



HASP REVIEW 2023
VOLUME XXXII

Sonia Bagdon

The *HASP Review* is an
anthology of written work
and original art by
members of HASP



Your *HASP Review* Team

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The front cover is original art by HASP member Donna Bogle. Additional examples of original art created by HASP members are displayed toward the end of this *Review*.

Discussion of Cover Art by the Artist

Irises

By

Donna Bogle



Looking between the shadows, seeing the hidden and subtle colors, and finding surprising hues in the light is a delight when painting nature in plein aire. The sky, wind, and earth change rapidly for the outdoor painter, so decisions are made early and altered only if necessary. Because of this immediacy, the work is fresh and lively.

I love to be interrupted by people wanting to engage in conversations about painting. They are often curious, complimentary, or artists themselves interested in techniques of other painters. Setting up on a pathway is intentional because I want to hear their stories as well. Later, when the painting is finished it contains not only my work but also the voices of those who participated in its birth.

The breeze, the birds, the sounds of grasses and leaves all become part of what helps me choose where to put brush to canvas. Even smells remain in my memory long after a work is framed. Painting is not just using one's eyes. All the senses are heightened and magnified. That cool drink of water after standing in the sun, the distant traffic noise, the hoot of a train far away, the perfume of crushed leaves or summer wildflowers, and feeling the day heat up or the wind cool the skin all become part of the process of creating.

Michigan offers so many places to paint: dunes, beaches, county parks, forests, farms, neighborhoods, playgrounds...all worthy of a day outside with brushes and palette.

Donna Bogle

Thoughts from Our HASP Director



Ian MacNeil

I never read as a kid – not even the *Harry Potter* series like every other kid on the planet. Seriously, I can probably count on one hand the number of books I *actually* read in high school. It didn't help that the curriculum's "required reading" was neither exciting nor relevant to my teenage self. Besides, I was very good at finding summaries online and passing tests without doing the hard work. It wasn't because I didn't like reading or because my parents didn't encourage reading (they did). It was because, as a smart kid, reading made me feel stupid. I struggled to stay focused on words on a page that didn't move, dance, or sing like the people in movies. It would take me five minutes to read a single page, only to retain nothing. So, I easily gave up on reading as a hobby.

In college, watching movies became my hobby. I spent hours in front of a screen studying cinematography, editing, sound, and acting. Movies were visual books even I could consume. When my studies led me to start writing film reviews for my college newspaper, it became clear it was not fancy visual effects that connected me to a particular movie, but the story – a story often based on a book. Soon, I desperately wanted to be the reviewer who said, "It was good, but the book was better." I learned an upcoming movie, *Boy Erased*, was being adapted from the memoir of a young man who was subjected to conversion therapy in an attempt to "cure" his homosexuality. I figured this story might be worth a deeper connection, so I checked out the book from the library. In an attempt to codify my newfound literary energy, I resolved to read at least ten pages of this book every day.

I dove into author Garrard Conley's story. It was beautiful. It was painful. Sometimes those ten pages came easily, sometimes not, but... I was reading. I started to feel the words on the page as if they were moving, dancing, or singing. At one particularly difficult moment in the story, I slammed the book shut in anger, threw it across the room, and started to cry. *Why was I doing this? Books can't make you feel like this!* But they can. Stories can.

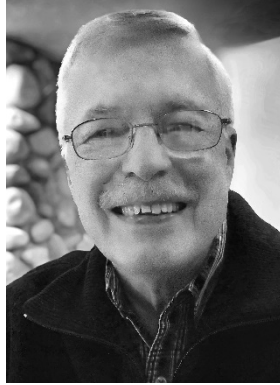
This *Review* is full of beautiful and painful stories. Through artwork, poetry, photography, or creative writing, our HASP artists have shared their talent in ways movies sometimes cannot – affording us the opportunity to imagine or empathize.

Ten pages swelled into twenty, then thirty. I finished the book, heartbroken and begging for more. I continued to read daily for the next three years until I was moving, dancing, and singing alongside the characters on the page. I still read regularly. I am not fast, but faster. I still re-read pages, but I'm retaining more and more. I am thankful I made the decision to turn the page, and I am thankful for all of the contributors to this publication who encourage us to do the same.

By the way, the book was much better than the movie.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ian".

Thoughts from your Review team Chairperson



This is the thirty-second edition of the HASP Review and I understand it is the largest so far. There are over ninety submissions from our members, and I would like to personally thank each one of you. The creativity that goes into the stories, poems, artwork, and photos is inspirational. NASA conducted a survey recently of what age groups are the most creative. Ninety-eight percent of four- and five-year-olds are considered creative geniuses. Only two percent of adults are. Our contributors are certainly part of that group. If you have a story to tell, a creative thought to express, or an image that wants to draw you into it, please join us next year.

Very Respectively,

Ralph Fairbanks

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Your HASP Review

*An anthology
of written work,
compositions, and
original art
by HASP members*

Out of respect for our authors' literary intentions,
proofreading of this publication has been limited.



Cruel Time

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)

Living within the comfortable confined measurements of employment’s fixed schedules
Forever punching the faceless, nano second counting Atomic Clock
Always longing for weekend down time
Planning for various vapid vacations and rich retirements
Birthing equity’s nest egg, matching the 401K
Extracting an existence from the micro divisions of man-made fabricated finite time.

Spending hard time, cruel time on the unemployment line
Languishing in the nether world of looming foreclosures
Never a day off from floundering unspecified amorphous weeks without end
Sending pleading petitions over the internet’s Ethernet void
Seeking almost anything to nail down life’s uncontrolled perimeters
Anxiously waiting for answers and offers
Rediscovering, remembering, practicing prayer
Reconnecting with God’s infinite time circumventing covenant of care.



Signatures

Pens are often dry and stubborn,
Ending in a scrawl or squiggle.

Pens are sometimes pale and faint,
Hardly worth the trouble;

Unless, they're all you have
_____ for now.



Communion in Lokichoggio, Kenya

August 1992

The shadow of the single-engine prop plane glided past me, then crawled over the sand and rocks surrounding the airstrip in Lokichoggio, Kenya. I sat alone on a low rock. My long jean skirt brushed the tops of my dusty running shoes. Sweat and tears trickled down my face, as I watched the small plane climb, then bank south, returning to Nairobi. The pilot and I had waited in this border-town outpost in Northern Kenya for three days in order to fly into Southern Sudan, to Watt and then on to Akobo in the White Nile River Valley.

I had a temporary permit to enter Sudan issued by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The SPLA was one of two main rebel factions fighting the Sudanese government—and each other—for control of the south in this ninth year of this second Sudanese Civil War.

Sudan's government had been based in Khartoum since independence from Great Britain in 1955. Northern Sudan's population was primarily Arab with strong currents of Islamic fundamentalism. Sharia law was the basis of the Sudanese legal system. Southern Sudan's majority population was Black African and included many cultures and tribes. Most of the south practiced traditional religions or Christianity.

In November and December of 1991 fierce fighting between the two rebel

factions and the government-based militia had displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians. The fighting left roads littered with corpses of people and cattle. In March of 1992 the government launched another massive offensive against the south, recapturing several rebel-held areas. The repeated offensives during planting seasons, the burning of crops and villages, and the poisoning of wells by invading militias perpetuated cycles of famine. The continuing ground offensives and government air strikes closed routes for humanitarian relief. In August of 1992 millions of people were starving.

For many months the Sudanese Government in Khartoum had suspended all humanitarian flights bringing food and aid to the civilian population in the war-torn south. In August, the government allowed humanitarian flights to resume, but only three UN flights per week. The flights carried limited food and supplies to specific locations identified by the government in Khartoum. Clearly, the government was using food access as a political weapon, a weapon of war.

I was waiting to fly into Southern Sudan with ACROSS, the Association of Christian Resource Organizations Serving Sudan. ACROSS flew unauthorized flights into rebel-controlled areas with permission from that rebel faction to provide food and other resources to the civilians. ACROSS

missionaries flew under the government radar into Southern Sudan to work with the Church of Sudan to provide comfort and hope.

Our plane had been grounded in Lokichoggio because heavy rains had turned the dirt airstrips in Watt and Akobo into fields of oozing, muddy ruts. The airstrips would take several more days to dry before it would be safe to land. Meanwhile, the plane needed to return to Nairobi for maintenance.

I sat on my rock and wondered if I had made the right decision to remain in Lokichoggio. What would I do until the plane returned in five days? Would I be able to stay in the UN camp or need to bunk in with the young missionary family I had met? Would I even get into Sudan? What about the snakes?

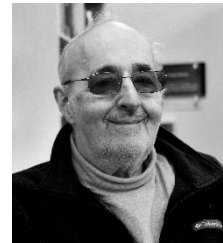
As I sat there, I watched Turkana men and women and occasional camels pass in the distance. The Turkana were semi-nomadic pastoralists that inhabited this area of northern Kenya. Women walked by often in pairs, some carrying water jugs on their heads, others with babies strapped to their backs. Most men carried a walking staff or camel-herding stick over their shoulders. From the end of the stick swung a small wooden stool that could also be used as a headrest. The men used the simple stool rather than sit in the hot sand. The men gazed straight ahead, but some of the women stared at me and others waved. An

occasional woman approached me with outstretched hands speaking in a language I could not understand. I shook my head and held up my empty hands.

I sat on the rock for a long time, watching and praying and journaling and wondering. Finally, I took a tangerine and a bottle of water from my knapsack.

I smelled her approach before I saw her. The pungent aroma of her unwashed body in animal skins overpowered the tang of the tangerine I had begun to peel. A young Turkana woman walked around me and sat down on a rock directly in front of me. Layers of necklaces made of colorful beads in different shapes and sizes encircled her neck, the only color in this beige and semi-arid landscape. The woman unstrapped her baby from her back and brought him to her firm dark breast. As she nursed her child, she spoke and pointed to my tangerine and water.

I continued to peel the small orange fruit. Rind gathered under my nails and juice wet my fingers as I split the tangerine and gave her half. I unscrewed the cap of my water bottle and held it out to her. We sat together in silent communion. When the baby finished suckling, the mother rose and walked away. I sat a bit longer, then headed to the tented UN camp hoping to find a place to stay.



Facing Forward: Thoughts on Cancer Survivorship

Uncertainty and Fear

I felt like the earth under me was shifting, when I was told I had an advanced stage aggressive type of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Unfortunately, when I was still in the midst of this very frightening, head spinning new reality, information was coming rapid fire and life decisions had to be made.

Then word got around and friends were texting and calling their concern, stopping by my hospital room and were already sending prayers.

All this, and I wasn't ready to be a cancer patient. I needed time to process this plethora of bad news. But time itself was moving the process along, with or without me.

We all have lived our share of life challenges, life's hurts, and life's hopes. I have the distinction, now, being a cancer survivor. But even as I declare that for myself, I wonder what being a survivor really means. I haven't liked some of the cancer labeling I have encountered. I never felt like a cancer warrior, in a battle, fighting the good fight. Nor did I feel like a victim of cancer, or even the distinction of being a 'tough bird' ready to take cancer on as someone said.

It was simply something I knew early I was on a journey that would impact my life in a big way and I would have to live

it as well as I can and for as long as I would be able. And that is with or without the cancer labels.

Cancer Survivor-What Does it Mean

Experiencing cancer is a mixed bag. The word *survivor* has found its way into the cancer nomenclature. At what point does one become a survivor. Some will say it begins, once cancer is diagnosed and treatment starts. Others declare that survivorship starts when treatment is done and there is no evidence of disease and one is sent on to live life. Either choice doesn't preclude the fact cancer can still be out there lurking about. One may still feel anticipation, fear along with continued hope.

Someone shared a mantra with me that read, 'there is always hope beyond what you see.' Now approaching my fifth-year anniversary of remission, I still find myself reliving both the good and bad about having been in that free- for- all between alternatively feeling hopeful, then hopeless and then hopeful again. Today I continue to choose hope. I have also added gratitude and save some of my hope and prayers for the newly diagnosed and those still struggling.

During my months of chemotherapy, I looked in the mirror and saw this bald, pale, thin unrecognizable person staring back at me. For those moments, I had allowed the ugliness of the cancer itself, to become mixed and blended into the

life-giving recipe I was trying to create for myself. I wanted to face forward. Cancer kept trying to pull me back. But for all of us, our humanness will slip through the cracks sometimes. We will go back and forth. It is normal.

I recall, on one of my chemo days, when I looked like every bit the cancer chemo patient, an old friend, stopped to see me. This fellow comes through town once a year. He insisted that I looked good for all I was going through. I was buoyed by his words, if only momentarily. Fast forward one year the same friend came through town again. I was finished with chemo and had gained weight back, no longer pale and asthenic and I had grown hair again. The same friend shared how much better I looked now. I challenged him, ‘Dan; I said, “last year you stated I looked good.” He said, ‘last year I lied.’ I still find humor in that interaction, but it does represent the mixed bag of challenges and moments of grace that can appear at the same time of anyone’s life crisis.

Another reality for cancer survivorship is that rabbit hole of survivor’s guilt. I still experience it. Many cancer survivors ask themselves the question, “why did I survive and others more deserving did not. But it is the randomness of who survives or not that is frightening. Survivors guilt is not talked about much, except among support groups and cancer patients talking to each other.

Gratitude for the Helpers

There is beauty to be found in some of the cancer moments. Being surrounded by a team of doctors, nurses, and a variety of professional support people that is comforting and reassuring.

Friends and family offer to help, pray, share words of support. Some offer rides, visits. One gets a lot of healing thoughts and prayers during this time. The soothing, and restorative vibes can truly be felt.

As one moves along further into survivorship and the treatment is complete, I noticed new stage developing within the support system that kept me propped up. The numbers of those helpers began to dwindle. It’s a normal and understandable process. People were there for the crisis. Thank God for them. But the watershed moment had passed. Sometimes, because of the outpouring of support, part of me incredulously wanted to go back to that frightening and confusing time, to warmth of support by doctors, nurses and friends. Other cancer patients have shared with me they felt the same kind of ambivalence as they moved further down the path of survivorship.

The Clean Up After the Storm

In many ways, I was my best self during my cancer days. I read, and wrote more, reached out more, prayed more and worried less about irrelevant matters. I drew into myself and spent more time exploring the depth of my feelings about what I really value in life.

Then it had occurred to me I had already begun to re-build a life. The storm had passed and the clean-up had already been occurring.

Today I continue to try to build on that life. Reading, learning to meditate and journal have a new importance. I have become aware of the important elements of my surroundings. When I ride my

bike, I value and appreciate every mile I ride. A hike in the nearby woods means being surrounded by God's brilliance and gift of nature. I turn off the podcasts or the loud music in my earbuds and listen to and enjoy the quiet. Time with friends, family has taken on a new importance. The knowledge that my particular chemotherapy treatment may take years away from my life expectancy has less consequence to me. In fact, it has compelled me to greater appreciate the life that is left.

Feeling Lost, Then Found, Then Lost Again

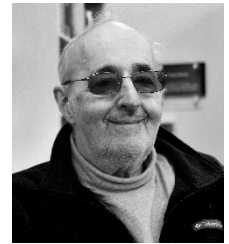
The cancer survivor can feel lost at times. There's no playbook, no boundaries, and no predictability. Everyone experiences it in their own human way and everyone's experience is their own. Many ride a wave of gratitude and appreciation for the extra time in life they have been given. They move along with anticipation and eagerness for life ahead. As W.H. Auden once wrote, "we are staggering onward, rejoicing."

The New Self

I'm not sure I buy into the concept that time heals all wounds. But I do think time provides perspective. Time allows silver linings to unfold. Time allows the opportunity to feel gratitude. Time has allowed me to reflect that trials in life can mean something. It doesn't take away from the crisis that was a cancer diagnosis. It doesn't take away the near paralyzing fear. But time creates that space to build those parts of the new self that emerges from the cancer life.

The Mystery of Grace

I love the quote from the writer Ann Lamott, who speaks of grace. She writes, "I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us." As the storms of life come and go, and come back again, may we all experience the kind of grace of which Ann Lamott speaks, and that that grace will help us to endure trials, and move us along to that better place as we keep "facing forward."



The Art of Caring

As Sandy was being rolled in on the ambulance cart, the Emergency Department staff nurses, myself included, began to shudder and let out a collective groan and a sigh of resignation and reluctant acceptance. Sandy was back with us for the night, and she would need a lot of time and a large amount of medical and nursing care.

It is hard to think of Sandy without the words sad, troubled and heart breaking. Admittedly, too, on a very basic emotional level, it is tough to put aside personal values to be Sandy's caregiver. She is challenging and problematic for the Emergency Department staff.

Sandy is frequently brought in for alcohol detox. She is never in a conscious or an awake state, due to the very high levels of alcohol in her system. She is well known for passing out, intoxicated, on sidewalks in main thoroughfares, back alleys behind taverns, once in the middle of a railroad track, and one time on the hood of a stranger's car. Sandy has been found more than once laying in a drunken stupor on whatever random front porch she chooses.

This time, Sandy was found intoxicated again to the point of having passed out on the sidewalk in front of Frank's bar, known as a somewhat seedy establishment in a fairly sketchy and wooly part of town. This is the part of town where police, fire rescue and ambulances spend most of their time on weekend nights. It is the part of the city

for the lowest of the downtrodden go, because there, they feel welcome.

Sandy is a frequent visitor to the Emergency Department and is the most challenging of patients. I would guess Sally weighs about 350 pounds. This is not a judgement, only a description. I speak of this from the perspective of trying to provide care to any comatose patient, and especially one who is difficult to move about on a too small of an Emergency Department cart. Tonight, she had vomited on herself and she had a particularly strong unwashed body odor about her. I must add, that Sandy gives little regard to personal hygiene during her drinking binges. Tonight, her clothing is disheveled, torn and dirty. There are many scrapes and abrasions on her legs and elbows likely from trying to stand then falling again, just before passing out.

Indeed, Sandy is a sad figure.

But Sandy is also a human being, and deserving of care. The nurses went to work. Everyone knew what to do. She had to be cleaned up, IVs inserted, lab work drawn, and the most challenging, a urinary catheter inserted to check for a urinary tract infection, which she had on almost 100% of her previous visits. Eventually Sandy was stabilized, cleaned up, IV's running, lab work drawn and sent to the lab, her heart monitored, urinary catheter in place. Sandy continued to sleep peacefully through it all.

On this night, in spite of all 25 treatment rooms filled with patients, I had a chance to take a 10-minute coffee break and ventured outside to stand in the relative quiet of the ambulance bay. I felt the presence of a person next to me and it was Danny, Sandy's long time and very beleaguered boyfriend. He came out to smoke and stood next to me as we watched traffic and listened to honking horns in the distance and shared some small talk. Finally, I said... "Danny, been a long time how ya doing overall?" Danny was barely 5' 4" and weighed about 110 pounds. He was thin, wiry and always carried a troubled anxious look on his weathered face. Danny was 50 but looked much older. In contrast to Sandy, he was a recovering alcoholic who was able to get sober and has been for 5 years. Danny became determined to live a healthier life. We knew Danny well as he was forever the faithful boyfriend who came in to be with Sandy when she was brought in by ambulance.

Danny answered my inquiry. He responded to me with a voice full of sadness, "Well Bill, I am blessed to have a lot of good things in my life" Danny declared. Danny began to share his gratitude list. "I have a good job, cleaning offices at night, and some money in my pocket." he proudly puffed up and stated, at which point he brought out and showed me, with pride, a \$20 bill he had with him. Danny then continued sharing his good fortunes. "I wear a clean shirt every day", Danny stated with pride. "And I always carry a fresh pack of cigarettes in my shirt pocket", Danny concluded by telling me "by the grace of the good Lord, I always have a cup of fresh coffee in my hand. "

As one can see, Danny's gratitude list is not long. "I should be happy with life

for all I have." Danny shared with me. It was at this point he broke out into tears and was wracked with sobbing and in a choked voice said. "I can't live without her, Bill. "She is going to die in a back alley one of these days." I thought for a minute, and realized, indeed, it is Sandy he is speaking about. I patted Danny on the back and reassured him he is the one who will save Sandy. "She loves you Danny and she will be back in your apartment soon." Danny thanked me for the talk.

The tears flowed as Danny headed back to Sandy's ER room. Sandy continued to lay there, still unconscious and unaware.

Once he was settled in a chair, next to Sandy's patient bed, I brought Danny another cup of coffee and a sandwich from our staff refrigerator, and handed it to him. I stayed and watched for a moment as he sat holding Sandy's hand. I gave him a pat on the shoulder and left the room. Sandy was moved to the detox room for the night, with Danny in tow. It was 3 AM, my shift ended and I went home for the night. Thoughts of the busy night swirled but mostly I thought of my conversation with Danny.

I thought often about Danny's gratitude for the 5 things he deemed were life's gifts. Cash in the pocket, a janitor's job, a clean shirt, pack of cigarettes, and a cup of coffee to hold in your hand. But none were as important as having Sandy back home with him and both of them sober and living a good life together. Danny said he prayed every day for this to happen.

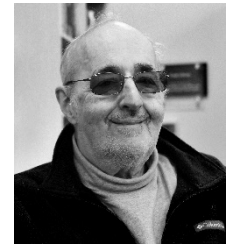
I think about the comfort that surrounds me as I write this. It brings to mind the gratitude and love for Sandy, that seemed to guide Danny's life. Few

people would look at Danny and imagine that he could teach us anything important about life. But that night he reminded me about gratefulness and where it can be properly found and stored.

One day, long after leaving my ER job, I saw Danny and Sandy seated at a fast-food place having lunch. They were amiably chatting back and forth. Danny

still had his clean shirt on and was drinking a coffee. Sandy looked brighter and almost well kempt. I stared for a moment and wondered if Danny's prayers had been answered. It appeared they had been.

As I look back on that night, I feel gratitude to Danny for being my teacher that late night in the Emergency Department.



The Story of Jeanie and the Naked Man

Jeanie awakened early and wrestled her way out of her sleeping bag. Her other roommates were still in slumber, but would likewise be arising soon from their rustic cots. This Guatemalan hospital, mostly abandoned, provided empty dorm like sleeping rooms for the group of 50 medical missionaries that came once a year to work and treat local patients.

Jeanie wanted an early start for breakfast and coffee, before getting ready for a busy day in the pediatric clinic where she was assigned. She almost couldn't believe that she is working again as a nurse in this beautiful, remote setting, so far from home. She had been retired for over a year and felt a sense of gratitude and purpose, feeling like a nurse again in Guatemala.

She began her day with a prayer for her team and for the many Mayan children she and the Pediatrician, Dr S., will see in clinic that day. Jeanie, always gregarious and smiling, shared several upbeat, good morning greetings to colleagues as she passed them in the hallway on her way to the women's bathroom. She looked forward to coffee in the cafeteria next.

The hospital needed much repair to be functional. Our team was blessed to have a talented maintenance guy who could repair most anything. Mark, who was a veteran of numerous Guatemala trips, knew ahead of time he needed to bring shower curtains and various

plumbing supplies including toilet parts to get them both in working condition.

As a result, because of the newly updated shower parts, this writer was ready to try out the newly repaired shower. Standing in the men's bathroom in front of the shower stall, I was stripped down to nothingness and only a few steps away from enjoying the warm water.

From out in the hallway I heard the friendly voice of team member Jeanie. Her voice was becoming louder and closer. I could hear her declare to herself, "Oh look! Mark put up a new mirror for us. This wasn't here yesterday."

I was first to realize the drama that was about to unfold.

Jeanie, thinking she had walked into the women's bathroom, stopped in her tracks, looked at me, gasped, with eyes wide and her hands covering her face, as she unsuccessfully tried to suppress a scream. She then bolted for the door.

But, I kept my composure, as I thought there was nothing more to be done and no further action could be done right now. It is not like I could chase after her to talk it over. Jeanie was gone from the scene and the drama had played out.

Or, so I thought.

Regardless, I completed my shower, singing a little tune and feeling happy being in Guatemala again.

Little did I know about the buzz that was forming in the hallways and in the small hospital cafeteria. Jeanie in her somewhat frenzied state bolted into the cafeteria, and coincidentally, the first person she saw was Kathi, my soon to be wife. She made a direct line to Kathi and began to profusely apologize stating, "Oh Kathi, I am so sorry, I saw Bill." Kathi responded, "I saw him in the hall this morning, he was headed for a shower."

"No!" Jeanie declared loudly and in a highly exasperated sounding voice, "I mean I **saw** Bill," as she went on to describe details of the shocking encounter. While she spoke seemingly to only Kathi, apologizing profusely and loudly, for "seeing Bill," the rest of the group having breakfast with Kathi that morning, mostly battle-weary nurses who had seen hundreds or more naked people in their lives, were sitting there taking it all in and breaking out in semi-controlled laughter.

One would think that a Christian missionary group would be a little demure and more restrained. But this proved to be only the beginning of the folly soon to unfold.

The working days at the hospital were long and busy. The local Mayan population was eager for the chance to see a doctor, dentist or nurse. The lines of people waiting went on forever. The surgery team worked into the night. The triage nurses were overwhelmed with crowds of potential patients, beginning early each day.

Our days began with a group prayer and short service, in the cafeteria, followed by breakfast, followed by a day-long

sprint lasting into the evening to provide medical care. One would think that there would be no time or opportunity for jokes, at the expense of this writer who was the subject of the now famous, "sighting." This was not the case. Within a few hours it seemed the entire mission team of 50 people plus a few Guatemalan hospital workers had heard about Jeanie's crisis encounter and her "Bill sighting." I think Jeanie and I became opportunities for relief from stress. A comment, followed by an outburst of laughter became the order of the day.

We had a team coordinator who kept records on the team accomplishments from the previous day. She would write a daily bulletin in a newsletter-like format.

For example, "The eye surgery group performed 16 cataract surgeries yesterday. Way to go Eye Team!" or "The Dental crew saw 64 patients yesterday, complete with dental hygiene, and 24 extractions." She would go on, "Let's thank the cooks for the wonderful soup last night." And so on.

So why should I be surprised that she included a new column in her daily newsletter, entitled, "Sightings of Bill, Sans Clothing." Yesterday there was one confirmed "sighting" of Bill, Recovery Room RN, as he was ready to step in the shower." Details available from Jeanie, our Pediatric nurse.

There were the individual comments by normally busy and serious-minded doctors and nurses who suddenly, on this trip, became comedians. One physician, an older gent known for his serious approach to medicine, came up to me at breakfast, placed his arm on my

shoulder and declared, “Bill, you should know that you have nothing to worry about. I simply nodded, while I waited for the punchline. “Yes,” said Gerry, “Jeannie told me you are a fine-looking man.” I simply said, “Very reassuring, Gerry.” Gerry of course erupted into a loud burst of laughter, as he walked away, enjoying his own humor.

One of our team translators, Ron, a computer engineer from our hometown, has a high-level fluency in Spanish. He loved going with the team every year to help as his good friend Art’s translator. Art was our team’s Eye Surgeon. I noticed Ron talking and joking in Spanish with a couple of local Guatemalan doctors who came to help the team. It was only a little later that day that I passed the two Guatemalan medicos in the hallway. They both gave me a big smile as they suppressed a laugh. I somehow knew a joke, at my expense, only this time, in Spanish, was forthcoming. “Muy guapo” the two said with broad smiles and a thumbs up which meant “very handsome.” I just tried to short circuit the joke by saying defiantly, “no, no muy guapo” The two doctors obviously enjoying the

encounter continued on their way laughing together. I am pretty sure I saw a hand slap between the two.

By the end of the week, the prevailing joke themes had mercifully quieted down. There was still an occasional isolated attempt at humor, but it became just one of another of a thousand memories each us would bring home from our week of service to the Mayan people of Guatemala.

Jeanie, the woman with the keen eyesight, bonded with Kathi and I that week and we three remained friends over time. When Jeanie had heard Kathi and I were to honeymoon in the Florida Keys, later that spring, she immediately offered up her empty condo in Del Ray Beach, Florida, for us to hang out for a few days. We accepted her kind offer.

The volunteer organization with whom we traveled, coordinates several medical teams each year in Guatemala. I believe the Michigan team is the only team to have documented the significant kind of event that occurred with Jeanie’s “important sighting.”



Leaves in Autumn

The leaves in autumn do not die but bloom,
their flow'ring colors — ochre, auburn, gold —
a vibrant burst to disregard the gloom,
defy the slow-approaching winter cold.

Josh Bishop is the Hope College Web Content Manager and serves on the HASP Board of Directors.



A Place Called Home

“There is a map in my heart that is shaped like a mitten,
and it always leads me home.”¹

I have traveled to and fro.
I’ve seen mountains, oceans and plains.
But still the place I love
Is the mitten in my heart.

The wind blows through her trees
Providing a nesting place for the eagles.
In the springtime her trees flow
Producing a sweet sap for the soul.

Forest surrounds me as I stroll.
Its own voice heard in the rustling sounds.
Hiding creatures who do not want to be seen.
Only their tracks reveal the journey they walked.

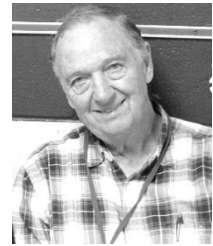
The Lakes have their own song to sing.
The waves speak of unknown tales.
Her waters hold the secrets of the deep.
They sing of mysteries from long ago.

Islands also surround the mitten on the map.
Places to go to find solace for the heart.
It is here I watch silent giants glide by.
And dream of places I still want to see.

Yet the mitten is connected to another peninsula.
A wild land of woods and waterfalls.
It is here the bear, wolf and moose run free.
And those with untamed hearts go to live.

¹ Viola Shipman - A Wish for Winter

There is a mitten in my heart.
With a precious spot on my street.
Here I have lived all of my days.
And this place will always call me home.



My Mother Grew Up in the Philippines – and More

Yes, my mother grew up in the Philippines. However, there is some interesting background to that. My Mom's father, my grandfather Amos Davis, was born with one arm and yet he somehow managed to play football, tennis and baseball! He graduated from Doane College in Nebraska. He went to Japan as an educational missionary, where he taught at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. He taught German to Japanese students – in English!

My Mom's mother, my grandmother, was born Anna Jackson. She also went to and graduated from Doane. She was 8 years younger than Amos, but they knew each other at Doane. In Japan, Amos kept thinking about that cute student, Anna. They carried out a correspondence across the Pacific Ocean for 18 months. He proposed and she finally sent a letter to Amos agreeing to accept it. Given the train to boat transfer of the letter, she knew they were engaged about a month before he did! She went to Japan where they were married in June 1895 in Kyoto. They came back to Nebraska where Amos studied for a Master's degree.

After the end of the Spanish-American War the United States took over the Philippine Islands after defeating the Filipino army. Who learned that last part in school? I know I did not. The United States was a relatively "soft" imperialist. They established a system of public schools and called out for teachers in the US. Amos and Anna Davis, responding

to their missionary urge, signed up and went to Bacolod on Negros Island. Amos became the principal and Anna ("Gram" to us) taught math and "domestic science." My mother (at age 2) and her two older brothers went in 1905. Amos and Anna were there for 6 years – two 3-year terms.

Most of the information in this article is from a 109-page mimeographed book by my Dad (Del) called "The Buttrey-Davis Story." Some bits of it are from hearing them tell their stories. From my Dad's story I found this report of my mother's experience in the Philippines. The pictures are from a scrap book.

For Carol, it was a happy childhood with a wide variety of interesting things to do, many playmates and for three years she attended a pre-school kindergarten conducted by a Spanish lady who lived next door in a very large house. During the times that Carol was five, six and seven years of age, she was part of that group which provided her with many interesting playmates. But her choice friend was the son of the kindergarten teacher. His name was Eduardo Blanco, the same age as she was; and to this day Carol remembers the happy times they had as next door neighbors and playmates. "To this day" would be 1979 when my Mom was 76.

In addition to the playmates she found in the kindergarten, Carol and her brothers played with the Filipino children in the neighborhood. Carol and her brothers (five and seven years older than she was) played with the Filipino children in the neighborhood. At first there was a language barrier because the children spoke a dialect called Visayan. In a short time the Davis siblings learned to speak it and often talk in that language around the home. Since the parents could not understand Visayan they made a rule that at meal time they must talk in English. They would get to arguing and quarrelling in Visayan and their parents had no idea of what it was all about.

After 6 years in the Philippines, the family came back to Crete, Nebraska. It was very different for my mother. She had no experience in formal education. They put her in first grade when she was almost 8, but she adjusted before too long. But after only one year in Crete, Amos, Anna, Carol and her brother Frank went back to the Philippines. My Mom's oldest brother Harold stayed in Crete for high school.

The family went to Tarlac, north of Manila in the Philippine Islands. Amos became superintendent of the school which Carol attended. After two years in Tarlac they went to Los Banos – both of which were in the northern part of the islands, not far from Manila. Amos taught German, including scientific German!

One of my Mom's teachers in Los Banos wrote this about her: "A fair, joyous girl, who has lived most of her life in foreign

lands, she has never shown a trace of self-consciousness, and knows no slang. Her pleasures are swimming, dancing, playing tennis, playing with her paper dolls and reading. She is the nearest approach to a child of nature I have ever known." In regard to the nature and dancing, I heard from my grandma Anna that she would sometimes go out in a thunderstorm and dance around!

In 1917 when my Mom was 14, when the First World War was on the horizon, they moved to Palo Alto, California. With her very unusual school background they put her in a grade school to learn a little American history. She never had that in the Philippines. She eventually graduated and went for one year to Doane College in Nebraska. Then she went to Stanford University in Palo Alto where she met my Dad. That's a very good thing for me, because if that had not happened, I would not exist!

One of the groups in which they connected was in the University's Cosmopolitan Club, which brought together students of different cultures, races, languages, religions and more. This background of my mother (and father) was and still is an influence on me as I try to celebrate the wonderful diversity in our world. When I fill out a form which asks for my race, I will check the "white" box. However, if there is an "Other" line for a race I will put "human". One of my daughters has a shirt which says "Human Kind –Be Both." My wife and I have had wonderful experiences overseas. On one trip we went to England, Germany and Italy. We stayed one week each with four families we know. We have been to Mexico a couple of times. We have been to Korea and the Philippines. We went to Ethiopia once to be a part of our

Korean daughter adopting a baby there. My mother was delighted that we had a Korean daughter. She would also have been delighted with our daughter's Ethiopian child. Unfortunately, she did

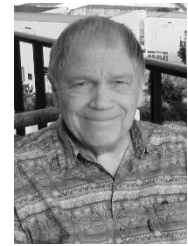
not live long enough to see her. I am so happy that I had my Mom to help me celebrate the wonderful diversity in our world.

This is my mother's 3rd grade class in the Philippines. Can you pick her out?!



This is my mother as a little girl with her father, Amos Davis, her mother, Carol Davis and her Aunt Amy – all are in fancy Filipino clothes.





Mr. Emerson
“SO...YOU ARE MY NEW NEIGHBOR.”

His grey striped bib overalls stretched upwards toward a grinning face, capped with a forest of white hair. He stood at the edge of a gravel lined country road in front of a tan two story farmhouse, trimmed in dark brown.

Behind, swallows flitted in and out of a red barn, skirting the ground in their flight.

“Yes, the awed eleven-year-old boy affirmed, we’ve just moved here from Chicago.” (It was 1943, World War II was on - and father had sold his trucking business in favor of raising two thousand chickens in the country.)
“Well, then, you’d best take home some apples.”

To the left was an orchard with a dozen trees, laden with shiny red apples: Jonathan and McIntosh for eating; Braeburn and Granny Smith (Best for apple pies) for baking.

That’s how I met Mr. Emerson, a retired Bank Cashier from Chicago.

To the right was a tilled field, perhaps half an acre, with evidence of a vegetable garden and a few corn stalks remaining. In the spring, Mr. Emerson would hitch “Nellie” to a single blade walking plow, in preparation for the annual planting.

Behind the tilled field was a small pond which Mr. Emerson had banked up soil to make. A large black bass toured the surface looking for flies.

(I often dreamed of catching that bass - but knew it would not be right.) Above the pond, up the hillside, was a free-flowing spring which fed the pond and the water loving aspen trees lining its banks.

In the red barn, Mr. Emerson showed me young swallows in their mud nests.

He banded them to see how many made their way back the following year. And, each Spring, he wrote on the barn wall the date the swallows returned from their long winter vacation in South America: “They say that some go as far as Argentina.”

In the tan farmhouse, Mrs. Faye, a well-fed elderly widow, presided amiably over Mr. Emerson’s household: his gastronomic and cleaning needs, in exchange for a late life place to call home.

Every Sunday, without fail, Mr. Emerson would don an incongruous blue suit; slide back the red barn door, remove his tan 1941 Plymouth, and go to church, saying that he planned to take the nuns out to dinner after.

Every winter he would, with pipe in hand, settle into a ladderback armchair; by the light of an old iron floor lamp, chuckling as he read “Tom Sawyer” and “Huckleberry Finn” over, and over again.

In 1948, our farm was sold and we moved away.

Years later..... I turned into the sandy two-track driveway.

The house was gone; the apple trees gone, the red barn and the swallows gone, and an ungainly modular home found itself plopped down in an unlikely spot.

I approached the invading modular home, asking permission to walk to the pond. It was kindly granted.

Yes, the pond was still there! The big bass, or his descendants, nowhere to be

seen. The never-ending stream still gurgled, reflecting sunlight, as it hurried downhill to feed the aspen trees circling the pond. They had grown tall.

I sat beside the pond, listening to the rustle of leaves in the afternoon breeze. I closed my eyes..... Nothing had changed: Mr. Emerson was still there in his grey striped bib overalls; the red barn was there, the swallows, the apple trees.

All was, just as it once was.....Indelibly etched on the mind of an eleven year-old boy.



On Seeing Red Ribbons In My Neighbor's Yard In March

Back in December
when we were all aglow with the spirit,
my neighbor attached red bows
to the posts on either side of her porch steps.
Long streamers flying,
they were festive in those darkened days.
"Gloria in Excelsis Deo".

What followed next, was the
hauling of plastic bags,
filled with Christmas flotsam,
down the driveway,
to the side of the road for pick up.
But the red bows stayed in place,
their contours flecked with snow,
like Valentines,
like cardinals,
resting on the snow lace branches of the pear tree.

Fresh snowfall told us yet another tale.
Her porch steps left unshoveled,
The driveway never plowed,
Proof enough!
Snowbirds had taken wing.

Slow rough weeks of winter's worst have passed.
The ribbons, drooping now,
still cling to life,
sodden streamers faded, frayed
their ends stuck fast in snowslides from the roof.

I wish someone would come and take them in,
for very soon, in the grey-green spring,
Christ will die and rise again,
and we will celebrate this news,
but not with tattered remnants of his birth.
The lamb, the cross, the empty tomb,
the solemn scent of lilies move us now.



Sayonara A Christmas Story

Sayonara is a beautiful Japanese word which evokes a mood of final farewell. It is said in parting, only when there is no expectation of meeting again.

Of course, on earth, all love stories have their final parting, their sayonara, but in our story, it was baked in from the start.

I was young, only in my early high school days, had very little experience with boys, and yet was pretty sure, deep down, that I had met the man I wanted to marry, though in truth, he had never indicated any particular interest in me.

Our families attended the same church and it was within that context that we all knew each other. He was older than me by about four years, and had already gone off to his first year at college. Well-liked by his friends, he had a fun-loving personality, a driver's license, and, (so I had heard), a girlfriend, but because he had never brought her to church, she existed outside my world and did not seem an obstacle to plans I might be forming for the future.

I fervently anticipated Christmas, which was always a magical time at our church, but especially for me this year, as he would be home from school. We were all attending an evening candlelight service and my heart rose at the first sight of him crossing the parking lot, and then fell to tragic adolescent depths as I realized that

through the stormy night, toward the lighted church, he was shepherding the girlfriend. Tall and pretty, she was holding his arm, and she was breaking my heart.

Throughout the rest of that horrible night and in fact throughout the family merriment of Christmas Day, I was trapped in some sort of grief, swallowing back secret tears no one knew of and to which I had no right. It was the saddest Christmas I had ever known, worse even than the year we all had the measles.

Then one day, later in the week, late in the afternoon, the phone rang in our house. Someone called out that it was for me, and when I answered, I could hardly take in the fact that it was him. He was calling me, and he was calling me to ask if I would go with him to the movies on Friday night.

What?

Wait... what?

I had never been asked out on a date. Uh... I would have to ask my mother. He said he could wait. He seemed to take my stumbling inexperience in stride. My mother, on the other hand, did not exactly take my stumbling inexperience in stride. She had questions.

What, (for example) about the girlfriend? We had all seen the

girlfriend. Well, I didn't know anything about the girlfriend, and indeed could not see anything beyond the thrill of this invitation.

Well, it all got decided. We would go to the early show. He would pick me up before 7:00. We would be home shortly after 9:00.

Oh, (and by the way), the name of the movie was, "Sayonara". It was the sad story of two young people; their love forbidden by the mores of time and place. Oh my goodness.

Somehow, Friday finally came and then 7:00 came, but no car pulled into the driveway, and there was no phone call, nothing but puzzlement all around. There was a phrase at that time for such a situation. It was called "being stood up". Had I been stood up?

We did not know him to be that kind of person but there was this whole thing about the girlfriend. What were any of us to think?

And then the phone rang.

"Very sorry... very, very sorry". There had been a flat tire. There had been no way to let me know. It would still be a little while, as he had to get cleaned up but we could still make the late show.

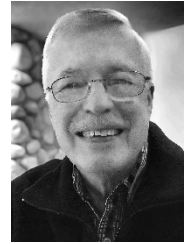
My mother demurred.

"Oh, no, dear, that will make it very late. You can spend a nice evening here, you know making popcorn, playing games".

Who was she kidding?

My heart was set on "Sayonara", and that's how it came to pass that in that blessed season of love and joy, I found myself at 14, on my first date, going out to a late-night movie, with an older man with, (as yet unexplained), girlfriend issues hanging over his head.

It was a start. There would be many bridges to cross, and much time would pass before our own real life sayonara.



Delayed Reunion

Put one foot in front of the other. You've done much harder things and you'll get through this. At 66, you are out of your element, signing up for an advanced German language class in Vienna, Austria with other students who are in their teens and early twenties. You've always said in order to grow you must be uncomfortable and go out on a limb a bit. So, suck it up and go to class.

It's a Thursday and tomorrow you head for the big reunion. It's been over 40 years since you've seen him and that was just a fleeting glance at a time when youth led you to do things you were either unprepared for or didn't know about. But for now, just go to class. Take the four flights down to the street from the apartment where you are renting a room and walk to the U-bahn. These apartments were built before elevators and automobiles came about and when horse and carriage were the main mode of transportation. Besides, you get your exercise climbing back up the four flights. The landlady must bring all the groceries up herself so quit complaining.

The walk to the U-bahn is a short hike through the city, past an elementary school and into a concrete stairway where it smells like urine. The U-bahn, a subway as the Americans call it, is the

lifeline to the city. Exploring the sights, restaurants, and museums, make the quick trip underground affordable and efficient. Wanting not to become a "Schwarzfahrer", or someone who boards without paying, I purchase a pass, go through the turnstile, and board the train. Getting off the train, I walk twenty minutes to the Actilingua Academy passing by several embassies where I was admonished not to take photographs. I walk around red and white poles leaning against the buildings which I learned were warnings to pedestrians that there could be falling icicles from above. I stop in a Blumenladen, or flower shop, to pick up a bouquet for the landlady who cooks dinner for me, though I mostly eat out in the evening. Upon first meeting her, she asked what I liked for breakfast and, kiddingly, I said eggs, bacon, and pancakes. She laughed and instead every morning I had Müsli with fruit syrup and water on it. I think Mr. Kellogg invented the idea of milk on cereal.

I arrive at the Actilingua building and enter through narrow doors that were originally meant for carriages to enter. Students from many countries start rolling in – Japan, Slovenia, England, Columbia, Russia, France. They were all young, but none were American. The

first day I arrived, I took a placement test to determine where my level of German was and since I had been studying intensely before I arrived, I was placed in an advanced class. At the end of the first class, I asked one student how long they had been there. Their answer, “3 months”. I asked another. “Six months”. They asked me. I looked at my watch and said, “An hour and a half!”. I was expecting them to ask me lots of questions about America but perhaps because of the age difference, none did. One day I went to a young Japanese girl and said, in German, wasn’t it nice that even though I couldn’t speak Japanese and she couldn’t speak English, we could communicate in German. She said, very clearly, “Oh no, I can speak English”. Well, so much for breaking the ice with that line.

I was accustomed to the American learning style -- get the assignment, read the material, and be prepared to listen to the lecturer, and take copious notes. Not the case at the language school. There, one shows up and they tell you what they will be presenting that day. I was always fighting from behind. By the time I went home and studied what they had presented I was okay, but during class I was frustrated, embarrassed, and sometimes humiliated. I hoped they wouldn’t call on me and I tried to sit close to the instructor so I could hear better. But it was over now, and I could begin my 4-day excursion to Germany. I went home, climbed the four flights of stairs, gave the flowers to the landlady



F4 PHANTOM –
BY USAF - HOLLOMAN.AF.MIL,
PUBLIC DOMAIN

and started packing for the next day’s journey.

I would be visiting someone that perhaps I owed my life to but who I had only seen for a very brief time. It started in 1973, somewhere in the Tonkin Gulf off North Vietnam. Two Airforce pilots had been shot down in their F-4 Phantom fighter jet over Haiphong Harbor. They had ejected from the



HH3A SIKORSKY HELICOPTER –
HC7 WEBSITE

plane, parachuted down, and were sitting in rafts waiting for us to pick them up. This was near Halong Bay and was in hostile territory. We didn’t know what to expect from small arms fire or even missile defenses. I was the co-pilot of Big Mother 60 stationed on the USS Long Beach. This helo was a large five bladed helicopter manufactured by the

Sikorsky Aircraft Company. Its gross weight was over 14,000 pounds and was

HC-7 Rescue 109 20-July-1972
Aboard USS Long Beach



| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| 2nd Crewman / Swimmer | Co-pilot | USAF- RIO | USAF- Pilot | 1st Crewman | Pilot in Command |
| ADRAN | LTJG | 1LT | CAPT | ADJ-3 | LT |
| Elvin Milledge | Ralph Fairbanks | Mike Nelson | Joe Burns | Tim McCarthy | John Pitts |

used for a myriad of duties like search and rescue, anti-submarine warfare, and general cargo and personnel transfers. Ours, the HH-3A, was set up for combat search and rescue with self-sealing fuel cells, bullet-proof armament, and a high-speed hoist. Mounted on the left side forward was an M-60 machine gun and on the right aft in the cargo door was a mini-gun capable of shooting 4000 rounds per minute. Each crewmember also carried an M-16 rifle. We got our call sign, "Big Mother", from an Air Boss on a carrier who was anxious to get us launched so he could get the planes off the deck. He said to the helo crew, "Get that big mother off my flight deck". We had launched from the USS Long Beach prior to the strike made by the Phantoms in the event someone got in trouble and needed help. Our crew was made up of pilots Lieutenant John Pitts, me, Lieutenant Junior Grade Ralph Fairbanks, Crewmen ADJ-3 Tim McCarthy and ADRAN Elvin Milledge. The ship had positioned itself near Haiphong Harbor but out of range from enemy artillery and shore defense

missiles. As it happened, a Phantom was shot down and we were awaiting clearance to go in and get the downed pilots. Special clearance was necessary from CINCPACFLEET, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, for such a mission. There was an abundance of surface to air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery positioned up and down the coast of North Vietnam, particularly around the Hanoi area. Also, there was the possibility of the survivors being picked up by local North Vietnamese fishermen who would receive a healthy reward for capturing an American pilot. Putting us in harm's way meant we could just as easily end up in the Hanoi Hilton, the POW camp where Americans were kept. The risk/reward decision had to be made at the highest level.

As we continued to circle just off the coast, as the Navy likes to say, 'feet wet', our fuel was slowly being depleted. The garble and interference across the radios made it nearly impossible to hear what was happening. The downed airmen were in their rafts and other aircraft were circling like mad hornets keeping the area clear or "sanitized" from any bad guys trying to get out to the survivors. Finally, by using an overhead



HALONG BAY, VIETNAM, GETTY IMAGES
PHOTO PROVIDED BY RON MILAM,
HC7 HISTORIAN.

aircraft controller, we received the okay to head in.

Now the question was, where were they? As we went “feet dry”, I tuned the automatic direction finder into the frequency of the downed airmen and got a course to their location. They were in the Cam River delta which was filled with huge stone monoliths jutting out of the water. This was perfect cover to fly between and be hidden from enemy fire. Today, this area is a sailor’s delight and a popular tourist destination. Back then, it was hot and not just from the temperature. We flew just over the stony islands to minimize our target profile. We headed towards the other circling aircraft and within minutes we spotted the downed crewmen’s orange life rafts. We passed overhead and circled around, constantly looking for enemy soldiers or fisherman. Coming to a forty-foot hover over them, we sent the swimmer down to pick up the survivors. Thanks to Navy training, we had all three in the helo within minutes. Our low fuel state was both an advantage and a detriment. Having less weight allowed us to hover in the hot humid air but also meant we had to return to the ship quickly.

Now it was time to get the heck out of there. Heading toward the shore, we were flying at over 140 knots, again staying close to the rocky outcroppings. I was sitting in the left seat helping the pilot navigate back to the ship and keeping a sharp lookout for enemy fire and checking the instruments. Then, suddenly, I saw a camouflaged Air Force

F4 Phantom fighter jet pulling up beside us. He escorted us out, flying in



USS KITTY HAWK
PICTURE FROM US NAVY

formation, until we got feet wet. He needed to keep his landing gear, speed brake, and flaps down to go slow enough to fly alongside us. When we got out over the water, he retracted everything, threw it into afterburner, and shot away like a bolt of lightning. I clearly saw the pilot and his radio intercept officer, but they were unrecognizable because of their helmets and visors. I often wondered who those pilots were that flew beside us. They made sure we got back to the ship safely, but I wouldn’t know who they were for many years.

We continued out to the USS Long Beach, landed, and refueled while the medics attended to the survivors. News of our success was radioed back to the aircraft carrier, the USS Kitty Hawk, and I knew we would receive a hero’s welcome when we returned. After the survivors checked out okay, I had an opportunity to speak with the RIO. He

said they were flying right over Hanoi, and he was taking pictures when the next thing he knew he had ejected and was coming down in a parachute. He was trying to talk on his survival radio but somehow, he couldn't get the emergency beacon to stop transmitting so he pulled out his .38 caliber revolver and shot his own radio. He was afraid the enemy would home in on the frequency and find him. As a result, the Air Force retrained all their pilots how to disable the radio without shooting it. We relaunched from the USS Long Beach and took the survivors back to the USS Kitty Hawk. As expected, the ship's company warmly welcomed them back after their harrowing experience. They were the 104th and 105th people our squadron had rescued in the Vietnam war. The next morning, the other pilot and I were summoned to the Admiral's quarters for breakfast where we described the events of the previous day. He was very gracious and proud to have us on his team. The two Air Force survivors returned to their base in Thailand shortly thereafter.

Years went by. My time in the Navy was over and I had embarked on a civilian career. Then one day, I received an email from our Navy squadron historian. The two survivors were trying to get in contact with the helicopter crew that saved them. Through several email communications, we were able to link up and shared our experiences and what we were doing now. I asked them, "Who was the pilot in that F-4 Phantom that escorted us out to the ship?". The name

came immediately, Gary Retterbush. He had stayed in the Air Force, was stationed in Germany, and had married a German woman. He now was retired and living in Kyllburg, a small town in western Germany. When my plans to attend ActilLingua in Vienna came to fruition, I contacted Gary and arranged to meet him one weekend.

So it came to be. I was free from the daily commute via the U-bahn to the German language school and I could actually meet the person I had seen so many years before flying out after a daring rescue over the South China Sea. I flew from Vienna, Austria to Cologne, Germany and then took a train south to Kyllburg. I was expecting to meet a tall, strapping, jet jock who would try to impress me with his feats of flying faster than the speed of sound while performing wing overs, loops, and barrel rolls. But first, I had to get there. Traveling via train in a foreign country is an anxious experience because, even though you've planned for the trip, getting on that train heading off to an unknown city leaves you wondering if you're going in the right direction. Finding out you got on the wrong train would only be discovered after you end up somewhere you didn't plan to be. But this time it worked out exactly as planned. I got off the train in Kyllburg to be met by the only person on the platform, Gary Retterbush. What a surprise. He was not as tall as I had imagined and of a thin build. His hair was as grey as mine. We hit it off immediately and got in his car to head to

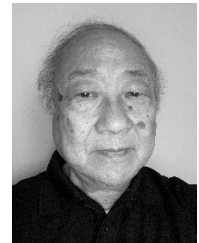
his house. There I met his charming wife, Herte, who immediately showed me the hospitality small town people have towards guests. Though they wanted me to stay the night and have dinner, I had made plans to head back to Cologne later that day to meet up with two German exchange students we had hosted years earlier. So instead, she served the best apple strudel I have ever tasted. Gary and I got down to business after updating each other with where we went after Vietnam. Then I asked him to tell me his story of that day back in July, 1972 from his perspective. I asked numerous questions while he told me what he remembered. I captured it all on my phone and later shared the story with our squadron's historian who transcribed it and is now a part of the squadron's recorded history.

I left that day to head back to Cologne feeling fulfilled having gained a friendship that would endure if only over Facebook posts. Gary was also an

avid photographer and we shared beautiful pictures from our respective country's hometowns. I am sad to report that Gary has recently passed away and I will miss him and the experience we shared when we were much younger and did things only the young and reckless will do. Rest in Peace, Gary.



Lieutenant Colonel Gary Retterbush



Morgan Freeman and I

Most of my friends know that I had a long career in the chemical industry, and I also taught college chemistry. Very few know my short stint in the film industry. Here is my story.

In the summer of 2007 my daughter Laura was working in Chicago. One of her employers was a movie talent agency. She said the company was looking for older Asians to do non-speaking parts in a new film called “Rory’s First Kiss”. Because most older Asian men were suspicious and superstitious, her employer could not get enough Asian men to join. She asked me to take a job at it. I was near the end of summer chemistry research at Hope and thought it would be fun. So, I agreed.

On a weekend in July, I drove to Chicago and was interviewed by the casting company. I was hired immediately and was told to show up for filming on Thursday August 8th at McCormick Place West. The contract stipulated that I would not disclose the film or the props used on “Rory’s First Kiss” during production. The pay was \$45 for the entire day. The Hope summer program concluded in late July. The timing was perfect. I was going to be famous. I dreamed of giving up teaching and signing multi-million-dollar contracts with major studios and living the glitzy Bogart-ish lifestyle for the rest of my life.

I glanced around the studio and saw a damaged fire truck, police and firemen

uniforms of various sizes hanging neatly and orderly on a large rack. When I was leaving I purposely walked close to the rack and peeked at the logos. It was “Gotham City”. I knew right away, I might be in a famous Batman movie. A few days later I received an email from the talent agency, telling me to wear either a brown or green business suit and brown or tan colored shoes so that I could be a banker or business executive.

The day before the filming I packed all the required items, filled my gas tank with gas and drove to Chicago to have dinner with my daughter and her friends. Her friend’s parents allowed me to stay overnight at their home in Highland Park, some thirty miles north of downtown. I was to report to work at 5:30 am.

On August 8th I put on my brown three-piece suit, beige socks and brown shoes and left my Highland Park friends’ home. It was a typical hot summer day. The weather forecast on the radio predicted a high of 98 degrees by noon. The early morning traffic was light. The 45-minute drive to McCormick West was shorter than the four hours if I had begun from Holland, Michigan. I had plenty of time to reach McCormick West. The moment I stepped out of my air-conditioned car I could feel the warm muggy air suffocating my lungs. Within an hour, about thirty Hollywood hopefuls were gathered in one large room. In the parking garage was a food caterer cooking breakfast for us. These

kitchen workers were all sweating from the heat in the early morning.

My chances of being rich and famous were not in my favor. There was a very attractive tall woman in her thirties. This Mongolian woman looked a little like Tia Carrere. She probably would have the best odds of getting selected. There were three other Asian men in brown or green suits. All were fifteen to twenty years younger than I. My chances of getting picked diminished further. We all ate the caterer's food and by 11 AM I got acquainted with about a dozen of these circus characters. Some could speak English, some could hardly speak any English. The Mongolian woman told me this was her third attempt to get discovered.

Around noon the assistant director ordered the men with long hair to visit the onsite barber to trim their hair. Since I was follically challenged, I was excluded. The director told us to board the bus. A large bus was waiting in the parking garage. As we were lining up to board the bus, we heard someone yelling from the upper deck of the garage. We turned to see the assistant director yelling, "You, the man in the yellow suit." Four of us in yellow suits raised our hands. The director came closer and pointed his finger at me and said, "You, go with the makeup artist to change. Instead of playing company executives, you will be a gardener." Since I was "surplused" and "reassigned" in my corporate life, I accepted the Hollywood demotion. I could endure the humiliation of a demotion from a CEO to a gardener as long as it could make me famous. I was directed to a camper trailer. Inside the camper were numerous pieces of winter clothing. A lady measured my collar, sleeve, inseam and waist, picked out a heavy, woolen

yellow pants, and a long sleeve flannel shirt. I changed into my new disguise. Then I was given a pair of Fiskar scissors and leather gloves. The crew were searching and finally found a brown belt, a pair of wool socks and a pair of casual shoes. Just before I left the camper to join the rest of the extras, the director threw a baseball cap on my head.

During the short walk to the bus I felt like a rotisserie chicken being roasted on a grill as I began to melt away. Several years earlier I was let go by Pfizer, moving from a respected "Senior Lead Scientist" to a lowly "Adjunct Chemistry Professor " position. I did not mind it because I might be famous. By that time the people on the bus had been waiting for a while. I walked past the gray black diesel exhaust and boarded the bus. It was a welcome relief to step onto a cooled bus. I was comforted by the others when they clapped to welcome me and a few laughed and pointed their fingers at my cap. I removed and examined it. It was from some raunchy nightclub. On the front it has a silhouette of a naked woman. Beneath the image was a statement: TAKE IT ALL OFF. I found an empty seat in the back of the bus.

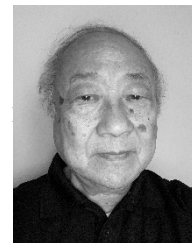
The bus ride to McCormick West took less than ten minutes. The people in front of me complained about the heat when they were stepping off the bus. When I reached the steps to descend from the bus I could feel the oppressive sultry air steaming towards me. Fortunately, the large room on the rooftop of McCormick West was air conditioned. Within minutes of settling down, a film crew member asked for the gardener. I stood up. He helped me gather all my props, took me to the edge of a large stone enclosed raised bed garden. Standing a few feet behind me

was an Asian man in a dark suit. He looked mean and unfriendly. I worried that this gangster might shoot me. The director told me when I hear “action”, I should pretend to clear the fallen leaves of the shrubs. When I hear “cut”, I should stop and put the leaves back under the shrubs. He said, this clip may be repeated up to a dozen times. He left a hoe leaning on the stoney edge of the shrubs and told me not to move it. He then gave me a ten-ounce water bottle. He was correct that this clip was filmed repeatedly for about seven to eight times. In between takes I saw Lau (the criminal banker played by Chin Han) and Lucius Fox (played by Morgan Freeman) sitting opposite each other at a rooftop table with white linen and white China tea set. Every now and then, the crew wiped their foreheads and dusted their faces with talcum. They too were sweating profusely. Meanwhile, I was in my winter clothes in the middle of the August day with the sun mercilessly casting its radiant heat over my entire body. My leather gloves were getting wet, my collar was crowned with a ring of sweat and my head was steaming with perspiration. My woolen socks were dripping with sweat. The casual shoes I was wearing were reservoirs for the overflow. My bottle of water was drained dry within the first few minutes. After the takes, the assistant director took pictures of me with a small digital camera and then told me to go back inside. As I walked towards our staging room I caught a sandy haired man

standing by the door of an adjacent room. Later I realized he was Aaron Eckhart who played Two-Face Harvey Dent.

My gardener’s leather gloves had molded on my limbs like my second skin. Peeling them off my hands was painful. Many of the other extras rushed to the door to ask me what happened. The Mongolian woman said I was lucky that I was selected on my first attempt. All the other scenes were shot by mid-afternoon and we were all transported back to the garage, changed and drove back to our homes. I drove back to Michigan that afternoon. The gas tank was almost empty. I paid \$40 and filled up the tank. Several weeks later I received a check, after federal tax, state tax, social security tax, and Cook County tax were taken out, I netted \$38. I lost two dollars.

There went my short film career. Reality hit me. I gave up the dream of becoming a rich and famous Hollywood celebrity. I accepted the naked truth and returned to my humble adjunct professorship. The Dark Knight was released the following summer. I did not see it in the theater. A few months later Laura gave me the DVD movie for Christmas. I opened the box finally in October 2022. I searched for the part I was in. I found my image about 32 minutes into the film. I was barely visible behind the famous actor. I appeared like a mature, overgrown ladybug on the collar of Morgan Freeman.



The Registrar's Office

I am not a physician but I have worked with people who aspired to be physicians. In the early 1960s was the golden age of Medicine shows when the public was bombarded by TV shows like Ben Casey, Marcus Welby and Dr. Kildare.

When I was a postdoc at Cornell several undergraduates working in my lab were pre-med students. I found them to be very well prepared for their dedication to medical science. Gail, a young woman from White Plains, NY, was an excellent student and a good researcher. Her father was an executive with General Foods and was about to be relocated to a new position in Missouri. She and her boyfriend Mark wanted to apply to NYU medical school. It was a common practice at that time she requested her college transcript to be sent to the medical schools she was applying to. The way the registrar communicated with the students was via an accessible paper file where each student could put an index card with their name, the schools they wanted the transcripts sent to and the dates of the request. The registrar would complete the request and stamp the sent dates on the index card. It was a quicker way for the registrar to communicate with the hundreds of students' requests. Gail was sure she would be accepted because of her impressive Cornell grade point average. She checked the index card and saw her transcripts were sent to the medical schools she chose, including UMKC (University of Missouri at Kansas City). It was a "what if" moment if she did not get into NYU. After the medical

school admissions were closed, she found out she was accepted to UMKC. NYU did not have her transcript. Some unscrupulous Cornell classmate entered a sent date on her index card. Gail thought the registrar sent that in timely, but the registrar never did. Mark, on the other hand, was admitted to NYU. Gail attended medical school in Kansas City for one year and then transferred to NYU the next.

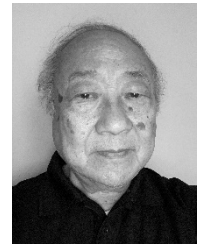
I was an undergraduate chemistry major. The second year of chemistry was to filter out the lesser qualified students in the science disciplines. One of our experiments involved identifying an unknown compound. It was a make-or-break moment for most students. I observed classmates sabotaging their neighbors' unknowns by pouring another substance into their unknown sample bottles. The perpetrators and the victims were all pre-med majors. I realized the American medical schools were so competitive that some rascals would resort to trickeries and deceptions to advance their own agenda.

In my senior year I was assigned to work at the registrar's office at my alma mater. My job was to pull transcripts, copy them, and send them to the graduate schools or medical schools of graduates and current students. I discovered my transcript was not among the master files. I inquired. Paul Fitch, another student worker, told me a story and showed me why.

A year earlier, another student, “Mr. Genius”, was admitted to the medical college at the University of Minnesota. One of his professors became suspicious. He visited the registrar’s office only to find the “C” the student actually earned was changed to a “B”. After extensive reviews, a corrected transcript was recreated. Mr. Genius’ file was updated with two copies of his transcript, one labeled “verified” and the bogus one was stamped “VOID”. Mr. Genius was a student worker in the registrar’s office and had access to his file. After that incident, the registrar pulled and stored all student folders while they were

working at the registrar’s office. I knew Mr. Genius. He was on my college soccer team and he was known as the fasting moving object between the goal posts.

All these incidents happened over fifty years ago. I quickly erased the faces and names of those who did harm to my other classmates. These characters do not deserve a spot in my brain. Mr. Genius, your impact on me is real. You taught me how to identify a scoundrel by your mannerism. Gail and Mark, I hope the two of you are married, have beautiful children and grandchildren.



Themistocles

When I left Union Carbide in 1986 I maintained contacts with several close friends. Themistocles, his wife Rose Marie and their family are the ones we made a special effort to stay in touch with. His background and his focus on his children inspired me to do the same. I grew up in Hong Kong under British colonial rule. Tim and Rose Marie lived under Portuguese and British colonial rulers. They nurtured their children in the most caring and amicable fashion. That was worthy of my attention and imitation.

He is known as Tim to most of those who worked with him in the Union Carbide Technical Center in South Charleston, WV. I met him in June of 1975 when I started my first job. He discovered and invented Larvin insecticide. Six years after his discovery I invented the viable commercial process to make Larvin.

Tim grew up in Goa, a Portuguese colony on the west coast of India. His wife Rose Marie was born in Karachi, Pakistan. Before WWII, Indian and Pakistani were all British subjects living in India. They met in graduate school in Washington D.C. and were married before he took his job at Union Carbide. Rose Marie was a chemistry professor at Morris Harvey College.

In addition to his scientific prowess, Tim is also a wonderful husband, a loving father and a kind person. He and Rose Marie lived about a mile from our West Virginia home. We were at their home for a Christmas party in 1975 and were

introduced to their children. They have four children; two pre-teen daughters and playful toddler twin boys. The parents sent them to their bedrooms when more guests arrived. We were interrupted by Rose Marie when she presented them a second time. The two boys were covered from head to toe in talcum powder. They had discovered dusting the talcum powder on each other could be so much fun. A year later the twins were fascinated to watch the billiard balls disappear when they flushed one down the toilet. Tim described Rose Marie's frantic phone calls, overflow cleanup, plumber's emergency visit, jackhammer noise and the agony when the repair bills came in a month later. He called that his cardiac arrest moment.

When my children were born their daughters frequently babysat our children. After the company consolidated business functions to North Carolina, we both chose Chapel Hill to live. During Sunday services his daughters were frequently the musicians playing their instruments. We carpooled daily for almost five years to work. I remember that fateful December Monday morning when Tim drove up to my driveway in his Datsun to pick me up. The three occupants did not greet me. They were all attentively listening to the broadcast on the radio about a deadly industry accident in Bhopal, India. At that moment I knew my days with Union Carbide would end soon.

A few months after the accident, Mr. Anderson, the Union Carbide CEO, traveled to Bhopal to divert attention that might hinder the team of American visitors who sneaked into the closed Bhopal plant. An American company was incorporated and the team of scientists all resigned from Union Carbide and began working for this fake company. Tim was a leader of that team. Mr. Anderson was getting all the insults tossed at him. He also spoke to the press and defended the reputation of the company. He was temporarily under house arrest by the city government. He posted bail and then jumped bail to return to the states. The distraction kept the focus away from the investigative team. These dozen or so engineers and scientists interviewed the plant workers, collected written records, samples and materials at the accident scene. That work was published by Tim in a book "The Black Box of Bhopal". I bought his book and he autographed it.

Rose Marie and Tim's children were exceptional kids. Their two daughters were accomplished musicians, they both were national finalists in piano, violin or flute performance during their high school years. The two girls were finalists in two different instruments in two different cities in 1984. Tim and Rose Marie each took time to drive them to these distant places and we were asked to take care of their two boys. By then the twins were pre-teens. They were very energetic. One early morning we heard thumping downstairs. The boys were doing sack racing using their sleeping bags. They were creative and clever kids.

In 1986 I took a job with Parke-Davis in Holland, Michigan. My wife and I kept in

touch with several Union Carbide families. Tim and Rose Marie were dear and close to us and we kept in touch. Rose Marie was employed at Duke and she tried to hire me to work there. We returned to Chapel Hill almost annually to visit our old friends and to be updated on how their children were doing. In the last three and half decades their children and our children all graduated from college. One daughter and one son are architects, Marisa, the second daughter is a medical doctor and is now a medical school professor at Duke. She plays flute with the Duke Medical Symphony. The other boy is now a regional president of Catholic Charity Foundation of Southeast Asia.

Tragedies happened to this family. Marisa's husband was killed in a freaky traffic accident in the 1990's when a construction load on the crane shifted and dropped onto his car. Karina was widowed with two young children. Tim and Rose Marie pitched in to help raise their grandchildren. After Tim retired he researched his genealogy in Goa. Most of that work has been posted on the internet. In the summer of 2019, Rose Marie and Tim were walking from their car to the gym when Rose Marie tripped, fell and died from her injury. Tim was devastated. The following year, covid pandemic made it difficult for us to meet. By 2021 the country overcame the fear and I felt confident enough to resume meeting with Tim. Tim is now over 90 years old. He walks with a cane and he looks frail. The inevitable decline due to aging is consuming him. I bring gifts to help him celebrate Christmas with his children. I am thankful to have made friends with Tim and his family. Knowing him is priceless.



Dinner Guests

Adam was appalled by my brashness. “Tricia, I’m afraid you will get your hopes up, only to be disappointed. State Senators don’t respond to dinner invitations from constituents. The odds of getting a positive response are slim. The Senator is not likely to agree to dinner at your home before the forum.”

I shrugged. Who was I to argue? Adam held a Masters in Political Science as well as a PhD in Medical Research. He served as chairperson for our grassroots community organization which was gaining name recognition and credibility state wide.

On this crisp autumn afternoon, we were finalizing plans for the first of three panel discussions. The program included local law enforcement, the District Attorney’s office and an expert on family issues. We wanted to complete the panel with a person who had influence in the Michigan legislature. A state Senator seemed the clear choice.

My mother was a cordial person with a passion for hospitality. Strangers quickly became friends. By example, her

children understood the importance of gracious consideration for others. Considering this backdrop, I believed it possible a relaxing meal and conversation were appropriate incentive for the Senator to agree to serve on the panel.

Imagine Adam’s surprise several days later when I asked, “Guess who is coming to dinner?” Mrs. Senator called for directions to our home. She and the Senator are delighted to join us for dinner prior to the Community Forum. Adam sat for a few moments in stunned silence.

Those years of civic involvement are best summed up by the Christopher Motto: “It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness”. Together, we learned the power of community. There is power in one. One person can make a difference. It takes one to speak. One who will listen. One who will write a letter.

A tapestry titled “community” was begun when the Senator and his wife came to dinner.



If for Geezers

(With apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

If you can't rise from a chair
Without a grunt or two

If you often must admit
That you haven't got a clue

If your friends are looking old
And you've lost more than a few

If your grandkids are in college
And their tuition's due

If you've downsized more than once
But still buying something new

If even a slight chill
Makes appendages turn blue

If a highlight every day is
Savoring your morning brew

If you feel a bit put out when
Someone's in "your" church pew

If your TV, phone, and computer
Cause you to bitch and rue

If every snuffle makes you ask:
Is it Covid or the flu?

If your mighty morning pooping
Makes you smile and say "whew"

If you're grateful every day
To be above where grasses grew

Then you're among your tribe
The wise, the seasoned, the true

And what is more, my dear
You'll be a geezer, too



A Journey Remembered

This is not a long story, but it covers a long period of time, 122 years to be exact. It begins in the year 1900, before World War I and World War II tore through Europe, laying in heaps so many beautiful buildings and historical monuments. I will try to tell as accurately as possible the events which led me to still be in existence today. You will find out more about me later.

I know for sure that July 4, 1900 was a memorable experience for a young man, a teen of nineteen years, excitedly climbing the plank onto the steamer *Indure* in Baltimore, Maryland. It was a time of heavy immigration from Germany to America, but this young man, James E. Simpson, was about to sail the reverse. I am not sure why he decided to make the journey but I hold the proof that it was made.

The ship sailed for Liverpool, England. From there James traveled on to Germany and Austria. Germany was becoming a land of big industry, big agriculture, big banks and big government, the largest economy in Continental Europe and the third largest in the world.

Tourists in the year 1900 were interested in many of the same attractions as tourists today: historical sites, train stations, memorials, cathedrals, castles, theaters, bridges, rivers. Some of the towns visited included Braunsschweig, Münster, Nürnberg, Darmstadt, Frankfurt am Main, Würzburg, Heidelberg, Strassburg, Trier,

Hannover, Coblenz, Bonn, Bielefeld, Düsseldorf, Vienna among others. James had no camera along to record his experiences. The alternative was to purchase postcards of all his interesting visits, 180 postcards to be exact.

In the middle of November, after already traveling for 5 months, James left Vienna, Austria in the middle of November towards Hamburg, Germany and then London, England, arriving by the steamer *Sunitron* in Portland, Maine the latter part of December 1900, just in time for Christmas.

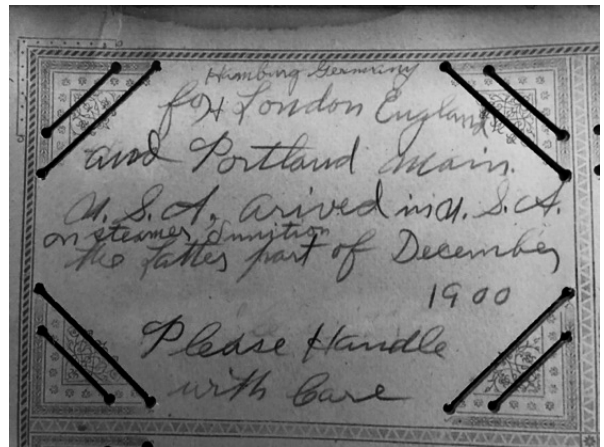
This is the part of the story I come in. I am the red covered album that James E. Simpson created with all those postcards. He carefully tucked four cards on each side of each of my brown pages, ending with the following notation: "Jas. E Simpson, at the age of 19 years, traveled during the year of 1900 about 20,000 miles. This collection of one hundred eighty (180) postal cards from Germany and Austria are in this album as remembrances. Please handle with care."

To continue the remembrances, I remained in the Simpson family until the 1970's, when Mr. Simpson died. His widow, moving to Florida to remarry, approached Al and Judy, her neighbors. The Simpson family members were not interested in preserving me any longer. Since Al had immigrated from Germany it seemed a good last-minute choice. The Hoffmanns accepted me, showing me off occasionally to those interested.

Al's mother, visiting from Germany, mentions that she had just watched a documentary there about using post cards to recreate the buildings after their destruction during the Wars. Looking through the album she comments, "These keep bread on the table."

Recently I was brought out into the open once again for viewing. I'm still proud

despite my faded red color with black bordered design, and gold-labeled title "Album Postkarten". My spine is broken. Pages are crumbling. But I faithfully protect every card within and they remain in perfect condition. Where the future takes me and my historical friends from this point on is still unknown. Got any ideas for us?





Stamp Collecting: A Neglected Past-Time Hobby

How did I occupy my time as a child? I am pondering this question since recently asked by a youngster. There are many possibilities as an answer, but I settle on collecting stamps. Why? They introduced me, a young girl whose most distant outings away from Michigan consisted of two trips to Chicago zoos and one family visit to Illinois, to an unknown, unexplored, outside world.

Just imagine how far the little colorful piece of paper I hold in my hand has traveled. Each tiny stamp tells its own story: a story of kings and queens, differing cultures and lifestyles, colorful peoples, intriguing landmarks and landscapes, and the behind-the-scenes stories of our own United States history and celebrations. To be able to follow the stamps, I learn the foreign name of its country and its currency. The United States stamps reflect our history, our heritage and heroes, our culture and achievements.

Sitting at our dining room table, school girl me, surrounded by stamps, both prepared and unprepared, sorted and unsorted, scrutinizes each, often with a magnifying glass, for proper placement in the stamp album. Every stamp has a story to tell why this particular image was printed on this stamp. A package of special stamp hinges lay nearby for attaching the colorful little attractions to their proper pages. Stamps still attached to envelope scraps are soaked in water or

steamed to separate them safely. Is this a good stamp? How much might this one be worth? Is it cancelled too heavily? Were there many of this particular stamp produced? Is it old or recent? Is there a special theme or interest? Is it already a duplicate to others in my collection? Does it commemorate a special event, a famous person, a country landmark? Look at the design and artwork on this one!

Unconsciously, in the name of fun, I am beginning research into history, geography, language lessons, cultures, currencies and landmarks in our family living room. I am not aware I am learning to categorize, classify and study details, all skills required to put together a collection of stamps.

The thrill of Stamp Collecting has lost much its appeal in today's world. Stamps are now pre-glued, internet and e-mail reduced the amount of ground mail, and stamp collecting does not match the fast pace of a video game or TV programs to keep a child's attention. It is not an instant gratification activity but a life-long pursuit. Some educators are once again encouraging youngsters to take an interest in collecting stamps, not necessarily for their monetary value, but for the learning skills involved: to sort, to organize, to arrange, to categorize, to classify, and to remember details. I wonder who will carry on my stamp album collection?





The Bible and the Unknown Soldier

Another small item falls out of the rickety cardboard box bought at the farm auction. Oops! What's that? Hmmm! It's a small New Testament, decidedly old based on its worn black cover. Picked up reverently, the delicate pages are slowly turned.

Inscribed inside in faded pencil the owner of the book is listed as Abraham Lincoln Ommundsen, of the 51st Company, 5th Regiment, 2nd Battalion U.S.M.C., address 324 Sackett St. Brooklyn, N.Y. in the soldier's own handwriting. A comment off to the side reads "From My Mother," surely making it especially meaningful to the young owner. The Bible came into my possession after the purchaser of the box, my uncle, died. After my initial interest, the book went into a drawer with some other odds and ends, looked at occasionally during house cleaning times, and wondered if some family member would like it returned.

The few attempts made to locate a family member online were futile, futile that is until recently. Typing in the enlisted name brings up a listing for a soldier who was killed on June 6, 1918 in France. Now that's interesting! The name becomes a person with a story. Further research adds a family record with his name online set up by Elin H, who submitted the information. I send an e-mail to Elin describing the little black New Testament book and the information contained within it, asking if it is possible to return it to some family

member for whom it would have special meaning.

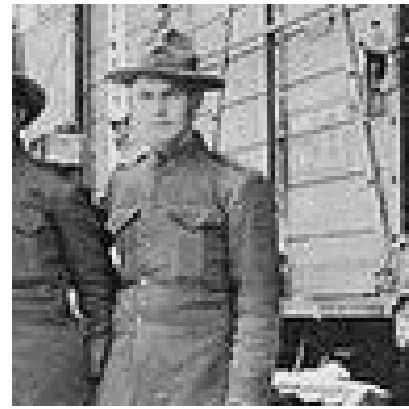
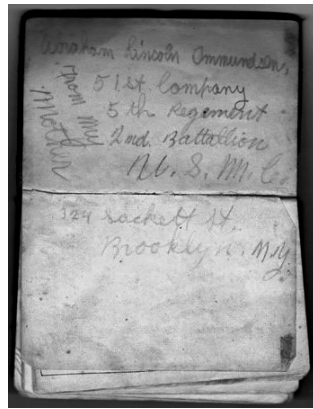
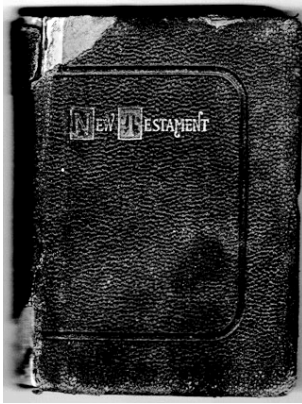
I receive a return answer that she would be happy to accept it, and if she can find any closer relatives she will ask if they want it. The soldier had been her grandmother's cousin, but the grandma, who lived in Norway, had never met him. Abraham's family immigrated from Norway to the U.S. The two families continued to stay in contact with each other. That satisfies me. I am happy to have it in the hands of someone for whom it has meaning. Elin sends me her address. It's a Norwegian address

I find a small envelope that will hold the little New Testament firmly, seal it, address it to Norway, and head for the post office. To send it needs a value to make its way through Customs. The post office clerk recommends \$5.00 since I have no idea what the little book is worth to anybody but a family member, and I am no family member. Postage cost? \$17.56.

After seven days I receive a message from Norway that the Bible has arrived, along with a note "I will send you a little gift in return." A couple weeks later the post official delivers a somewhat wrinkled white envelope with a 160.00 Norwegian Kroner postage. Excitedly breaking open the envelope reveals a book in both Norwegian and English, Adventures for Everyone in Southern Norway, Elin's home area, and a box of Norwegian chocolates. These are now my remembrances of the faded little

Black New Testament presented to Abraham by his loving mother, and the

grief she bore as he gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country.





Heart Murmur

If it is possible to be fervently cool, Bobby Darin was. My eyes glazed over and slipped into watery blurs the other day when his voice filled up my whole jeep. Why did the beginning strains of “Mack The Knife” hit me like a tumble down a mountain side? Picturing Bobby’s verve and dash on Bandstand, then later on Ed Sullivan, then finally in Las Vegas crumpled me. Why? Because he’s dead and so is 1959. The thought of Bobby’s hip fingers snapping, his smooth shark skin suit encasing his American boy good looks took hold of me that moment, gave me a psychic slap and let me know, “Life’s just a oozin’ on out.”

Most times the present truly wins out over me. I’m engaged, planning, living, and making time count. There are other moments when the past and present are racing around in my brain in a dead heat. Then, there are the Bobby Darin times when I just surrender—when the present is trumped by all what went before it. Bobby’s voice makes me remember when life was a cakewalk, even though it didn’t seem like it at the time. His sexy intonations helped me discover my own budding impulses. His tapping foot made me think there was nothing more important than executing just the right dance step. His sway and swagger made a whole tribe of us think image was it. The thing to strive for. Of course it’s ludicrous. As silly as Splish Splash. As dumb as thinking the party could go on. Age and reality settles in, a salty mist, corroding youthful innocence.

Bobby married Sandra Dee, America’s sweetheart. Las Vegas life did the golden

couple in. He died young of a failing heart and she became overcome by her deep troubles. I once saw Sandra Dee in a TV interview where she looked and seemed pretty wacky. Sandra Dee was a remnant of a thing that once glowed, like the times that were. She was that unreachable glistening screen persona we yearned to imitate. Sometimes when we are confronted with images, especially icons of the past, that now appear corny, artificial and just overdone, I wonder how I could have been so electrified by the experiences. But, don’t all encounters, even our most personal ones, get the edges polished down. Life has a way of making us throw everything into a great big accumulative stack. Sometimes all we can do is retrieve a moment of something that happened between the long ago past and the present, then let it make us laugh or cry. Sometimes I take too much out of my pile and spread it out before me like a game of chess. I want to rearrange all the pieces for a win. I don’t want sadness to seep in, reminding me of all the powerful jabs and injuries. I want to think not of love lost, but only gained.

Bobby’s voice made me look for and find myself in the 1959 part of my heap. His singing made the present drift from my grasp and caused me to reach deep into my mental burial grounds with caution. He touched off a hip alert. A finger snapping warning to be cool, and remember that at my age there are more years behind me than ahead. I hope I can live them well. “Look out Ole Mackie is back.”



The Coliseum and Elvis

The Allen County War Memorial Coliseum is a memorial to servicemen who died in World Wars I and II and the Korean conflict. When the Coliseum was built in the early fifties, it became a soldier itself. The imposing structure stood like a lone sentry on the outskirts of Fort Wayne, Indiana. It was muscular and powerful and could host anything that was too big for the more antiquated or puny halls. The Coliseum held all our main events in its strong arms long before there were such buildings in other mid-sized towns across America.

So many of my own experiences involved being in the Coliseum. It was there that I remember seeing The Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus when it had moved from under the big tent to indoors. The Fort Wayne Comets were one of the first small town professional hockey teams thanks to the transformation of the Coliseum's floor to ice before changing back to wood for basketball. The Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons were ours before they became Detroit's. You had to be a Hoosier to understand the mania basketball produced. High school playoffs were held at the Coliseum and schools were let out for all the games. Once during playoffs, I was selected to perform a dance skit with a group of other girls on the Coliseum floor during half time. Spotlights were on in the darkened cavern, drums rolled, fans cheered in 10,000 seats. I have always secretly known how the Dallas Cheerleaders must have felt. Even my high school graduation was held at the Coliseum.

In 1957 when I was fourteen and still in grade school, Elvis came to the Fort Wayne Coliseum. It was before he wore ridiculous costumes, before he bulged, before he dyed his hair and went to Las Vegas and before he became a tarnished, worn-out caricature of himself. He was the new electric Elvis. And he would be close enough to almost touch. He would be in our own backyard, in our own Coliseum, a palace fit for a king.

I can't remember just how we first got wind of Elvis' coming. I do remember getting ready for his anticipated arrival. My two best girlfriends, Rita Habecker, Barbara Gigli and I started saving our lunch money for tickets months in advance. The tickets were seven dollars apiece. We each got a quarter a day for lunch. This was one math problem that I could figure out. We were obsessed with Elvis. As purses, we carried around leather bullet bags that we got from the army surplus store. We engraved his sacred name with ballpoint pens into the tough leather. We played *Don't Be Cruel* and *Hound Dog* on jukeboxes dreaming of when we would lay our eyes on him. We went downstairs into the girl's bathroom at St. Joseph Catholic School and practiced Elvis' crooked, sneering smile in front of the mirror. It was about that time that we discovered that Elvis was born on January 8th. My birthday too. Knees quivered in triplicate over this vital statistic. I became the object of envy by girls in my class.

Urban sprawl has made the Coliseum fight for its dignity in the past several decades. The arena still perseveres doggedly like an old general in a uniform too tight around his middle. Shopping malls, Home Depots, Country Buffets, Speedway Gas Stations, Subway Sandwiches and Krispy Cream Doughnuts strain against the Goliath body. Expressways and highway bypasses spew out autos engaged in dodgem cars that crisscross near the once stately and remote Coliseum grounds. Like the life of Elvis, the area around the Coliseum is a modern-day testimony to excess. It screams, "we can get anything we want, and we can get it now." Today there are stadiums, arenas, domes and halls all over the country being replaced by even larger ones faster than you can say tax.

On the evening of Elvis' performance, Barbara, Rita and I took a city bus from our neighborhood to downtown. We waited in front of Murphy's Dime Store for another bus that would have Coliseum scrolled across its lighted forehead. It would be the bus that ran out Parnell Avenue, just during special events because so few people lived that far from town. We had floor seats only about eight or ten rows from the stage. When Elvis appeared before us, there was no set, no quirky smoke, no odd colored lights, no blasting sound system. It was just him and his little band. He was beautiful. He was Elvis Presley right here in our own Fort Wayne, Indiana Coliseum. It was 1957.



White Whispers

A Trilogy of Stories from 1948 & 1949
Rolling Mill District in Fort Wayne, Indiana

Skin Deep

Our small fingers gripped the wire fence in anticipation. There were about ten of us and when I looked on both sides of me, I saw that all the other arms and outstretched hands were brown and black, not white like my own.

A mingle of lace and pearls floated down the concrete steps of the old Romanian Hall, the center of Pe Lunca, our urban village. The bride crisscrossed the span of grass in the hall yard and walked toward the fence, to which we clung. Her groom walked close to her side and as she drew nearer, we could see that her red lips encircled perfect teeth that were as pure as her gown. She smiled at us with her heart. Her bridesmaid carried a large silver tray with square pieces of wedding cake resting upon celebratory napkins on which golden rings had been embossed. The bride gathered one delicious confectionery at a time and placed slices into our cupped hands. We sat down next to weedy patches between the fence and sidewalk and pressed buttercream into our mouths. We were a tangle of neighborhood kids with dirty bare feet, matted hair and hard worn clothes, sharing common happiness without giving recognition to our unholy separatism.

Faded Blooms

Olympia had given me a left-over corsage of white carnations embellished with ribbons of sky blue. That morning I pinned the droopy flowers onto my tee shirt with a pearl headed hat pin. At six years old, it was pretty exciting to be in possession of such a womanly prize. It decorated me in a way I welcomed. The gate at the front of our yard easily unlatched. I stepped into the glory of neighborhood freedom and adventure, then made my way to the corner, our corner where everything happened.

During the day kids played marbles or banged on caps with rocks, or absent hills, we competed for the title, king of the fire hydrant. Late afternoon when the steel mill whistle released weary and dirty men, the craps games began. The men expertly threw dice beneath the glass window sign that read, "Wines, Brandy, Gins." At night the corner was given over to old women wearing aprons and had scarves tied over their heads old country style. Lucretia Derlason brought out wooden folding chairs from her liquor store, indicating the corner was claimed for socializing. I often joined my grandmother and the women listening to their stories as I sat on the entrance step to the booze establishment.

But this day was different, quiet, no one about. As I crossed the street at

Berghoff and Beadell on my way to Nick Punch's store armed with a nickel grasped in my sweaty palm, a little girl my same size caught up with me. She put her arm around my shoulders and joyfully plunged her nose into the carnations attached to my tee shirt. It was as if we two were magically joined by our attraction to my wilting corsage. We mimicked each other in body weight, knobby knees and skinny limbs. We both wore shorts, better to face the coming heat of the day. Our feet were bare. She was black. Her open face revealed dark eyes that shone and her mouth smiled at me as if saying, "Let's be girlfriends." And, then, the thoughts that had been planted into my young fertile mind by other white figures began to speak. Words that crushed that tiny moment of promise. The venomous words spoken by so many others sprang forward and made me stiffen, telling me that the girl and I were wrong for each other.

The Sanctuary

The Potts couple lived in their cozy shanty house that had a tar paper roof, faded maroon paint and patched screen doors. The home was situated at the back of a deep city lot. The beauty of the Potts property defied the grit and grime of our neighborhood. Mingling of races wasn't customary in Pe Lunca, our urban village, where most residents clung to the breast of Joslyn Steel Mill for their livelihood. But sometimes

when Mrs. Potts was out in her yard wearing gardening gloves and her wide brimmed sun hat, bending and snipping and caring for her glorious flowers, I would call and plead to come in. Her deep bronze image would laugh and encourage my sightseeing of her rose garden. It was not an ordinary garden, but a glorious vista that traveled from the Potts' rickety fence on Greater Street to the back alley where the Potts' flimsy domain sat.

Each variety of rose thrived in its own section. Yellow Floribunda, Pink Damask, Peach Peace Roses and White-Cream-Red Double Delights lived in generous mounds of earth which hugged roots, giving sustenance and vitality to the summer beauties. Colors spread over every part of the Potts property. Dear Mrs. Potts explained the identity of each brilliant ornamental flower as we walked the maze of her paradise together.

Mr. Potts, dressed in work overalls and a beat-up fedora, sat on a wooden bench leaning against his house smoking Bull Durham rolled in white paper. He showed little caring for my admiration and wonder of petals and fragrances.

Uncle Kenny told me that Mr. Potts was mean and scary. He said, "Don't go over there anymore." My rose garden visits became infrequent, then stopped.



My Life with Cars

I do not have a close bonding with cars. I consider them a method or means of getting from one spot to another, but I do not have a love affair with them. And that is fine with me.

I have a history of weird things happening to the cars I have driven through the years, and I also have proof that there are car angels carefully guiding you as you maneuver your way down the road.

When I reached the exciting age of 16, I felt so accomplished and ready to conquer anything life would throw at me. I secured my first part time job because I could arrive there driving our family car and not having my mother or father deliver me.

I can remember with great clarity that the first family car I could legally drive was a 1965 Ford Fairlane, a beautiful bicolored yellow and black car. Oh, was my father proud of this car! I was surprised he trusted me to drive it and maybe he shouldn't have had so much trust.

I can still remember driving down Ivanrest Road in Grandville on my way to my job at a restaurant in Rogers Plaza. I remember not wanting to go to work because it was a warm summer day and a perfect time to hang out with friends and listen to the Top Ten radio program on WLAV. But I had a commitment and I knew I had to fulfill it.

As I was driving down the road I noticed the city utility workers were working while atop a ladder near a pole at the side of the road. It looked to me as though they were attempting to tighten the huge wires which crossed the road and had a large street light globe dangling from it. And I do mean dangling, because at the precise moment I drove under this large street light the globe smashed into the top of my car and crushed through the interior creating a large gash. I remember ducking before it even came through the roof and thinking that large object could possibly hit my car.

Of course, I stopped the car and I really don't remember what happened next. Except I recall my mother hysterically screaming when she saw me and checking me over in every way imaginable. And asking question after question about the incident. Miraculously I was not hurt but just shaken up somewhat. I am sure I had divine intervention on my side at the time of this incident. And my father decided it was time to buy another car because of the extent and cost of the damage.

So, our next car was another Ford, white and blue in color, but I am not sure of the model. This was my father's pride and joy because it was one of the first new cars he bought and he took good care of it, most of the time.

But apparently he should have given a little more thought into keeping this new car in good shape. Because this next accident was his fault.

We had a large amount of snowfall in Grandville that day and it just kept snowing and snowing. Now my dad was not one to keep the snow shoveled off the narrow driveway and this drove my mother crazy. She would often tell him in that certain tone of voice to please go out with his shovel and clear off that snow. And if and when the spirit moved him he might remove some snow, but not often.

That night I was sleeping soundly in my upstairs bedroom and was awakened by a loud crashing and screeching sound in the front of our house. Evidently I was the only one who heard it and just rolled over and went back to sleep. I was abruptly awakened the next morning to the loud voices of my parents having a heated discussion. I quickly bounded downstairs and looked out the window to view what had caused their heated discussion.

My father had gone out the night before, and when he attempted to drive up our unshoveled driveway he got stuck in the snow. Now this would not have caused a problem except for certain things working against him. His car was stuck straddling the sidewalk and he just left it there overnight because he thought he was pulled far enough off the main road. And he was pulled off the road all right, but around 3 am in the morning a sidewalk V plow was clearing off the sidewalks and you can imagine what happened next.

Looking at the passenger back side of his car, one could clearly see the imprint of

a large V neatly showing for all the world to notice. Needless to say, our home was not full of blissful peace for a long time. And my dad started to clear the driveway with a passion. The snowplow driver was not injured thankfully.

This last incident was just plain embarrassing. My parents purchased a car for me to drive to college, my first car just for me and I was ecstatic. My father bought it from a coworker who had connections in the car world and got a really good deal. This should have been a clue that perhaps it was not the best model car to drive.

This small car was shaped like a box, black and yellow, and had a stick shift which created a whole new method of driving for me. But I somehow accomplished this feat of stick shift driving and drove it to Grand Valley for a couple of months. This unique car model was an Opal Kadett, a car model unknown to many. But I was just happy to have my own set of wheels.

One fall morning I was driving to school and extremely nervous because I had a presentation to give first hour. I remember turning onto Baldwin Street and suddenly when I hit the accelerator the car just hummed, became silent, and died right there in the middle of the busy intersection. Two burly, good-looking young men helped a damsel in distress and pushed my box on wheels to the side of the road. They both remarked that they had never seen a car like this before, and I remarked that I probably was driving the only one ever made hoping my humor would cover up my embarrassment.

That car never made it back home and my father proceeded to buy me an old

Ford from a used car lot, which never gave us any problems.

Cars are a necessity and I have sure had an interesting history with them. But I

never have and never will develop a close relationship with them or as my husband likes to do, give them names. Currently he is driving Black Beauty.



Flying

I want to fly again.

I want to dream the old dreams

As a child again

Hearing a Phantasy song without words

Each notes a part of nature's song

While running, jumping to the treetops

A vertigo experience in dream reality

Drifting above the barn, the house, the wheat fields

The cosmic breeze flowing through my hair

I want to fly again.

Experiencing the upside-down world

The east wind gently growling

Now playing the harsh contrasting sounds

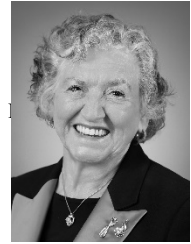
Of drums and harps tuned to the earth

The scent of pine boughs and apple blossoms

moments of stillness in my upside-down world

Now as in my childhood dreams

I want to fly again.



Ida

Ida's in Hospice Care.

Ingrid called to tell me.

I drove to see her.

We spoke of friends and family,

Enjoying the time together.

Ida's in Hospice Care.

I should go see her again.

Hurried days, rushing weeks.

So much to do.

Ida's in Hospice Care.

Ingrid called.

Ida's funeral is tomorrow.

I'll go see her.

I have time.



Quarter line

Here you are, right on time

At the quarter line of your life.

Not what you expected! Not what you planned!

Now you know the truth regarding those best laid plans,
the promises you were told by teachers, professors and
graduation speakers.

But,

Life has surprises and new beginnings.

The quarter line will teach you the hard lessons you will need for the next three
quarters.

But no one tells you where you are. You are at the quarter line.

It is worth crying about,

Screaming about,

Fighting with God about.

Yes, truth will win.

You are only at the quarter line.



Threads of Memory

There it is - I could never throw it away. Vintage, 1955. A white t-shirt with a round emblem imprinted on the front. (It read circularly, "Camp Moran-Grand Valley Council"- plus "Staff".)

My first-year summer assignment from Seminary was to be a Chaplain at this Boy Scout camp. Ah, a new experience! A summer with squirrels and swimming, fish and campfires, bows and birds, knots and hikes, snakes and pinecones, spiders and songs- what a swell change of pace! And environment!

But I've never even been a Boy Scout! I'm a nobody with knots-only in my shoelaces! And what does a Chaplain do out there? What would the work entail? "*You come a week early and become trained in scouting skills.*" Wow! An Eagle in a week!? Just a cub?

The t-shirt, what did it look like after 68 years? A few well-earned stains. A few shreds of threads hanging loose. But it had been my cassock almost every day all summer!

But I have a wife and an almost-a-year-old daughter! Where do they live? "*No problem. We have a 6 x 9 foot rustic cabin for you. You'll all eat with the campers.*"

We arrived a week early. The cabin, definitely rustic- no electricity or water. Room for a bunk bed and crib- and a diaper pail, laundry only 5 miles away. In 5 minutes we were settled and

screened in. Lower bunk slept two. (Guess who!), upper bunk- storage.

Training began in the rope yard. Fumbling fingers encountered thick ropes and a variety of logs. Next: nature studies, tent routines, bow and arrow shooting, cracks at rifle shooting, and all the codes, rules and signals.

Early Sunday afternoon scouts from about 15 troops (minus adult leaders) flooded 6 campsites ready for riotous living, each with a provided adult scout leader. I was to be one of those leaders! - assisted by the best young adult Eagle Scout named Bob Woodall. I was kidding no one! - I assisted. We slept in our luxurious cabin- between trips through the woods for more warmed bottle milk. Had a few night-time tramps to "my" campsite - including a 3 am kid who displayed a spider bite that gave him a lip like an egg.

Actually, the scouts were basically pretty "disciplined" each week. A few sneaky antics were attempted - but quelled or quashed. Special attention was given to a young scout who, with his father, captured snakes for museums and zoos; most exciting was a 9-foot blue racer sunning him/herself; the scout crept Indian style and dove for its tail - only to lose him as he slithered noisily through old leaves.

So I led the troops from the rear as they moved from one skill effort to the next. I coached cautiously so as not to show my

lack of experience - but I improved after seven weeks out there! Bob led the way.

Ah, those campfires each evening: songs and skits and stories, entertained by the camp director and other leaders as 110 scouts sat in a small log amphitheater facing the lake and flicking spiders off themselves. We all got to be leaders, skit characters, and teachers (except me- no sermons). A couple songs sounded racist; I got nowhere noting this; "It's campfire!"

Special events: Oh, a few canoe river trips were a venturesome delight; swimming every day as well; all meals made- such as they were - by an old army cook; everyday experiences along with the scout activities. A modicum of embarrassment arose when a scout showed me the best or correct way to do something. And I didn't know that puff adder on our cabin step wasn't a rattlesnake!

Chaplaincy? The staff expected a short service on Sunday morning, then a prayer at first lunch before scouts arrived (for survival mostly). It was a hodge-podge time with no books or songs books. Improvisation time! Most important: I spent an hour (1-2 pm) with a different group lounging at a campsite fire pit "discussing" various spiritual, moral, social and whatever other issues: some scouts slept as if in a pew.

Low spot: during a Saturday afternoon staff gathering - a happening: a teen-driven speed boat, for the third time, cut through the swimming area ripping up all the anchored ropes. We shouted to no avail; however, we heard the rapid blast of six rifle shots, then saw the hull of the boat cave in and the boat sputtering down into the water. The visiting husband of a camp nurse, a veteran Frogman, who swam into Tokyo Bay in WWII, reappeared quietly a bit later. No one asked any questions, not even the sheriff.

A high/low spot: Bob Woods, the nature guy, captured a huge snapping turtle that just fit in a wash tub; with a lake full of turtles, we didn't tell the "boys". The army cook prepared it for a weekend dinner; it was so tough not one of us could get a bite.

Quite an assignment! I came, I saw, I concurred. My meager book learning about scouting got greatly amplified by experiencing the real Boy Scouts and leaders. I gave what I could. I learned a bundle- mostly about people. And my wife and daughter hadn't left me.

So I held up the shirt before me. I weighed the same as then. Let me try it on! I almost choked myself! The sweat saturated threads held their memories close. I returned the shirt to its honored place on the shelf.



A Vanishing Pill

My morning pill tumbled along in its narrow creek
Toward its diluted destination in my flowing blood stream-
Well, actually-it was one of a nest of other unrelated
Cousins waiting patiently on my breakfast tray
To together nudge and nourish another 24 hours
Of hoped for health and vitality- and even a
Plethora of misappropriated but willed demands.

Usually, I take little notice of this phenomenon
Simply non-consciously trusting it will do its duty
As intended by all those white coated strangers
Who gave it highly considered power and purpose
Dropping down personal channels of innumerable human beings
Of every definable and undefinable shape and intention-
Rarely experiencing the personal-ness of their constant effort.

There may be a hundred fingerprints on each capsule!
And yet a microscope would reveal there are none!
These round, oval, flat, fat, colorful or white, easy to swallow-or-not
Power packs infiltrate our every hour and movement.

I wonder how many souls receive them with gratitude?
I wonder how many over the centuries have prayed for their help?



Music of the Universe

The gift of retirement accompanied our move to Holland where I was introduced to places filled with opportunities. One of these places was Hope Academy of Senior Professionals (HASP); another was Evergreen Commons.

The big, bright yellow sunflower used to advertise a watercolor painting class at Evergreen Commons intrigued me. Participants would create that very sunflower. Since I had never taken a bona-fide painting class (where there was a fee and an instructor), I was excited to embrace the challenge of *Beginning Watercolor*.

Class was great. I loved the camaraderie and the instruction. We ten students were all focused on painting that exact sunflower. We all followed the same painting model, and we all followed the instructor's directions to a tee. But each sunflower only *resembled* the model. No one but me was focused on *replicating* it. That fact made a huge impression on me.

Our instructor insisted on carrying each painting to the front of the room to show it off—and to receive critiques. Cries of “Oh, No! Don't show mine!” resounded around the room. But our instructor was hearing none of that. With the perspective of distance, each painting became a much different piece of art than the ones we had muddled through right under our noses. My goodness. The instructor provided compliments and encouragement—as did the class members. The entire process was

uplifting. Regardless, I thought that MY painting was an utter failure.

Like it or not, we were expected to take our paintings home with us.

I walked as fast as possible to my car in the parking lot (trying to hide my creation under my arm), popped the trunk and placed my still damp, big yellow blob into that dark cavity.

When I got home and sheepishly carried into the house what I had paid good money to create, my husband appeared to be genuinely impressed. And without the instructor's model to use as a guide, even I agreed that my painting looked quite a bit better here at home than it did in the classroom. Eventually, I put even more money into the thing by having it framed as my first-ever instructor-led, registered-for piece of art. Miraculously, that frame somehow validated my attempt.

I focused on watercolor for several years until I was drawn to another offering at Evergreen, *Beginning Acrylics*.

In my very first acrylics class, I learned that painting with acrylics is much less intimidating than painting with watercolors. Watercolors run and move according to the weight of the paper, the amount of water on the brush, the quality of the paint and so on which, I admit, can be fun. But acrylics stay put. Plus, if I don't like what I see on the canvas, I am allowed to paint right over it. Acrylics allow for corrections. This mind-blowing concept gave me the

confidence to be bold with colors as well as with brush strokes. In fact, I became so bold, that I decided to try to paint on my own at home—without instruction and without a model.

Shortly after creating a small art space at home, I came upon the following sentence in our church bulletin one Sunday morning. Under the heading *Music Notes*, our choir director and organist provided the following educational paragraph:

In ancient times, people believed that as the planets revolved in the universe, they made music or harmony. Though this belief has since been disproven, we know that objects in space do in fact emit sounds. Even more amazing, the ocean is also making noises at its very lowest and darkest depths—sounds which scientists are still unable to identify. The whole universe is singing a song of its creation, revealing something to us about He who created it.

I loved those words and could (and still can) easily imagine them to be true. Not only that, but I was excited to try to paint something that would reflect that thought.

A trip to Hobby Lobby provided me with a stack of 8"x10" canvases and a few tubes of acrylic paint. I had no idea where to begin but decided to try for something heavenly—like the northern lights, a canopy of stars, or phases of the moon. I could also imagine the beauty of pristine snow coming into the picture, and maybe a little wind—all with their own music.

As I painted and painted—returning to Hobby Lobby for more and more supplies—I surprised myself with the passion that appeared on my little canvases. Some creations wild and chock full of powerful symphonic sounds; some quiet as a lullaby. I decided to call the whole shebang *Music of the Universe*. My colors can be anything from sap green for the way the northern lights quiver in the heavens, to red, pink, orange, yellow or even aqua for the way a sunset burst on the horizon. Purple trees are okay because many shadows are purple. Various blues are awesome, too. Certain of my paintings are almost monochromatic. A viewer can decide just what music is coaxed into being by the art. I think that's best since we all react differently to what we see.

I also need to explain that when I begin to paint, I always have an idea as to what my finished product should reflect. Ha! That rarely happens. (Which is one of the BIG things I learned in those watercolor classes.) Once paint hits the canvas, and creativity kicks in, I surprise even myself. Because of the classes I was blessed to take those many years ago, I know that each painter can't help but put a little of herself/himself on the canvas. That's a good thing, don't you think?

At the end of this HASP Review, you will see two of my paintings. One a quiet lullaby, and one busy with orchestration. Both include a bit of gold paint—which may not show up in the photographs. Both are framed in gold as gold seems to magnify the music as I paint. May you hear your own music as you view them. I will be over-the-moon happy if you do.



Charm Bracelets

During a visit to a local antique store, I am looking through an aged glass display case trying to find one or two antique pins to use in a craft project when I spot a vintage silver charm bracelet. Over the years, I have come to think of these display cases as burial grounds for all the discarded jewelry of so many women - jewelry reflecting specific times, styles, and personalities. This particular bracelet is laid out lengthwise with the individual charms neatly clustered around the sides, underneath, and on top of the bracelet chain. Rather than place it in a heap buried beneath the other jewelry, someone has lain this bracelet out much like a deceased person would be respectfully arranged in a coffin. My eyes are unable to stray from that bracelet and I am thus thwarted in my effort to complete my own search for pins. I become sad because a representation of someone's life is in that case along with the other forgotten pieces of jewelry. A charm bracelet may span years or be specific to one event such as a wedding or the birth of a child. Charm bracelets are miniature pieces of a person's life; the charms represent a unique person, a unique story.

I am now the proud owner of my mother's charm bracelet, a rather heavy silver piece consisting of a thick silver chain with eighteen charms dangling from the links. It smells like aged silver does, flinty, sooty and musty. With each new charm, I recall going to the jeweler located in the military base PX with mom so that he could solder each charm onto

the chain. Mom was then assured the charm was safe, the memory represented preserved. Other than a single enclosed mustard seed (then to have been considered good luck), my mother's charms are from foreign countries, primarily those in Europe: the Parthenon in Athens, the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, a windmill from the Netherlands, the royal crown of England, the Luxembourg Palace, and a Venetian gondola to name a few. My mother's bracelet is a collection of her time traveling Europe and living in Paris. As a child, I was well aware of the importance of this bracelet as indicated by its resting place in its own square box surrounded by soft, fluffy cotton. This bracelet presents evidence of a woman from the depression raised dirt poor in South Carolina who lived and traveled in Europe.

I have four charm bracelets. My first bracelet began when I was in middle school. It is similar to my mother's but lighter in weight. Frankly, it is prettier than hers. Dad bought most of these charms for me from his trips to Europe and around the world. My dad's love for me is in those charms. As a girl, I was confident that he was thinking about me when he was away from home and those charms were the tangible result of that love. Most of the charms on this bracelet are vivid reminders of my family's trips throughout Europe in the 1950's. The charm with the She Wolf with tiny figures underneath her (Romulus and Remus), a major symbol of Rome,

reminds me of the several summer visits to the capital of Italy as a child where the temperatures were high and traveling in a non-air-conditioned car uncomfortable. I didn't care. I loved the "oldness" of the ruins in Rome, the time of gladiators and legions of soldiers. The windmill charm evokes a vivid memory of the beauty of the Netherlands: the tulips, the immaculate city streets where you could quite literally eat off the sidewalk and the turning of the windmill blades making a soft swish, swish noise as you approached. Of course, the Eiffel Tower dangling from the bracelet represents a city near and dear to me. I have charms from England, Scotland, Africa, Turkey, and Australia where only dad ventured. I am grateful to both of my parents for realizing I was old enough for a charm bracelet and for choosing charms reflecting my childhood spent in Paris and dad's later journeys. My second charm bracelet represents my years as a teen and young woman. A total stranger could easily discern that I loved and was involved in music, graduated from high school or college in 1965, possibly lived near the nation's capital, and that I was definitely a "sweet sixteen."

My two more recent charm bracelets have been given to me over the last twelve years by my daughter-in-law. I

am touched and honored by these bracelets which are links connected one to another rather than a chain bracelet with dangling charms. Through the eyes of my adult children, it is easy to know what is important to me in my gray-haired years by what is represented on these bracelets. I wear these links every time I fly. I feel calmed as I look at each charm. The story each one tells takes me to another place where sights, smells and circumstances take the place of revving engines and wheels leaving the ground. Knowing how evident my life can be seen in all these charms, I wonder why I bother to write my memoir. My life is so clearly evident in all these bracelets! Charms are like a spider web whereby place, sound, smells, and thoughts are woven together within a small miniature form.

I wish I had bought that charm bracelet in the antique store. I would have written a story about what the owner's life might have been and perhaps whether accurately or inaccurately preserved some of her life's history. Indeed, I missed an opportunity to discover the life of the woman who wore it. If by chance, my or my mother's bracelets end up in an antique shop, I hope someone will buy them. I would so appreciate any attempt to tell my story.



Shadow

Shadow

Her shadow falls just beyond reach
Is she young, old, at peace, or searching?
The shadow will not tell me
But the sun is behind her, shining warm on her back
Is that enough for now?



Destination

The weathered chair awaits me.

I have meandered down many paths

But I long to sit, to pause

To just BE

Can I do that?

Just breathe....



Stone Statue

You and I have something in common

We are both baked and hardened by the sun

Are you content to simply watch the world go by?

A strong confidence or a hard cold cynic behind those sunglasses?

What thoughts or deep dark secrets do you harbor?



Sunset

Sinking, sinking, sinking ever so slowly

Harsh words, toxic climate, divided country

The sun sets filling the sky with brilliance

Now gone. Tucking us in for yet another night

Time to rest our weary, disheartened souls



Oh, Mighty Whale!

Do you know how thousands seek to see you?

To witness your “blow”, to see you breach the water?

Do you know you were here before us?

Do you know your exquisite existence depends on us,

A less noble species?





Three Lessons

It is snowing outside – again! Dismay sets in, frustration about driving conditions, and bemoaning winter in Michigan is front and center. I wonder. Might there be another way to respond? Would choosing to center on thoughts and actions within one’s control not result in being in a “better space?” A simple non-refutable conclusion is that there is absolutely nothing to be done about the weather – nothing!! Therefore, why waste emotional energy on negative thinking? It doesn’t mean snowy, cold weather is to be liked, but why devote time to it? Instead, why not grab a cozy throw, make a cup of coffee, read, knit, write or simply take one breath at a time?

Choices made each day explicitly determine and define how we choose to live our lives. A principal at an alternative high school (a school serving teens who could not make it in larger settings) operated with the philosophy not to expel students for a drug infraction, a fight, and/or skipping school but rather expect students to deal with their behavioral choices. When a student was in the principal’s office, he/she knew one simple, succinct question would be asked: “Were you trying to be hurtful or helpful?” It sounds almost too simple, doesn’t it? Students more often than not found it difficult to focus on their own behavior; blaming others, being the victim, giving excuses were much easier rationales. Students had to work hard to focus on their actions and then take responsibility for their choices. At the point of

accepting their negative behavior, students were able to take responsibility and participate in a plan to change their hurtful behavior.

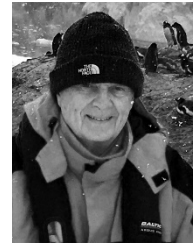
“Are we being helpful or hurtful?” This simple question can help us monitor our own thoughts and behavior. When a cashier makes mistakes or is very slow with the checkout, is the response to that person going to be helpful or hurtful? Is our response to bad weather, a medical diagnosis, a plane delay, a miscommunication with another, or dealing with problems going to be helpful or hurtful to myself and/or others? Choosing “being helpful” involves: respect for oneself and my fellow man/woman, honesty, caring for others and the world in which we live, being more in tune to everyone and everything outside of oneself. When we get too caught up in “ME,” do we not lose our way?

“The Good Doctor” is a very popular and somewhat addictive TV series. There are many life lessons to be learned from the main character, Dr. Murphy who is a doctor with autism. When riding in a helicopter to retrieve a liver for a transplant for a gentleman who was going to die without it, Dr. Murphy was living the moments leading to that end. He was marveling about how a helicopter can fly, he was patient and observant of his surroundings and those in it during minutes and hours that seemed to his doctor colleague to pass painfully slow and unobserved. Dr.

Murphy was involved in those moments until they could retrieve the liver and then return to the hospital. Neither did he get upset when the man for whom they got the liver could not receive the transplant due to his own failure to comply with transplant rules. Another hospital quickly retrieved the liver for one of their patients. The doctor accompanying Dr. Murphy was dismayed and disappointed that the end result of all their effort - their patient - was going home to die. Dr. Murphy had a surprising response: "We saved a life today. It wasn't Joe's but someone else will live. It's been a good day." Most people are like Dr. Murphy's colleague who was tied to the initial outcome. However, when a good outcome

happens which may not have been the original intent, it can be and still is "a good day." Indeed! The lesson to be learned from this storyline is to be open to the possibility of a different end or even a different path along the way. Let go! Be open! Be aware!

Perhaps there is much to learn - even from a TV series! Life is not hard but life situations are unpredictable and difficult. While there may be little control over much of life's situations, the responses to those experiences can be positive or negative. Living a positive life means paying attention to the "now", giving up the need to control events and people, and lastly, being helpful not hurtful to oneself and to others.



Antarctica: Journey to the Bottom of the Earth

Tourism takes a toll on the world's seventh continent. More than 100,000 visitors are expected this year, threatening its fragile eco-system.

PORT LOCKROY, Antarctica—Ernest Shackleton never had it so good. Neither did his fellow Antarctic explorers who just over a century ago raced to be the first to reach the bottom of the world.

While a few like Roald Amundson made it to their destination (he was the first to reach the South Pole in 1911), others like Shackleton, best remembered for his ill-fated *Endurance* expedition in which he lost his ship but saved his crew, did not.

Still others like Robert F. Scott made it there later (he arrived just a month after Amundson) but perished in a storm, destined to spend eternity in the coldest place on earth.

The ancient Greeks dreamed of a continent at the bottom of the world, but it wasn't until 1820 that it was discovered. Antarctica's Columbus turned out to be one Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, a Baltic German officer in the Imperial Russian Navy. A year later an American sealer, John Davis, was the first to set foot on the continent.

A scattering of scientific stations followed, set up first by the British, then by a dozen or so other countries. (Three are operated by the United States—McMurdo on Ross Island, Amundsen-Scott at the South Pole, and Palmer on the Antarctic Peninsula). The first tourist

ship arrived in 1966. Then came another—and then another.

Fast forward to the present. On any given day during the Antarctic summer (December to March), as many as 30 tourist ships may be tracked along the Antarctic Peninsula, which juts northward toward the bottom tip of South America.

What lies between is a 600-mile-wide body of water called the Drake Passage, arguably the roughest patch of ocean in the world. It's where the Atlantic and Pacific collide head-on, throwing up colossal waves that reach as high as 40 feet. Intrepid seafarers call it the Drake Shake.

For Santi Giorgi, our Argentinian guide, crossing the Drake is all in a day's work. "You have to go through hell to get to paradise," he said as we set out on the first leg of our voyage—a 100-mile cruise through the Beagle Channel from Ushuaia, Argentina, the world's southernmost city (pop. 80,000)—to the open sea.

How long paradise will bear up under the human invasion is another matter, not to mention the effect of global warming, a consequence of humans acting from afar.

“If things keep going at the present rate,” declared Neil Horrocks, our ship’s host our first day out on the Drake, “tourism in Antarctica will end in 15 years.”

Since the first cruise ship arrived in 1966, a million human visitors have visited the continent. Another 100,000 are expected this year.

I thought about our own little ship, the *Hebridean Sky*, adding a puny hundred people to the invasion. How much can a hundred people affect a continent anyway—a continent twice the size of Australia, or looked at another way, as big as Mexico and the United States combined?

But every footprint makes a difference. In 1959, 12 countries including the United States created the Antarctic Treaty, declaring the continent “a natural reserve devoted to peace and science.” Since then, 40 more countries have signed on, setting aside any land-grabbing notions they might have entertained.

For the most part the treaty has worked. To this day, nobody owns Antarctica but the penguins. But the explosion in tourism poses a whole new threat to its fragile eco-system: the introduction of seeds and other foreign substances like plants and insects.

To see that first-hand we first had to cross the Drake, which posed a bigger challenge than we’d bargained for. On the second day of our crossing our ship bounced around like a rubber duck, hurling my wife to the floor. It served as a warning to our fellow passengers: hold on to the handrails and don’t wear socks in the bathroom. I wondered how

Shackleton and his fellow mariners made it across without electronic stabilizers to keep their ships afloat, let alone GPSs to keep them on course.

After a few pain shots administered by the ship’s doctor, my wife was ready to resume our joint adventure. Later that morning we passed an iceberg the size of our ship, a sign we were approaching the end of the world. I wondered how many more icebergs we would see—and how much bigger they would get—as we drew closer.

By mid-afternoon we entered the calmer waters of the Gerlache Strait, off the northern coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. From our ship’s deck we got our first close-up look at the seventh continent: gigantic, white-capped mountains off the portside; smaller, white-capped islands off the starboard. On both sides, ice cliffs as high as 500 feet rose out of the water.

In the distance I heard an ominous rumble, like an F-22 fighter racing across the sky. “What’s that noise?” I was about to ask our guide, Santi, when he explained it was the sound a glacier makes when it calves into the sea. He had heard it too many times before.

The next morning we prepared to make landfall—at Cuverville Island in the Palmer Archipelago. After we donned our parkas and waterproof pants for our first zodiac (rubber raft) ride to shore, Claudia Roedel, our Brazilian-born expedition leader, made sure we passed inspection. Every pocket, every sleeve, every Velcro strip on our clothing was microscopically searched for seeds and plants and any insects that might have stolen away on our voyage. The last step

was to swish our company-issued boots through a pan of sanitizing fluid.

“No more than a hundred people are allowed on shore at the same time,” Roedel explained. “That’s part of the Antarctic Treaty.” With our ship’s tiny manifest—it wasn’t exactly the Queen Mary—we were well within the immigration limit.

A chorus of black-tailed gentoo penguins greeted us when we climbed out of our zodiacs and started up a snowbank. As we drew closer, I realized they weren’t singing to us but to each other. “They’re calling for their mates,” explained Ken Wright, the ship’s on-board bird-watcher who doubled as our zodiac driver. “Each call is distinct. Only their partner recognizes it.”

I couldn’t tell the difference. What I heard was a symphony of harmonicas without much harmony, majestic in its own way. This was nature at its purist. As we listened, two or three members waddled up to us close enough to touch.

“Penguins are intensely curious,” Wright said, “and they’re not afraid of people. The reason is they have no land predators, only the leopard seals to be afraid of when they dive for fish.”

I wondered how much longer the penguins wouldn’t be afraid of us. Each time we encroached on their habitat—even after all our seed and insect inspections—weren’t we unwitting accomplices to their eventual extinction? I thought of James Michener’s description of Hawaii, which started forming when a stray bird pooped onto the side of a volcano. Except in that instance it created life, it didn’t destroy it, which is nature’s way.

A few days later, we learned what effect climate change—another human phenomenon—was having on Antarctica’s native population. The place was Fort Lockroy, a once-abandoned British research station resurrected in 2006 as a museum and—believe it or not—a post office.

Manned by four women, including one recently married who claimed to be on a “solo honeymoon,” the station consists of three small buildings perched on a rock off the western shore of Wiencke Island in the Palmer Archipelago.

“We’re here for four months and we love every minute of it,” one of them said as I paid her for a few postcards. I wondered what these Antarctic women—mostly in their twenties—did for nightlife 8,000 miles away from home at a place where there wasn’t any night to begin with, at least in the Antarctic summer.

But what worried me more was the fate of hundreds of not-yet-hatched gentoo chicks that surrounded the rock. While their mothers sat patiently on their eggs, their fathers hunted for stones to build up their nests.

“Their eggs are hatching later than usual this year,” said Wright, our Antarctic birdman. “That’s because of a late snowfall. Unfortunately, most of the chicks won’t survive the winter. They won’t be big enough and they’ll freeze to death.” It was a consequence of climate change I hadn’t thought of.

Back onboard the ship, Claudia Roedel, our expedition leader, spoke more about the consequences of climate change—how it’s changing Antarctica and how

Antarctica, in turn, is changing the world.

“We’ve entered the Anthropocene,” she said, referring to a point-in-time in the earth’s geological history where climate change may have a catastrophic effect on life in all its forms.

“The summer of 2022 was the hottest ever,” she said. “London had its hottest day on record—104 degrees Fahrenheit. Europe had its worst drought in 500 years. In Pakistan, 500,000 people were flooded out of their homes.

“Here the glaciers are calving off,” she said, adding that an iceberg the size of Delaware had broken off Antarctica’s Larsen Ice Shelf in July 2017. “The ocean level...is already up about an inch. Roedel added that if all of the Antarctic ice melted, sea levels around the world would rise 200 feet. First, coastal cities like Venice and Miami would go, then Los Angeles and Amsterdam, then San Francisco and Lower Manhattan.

“Without question, humans are the predominant cause of global warming.”

So what can we do?

“Switch to clean energy. Reduce our dependence on fossil fuel,” she said, citing the use of wind turbines, solar power, LED lights, hybrid cars, nuclear power. “There’s no silver bullet, no single solution, but these are things we can do.”

Up in the bridge, satellite images on the screens showed another storm moving into the Drake Passage. Our captain, Andrey Rudenko, decided to turn his ship around and get ahead of the storm—something Shackleton surely would have done if he’d had the technology to warn him.

As I looked back at the glaciers, I wondered if Antarctica, a continent we didn’t even know existed until 200 years ago, was lashing back for what we were doing to it. Because that was nature’s way.



Ovens School

What, have you been in an Oven? Did you get burned? What a name for a school, raw, bake or burn???. Such were the phrases I occasionally heard in my nine years at Ovens School. A family named Ovens donated a plot of land for a school in Olive Township, located at 104th St and Baldwin Avenue. The school had kindergarten through 8th grade all in one room. Most of the time there were 45 students. When I started school in 1945 there was indoor plumbing, but the woodshed was still there.

I started school at age 4, walking two miles with my older brother Gary. Along the route other DeWitts, Geurinks and Hamstras joined us.

Mrs. Fleming was my first teacher. Stories say that she spoiled me, even rocked me on her lap in her rocking chair. The chair was at school because she sometimes stayed there during stormy winter weather.

In the front of the room there was a recitation bench. I remember reading there with my short legs and high top shoes dangling from the bench. My class had only 4 students, thus we often just stayed in our seats to receive assignments. I was the only girl with three boys as classmates.

My teacher for six years, Minor Meindertsma was a strict disciplinarian. For me, there was no desire to be “naughty”. But some boys

had a harder time being good. Corporal punishment was common.

Our days started with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. On Friday morning we sang songs, mostly Sunday School songs. When I had learned to play piano, I sometimes played for this singing, but I can remember the piano never being with the singing. I think we needed a leader and a more accomplished pianist!!!!

We had wonderful holiday parties, Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine’s. For Halloween we had some art projects and food. I don’t think we soaped the school windows!! At Christmas we put on a wonderful program for the parents. The school was packed, and the excitement was high. We had poems to memorize, songs to sing and a play to perform. For the play there was even a curtain to pull for the different acts, I wanted that part one year, but did not get to do it. I don’t know why that was so important to me. I imagine we received some candy at the end of the evening, but I don’t remember that.

Valentine’s Day was special. I spent hours with my Valentines on the living room floor, all of them displayed, deciding what one was best for each person. I think the pictures were more important than the words. I still remember going up and down the aisles of the schoolroom handing out those cards. I believe fudge and divinity candy

were loved treats. We also had the little message hearts which were special.

We brought our lunches to school in sugar bags, brown bags or pails. My brother Jack has the reputation for keeping the neatest sugar bag, he folded it perfectly and slipped it into his jean pocket and used it for weeks. On some occasions we received government surplus foods. The only one I remember was jellied cranberry sauce, served in little paper cups. It was delicious. The milkman brought milk every day, no cooler to keep that in!! I felt special with that little container of milk.

We also received boxes of books to be used in our little library. I can still see us opening that box and looking at the books. I loved to read, but we couldn't read library books during school hours. One afternoon I sneaked a library book to read in front of my Agriculture book and Mr. Meinderstma caught me and I had to stay after school.

There were families at Ovens School who moved from Grand Rapids. They brought some other types of education to our eager ears. Judy Brooks had older siblings, she told us about parties at their

house on the weekends. One thing I learned was about French kissing, not doing it, but how it was done. The marvel about it was how to breathe and kiss!! We didn't tell our parents about this education.

We had a lot of fun at recess and noon hour. We played Red Light, Green Light, Tom Tom Pullaway and lots of soft ball. Girls played Hopscotch and jacks. In the spring we had a Field Day in Zeeland. There was running track, long and short jump and relays.

Eighth grade graduation required a picture taken in a photography shop: *de Vries*, in Zeeland. My parents went to Grand Rapids to buy a dress for me, the boys wore suits. I don't remember any ceremony, but we each received a certificate. We had a visitation day at Zeeland High School for entering ninth grade, that was somewhat scary. My bus picked me up at 7:10 A.M. for those exciting high school years.

My classmates Bill DeWitt, Wayne Styff, Tom Bush and I parted ways. Our one room country school prepared us for the future, our education in life continues today as we navigate our 80s.



The Perch

It was a dark and stormy night. Well, maybe stormy is an exaggeration. And come to think of it, I doubt I ever saw the sun go down before being marched off to bed, so scratch “dark” too...but it *was* kind of scary.

Being the almost-youngest, (a rank distinguished only by its ability to exempt me from being “the baby”), I was part of the first rotation in the nightly Please-God-if-I-can-just-get-all-these-kids-in-bed-I-can-finally-sit-down ritual. I found this practice discriminatory. After all, it wasn't my fault that there were so many kids that Mom had to start at 7:00pm to stagger bedtimes in order to avoid the chaos of everybody being sent up at once.

Having been cursorily dispatched and executing the well-rehearsed pantomime of actually doing what I had been told, like any red-blooded American brat I crept back down several steps and planted myself on my usual perch. The perch was close enough to the top of the stairs to allow a hasty retreat at the first sign of discovery, yet low enough to intercept any stray snatch

of grown-up conversation. It had been selected to avoid both the creaky stair, and the spot where Joe threw up the chocolate chip cookies. (It has been meticulously scrubbed, of course, but it's never really gone, is it?)

On this night, occupying the perch was not just an act of covert defiance, however. It was a kind of island between the suspicious darkness above and the familiar warmth below. The only safe place on a night when the shadows were a little too restless and the wind voices a little too unfriendly.

It happened every night, of course. Sometimes I heard, sometimes I didn't, but I always knew and that was the important thing. That night I heard the sounds and felt the change, and I knew it was happening now. A cautious peek around the corner confirmed it.

It only takes an extra ounce of courage and inch of stature to face most demons in a child's life. I rose and walked up those last few steps to face mine, armed with the magical mantra that would still any imagined threat: “Dad's home.”



Blood Brothers

In the 1950's, Joe Wolfe and I grew up together on the same street in Jackson, Michigan. My family lived at 1200 Chittock St. and Joe lived across the street at 1111. Joe's parents, Harold and Patralella Wolfe, were very kind, wonderful people and they were always very nice to me. They indulged Joe and I with our make-believe games of cowboys and Indians, Davey Crockett or Daniel Boone and they helped us create costumes and act out what we read in our comic books or watched on whatever TV shows we could get on our black and white TVs. I'm sure Joe's sister Connie would laugh and roll her eyes when we'd pretend to be tough cowboys.

The summer of 1955 was the highlight of our fascination with the wild west, bow & arrows and coonskin hats. Joe was seven that year and I was six. We would spend hours watching Fess Parker as "Davey Crockett, Indian Fighter" before our mothers would make us take off our coonskin hats, remove our moccasins and go to bed. We knew all the words to "The Ballad of Davey Crockett" and would sing it as we walked around the block with our ridiculous homemade bows and arrows that we fashioned out of sticks we found in the alley that ran behind Joe's house. Joe was much bigger than me and he could pull off the Davey Crockett look nicely. His coonskin hat sat squarely on his head as he held his bow in one hand and the arrows in the other, ready to repel any Indian raiders that might invade our neighborhood. As added protection, he had a rubber knife tucked into the waistband of his rolled-

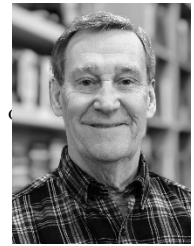
up jeans, just above his left front pocket, so he could quickly reach over with his right and withdraw the blade to spear his attacker. Fess Parker had nothing on Joe.

Another western legend that captivated us on radio and TV was The Lone Ranger. By 1955 this show had been running for six years and was the most exciting thing we'd ever seen. We couldn't wait for the show to begin. When the William Tell Overture opened the show with its pulsating rhythm and The Lone Ranger came riding over that fake dusty hill exclaiming, "Hi-Yo Silver, Away!" with his sidekick Tonto following close behind riding his trusty pinto, Scout, we lost our minds. The back story was that when they were boys, Tonto and the big guy became "blood brothers". Tonto had explained that, in the Native American tradition, to be irreparably bound with another man it was necessary for each of them to cut themselves and mingle their blood so that they would be bound in a blood oath. Tonto took out his knife and drew it across his palm and the young white boy did the same. They pressed their hands together to seal the deal and Tonto called him "kemo sabe". At least I think that happened but I don't know for sure because I had my hands over my face as soon as I saw the blade. This was the most awesome thing we'd ever witnessed.

Joe said we had to do this. To become blood brothers. We had no idea how we were going to accomplish this but we

were committed. We couldn't bear the thought of actually cutting ourselves with a knife and besides the only blade we had was the floppy rubber shiv sticking out of Joe's waistband. So with more imagination than courage we decided to accomplish the deed with a minor puncture wound, minimal bloodletting and involving no major body parts. We broke a small branch off a pricker bush and each took a thorn. We decided that our thumbs would be a good place to draw a little blood and easily hide the wound. Joe went first, sticking himself bravely on the tip of his

thumb and producing a surprising amount of red fluid. He smiled and said, "Stevie, you're next". No turning back now. I squinted my eye shut as I poked the thorn timidly into my thumb, jerked at the short pain and was relieved that only a small bubble of plasma peeked out. Not wanting to waste any time and to get this over with before somebody started to cry, we pushed the tips of our thumbs together and rotated them slightly. We both said, "Kemo Sabe" at the same time and then went inside to see what was for dinner.



Music as Poetry

The magical combination of lyrics and music can often evoke a powerful, visceral response in me. Sometimes it's the musicality itself. The soaring power of a Puccini aria sung by the tenor Luciano Pavarotti, dubbed the "King of the High Cs." Or maybe the tender and reverent rendition of *Ave Maria* by the amazing Andrea Bocelli. Listening to these two tenors, you can see all the way to Italy. Perhaps it's the fluffy, cotton ball softness of the flute, or the lyrical, angelic tones of a harp. Sometimes it's the Star-Spangled Banner at a football game, or listening to *Danny Boy* sung by a crooner in a quiet Irish pub. The beauty and power of the human voice stirs me. Takes me from goose bumps to tears and back again. A rousing ride. But other times it's the lyrics alone. When a lyricist and a composer collaborate to blend story and music into a message, it can be very powerful. In these songs it's the lyrics that speak to me.

The writing, the message: the whole point of the song. The poetry. There are a select few songs whose verse can bring me to tears if I allow it. I can see it coming, it embarrasses me and yet I revel in the sensation because of its rawness. When I let it happen I feel intensely alive.

There are the two types of songs that stir these emotions for me. One because of their musicality, and the other driven by the tender verses that speak to my life. There are three songs in particular that are so musically poignant that I goose-

bump each time I listen, and afterward I feel calm, like after a good cry.

How Do You Keep the Music Playing. Tony Bennett's recording of this beautiful song, written by Marilyn and Alan Bergman, is my favorite arrangement. As Tony beautifully climbs those final tonal steps upward, step-by-step, to that measured, powerful crescendo that takes my breath away, I cheer him on to the vocal peak that I know he will reach. The ending of that song is pure satisfaction. If you ever forget what goose bumps feel like, listen to Tony Bennett's rendition of this song. At the end, your hands will be in the air.

Barbara Streisand's recording of ***Where Do You Start***, also written by Marilyn and Alan Bergman, is a delicate song which describes the ending of a relationship with a slow, tender sadness. Streisand's quiet but potent phrasing and the slow crescendo build takes me up and then back down again to a sad landing. A tune expertly executed with the constraint and control that is signature Streisand.

When October Goes is a song written by Johnny Mercer and recorded by Barry Manilow. This little known but incredibly tender song emits the melancholy we sometimes feel as we lament autumn's relentless slide into winter. A metaphor for loss. With its beautiful, uplifting concert piano accompaniment and Manilow's vocal range, this song makes you feel the grief of loss. And it drops you sadly, softly at

the finish, like a feather floating to the ground, with a final note that goes on forever. “I should be over it now, I know. It doesn’t matter much how old I grow, I hate to see October go.”

The other category of songs that hit my heart like a punch to the sternum are those that resonate with my personal life: my doubts, my regrets, and my longings.

Forever Young recorded by Rod Stewart is an adaptation of an earlier Bob Dylan song. These lyrics speak to my insecurity and doubts about being a parent. “May good fortune be with you. May your guiding light be strong. Build a stairway to heaven with a prince or a vagabond. May you never love in vain and in my heart you will remain, forever young. And when you finally fly away, I’ll be hoping that I served you well. For all the wisdom of a lifetime, no one can ever tell. But whatever road you choose, I’m right behind you win or lose. Forever young.”
Doubts.

Cat’s in the Cradle is written by Harry Chapin and his wife Sandra Chapin. This sad tune reminds me of missed opportunities with my father. Calls not made, spontaneous stop-byes not done,

and conversations never attempted. “The cat’s in the cradle and the silver spoon, Little Boy blue and the man in the moon. When you coming home, son? I don’t know when, but we’ll get together then, Dad. We’re gonna have a good time then.” Regrets.

Learn to Be Still. Lyrics by Don Henley and Stan Lynch. Recorded by The Eagles. This song is about achieving personal happiness by finding inner peace: to quiet your “monkey mind” and not rely on others for your happiness. To embrace the solitude that is silence. “We are like sheep without a shepherd, we don’t know how to be alone. So we wander around this desert and wind up following the wrong gods home. There are so many contradictions in all these messages we send. How do I get out of here? Where do I fit in? Someday, you will, learn to be still.” Longings.

I am grateful for this poetry and power that stirs my emotions and make me feel alive. I can have it whenever I want. Turn off the TV, silence my devices, pull the shades closed, and listen to the musical poetry that enhances my life. The elixir that sustains me as I nestle into myself, comfortable at last.



Over The Hill

In the second half of 2007, the national economy began to falter. Fueled by unbridled optimism on Wall Street, risky decisions in financial markets, and the failure of governmental regulatory agencies to rein in irresponsible behavior by the stewards of the people's money, The Great Recession was beginning to take hold early that year. The massive scope of this beast, and the speed with which it upended the economy was astonishing. Banks failed, pension funds were decimated, personal fortunes were lost, and organizations of all types began to circle the wagons as their revenue streams were drying up and consumers were heading for the exits. By the end of that year the bottom dropped out, like a trap door in a Vaudeville act.

Like most organizations and companies, my employer initiated a downsizing and reorganization, eliminating any nonessential service programs or staff. It was humbling and somewhat embarrassing to be regarded as "nonessential." After twenty-three years of loyal service, my program and my job were eliminated. I was told there was nowhere else in the organization for me to fit in. For the first time since I was fifteen years old, I was now unemployed. A driver with no car. This required that I enter a very tight job market, even as my sixtieth birthday approached. Having only a cursory appreciation for my predicament, I dove into the labor pool, confident that my college degrees and considerable work experience would keep me afloat, like a life jacket in

the deep end. I would easily find another position, I reasoned, and work the remaining few years before retiring comfortably.

I aggressively carpet-bombed Michigan with my resumes, applying for any relevant position I could find, and interviewed relentlessly, believing that it was only a matter of time before I would land a job and settle in somewhere. Months went by. My sixtieth birthday came and went, and still I was no closer to a job offer than the day I began. Openings were scarce and the competition fierce, but I soldiered on. A year drifted by, then eighteen months. Nothing. I'd be sixty-one years old soon and this was getting ridiculous. What was happening? Then I saw it.

A lifetime of white male privilege and decades of career success had become overshadowed, superseded, by one singular consideration: age. I was now being viewed as "old." Age discrimination never occurred to me, but as the rejection letters piled up, like the October leaves accumulating in my yard, it was now painfully obvious.

The euphemisms in these rejection letters were transparent and maddening:

"Another candidate's qualifications more closely match the requirements of this position."

"Your education and work experience, while impressive, does not contain the demonstrated

accomplishments that would qualify you for this challenge.”

“You are over-qualified for this position.”

“We will, however, keep your resume on file in our office should a position that matches your background become available.”

And when I was able to land an interview, it was invariably with someone decades younger. After scanning my resume and doing the math, their body language and facial expressions betrayed a host of assumptions. I could almost hear their inner monologue:

“It’s going to take way too long for this guy to learn our computer system.”

“OK, he’s sixty-one and in a year he’ll be eligible for Social Security, he’ll be gone, and I’ll have to fill this spot all over again.”

“It’ll take us a year to train this guy to our policies and culture, and he’ll work another, what, three years and then he’ll retire? That’s not a good return on our investment.”

“I don’t think this man can maintain the pace of the way we do things around here.”

For the first time in my life I felt like a minority, the “other.” I was viewed with raised eyebrows and suspicion. Thought to be too old to fit in. My decades of experience had now put me over-the-hill, not highly qualified. I had been in an active job search for two years, from age sixty to sixty-two, with no success. This age discrimination was real, and I felt its sting like a slap across the face. After I processed my anger and frustration about this silent discrimination and accepted I had no leverage, no cards to play, a pleasant realization washed over me like a hot shower.

Yes, I was old, but I was also old enough. Old enough to quit the race, get off the track, and head to the locker room: retirement. The irony that my largest liability had morphed into my biggest asset was a sweet one indeed. The locus of control shifted. I had weathered the storm of ageism and survived with my sanity and even a little dignity. After applying for early Social Security benefits, putting in for my pension and recounting the money in our bank account, I retired. I found a fun, part-time job for three years until my wife could join me, and I looked forward to the adventure of a wonderful retirement life. Gradually, what had been the resentment I felt toward those ambassadors of ageism transformed to sympathy. I now pitied them for their ignorance about the eventual day they would be in my place and feel what I felt. For their sake, I hope it’s less painful.



Karma

After the manner of Mary Oliver

Spring rains
bring forth
fat worms
from the earth.

Gourmand robins
gorge on fat worms
from the earth.

Fat cat
feasts on
robin;
oh, what fun!

Wily coyote
seizes fat cat
on the run.

Wily coyote
dies in his sleep.
Vultures picnic
on this heap.

Vultures sickened
fall from sky.
Earth worms find them
When they die.

Spring rains
bring forth
fat worms
from the earth.



Adventures in Training

Peace Corp Sierra Leone FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY



The Cotton Tree, commonly known as a kapok tree, is a historic symbol of Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone.

Fortunately we arrived safely in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Unfortunately we were very tired and hungry.

Fortunately the Peace Corp had food ready for us to eat.

Unfortunately we were unprepared for the hot spicy food.

Fortunately there was lots of water to drink.

Unfortunately we didn't speak the language.

Fortunately there were language trainers to teach us.

Unfortunately I was a slow learner.

Fortunately we had lots of practice.

Unfortunately the culture was foreign to us.

Fortunately we were introduced to many cultural experiences.

Unfortunately it was very hot and humid.

Fortunately there were showers

Unfortunately the plumbing was precarious.

Fortunately it still worked.

Unfortunately the shower head came off and the water squirted everywhere.

Fortunately I could call for help.

Unfortunately I forgot I was not dressed and help was a guy!

Fortunately he stopped the flow of water.

Fortunately I had a towel.

Fortunately I never saw the guy again.



We Love Our Pets

During almost all my life, we had pets living with us. During my childhood, my brother Karl was coming home from staying a week with our aunt and uncle who had a farm and brought a cute dog named Nelly with him.

We all liked Nelly immediately. He got quickly used to house, garden and fields, so he could roam around freely. My teenage brothers would take Nelly with them when they went to nearby woods and fields where Nelly discovered rabbits in their holes and chased them out of there. Once he was stuck in such a rabbit hole, and my brothers had to dig him out.

One day my brother Josef had Nelly with him when he went to the woods to pick blueberries. Suddenly a big dog came running and went after Nelly. Before Josef could chase the big dog away, he bit Nelly in the tummy. Poor Nelly! Josef went with him to the Vet, and we were all happy that Nelly survived!!

Many years later, when we lived as adults in Accra, Ghana, we had a German shepherd named Berry. He was loyal, protective and kind with our two little girls. We all enjoyed having him around. At the end of our 4-year-contract, we did not want to transplant him to another country. So we could not take him with us when we returned to Germany. We felt sad about it, but at the end had a very good solution. Peter's successor who had lived with us for a few weeks to get used to business and life in Africa was happy

when we left Berry with him and his family.

When we lived in Sparta, N.J. there were sometimes different cats in our garden. Every now and then a black and white cat went into our garage and stayed for a while exploring all the things we had stored there. I got used to her and really liked her. Sitting on the upper step of the stairs leading to our kitchen, I tried to convince her to come upstairs by calling "kitty, kitty, kitty". After many trials she became our cat Kitty and she felt very comfortable with all of us.

A year or so later, to our big surprise, she was expecting babies. We made a nice cozy bed for her in the children's bathroom, while the children had to use our bathroom so that Kitty would have her own space, and she seemed to be very comfortable there.

Several days later, I was awake early in the morning and heard Kitty jumping out of Peter's closet. Climbing on our bed while Peter was still sleeping I could see movement in the corner of the upper shelf. I woke Peter up with my "Oh no, oh no" and he called out: "What are you doing up there?" To our big surprise we found four kittens. Once we understood what had happened, we carefully took the kittens, one by one, to their cozy place in the bathroom. Kitty walked back and forth with us and seemed to be okay when all were there together.

Later that day, when the children were still in school and I came home from

shopping, Kitty was with one kitten in her mouth on the way to our bedroom. If I remember right, one kitten was already back on the upper shelf. Later Peter found out that several of his suit jackets had pulled threads on the sleeves where Kitty had held on with her paws. From that day on our bedroom door was kept closed. The kittens were adorable, and we named them Spotty, Milky, Dotsy and the last name I cannot remember. After a certain time, we found a home for all of them. After several years, Kitty moved with us to Holland and died later of old age.

Then we got two beautiful white longhaired cats, flame-tipped Persians, Archibald and Felix. They were very well behaved and I think they probably knew how beautiful they were!

When Peter got the job offer to go to Brussels for a few years, we could not take them with us and gave them to a friend who was very happy to have them.

After we moved back from Brussels to Holland, we were for a while without any pets. Then Nicky got a lovely cat named Kaley, but shortly after Kaley moved in they found out that Billy and Max were allergic to cats! Since Peter and I, after owning so many cats over time, had developed into real cat-loving people, we were pleased to help and let Kaley come to us. This way they could come over whenever they wanted to be with her. After getting used to her new

surroundings, Kaley felt very comfortable in our home. She explored our yard without running away and liked to cuddle with us.

After Peter died, she was the only living thing staying with me, and she became my companion. She was, however, not allowed to roam the house at night because she would wake me up. So she stayed in the kitchen, quite big with a sunroom. When I came down in the morning, she greeted me lovingly. I was quite often surprised how intelligent she was. She seemed to understand how to be a good companion! She was part of my life for quite a long time. Then suddenly she could not walk properly anymore and had a lot of pain. Not really surprising! She was 20 years old and had been with us for 14 years!!

My family and I did not want her to suffer and since she could not get better because of her age, we decided to have her put to sleep. The Vet recommended that too. So one day Nicky and I took her to the Vet, he let her sit on the table and I held her close with my arms around her. She looked trustingly into my eyes when the Vet injected the needle. She fell asleep right away and died very peacefully. I was, of course, crying the whole way home and missed her a lot. But I have the very strong opinion that if pets are in so much pain and cannot get better, we should help them to rest in peace!!



My Mother

She was 41 years old when I was born. I was my parents 5th child and only girl. One of the boys died of Scarlet Fever two years before I was born, so growing up I had three older brothers. My mother was a stay-at-home mom and was always there for us.

I think when I was born she was very happy – as was my father - that I was a girl. And I must say it was great to grow up with three older brothers and having a special place with Mama and Papa.

Mama was definitely the boss in the house, but my parents discussed all family decisions with each other, so we had a very peaceful home. Quite often Mama was singing while working in the house.

Before marriage, Mama used to work as a seamstress. She used this talent later, especially during and right after the war, to make clothes for us all. She also was a talented knitter and made beautiful sweaters and skirts for me.

We had a big garden and Mama quite often picked vegetables and fruits for individual meals. But before we had a refrigerator, canning vegetables was a big part of providing food for the winter months. So Mama canned not only vegetables but also all kinds of fruits like apples, pears, peaches and cherries, all harvested from our own trees. I especially liked the pickles and fruits. It was always a great treat when I could go down to the cellar and get a jar of cherries for dessert.

Mother was a very positive person! Living in a small town where my parents had moved after they were married, made it very easy to have a friendly relationship with other women and to make friends with them. She also kept in close contact with all our relatives who lived 10 and 20 miles away. We would use the train to visit them. Otherwise her mode of transportation was her bicycle for going shopping or visiting friends around town. Sometimes, during good weather, we would even bicycle to our relatives.

Mama and I had a lot of good times together. We would go for long walks by the canal, arm in arm, singing all sorts of songs or having long conversations. We would ride our bikes to visit friends, aunts and uncles. Although my parents always worked hard, there was a lot of socializing with neighbors, friends and relatives, and Mama always loved seeing everybody.

When I was 19, my parents allowed me to move to Duesseldorf. Although I really wanted to go to have this new experience, it was hard to say goodbye to Mama. There was no possibility to talk regularly on the phone like today. But Mama was a great letter writer. Every week she sent me a letter, so every day coming home from the office I could not wait to check my mailbox. Via letter writing we continued to be very close!

A few months after I moved to Duesseldorf, my friend Margret also

came and we got used to life in the big city, and we really loved it. Every few months we traveled home by train. The damper on all these homecomings was Mama's failing health. A few years earlier, she had been diagnosed with stomach cancer, had surgery and had been recovering well. Although she was always very positive during my visits, I realized soon that her health was slowly deteriorating. In hindsight, I know that she tried hard to cover up because she did not want to worry me.

The summer after arriving in Duesseldorf, Margret and I wanted to go

camping with a few friends on a Dutch island. We were very excited about it and had everything planned, came home to pack a few more things and then start the trip with our friends the next day. But when I saw Mama, it hit me that her condition was so much worse and that she was very ill! I could not leave her, so I let my friends go without me.

Looking back, I am so thankful that I did not go, because Mama died a week later with me and other family members at her side. I do not even want to express here the sorrow and the despair I felt. Mama had always been there for me!



Visitors to My Yard

Since I missed my cat Kaley so much, my children recommended another cat, but I could not get used to that idea. No cat would be like Kaley! Another thought was that the next pet would probably outlive me. After all, Kaley had been with me for 14 years and was 20 years old when she died.

Slowly getting used to being alone, I started to pay more attention to the animals visiting my yard. The first ones I see almost every morning, looking out of my window during my exercise, are ducks swimming in the lake. Ducks like to be together in groups. But sometimes there is only one swimming by my house and looking very lonely. It does not take long until three or four ducks encourage that duck to come with them. Quite often there are a male and female together as a couple. It is very interesting to watch them interact with each other.

There are also Canadian Geese swimming by in a straight row, all following the leader. In the early summer there often would be a whole family, the Father at the beginning and the Mother at the end of the straight line and the young ones in the middle. I am always amazed how well animal parents protect their children.

The ducks are also interesting in that respect. The mother always watches her children when they are running around or jumping in the water. She always waits for the last one to be with the group again.

Sometimes the Canadian Geese interrupt their tour and all come into my yard. One day about 20 of them jumped out of the water and after they had been picking food from my lawn were standing for quite some time on my seawall. I found it very interesting to watch them! But when they finally left, I found out that the wall was full of their poop! Yucky!! My granddaughter Emily was so nice to clean it the next day; it was a very hard job!!

After that they still came along in their long straight line and stopped in front of my yard. I did not want to scare them or to chase them away. But I also did not want them to mess up everything again. So I just came out on the deck and was standing there motionless. When the leader saw me, he turned around right away with everybody following him!

Other frequent visitors of my garden are the squirrels, some are black and some are grey. They often chase each other. They are very fast when they run and climb up the trees often to the very top. I love to watch them when they are looking for food in the trees. I call them "my acrobats"! They even hang on the very thin ends of the branches, holding on with their hind legs and using the front legs like arms and hands to grab the berries or the bud-like ends of the twigs and eat them right there. So amazing!

Other visitors are rabbits. They are so cute and soft looking that I am always delighted. Since we had rabbits when I was growing up, I would like to pick them up. But they would, of course, run away, so that is not possible!

Sometimes deer walk through the garden along the water. Recently I was looking out the window and suddenly one deer came from my neighbor's yard, jumped over a very high hedge and ran away. I had never seen a deer jump that high. It took my breath away!!

A few days ago I had very unusual visitors on my deck: 4 wild turkeys! That had never happened before. The amazing thing was that they were standing right at my sliding door, looking into my kitchen. I was standing inside and then also walking around, almost right next to them on the other side of the glass door. But they were just watching me and not afraid at all. They were there for almost one hour.

Maybe they wanted me to have a good ending to my story about visitors of my garden!!



**I Saw the Beatles
(dramatic pause here)
IN PERSON!!!**

I'm sure many of you remember the game we often had to play at work while "team building." A common question was, "Reveal something about yourself that no one here would know." Depending on the age of my co-workers, my answer would always be, "I saw the Beatles, in person" and it never failed to impress.

The year was 1964. I was ten, just barely, and I might not have been as aware of the Beatles as I was, save for the fact that I had an older sister, and she had even older friends. They were all huge fans of the "Fab Four," so of course I became interested as well.

The Beatles U.S. debut was on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964. Like so many Americans, especially young girls, we were all glued to the television that night. Our parents were watching with us, and certainly didn't understand the fuss. We heard the usual tut-tutting over the group's long hair, which was only to be expected. But our Mom and Dad were tolerant, (my mother had loved Frank Sinatra when she was young, after all) and let us buy those precious Beatle 45s when they came out. Remember how the flip side was always a little disappointing, but I digress.

My sister, myself, and two neighbor girls loved to play their music and pretend to be the Beatles. Being the youngest, I was George, so not many solos, but a lot of "deed I dos." To our amazement we

learned that the Beatles were coming to our hometown, Indianapolis, as a stop on their upcoming concert tour. The venue would be the Indiana State Fair, in a space that was also used as an ice rink for part of the year.

All our parents, probably in cahoots, decided we could go, accompanied by them of course. Our parents drew the line at those ridiculously expensive seats near the front. Five dollars each—outrageous! The other two girls got those precious seats near the front, and we were relegated to the seats further back which were three dollars each. We were required to pay for half of them ourselves. The going rate was 35 cents an hour for extra work above and beyond our chores, so it did take some effort on our part. But looking back, it was probably hard to find enough for my nine- and ten-year old self to do!

When the big day came, September 3, 1964, we were ushered into the venue. It had old, rickety wooden chairs set up. Unlike the extravaganzas of today's concerts, this concert consisted of a stage, sound equipment, simple lighting, and the musicians and their instruments. The air was electric, and there were Red Cross workers everywhere. Most of the young people in attendance were female, with lots of parental units as well. We were at the early show, around 6 p.m. and apparently there were over 12,413 in attendance. Many girls starting standing on their chairs,

screaming, although nothing had started yet. This was not behavior befitting a young lady according to my mother, so we sat.

I couldn't tell you what group opened the concert, but I can tell you no one cared. They sang a few songs and quickly exited the stage. A few stagehands then brought out "their" guitars. We knew whose guitars belonged to whom by sight and now it was pandemonium! Those helpful Red Cross workers were carrying out girls who had fainted (already—so silly I thought, they will miss everything.) Then the Beatles bounded onto the stage. Ringo was last, and apparently almost missed the concert because he was out having fun at the Indy 500 racetrack. Our mother finally relented

and let my sister and me stand on our chairs, so we could at least see something, but absolutely no screaming thank you very much. I still saw very little, and it was nearly impossible to hear much of anything. They did a set of twelve songs (thank you Wikipedia) and I imagine they sang the tunes we all knew so well like "She Loves You," and "I Want to Hold Your Hand." And then it was over, way too soon.

To be perfectly honest, my ten-year-old self didn't really understand it all—the screaming, the fainting, the frenzy. But I would have been heartbroken to have been left out. I had no idea I was witnessing history, nor that I in the future I would always have a great story to tell!!



Old Lady Thoughts

The old lady sitting in the corner
Thinking old lady thoughts
Wasn't thinking old lady thoughts
NO, NOT AT ALL;
The old lady was actually
Entertaining very unladylike thoughts
OF
Long-ago lovers and passions;
GONE, maybe, but not forgotten.
Passions that stir
The embers of old loves and desires,
Recalling the shape and scent- body to body-
The warmth and heat,
Which fans the flames of memory
Which don't die
After a certain number of birthdays
NO, the old lady sitting in the corner
Isn't thinking old lady thoughts at all.
NO, she's actually thinking
Thoughts of deep desire and soaring passion.



Tree Chat

IF the trees talk to each other,

Would a palm talk to a sequoia in the same language?

How about an oak and a birch?

Just wondering...



Tulip Dreams

What do tulips
Dream about
During their winter sleep?

Snug and hushed
Beneath their
Snowy comforter,

Do they dream
Of last Spring's
Days of Glory?

Do they dream
Of tall stems
Bearing elegant blooms
In jewel tones?

OR

Do they dream of
Sunny days and warm breezes

OR

Do they dream of
Exotic far away
Gardens graced
By their ancestors

OR

Do they dream
Of new patterns
And colors yet to be imagined?

As they await a new Spring;

What do tulips dream of?



Haunted by My Dreams

In 2010, HASP member Al Ver Schure began writing a musical for the stage with collaborator and friend Bud Ferguson. It was titled *CARNEY DREAMS*. That show was performed at the Red Barn Theatre in 2012. Al wrote the libretto and lyrics, Bud composed the music. They next wrote *1848*, with the story centering on both the romantic relationship of composer Frederic Chopin with female French novelist George Sand, and an unsuccessful Parisian uprising in July of 1848.

Chopin was sent to Paris from his home in Poland to study music and to escape strife from a Russian occupation. Sometime later, he entered into a nine-year long relationship with Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin Dudevant, who had become a popular novelist who wore men's clothing and used the pen name George Sand.

In *1848*, Ver Schure created the Sand character as a romantic and a revolutionary, who is prominent in the intended uprising. Her lover, Chopin, is apolitical and just wants to write and perform his music. Sand's activism is a focal point in the tension between the two. Chopin, in this musical, is also living in a nostalgic past and continues to pine for a youthful love left behind in Poland. In the show, she is The Girl in White.

While much of the musical is fiction, Sand was, indeed, a firebrand. When one of her earlier lovers enters into a duel on behalf of her honor, she actually picks up the pistol and shoots the other duelist when her champion faints out of fear.

Here are the lyrics from two songs in Act One of *1848*, that attempt to capture Chopin's feelings of loss and desperation as Sand is more and more occupied by political actions and he has less and less ability to compose music.

Haunted by My Dreams — Chopin & The Girl in White

Verse 1 There are times to forget
Chopin And times to remember—
 Times when you want
 The past to walk beside you
 A comfort against the wind
 But now June is November
 And my memories have faded
 Into dreams that haunt me
 again.

Bridge This memory is a burden
Chopin A weight I have to bear

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| | One thing I feel for certain I've a life beyond repair. |
| The Girl in White | Have I become your burden A weight you have to bear? Let darkness be no curtain For a life that we can share. —A life that we can share. |
| Verse 2 Chopin | A girl in a white dress And mist in the valleys— She shimmers in grays Of the slanting moonlight— Makes hope in me begin. But will I ever see her— And touch the insubstantial— The dreams that haunt me again. |
| Refrain Both | Can we show courage To return to our homeland To find a new life Where broken hearts can mend— But can we say our good-byes And hope for a reunion And find our first love once again. |
| Coda Chopin | But my memories are fading Into dreams that haunt me again. To reach the insubstantial— It haunts me again. |

The Girl—The Metaphor—in White — George Sand The Girl in White & The Ensemble

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Verse 1 George Sand | He's living with a symbol, but he's not living at all. It could've been so simple, But that wasn't his call. He's chasing an illusion, A metaphor in white. |
| | <i>(Lights come up on the Girl in White.)</i> |
| Both | She isn't a solution— And now he's just not right. |

(The ENSEMBLE enters to stand up of the women.)

Chorus He's yearning for normality
Both & But destined for insanity.
Ensemble Hung up on that metaphor, Not
 knowing what he's living for.
 Will he move beyond our touch,
 Dissolving in his fears—
 If he keeps on leaving,
 Will he disappear?

Verse 2 He can't accept an answer—
Both It's useless to debate. It's
 numbing like a cancer,
 It's impossible to relate.
 Life has overtaken him
 Like a shadow he can't
 shake. Shattered in a
 freefall— Has life arrived too
 late?

Chorus He's yearning for normality
Both & But destined for insanity.
Ensemble Hung up on that metaphor, Not
 knowing what he's living for.
 Will he move beyond our touch,
 Dissolving in his fears—
 If he keeps on leaving,
 Will he disappear?

Bridge He's caught in that metaphor.
Both He's haunted day and night.
 He can't connect to reality
 And now he's just not right.
 She and I are grieving,
 Sharing real and unreal tears—
 We're walking through a foggy wood
 Of lost and aimless years.

Coda He's yearning for normality,
Ensemble Though it may not be his fate.
 Is he destined for insanity?
 Will life arrive too late?
 Will life arrive too late?
 Will life arrive too late?

(The GIRL IN WHITE exits.)

George He's yearning for normality—
Sand He's destined for insanity.
 He's chasing an illusion, A
 metaphor in white.

Ver Schure and Ferguson are looking for a venue at which to stage *1848*, and are currently working on musical number three, *Songbird*.



Ain't That the Best

When I was a child, I looked very different from my sisters. In fact, I looked very different from everyone in my family. My sister, Jean, had dark, straight hair as did both of my parents. My sister, Sue, had blond, curly hair as a toddler, but then progressed to having dark, straight hair like the rest of our family as she grew older. My cousins, aunts, uncles and other relatives all tended to have dark, straight hair. However, I was born with red hair. Bright red hair.

My mother often told me the story of when I was born. She would laugh warmly and tell me that I was the funniest looking baby she had ever seen. I was born completely bald. Then, she said, when my hair finally started to grow, it came in bright red.

As a young child, I got teased a lot about my red hair and freckles. I was the only redhead at our little country school. The older boys loved to tease me. They were always saying, "Better dead than red on the head" or "Redheads are hotheads." Adults also joked about my red hair. They would ask my parents, "How did you get a redheaded little girl? Do you have a redheaded milkman?" I did not really understand the adult jokes, but I knew they were laughing at me—and my red hair.

Clothing was also a problem. Because I was a redhead, I was not allowed to wear red, pink or orange clothes. My mother said I was not allowed to wear those

colors as they "clashed" with my red hair. However, my sisters were allowed to wear any color they wanted. One summer my mother ordered us matching dresses to wear for special occasions. Except that the dresses did not really match. My sisters' dresses were red and white. Mine was blue and white.

One day we received a wonderful box of "hand-me-downs" from a family friend. The box contained many beautiful red and pink dresses. I pulled out one of the dresses and begged my mother, "Please, please let me wear this dress."

At first she said, "No, that pink dress would not look good with your hair." I continued to beg and plead, so she relented. She said, "Well, you can wear it to school a little, but you cannot wear it to church or anyplace like that." Church attire was considered much more important than school clothes.

One day when I was about 6 years old, my mother's cousin came to visit us. He was a friendly, middle-aged man who lived several hours away. He did not come to visit us often. He had a big smile on his face as he greeted each one of us. When he turned to me, he said, "Now, where did all that red hair come from?" Then he let out a big, hardy laugh and continued talking to my mother.

I was so upset. I ran into the house and looked in the mirror. Tears were streaming down my face. I did not think my hair looked red. Red was the color

of the brightest crayon in my crayon box. My hair did not look like that. I went to get my crayons. I stood in front of the mirror and held my red crayon up next to my hair. My hair was not the color of the red crayon. Why were people always talking about my hair?

Later my mother came in to find me. I was still crying. In between my sobs, I showed her my red crayon and said that my hair was not that color. At first, she tried to explain things to me. She said her cousin had not meant to make me feel bad and that the red of hair was different than red crayons. Her words did not help. I still kept saying that my hair was not red. Eventually, she agreed with me. She gave me a big hug and assured me that my hair was not really red. After that I quit worrying about my hair. Whenever anyone tried to tease me again, I just told them that my hair was not really red.

During later elementary school and middle school, things went very well for me. I made lots of friends, took part in some good activities and played with my sisters. Hair color and freckles did not seem to be an issue any more. Then in high school, I started noticing a wonderful thing. The cute boys all seemed to like my red hair. They never really gave me a direct compliment on it, but they did seem to always notice it. And no one made fun of my freckles anymore either. By high school, being a redhead was a read advantage.

Soon I was off to college and there I discovered another advantage to being a redhead. I was on a big college campus. We were meeting many new people every day. It would have been very easy to just be lost in the crowd; however I noticed that many people seemed to

remember me because of my red hair. Because there were so few redheads on campus, it gave me a way to stand out a little and be noticed. And again, the handsome young men seemed to really like my red hair. So, although people did not often say a real compliment about my hair, they did all seem to like it.

Then came 1968. The year of the hippies. Everybody was growing their hair out long—even the men. I grew my hair out until it was so long it was below my waist. It was so long I could even sit on it! It was fun to have long, red hair.

During my senior year, I was completing a bachelor's degree in Social Work. As part of that program, we were required to get actual work experience through a field work assignment. I was assigned to work at a large state mental hospital. It was a very big facility with many patients residing there. There were many large, tall building looming over the sidewalks. The buildings for the more seriously ill residents were locked facilities. These residents were considered too disturbed to be allowed outside without supervision. Some residents were so disabled that they would live at the facility for many years.

One day I was walking between the buildings at the mental hospital to get to my next work assignment. I heard a funny screeching voice. It sounded like it was saying something about red hair. I stopped and looked around. I did not see anyone. I continued walking. I did not want to be late. The voice came again. It screeched, "Look at all that red hair."

"Oh no," I thought. "I am twenty-two years old, doing a professional job and I

am still getting teased about my red hair.” I heard another noise. I looked up and there on the fourth floor of one of the most secure buildings, I could see a woman’s face. She appeared to be an older woman. Her skin looked wrinkled and worn, her gray hair appeared frazzled and unkept. She was obviously a resident of the hospital. She leaned against the bars that covered the window and looked directly down at me. I heard

her voice again. She called out, “Look at all that red hair. Look at all that long, long red hair.” She paused and then she said “Ain’t that red hair the best?”

And that was how I got a real compliment on my red hair. And that was one of the strangest, most unusual—and maybe one of the best compliments I have ever received.



My Mother's Good Example.

My mother taught me so many good things. She was a wonderful example of how we should live our lives. When I was a young child, we lived on a large fruit farm. During those years, she was always happy to help my father with the farm management. She did all the bookkeeping and wrote out the paychecks for each farm worker every Friday. She and my father always budgeted and reviewed the financial accounts together. She was a good role model of how a woman could be an equal partner. She had a regular schedule for her household chores during the rest of the week. On Mondays she did laundry (with an old wringer washer and by hanging the clothes outdoors on the clothesline). On Tuesdays, she ironed. On Wednesdays, she cleaned the kitchen and bathrooms. On Thursdays, she cleaned the bedrooms. And on Sundays our family all went to church together. During tax season, she and my father worked together for a whole week completing the tax records. It was a huge chore considering all the farm workers they employed during the year. In spite of all the work, my mother always had a positive, grateful attitude. She often said that she really liked being married to a farmer.

As her children grew older, my mother decided to return to her teaching career. She had loved being a teacher before moving to the farm. She went back to school at Western Michigan University and updated her credentials. Soon she had a part-time teaching job. She

insisted on only working parttime at first as having time for her family was her priority. And, of course, she continued to help with the bookkeeping and taxes for the farm. I often thought of what a good example she was. I hoped when I was grown that I could be just like her.

Eventually her children grew older and she went back to teaching full-time. Then the children grew up and left for college and careers. But my mother had no time for the "Empty Nest Syndrome". She returned to college herself, earned two Master's degrees and obtained a new job as a Reading Specialist. She gave workshops at professional conferences and had several articles published in professional journals. She loved helping children who had difficulty learning and always seemed so enthusiastic about her career. She was such a good role model for my sisters and myself. I hoped someday I could be just like her.

Even though she was busy with her career, my mother also continued to help my father with the farm. She continued to keep all the books, write the paychecks and of course, help my father with the taxes. Eventually my father retired and they sold the farm. However, my mother continued to teach school until she was 75 years old. She also took up tennis after my father's death in 1983 and played in the Senior Olympics. She won a medal for being best in her age bracket at age 80. (Unfortunately, there was no one else in her age bracket to play against, but she

still beat the 70 year old she was competing with!) I often thought about what a good life she had created for herself. I hoped I could be enjoying life in the same way during my 70s and 80s.

With my mother being such a wonderful role model, it was very sad when she began to decline. After her eightieth birthday, she began to slow down. She stopped many of her volunteer activities complaining that she could no longer remember people's names. By age 85, it was apparent to us that she was getting very forgetful. The doctors diagnosed her with the beginnings of dementia and possible Alzheimer's Disease. I could not believe this was happening to my mother. As she got closer to 90, it was necessary for us to help her manage things in her life. I took the responsibility for helping with her finances. Soon it was March and time to do the taxes. I had never completed my own taxes by myself and I was a little confused by all the forms required. I sat down with her one day and we started

going through all the papers together. As I read the forms, I tried to get her to find the right receipts for us. We needed her pension receipt, her social security receipt, the church and charity contributions, the property taxes paid and many other important forms. I felt overwhelmed. My mother looked at me and scowled. I could tell she was thinking about something very seriously. She looked up at the ceiling and scrunched her face up even more intently.

"Taxes, taxes, taxes" she said. "I've paid taxes all my life." She paused a minute and then turned to me and said in a stern voice. "Kathy, I've paid taxes all my life. I'm not going to bother with that this year. I'm done with that. Just put those papers away and forget about it."

"Hmmm", I thought to myself. "My mother was always such a good role model. I had always tried to follow her example. Maybe I could just forget about taxes this year too?"



Stephen's Adventure

Our family farm was 80 acres. It seemed huge when I was a child. There were orchards of apple, peach, pear and cherry trees. The name of the farm was Royal Ridge Fruit Farm.

When we were younger, our parents took us for long walks around the property. As we grew older, we often ran and played in the orchards by ourselves. There were many trees to climb. The little orchard roads were perfect for riding our bicycles. The ditches were wonderful for hiding in. At the very back of the farm was a dirt road leading through some woods. An old, abandoned house stood next to the dirt road. By the time I was six years old, my parents felt I was old enough to play in the orchards by myself. Our family dog of that time, Blackie, loved to wander over the farm. He often came to play in the orchards with us.

At the very back of the farm was 5 acres of undeveloped woodland. The first part contained a dark, gloomy, muddy swamp, but if you walked carefully around the swamp, you entered a beautiful wooded area. There were all kinds of trees and wildflowers. There were grapevines to swing on. The large beech trees had smooth grey bark which was perfect for carving our names and initials into. When we were younger, my mother would often take us to the woods for walks on sunny afternoons. By the time we were 7 or 8 years old, we were allowed to play there by ourselves. However our parents sternly warned us to stay away from the swamp.

One summer day when I was about 11 years old our family had a problem. It had started out as a typical Sunday afternoon. We had gone to Sunday School and church and then came home for a good family dinner. After dinner my parents decided to take a nap as they often did on Sunday afternoons. As usual, they asked my older sister, Jean, and me to watch my younger brother, Stephen. He was only 3 and not old enough to be left unattended. Jean and I agreed. Then I went back to my room to finish reading my book. After her nap, my mother came to us with her nice smile and asked how we all were. Then she asked where Stephen was. I said that I did not know as Jean had been watching him. Jean said, "No, Kathy, he was supposed to be with you". We looked at each other and then looked around the room. Stephen was not anywhere in sight. We looked all over the house. We looked all over the yard. My mother woke my father up and then ran off to the barn to see if Stephen was there. There was lots of old equipment and many dangerous things in the barn. But Stephen was not there. We called and called, but there was no answer. I thought Stephen might be playing in the back yard with Blackie, but neither dog nor Stephen could be found. My parents were getting frantic. They decided to call our neighbors and ask for their help. Soon these men joined us in our search but still no sign of Stephen. There was some talk of whether the police should be called.

My parents decided we needed to search all of the distant areas of the farm. We were divided up so that we each had our own area to search. My mother would stay at the house and wait for us to return with any news. My mother said she wanted me to go out to the woods. She was so afraid that Stephen might have wandered that far and fallen into the swamp. She told me to run out to the woods as fast as I could and keep calling his name. I was to go alone, by myself, and there was no talk of what I should do if Stephen had fallen into the mushy, wet ground. I ran to the swamp as fast as I could. I kept calling, "Stephen, Stephen, Stephen", but got no reply. When I finally got to the swamp, I called and called again. Then I listened quietly, but all I could hear was the chirping of crickets and the rustle of leaves. I ran around the edge of the swamp and looked through the bushes. There was no sign of my brother. I did not know what to do, so I finally decided to return to the farm house. I walked slowly back. I was so sad to report that I had not found Stephen.

When I arrived, I saw a group of adults standing together. My mother was in the middle, laughing and crying all at once. One of the men had found my brother. Stephen had been found sound asleep on the porch of the old abandoned house at the back of our property. He must have walked more than two miles over the rough orchard land to get there. And sitting there next to him on the porch was our dog, Blackie. Slowly we pieced together what must have happened. While Jean and I had been preoccupied, Stephen had been playing with Blackie. Blackie decided to go into the orchard and Steve decided to follow him. They must have walked all the way past the cherry orchards and the apple

trees to the very back of the farm. When Blackie and Steve arrived at the abandoned house, Stephen was so tired that he laid down on the porch and fell sound asleep. Blackie was not tired at all, but he faithfully sat by Stephen to watch over and protect him. Blackie was still there waiting calmly when our neighbor found them.

After that frightening day, we all kept a much closer watch on each other. My parents no longer took as many afternoon naps. Jean and I were much more careful when we were supposed to be watching the younger children. My mother became very firm with Stephen and tried to make sure he understood that he was never to leave the yard again. However, there was a problem with this. Stephen loved to play with Blackie and Blackie, being a dog, still wanted to wander the orchards. Whenever Blackie left the yard, Stephen started to follow him. My mother repeatedly scolded him and told him he had to stay in the yard. However, this was not successful. Stephen still tried to wander off with the dog. My mother became so frustrated that she finally spanked Stephen. Even that did not work. Stephen still wanted to be with Blackie. One day in her exasperation, my mother tried something different. After scolding Stephen, she reached over and gave Blackie a big, firm spanking. She told the dog that he was never leave the yard again. That solved the problem. Stephen was very upset that Blackie had been spanked. He was very worried that Blackie would get in trouble again. Whenever the poor dog started to wander beyond the yard, Stephen would chase after him and say "No, no, no." Then he would reach over and give Blackie a big smack right on his black, furry bottom.

Stephen never got lost after that. He understood it was important to stay in

the yard. And unfortunately for Blackie, Stephen made sure that the dog never left the yard either



When the Phone Rings

The phone shrieked in my ear. I shot out of bed – 6:14am.

Flip open the phone, read the instructions, hurry to the bathroom. Uniform hanging ready and briefcase already in the car. Call Central Dispatch, call my partner. Out the door - 6:24am.

I am an advocate with the all volunteer Victim Services Unit of the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office.

We train for various situations: We learn what to say, what not to say, how to notice and honor cultural norms, how to listen for what is not being said. Is that young woman off by herself because she needs quiet space, or is she screaming inside? Are too many family members stressing dad with questions?

“What is it exactly that you do?” We are the Victim Services Unit. The deputies call us to support the family in those first horrible hours of an unexpected death.

“Oh no. I could never do that. I would be too _____.”

My answer: Yes you can. You need a compassionate heart and an ability to be strong for others. You receive lots of training. The family needs you to be the person who can answer the questions they don't know to ask (you don't want your nurse to sob at your bedside in the

hospital. You need him to calmly change your oxygen and tell you what's next). We assist the Sheriff's Department, to tell you what's next.

Every advocate receives 25+ hours of training from state and local instructors, and monthly continuing education. Newbie advocates shadow an experienced team and are okayed by the program director before being partnered and sent out on their own.

I have been an advocate for over ten years. There is so much satisfaction and I know I have made a difference. I was there to listen when the wife talked about her husband of 60 years. My partner and I were there when the Sheriff's Office deputy explained to a mother her son didn't survive a car accident. We were there when a brother asked, “What do I do now?” We were there to remind, “Did you eat breakfast today?” “Do you need to take medications?”

My partner and I were there, with mom and family, waiting, on the beach, in the rain, watching as the human chain slowly moved through the pounding waves, searching, searching. And we were there when the deputies, and the police, and the paramedics, and the Coast Guard began to run. And mom began screaming because she knew the wait was over.

We are twenty-four strong. We are a family. We support each other; we laugh and hug and sometimes cry together. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

The phone shrieked in my pocket. I pulled it out - 4:31pm. Turn off the stove, put the eggs back in the fridge....

I am an advocate with the all volunteer Victim Services Unit of the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office. Please contact me for more information.



Sterkte*

The fading shores of home
hide in the morning mist
as we set sail out of Rotterdam harbor,
saying farewell to our families
and the friends we love
but will never see again.

Forever gone,
a one-way ticket,
No returns.

Our eyes fill with tears and
hearts are heavy but
we don't look back,
instead turning toward the open sea.
We dream of a place to prosper,
a place to worship freely,
a city for God's chosen.

For forty days we sail,
Catching the wind on a creaking ship,
braving the stormy North Atlantic
with psalms
and prayers for our journey.

Sickness plays no favorites.
We suffer together and weep
as our babies, wrapped in shrouds,
slide silently into the sea.

Oh, people of the Lord!
Pray for safe passage.
Surely we shall survive the shadow of death
and reach our very own
Promised Land.

At last we see the shore ahead!
Joyfully giving thanks,
our spirits rise
as we await the sight of
our new home.

Alas, our New Jerusalem has
neither roads nor buildings--
only untamed wilderness filled
with towering trees.

Armed with axes, space is cleared,
crops are planted amongst the stumps,
but the harvest is
too small.

Nearby, fetid swamps hold
fevers and disease.
We are hungry and sick,
and when the cold of winter comes,
the bitter wind blows the drifting snow
through the cracks
of our cabins.

We dig more graves
to the sound
of the sobs of our orphans,
almost overwhelmed with sorrow and despair.

But we know the spirit
of the Lord is with us.
We cannot give up:
God has a plan.

Through all the trials, we find strength
by clinging to our faith.
Hope is not lost.
Dreams are postponed, but not forgotten.

Gathering together with courage,
we resolve
to make paradise happen
for the next generation.

**Sterkte is the Dutch word for strength.*

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Your HASP Review Team at Work



Dave



Susan



Ralph



Mary Jo



Birgit

Susan

Ed



Sandy



Barbara

Our Artists



Carole Aardsma



Donna Bogle



Gary Bogle



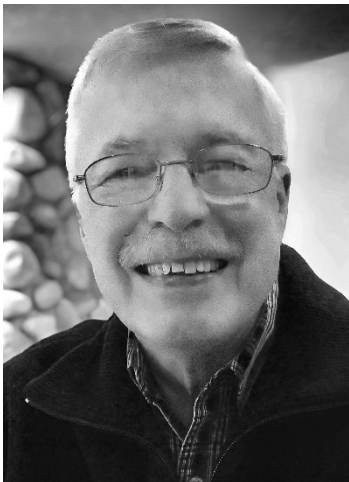
Carol Crawford



Alan Denko



Dean DeRidder



Ralph Fairbanks



Mimi Elzinga-Keller



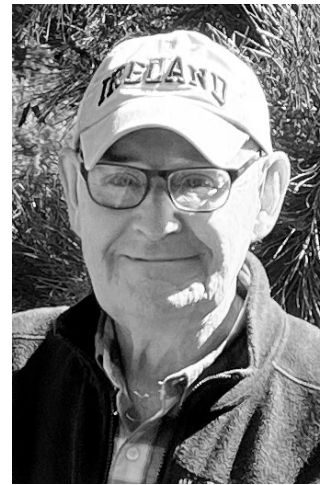
Jane Lindemuth



Nancy Mack



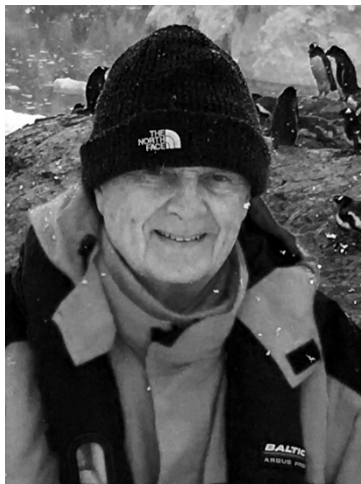
Jane MacPherson



Fred McConkey



Susan Miller



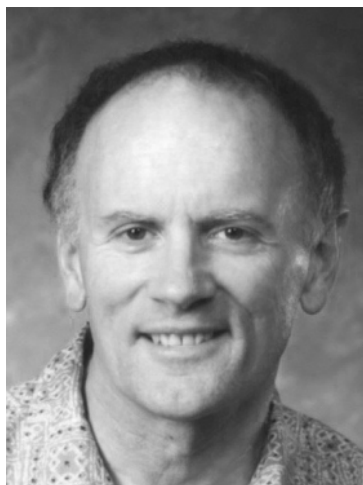
Milton Nieuwsma



Mary Porter



Delaney Prins



Mike Rannow



Ed Schierbeek



Gloria Schurman



Linda Slusar



Dian Taylor



Karen Zoetewey

Original Works of Art

By

Contributing Artists



Karner Blue Butterflies

By Alan Denko

I am an avid butterfly photographer. Here are a couple pictures of the Karner Blue, taken in Manistee National Forest. It is on the endangered species list and lives mostly in west Michigan with limited colonies in Indiana and Wisconsin.



Tiger in My Tank
By Gloria Schurman



Van Gogh's Salute to Ukraine
By Carole Aardsma



Kollen Park Dock
By Donna Bogle



Frenzy
By Mary Porter



Apennine Spring
By Susan Miller



Spring Bouquet in Delft
By Diane Taylor



Writing in Circles
By Gloria Schurman



Dog Tags

By Ralph Fairbanks

These are just some of the 58,034 dog tags in the artwork, “Above and Beyond”, created by artist Rick Steinbock, and veteran artists Ned Broderick, Joe Fornelli and Mike Helbing.. Each dog tag represents the death of a service member in the Vietnam War, and is stamped with their name, casualty date, and military branch. The entire artwork and exhibition is at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago at 400 S. State Street.



Birthday Bouquet
By Carole Aardsma



Sunrise in Angkor Wat, Cambodia
By Karen Zoetewey



Cousins, Best Friends Forever
By Ed Schierbeek



Tamarack

By Delaney Ann Prins

The Tamarack always sheds its needles in the autumn but stands tall and patiently waits for spring to arrive and a new life cycle to begin. We have suffered through some stressful years lately with upheavals and divides in almost every aspect of our lives, but we stand tall as the Tamarack and begin anew with each season of our lives.



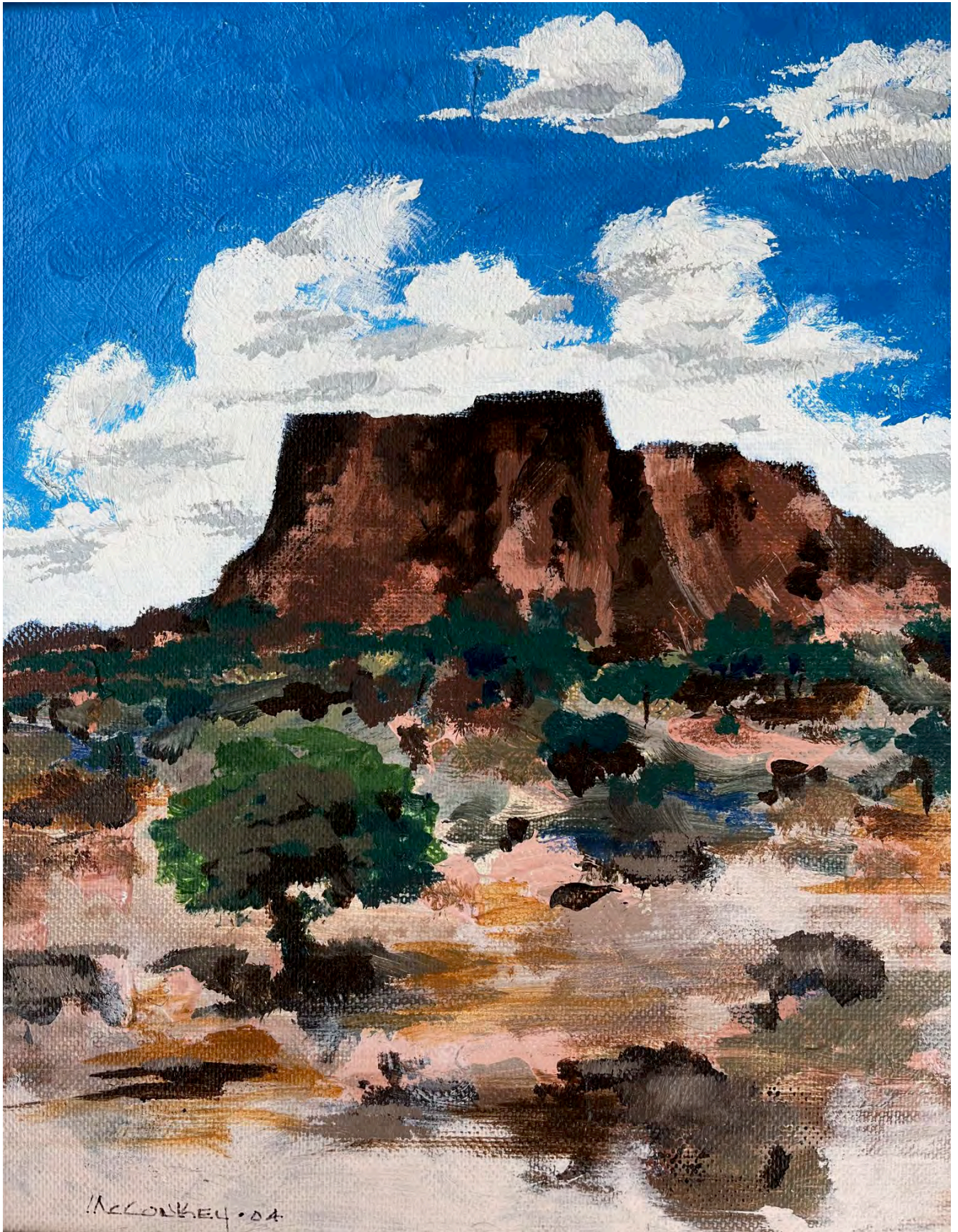
Reflections of Nature
By Gary Bogle



Berber Tea, Morocco
By Susan Miller



Angel Wing
By Dean DeRidder



Sedona Memories
By Fred McConkey



Serenity Lullaby
By Jane Lindemuth



Pink Peonies
By Susan Miller



Magical Blizzard Symphony
By Jane Lindemuth



Venice
By Jane MacPherson



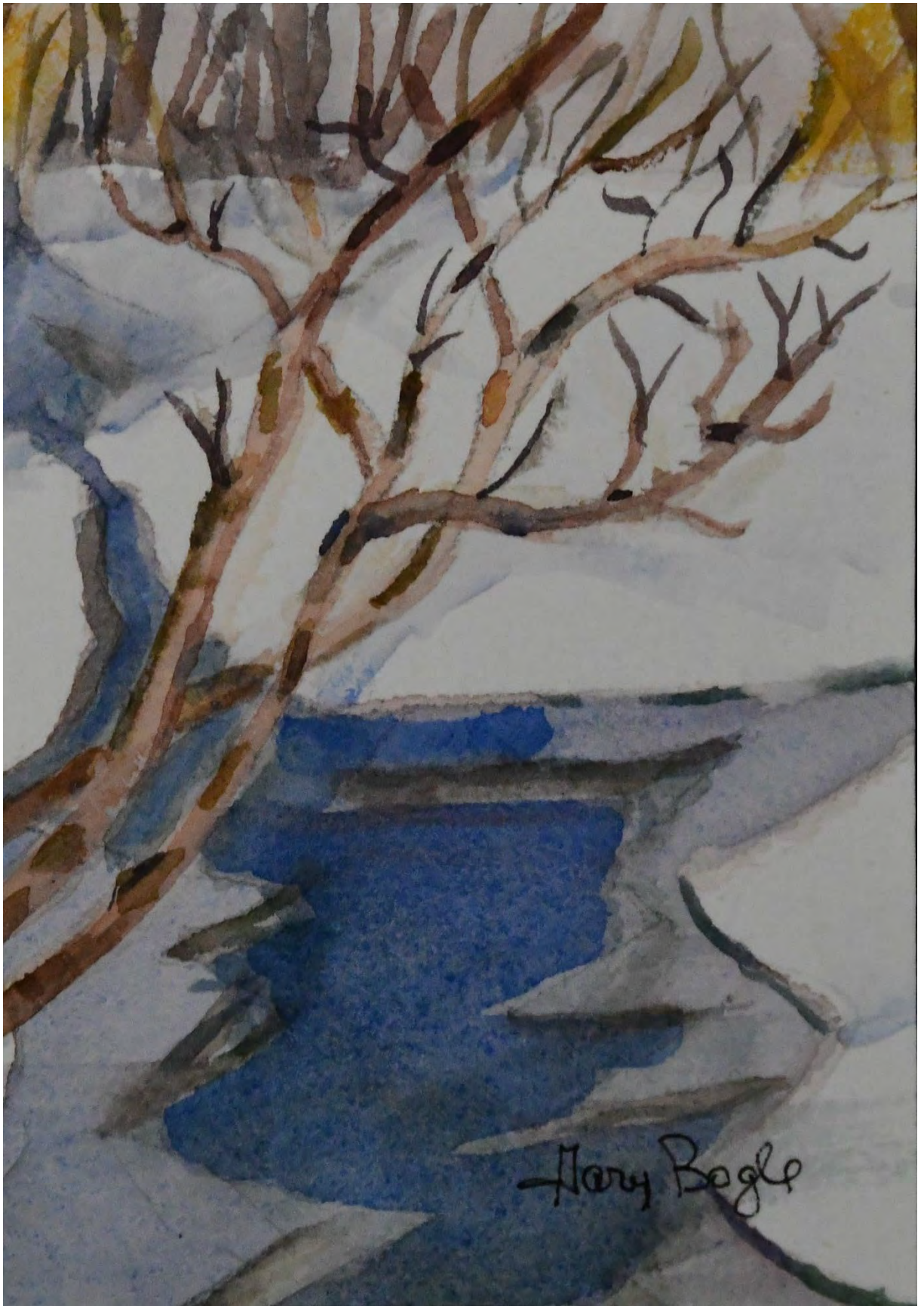
Sintra
By Carol Crawford



Graves Hall
By Donna Bogle



Untitled
By Gloria Schurman



Whispers of Winter
By Gary Bogle



Untitled
By Fred McConkey



The Snail
By Mary Porter



I Spy
By Mimi Elzinga-Keller



Penguins

By Milton Nieuwsma



Lanterns
By Mary Porter



On the Way
By Linda Slusar



Bowers
By Mike Rannow



Untitled
By Nancy Mack



Irises
By Donna Bogle

East view of sunset, Pine Creek Bay



Reflected Sunset
By Ed Schierbeek



Reflections
By Fred McConkey

HASP HOPE ACADEMY
OF SENIOR
PROFESSIONALS
at Hope College 