

CAN A CLOCK PLEASE TWO SISTERS?

HER HOT BREATH WAFTED OVER MY FACE AND THEN SHE SLUNG ME TO THE COLD HARD OAK FLOOR. MY ARMS AND HANDS DANGLED DOWN. I FELT MY INSIDE MOVE AROUND BECAUSE OF THE JOLT HER EYES LOOKED ACCUSINGLY MY WAY AS SHE GAZED OVER AT ME. SHE MADE A GRAB FOR MY FACE BUT HER SISTER KATE APPEARED IN THE DOORWAY AND EXPLAINED, "LET'S GO OR WE WILL BE LATE FOR WORK". KATE GULPED AS SHE LOOKED OVER AT MY SMEARED FACE. I THEN HEARD THEIR STEPS RETREATING DOWN THE HALL. I KNEW I HAD EIGHT HOURS OF REST BEFORE I WOULD BE CONFRONTED AGAIN.

THE NEXT DAY I DID A BETTER JOB OF PLEASING KATE AND GRETCHEN. KATE'S EXPRESSION HELD SUCH A FLICKER OF TENDERNESS THAT IT GAVE A HITCH TO HER NEXT BREATH. SHE HUDDLED DOWN NEXT TO ME AND WHISPERED "I WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU". HER SMILE DIED ON HER LIPS. DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT AS SHE SPOUTED. "I WASN'T THE ONE WHO NEARLY BROKE YOUR ARMS".

MORNING SUNLIGHT SLANTED THROUGH THE BEDROOM WINDOW AND ILLUMINATED DUST MOTES DANCING IN THE AIR. I FLICKERED MY GAZE TO GRETCHEN AND FOUND HER WATCHING MY ARMS WITH A TAUT EXPRESSION AS SHE RAISED UPON HER ELBOWS ON THE OVERSTUFFED BED. I COULD DO A BETTER JOB AT PLEASING THEM IF THEY PAID MORE ATTENTION TO MY CARE. I COUNTED THE EIGHT LONG HOURS THEY WERE AT WORK WHILE SITTING LIKE A STATUE.

I HEARD THEM LUMBER DOWN THE HALLWAY AND ENTERED THE BEDROOM WITH WELCOMING SMILES AS THEIR SHOULDERS BLOCKED OUT THE SUNSHINE STREAMING THROUGH THE WINDOW. THEY SEEMED SO LOGICAL, SO EARNEST. I HEARD THEM COMPLAINING OF THEIR STRESSFUL JOBS I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO EXPECT TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT. THEIR SMILES AND KIND WORDS WERE ONLY MEANT TO GET ME TO STAY QUIET.

GRETCHEN KICKED OFF HER SHOES AND THEY WENT FLYING THROUGH THE AIR AND LANDED NEAR ME. SHE WAGGED HER FINGER IN MY FACE AND YELLED, "DON'T FORGET TO WAKE US UP EARLY IN THE MORNING". KATE SIGHED, DUG INTO HER POCKET AND PULLED OUT A PACK OF ROLAIDS. SHE THUMBED ONE LOOSE WITHOUT LOOKING AND POPPED IT INTO HER MOUTH. KATE PICKED ME UP AND CRADLED ME NEXT TO HER CHEST. SHE SAT ME DOWN REALIZING SHE NEEDED TO GET READY FOR BED.

IN THE EARLY MORNING LIGHT, I FELT A HAND GROPING MY FACE, I FELT HER LET LOOSE OF HER GRIP ON MY FACE AND I VOWED TO DO A BETTER JOB AT AROUSING THEM FROM THEIR SLEEP. GRETCHEN PRESSED HER HAND TO HER THROBBING TEMPLE AND I KNEW I WAS IN FOR IT. I FELT HER HAND CLUTCH MY FACE AGAIN AND SLUNG ME INTO THE CORNER OF THE ROOM AS SHE YELLED, "YOU MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE". I FELT I WAS ONLY DOING MY JOB AS I FELT MY HAND CRACK AS I HIT THE WALL.

GRETCHEN BREATH FOGGED THE AIR, PLANTING ONE BARE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER AS SHE SCREAMED, "WHERE ARE MY SHOES?:". THE STRONG DESIRE TO GET READY FOR WORK DROVE HER. AS SHE WAS EXITING THE DOOR AND GASPED AS SHE TURNED AROUND AND SAW ME LAYING ON THE FLOOR. HER ESPRESSION SHOWED NO PITY

KATE'S DARK HAIR FELL ACROSS HER BROAD FOREHEAD AND STUCK UP AT THE BACK WHEN SHE EVIDENTLY SWIPED AT IT WITH HER HAND. SHE FLIPPED OFF THE OVERHEAD LIGHT THAT HAD ILLUMINATED THE OVERSTUFFED TWIN BEDS COVERED WITH DOUBLE RING QUILTS THAT THEIR GRANDMOTHER HAD HANDSTITCHED TOGETHER WITH LOVE..

KATE POSSESSED A REASSURING SENSE OF STRENGTH AS SHE CAME NEAR AND PICKED ME UP AND SAT ME UPRIGHT WHILE STROKING MY FACE AND REMARKED, "I THOUGHT YOU DID A GOOD JOB THIS MORNING". I COULD SENSE THAT SHE WOULD NEVER THROW ME AWAY LIKE A PIECE OF TRASH AND THAT GAVE ME ENCOURAGEMENT.

I FELT SOMETHING NEW HAD HAPPENED AT THEY ENTERED THE BEDROOM TONIGHT. I HEARD THEM REMARK WHAT WONDERFUL NEW JOBS THEY HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO. I COULD TELL THEY HAD DEVELOPED A POSITIVE. SPIRITUAL MENTAL ATTITUDE. THEY FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT EVERY CHALLENGE THEY FACED IN LIFE COULD MAKE THEM BETTER PEOPLE. I COULD SEE THAT THEY VALUED ME AS THEY LOOKED AT ME AND EXPLAINED, "YOU'RE ADORABLE AND HAVE SUCH A PRETTY FACE AND HANDS". I KNEW I PLEASED THEM AND I WAS OK.

By Edie Bell, Barren County

The Cycle of Life

“Do you know where you’re going?” asked a pleasant man whom I assumed was a greeter at north Atlanta’s Dunwoody Baptist Church.

“Well, I’ve been a member of this church twice before, but I live out of state now. I think I know where to go for Sunday School.”

Rev. Allen Taliaferro introduced himself and offered his card identifying him as Minister of Outreach. I identified myself as a member of the Chandler Family, an active family at Dunwoody Baptist for 45 years. Recognition flashed across Rev. Taliaferro’s face. When he had arrived at Dunwoody Baptist months earlier, his parents, who lived in Virginia, had advised him to seek out the Chandler Family, who had been their good friends at Somerset Hills Baptist Church in Bernardsville, New Jersey in the early 1970’s. They had exchanged Christmas cards for many years, but the cards had stopped in the early 2000’s when Mother was no longer able to send them.

Now, recognition flashed across MY face! “Nancy and Bryan Taliaferro must be your parents,” I exclaimed. “I remember them coming to our house for dinner when they were newlyweds in their twenties and I was about 16.” I could not remember how my parents knew them other than New Jersey.

Allen explained that they had been our neighbors, so my parents had invited their new Baptist neighbors to visit our little Baptist mission church, which Nancy and Bryan had later joined. As newlyweds recently graduated from college, they were from Virginia, about six to eight years older than I was.

Four and one-half months later, I was back in Atlanta during my spring break. My brothers and I were investigating care options for our father (90). Care givers were coming around the clock to his independent living condominium, but we were investigating nursing care, memory care, assisted living, and other options. For eight years since Mother’s death, this had been an active community for Dad with friends and favorite activities several days a week. Dad had been on the Mt. Vernon Towers Senior Adult Community’s Vespers Team securing speakers from Dunwoody Baptist when it was the church’s month to serve. Dad

had also sung in the church choir and senior adult choir until two years earlier. Now, failing health did not allow participation in any of these things.

I had almost forgotten it was Tuesday as I rushed into the dining room of Mt. Vernon Towers to grab some supper near closing time. Other Dunwoody Baptist Church friends were escorting Allen Taliaferro down the hall from the dining room. He was evidently tonight's vespers speaker, as he also served as Minister to Senior Adults.

I managed to choke down an otherwise delicious dinner in 10-15 minutes, then hurried down the hall and slipped into vespers. We had taken Dad on an outing earlier in the afternoon and since he was very tired, his caregiver had taken him back upstairs to bed. After the vespers service ended, I lingered to talk with others. Allen, others gathered around, and I discussed concepts from the message. He shared his Minister of Senior Adults business card.

"You wear several hats, don't you?" I asked. We both laughed, as he agreed. Then, Allen began to tell me an amazing story I had not heard before. At age 62, I thought I had heard ALL of my parents' stories! Not so!

Nancy Taliaferro, at age 24, had been home alone. The pilot light on her stove had gone out. As she tried to re-light it, it flamed up hugely, burning her badly. She came running and screaming to our house. Dad, then about 44 years old, had driven Nancy to the hospital in Morristown, N.J. about eight miles away. Nancy had been about five months pregnant with their first child ... Allen!

The baby my Dad had helped to save half a lifetime earlier was now Senior Adult Minister to my father and he was now the age my father had been then. The Lord had brought them together for the second time, but who was ministering and who was receiving had been reversed. They had traded roles and the cycle of life was coming full circle. The baby my father had helped to save had now become the man who would preach my father's Celebration of Life service at the end of his earthly life!!

By Carol Russ, Oldham County

2019 CULTURAL ARTS AND HERITAGE:

Creative Writing Contest

Entry Title: My Father—a Beekeeper

County: Hardin County

Area: Lincoln Trail

Submitted By: Ruby Ingram

My Father, a Bee-keeper

By Ruby Ingram

"Shortly after Daddy and Momma moved to the farm they purchased in 1930, Daddy had a bad scare and perhaps almost a life-threatening situation. He had gone out on the farm to take a look at everything when a swarm of bees tried to settle on him. He quickly thought to dart under a small tree with low-hanging branches and the bees settled in the tree. He ran to the house and was out of breath when he got there, as he was almost fifty-one years old at the time and not a sprinter. He related to Momma what had happened, and he decided on the spot to become a bee-keeper. He went to town immediately, about a ten minute drive, and got all the gear he needed. This included a hat with screening that fitted all about his head, gloves, and a smoker. The smoker was a concern that he could suck smoke into and blow out on the bees, thus causing them to become somewhat immobile for a few minutes. Then, he was able to scoop them up and put them into the hive he had purchased.. He would build beehives later when he had more time, and as the bees multiplied. It is hard to describe the smoker: it looked like a tiny accordion, about ten inches tall, with one fold after another in the leather, and was shaped like a V, with a hole close to the top that sucked smoke in and blew it out when he squeezed it. He got all the bees into the hive and this started his bee-keeping. From this small beginning, his colony grew to have perhaps ten or more hives. I remember him having my brother George Omer and me to stand outside when the bees were swarming and beat on pans with large spoons, trying to get the bees to settle nearby-this worked, and they didn't land on us. Whew! He was afraid they would leave the area and was advised from experts that noise would prevent this happening. He sold this white clover honey through the years, and he gave away a lot. During World War II when sugar was rationed, Momma sweetened almost all her desserts with honey. Daddy had turned his "almost catastrophe" into a blessing for the family."

SANDRA'S FUDGE

Do we take time to recognize the human angels around us? These are special people who make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. They give in love and expect nothing in return only the satisfaction they gain from serving and caring for those with a need.

I would like to tell you about a special Homemaker – Sandra Givens Lennon. In 2004, Sandra's mother, Glenn Givens, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Over the next four years Mrs. Givens battled cancer. Sandra, as an only child, was the primary care giver to her during this time, taking her to treatments, helping her at home, grocery shopping, and all that is needed through the journey of cancer. At the same time, she helped care for her father who was also in poor health.

Sandra has been involved with Homemakers as a club member, County Officer, Area Officer and has even served as KEHA Treasurer. Through her parent's illnesses, Sandra remained active with the Homemakers in any way she could be productive. We as Homemakers know the importance of family in our lives.

Mrs. Given died from cancer in May, 2008. Following her death, Sandra promoted the need for Logan County to contribute to the Ovarian Cancer campaign through KEHA. From this effort, Logan County has contributed \$1000 through money making projects dedicated to this cause for the last ten years.

Sandra, personally, has marketed, made, and sold fudge every Christmas season since her mother's death. Proceeds from her fudge sales go to the Ovarian Cancer Fund. She starts taking orders for her homemade fudge in November and delivers the fudge the week before Christmas.

In 2018, Sandra made 112 pounds of fudge in the flavors of chocolate, peanut butter, coconut and creamsicle. This project takes many pounds of sugar, butter, evaporated milk, flavorings, chocolate chips, peanut butter and coconut. Many hours are spent purchasing the supplies and then working in her kitchen preparing ingredients, cooking the ingredients, finalizing the fudge process with cutting and packaging the different flavors of fudge she has made. She delivers each package with knowledge that the monies received will go to Ovarian Cancer – which for Sandra is in memory of her mother who lost her battle with cancer.

Sandra's daughter, Kayren Essenpreis, was diagnosed with lung cancer in July, 2018. Sandra again has cared for and supported Kayren through the treatments and ups and downs of her every day battle. Again, the monies gained from her fudge sales have a special meaning in the battle against cancer.

Making and selling fudge is a lot of work but done with love and compassion for those who are fighting for their lives against cancer. Sandra truly gives of herself in this fight. As Sandra says, "we can all make a difference if we just put forth an effort".

What better quote than this by Corrie Ten Boom – "The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration but its donation". Through Sandra's example, we are encouraged to be a blessing in any way we can to those who need a kind word, a helping hand, a ride to medical appointments, a whispered prayer, our presence in their hard times and good. Thank God for human angels like Sandra.

By Emily Hayes, Logan County

It Wasn't a Sinkhole

You know the phrase “scared to death”? On August 31, 2013 at 12:15 pm. I came so close to experiencing what that means. I don't believe my heart has beaten the same since that night.

I was sleeping like a baby when suddenly I was awoken by the loudest sound I have ever heard. It sounded like huge concrete blocks hitting concrete blocks. Then, immediately after that I heard the sound of bricks breaking apart and crumbling into pieces. My first thought was that my house was disintegrating because it was falling into a sinkhole. Recently, on the news I had heard where a man had died when his house in Florida was swallowed by one.

I quickly jumped out of bed and ran to the back kitchen door. My heart was pounding as if at any minute it was going to leave my chest. As I was trying to get the door unlocked, I glanced out of the glass window. The doorstep was gone. I couldn't step out. What I saw next was an unbelievable sight. My small, white truck was sinking into the broken reservoir. That's when I realized what had actually happened. It wasn't a sinkhole. My carport had collapsed, and my favorite vehicle had fallen into the water that was underneath.

Who do you call when something like this happens? Who would believe me? I didn't want to wake up my adult children. They had to work the next day. Instead, I called my brother in Indianapolis because he's a night owl and I knew he would be up.

What was I thinking calling him? He was so far away. It was hard to think.

My brother calmly told me to call the police. They would know what to do and whom to call. Waiting for the police to come, I went ahead and called my son. I said "I can't get out". He said "Mom, go out the front door." No one ever uses my front door to enter or exit. I felt so silly that I hadn't thought of it. Was I in a state of shock? I carefully walked out the front and around the house to the front of the carport. I saw the taillights blinking and heard my truck making beeping sounds. It was like it was saying help me, help me as it slowly finished sinking. Then, the lights went out and the beeping stopped.

My son pulled in my driveway. He said, "When I pulled in and didn't see the truck, I knew it was bad. I did call my daughter and she quickly came. She was a little upset that I hadn't called her sooner. I've always tried to handle things on my own since my husband died, but this night I needed help.

The policeman came and couldn't believe it either. He said, "I have to say I have never seen this before". He called the wrecker service and also the fire department to pump out the water. I could see by the utility pole light that there wasn't any brick left on the wall attached to the carport. As the brick fell, it hit the side and hood of my truck filling it with hundreds of tiny dents. I saw the bench with my pink flowers and my blue Igloo cooler floating in the watery mess below. The concrete floor had broken and hit the bottom. That was the loud sound I had heard. The most unbelievable sight

was my vehicle down in the hole. That was something you don't see everyday and don't want to see, or so I thought. I had more company come by after this happened than I had the entire time I've lived here.

My next thought was how was the young man going to get it out of there without doing damage to my roof. It had to come straight up to get it out. It was a very slow process, but he did get it out without any more damages. Finally, I was beginning to come to my senses.

I was told later that when my house was built there wasn't enough rebar put in the floor to reinforce it. I could see very little rebar in the broken concrete pieces.

Thank goodness I had house and car insurance. I was able to purchase a new car and pay for the repairs to my house.

A year ago I was diagnosed with trygeminy. It is an irregular heartbeat. No doctor had ever mention that to me before. Could it be possible that I was so frightened that my heart starting beating differently that night? I wonder sometimes. Was I nearly scared to death? It sure felt like it! Needless to say that I'm a little weary of loud sounds now. I have to know where they are coming from and what is causing them. Something I say all the time is things can always be worse. So, at least it wasn't a sinkhole.

The End

By Nancy Macy, Breckinridge County

Bingo



BINGO

It was May 2018 that I took seed out to replenish the depleted bird feeders and as usual all birds scattered as I approached except one. He did not seem to be a bit afraid of me. When I came back to the porch he flew back with me. It was a Mourning Dove. From that day on we had a special and unusual friendship that lasted four weeks. He was named Bingo.

Bingo and I spent many hours together, he always wanted to be where I was when I was outside. If I sat on the porch reading he would sit in another chair or on the table next to me. If I was in the garden weeding he would be there, too, either pecking in the dirt or sunning himself. Bingo was not afraid of the golf cart I used to haul gardening equipment, he even enjoyed an occasional ride. If I was not home he would sometimes visit the neighbors if they were outside working. He liked being around humans but let us know he did not want to be touched so we all abided by his wishes. Bingo was a very special little bird. None of us could figure out his friendship with humans and we all thought it to be very strange.

After being around much of the day Bingo would fly off early in the evening. I do not know where he slept. Maybe he had Mourning Dove friends to stay with at night?

Sometimes Bingo would sit on the front roof of the house looking in the front window, I guess he was looking for me. It was about 8:00 one morning that I heard an unusual THUMP on the roof. Right away I checked on that noise and there were many dove feathers flying around and falling down to the bushes below. A hawk had attacked Bingo. I wonder if he wondered why I was not helping.....I wonder if he was hurting.....I wonder if his death was quick.....

Losing Bingo was sad and I still miss him very much. Our four weeks together was very special.

By Donna Jackson, Madison County





I'M BORED...."Huh ?"

In 1980's there was an experiment for those adults of us who concerned ourselves with the nurturing and education of youths in USA. (Have a degree in public health). In Norfolk, VA there was a study of three different groups: one group had TVs with four channels, the second group had TVs with one channel, and the third group had no TVs...yes, that is true...the children with no TVs had the highest scores on the test of questions on the range of from imaginative thinking to total boredom!

Several years later a Ph.D. noticed that the artists in her field were complaining of being bored. She tried to get them to see that the use of mechanical devices such as TVs cuts into the creative gene and that their creativity was being cut short by the time wasted there. Also, the result of the test exposed above showed that the creativity levels of the children who had no TVs dropped to the levels of the other two groups when the TVs came to their towns.

The bored adult artists came to appreciate that languishing is a time for creativity to arrive, develop to bigger and better levels and to attempt to push an artist to a gate to go through to sit down and DO ART, FOR PETE'S SAKE !!

Children have to have THEIR TIME. If you are a parent, you understand what I am referring to. Your child tunes out all other-stuff----and nothing you can do to distract them from this moment of contemplation will work...they stare and stare, even if it is at something that they totally are familiar with, and only when THEY ARE FINISHED DO THEY MENTALLY RETURN to you and your presence. Your mind has said to you, and perhaps you even voice this thought to another person who is with you, saying, "I wonder what in the world he/she (child) is thinking of?"

This phenomenon of my children happened very young, I now understand, my first child, a boy, at about the age of one year old. My two succeeding children, both girls, (all three born within span of two and half years) did not show this quality until about the age of two.

Sometimes the child will tell you what he was thinking of, but generally this will not happen until about the age of three. I loved "THREE" AS I COULD TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND SAY TO MYSELF, OK NOW, HERE WE GO ! THIS PHENOMENON WILL GO ON AND PRODUCE VERY INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS with your children for many more years. However, a lot of the time the child will answer with "I don't know"..and this is really true...they don't know...something captured an autistic type moment and this is very natural.

I remember that at the age of about eleven, a cold Sunday morning, my father backing the car out of the garage for me, my mother, my sister, and two brothers to get into the car to go to church. I was in one of those fugue states of contemplation when my mother asked me what I was thinking and I said, "Did you realize that Adam and Eve's children had to marry their own sisters and brothers?"

At that my mother and peers were howling and doubled over with laughter and unable to enter the car and my father was screaming, "Get in the car! Get in the car it is bloody freezing outside!! " I remember

it as if it were yesterday. Of course, now, at the age of 81 in a few weeks, I can't even remember what it was that I did this a.m.

This current age of children are over-stimulated, over-scheduled, already becoming consumers, and they are as a spinning top. These children, to be bored would be a luxury. Problem solving, designing, learning to cope, are interior mental processes which need nurturing, need time, and need exercising with their frontal lobe (seat of character and personality) from the earliest age and one which never ceases to be a need...even way into adulthood.

Frontal lobe activity , IN THE OLD DAYS, CAME TO UNDERSTANDING BY WAY OF PLATITUDES, OF MANY TYPES, BUT A GOOD ONE WAS: "A child, he/she, develops best when treated as a young plant ...left undisturbed ...and in the same soil" ...so said Bertrand Russell .

Thus, too much travel, too much diversity exposure, too many different impressions to the young can cause children to question their own abilities and envelope a sense of dread into their everyday activities. Realize that the study I quoted at the start of this piece of writing took place almost 40 years ago...I dread to think of what a test of this nature this day in time would show to our adult world with the use of not only the technology of the past but with also the variety of very unrealistic equipment development occurring everyday for the children of the years 2000 and afterwards. Time to pray!

Mary Ann Carrico-Mitchell, RN, BS

Life as a farm girl —

On Aug. 3, 1942 I was born, at home, on a farm, my parents were farmers, they were leasing a farm in Simpson Co. KY., from the Crowds Sisters, who lived in Franklin, KY. I do not have many memories of that farm, as we moved when I was three, to Barren Plains, TN. the home place of my dad. We raised tobacco, hogs and milked cows, my jobs consisted of "helping" my parents and learn from them, a lot can be fixed with twine string and bailing wire and don't swing on the gates. As I grew, I helped with the tobacco, especially dusting and worming, it was fun to milk a cow. During those early years, I learned all books of the Bible, memory verses and various other things to get me ready for school and life. I had aunts, uncles, cousins and other relatives that were teacher hence I would later become a teacher, for thirty four years.

I moved with my parents in the summer of 1948 to Auburn, KY., four miles from town to a 105 acre farm that was bordered on one side by a creek. Dave and Tom our mules, milk cows, hogs, chickens, cats and Lady, my dog all were moved to the new farm. I can never remember, not having a dog.

On Dec. 6, 1950, I was eight years old and in the third grade at Auburn Elementary School, in Auburn, Kentucky. The weather was cold and my family had killed hogs on previous days. As the only child of John and Elisabeth Sweatt Gunn, I helped with all things on the farm. It was a school day and I walked the two tenth of a mile to meet the bus, at the highway and headed to school for the day, mother and daddy left to go to a farm about two miles from our home to strip tobacco. We rented extra land from two elderly ladies, the Procter sisters, where we also had tobacco and corn, same as on our farm, along with the cows to milk, a tractor and horses to share the toils of the farming, chicken, lots and lots of chickens. There was Lady that helped me herd the cows, and a cat named McArther. This would prove to be a life changing day for my family and for me.

No cell phones, no mass communications, just word of mouth. We never really learned why, but our home burned to the ground that day, only the chimneys were standing when I was let off of the bus, into the arms of my parents, the clothes on our back was all that we had. Later we learned that Lady died, under the house, McArther survived, as he was an outside cat. No insurance, very little

money but a lot of love and hope. Nothing much was found in the ashes, but my round handle baby spoon. It was time to start over.

We journey to Schochoh where my mother's parents lived to spend the night. Word spread, family, friends that we had never met, our home church family, all collected items for us, also money, a church member and neighbor let us have a two room house that had been used for stripping tobacco, we settled in the very next day. Life would go on and we had each other and our animals. The snow and ice came in abundance that winter, life continued. Our car died and with no money, we bundled up and rode the tractor to the farm, twice a day to milk and keep a check on our animals. We laughed, sang songs, said Bible verses and made the most of every day. On Sunday, we rode the other direction to attend Church.

My parents had my "Santa Clause" in the house, it burned. I was blessed and so surprised when my school class got me a doll and lots of new school supplies and books, I really did miss my books, but during the winter, read all of the new ones. The neighbor, who let us live in the little house, had three boys, my age and a little older than me. We built fort in the snow and played, sometimes, we would popcorn and play Chinese checkers or just regular checkers, if we did not have school, due to the really bad snow and ice.

During March we always got 200 baby chicken to raise. Straight run, so we would have pullets that would become laying hens and the rosters to be killed and packaged for the locker plant, in town, we had no freezer. The baby chicken arrived by mail and we had the brooder house clean, wood shaving down and the heat lamps ready. Daddy was concerned about the electric since the fire, he blocked off a part of the brooder house, putting down quilts and blankets and we three slept there for several night. I can still hear the little chicks as they settled in, then up to eat and drink water. It was peaceful, fun times of Bible stories, discussions of why things happen, what to be thankful for and looking forward to our new house.

Daddy and the neighbors began to cut timber from our woods, take to a saw mill, to trade for dry lumber, to build the house. Two carpenters and my parents worked in all kinds of weather, mother worked just as hard as the three men and I helped when I got home from school, picking up scrap lumber and nails. We moved into an almost finished house by the first of May, it still lacked the

windows and some other things, but we were home. It was Spring time on the farm, new baby calves, the chickens were growing and it was time to peg out tobacco, I mostly dropped the sticks.

Our lives did not STOP, just because we lost our house, as long as we were together, we had a HOME. I grew up, that Dec. day, more was expected of me. I became more dependable, I learned not to cry over things that can't be helped, to be thoughtful, to show appreciation and to always help others. I learned that there is only one way and that is UP. Faith, Family, a strong religious`Foundation and Positive attitude helped to mold me into a forever farm girl, I still am, I am BLESSED.

Betty Ruth Gunn Ditmore

Simpson Co.

Franklin, Kentucky

LIGHTNING BUGS AND DAD

I saw one again, just the other day, a happy little lightning bug. I had forgotten about them for so many years. How does one forget about lightning bugs? I suppose life just gets too busy at times. That and we don't get many lightning bugs here in Tampa.

That day I saw them again, I mean, really saw them, was such a day of happiness and healing for me. I had that "coming home" feeling authors describe in their novels. That feeling of knowing everything is going to be okay.

I had just driven into town. My client meetings had gone well and had provided me with a sense of accomplishment that, combined with my excitement about the next four days, drenched me in such a warm feeling of euphoria, that I found myself smiling uncontrollably.

I called my husband to check in and asked him, "Have you ever felt so happy that you feel your heart is going to explode?"

"J, pay attention to your driving and forget about the radio." He instructed.

"Yes, Sir," I replied with a bit of sarcasm, "Love you and I'll call you when I get to Dad's."

"I love you, too!" He said and hung up the phone.

"Oh, I love this song!" I said to no one in particular. I turned up the radio in my rental car, despite my husband's instructions, put down the windows and accelerated just enough to stay under the radar of those Kentucky State Troopers.

I credit my dad for instilling in me a love of country music. When I was young, he and I would go for drives and we would sing along with George Jones, Charlie Pride, Charlie Rich, Tanya Tucker, Johnny Cash and so many others. If it had a twang, we were listening!

Green was all around me. The cornfield and soybean crops were at their peak. I passed horses and silos and one farm after another. These things that had, at one time, been so familiar to me, then had faded and become part of my past, were now so quickly rushing back to my present with unanticipated welcome that I felt both exhilarated and saddened at once. What joy to be coming home after so many years but what sadness to know my physical home resides so far away. This, Kentucky, had become the home of my heart and Florida had become my real home, the place where God now needed me to be. I felt richly blessed to know both places.

I stopped in Henderson for a restroom break, as it would be my last opportunity before Dad's house, and for a nice cold diet soda with extra ice, of course. Diet soda tastes best when it's arctic cold, I believe.

"Here ya are, honey. Have a nice afternoon." said the clerk.

Yep, I was in Kentucky alright. The place where one can smile at another person and that person simply smiles back without wondering if there's a problem. I wrapped a napkin around my cup and was back on the road.

Thirty minutes, if that, and I'd be at Dad's. I was acutely conscious of the fact that this very moment, this very adventure, would be one that would forever be forged in my memory, into my being. Although I knew not the outcome, I knew, regardless, this was one of those extremely special moments in time for me. That realization encouraged me to savor every second.

As I drove, I thought about Dad. Was he as nervous and excited as I? That day he called and wanted to talk took me by surprise. I had trained myself to keep my shield up during our conversations. Enough empty promises cause a daughter to lose trust and faith in a father. And the loss of trust and faith causes a father to feel uncomfortable and unworthy to talk to his child. So, because I stopped believing his promises that he would stop drinking, and because he continued to drink despite those promises, our conversations over the past ten years had become nothing more than a hello and a good-bye. But, that day, about a year ago now, Dad called. He called and we talked. We really talked. Before he hung up, he had cried and thanked me for listening. He told me it was the best conversation he had had with anyone in a long time. He told me he loved me. I told him I loved him back. Then, we hung up.

Oh gosh, I thought. What just happened? Was this another ploy? I had let my guard down before only to be hurt, only to be made to look foolish for believing things had really changed. But Dad had never cried before. He had never, never sounded so sincere. I didn't know what to feel. I was cautiously excited. I was worried. I was scared, sad, curious and elated all at the same time. People talk about life-altering events. That phone call was mine. It was more than a phone call from my Dad. It was also a phone call from God. My Dad was calling to reach out to me with the last bit of strength he had at that time. He needed me to believe him, to believe in him. He needed me to love him. He simply needed to know his child still cared. What I needed and had needed for such a long time was happening on that phone call and I needed God to tell me what to do. God instructed me to simply listen. While I was listening, He told me to let go of my pride, my fear, the reasons I had not to trust this man, my Dad. He instructed me to forgive. But, more importantly, I needed Dad to forgive me. I needed him to forgive me for giving up on him. And, he did. We forgave each other that day on the phone. And, with the help of our heavenly Father, we both began to heal.

So, here I am, on the way to spend a few days with my Dad. So much has happened over the past year. We've talked often since that initial call. When I called to let him know I was going to be in Louisville for business and to ask if he'd mind a visitor for a few days, he didn't hesitate.

He told me a room would be ready. That "heart about to explode" feeling has come over me again at the thought of his invitation.

Lightning Bugs and Dad
Page Three

I pull into the gravel driveway. There's the birdbath Dad's been telling me about. His yard looks beautiful, I think to myself. As I step out of the car, I smell Morganfield. The smell comes from the soil. It is a smell I have known since childhood and will know until my last day. I cannot describe it to you. You must experience it for yourself. The aroma is distinct; it's earthy and will draw you back, time and again, through your daydreams, to this beautiful, small Kentucky town called Morganfield. As I mentioned earlier, my place is in Florida now. And it, too, is wonderful. But Morganfield will forever be a part of me. I am grateful for the opportunity to be back now, albeit for a short time.

Dad walks out the back door, the screen door slams shut (another sound I thought I had forgotten) and welcomes me with a hug. This hug, I tell myself, is the ribbon on this gift with which God has just presented me. Sometimes God takes a little longer than we'd like to answer our prayers. Sometimes He doesn't answer our prayers and we must understand it is all part of His plan. But today, He has granted me and my Dad an answered prayer. Because of the journey we had to take to get to this day, we are that much more appreciative of His gift. He is truly amazing. As Dad and I hug, I know, at this very minute, we are both being embraced by the Father. He has given us back to each other and rather than tears, I celebrate with joy and excitement about the future.

The lightning bugs are dancing outside now and as I watch them, I promise to never forget about them again. As I watch them, I feel myself slowing down. I look to them as a reminder to never let myself get so busy again that I lose focus of the beauty and wonder around me. I look to them to remind me how I, too, felt like celebrating and dancing that day Dad and I really talked. Our hearts, like the lightning bugs, began to shine that day and we will forever celebrate God's goodness to His children.

By Jennifer Duncan, Union County

The Uninvited Visitor

It had scarcely been two months since Daddy had died. Mom was still trying to adjust to living alone. She had spent the first fourteen years of her life with her mother, father, sister and two brothers. But she thought she was ready to leave her home situation, so she married at fourteen, which wasn't too uncommon in 1944.

It was late on a cold February night, and Mom was ready to retire for the night. She was tired, because she had worked that day at the local sewing factory. At least she could see people during the day. And in the evening she usually talked with one or more of her seven children. None of them was living at home now, the youngest having left for college only a few months before Dad died. Bedtime was the worst. She had trouble falling asleep. Memories flooded through her mind.

It was just past eleven o'clock that night when Mom remembered she needed to change the water in the goldfish bowl. She had managed to keep one of the children's carnival goldfish alive in a large bowl. It was nearly four inches long now. A monster!

As she carefully scooped the goldfish out of the dirty water to place it in a pan of water while she cleaned the bowl, she thought she heard something moving under the kitchen sink. She had heard noises under the floor for a few nights and guessed that some animal had squeezed through the loose vent and was going to winter there.

She set the goldfish bowl aside and slowly opened the cabinet door below the kitchen sink. She was as startled as the young opossum who sat just inside the generous hole that had been cut for the water line for the sink. For a moment, they were both frozen in fear.

Then she began trying to think. What was she going to do? She didn't want to call her son-in-law, who lived only a few minutes away. He was probably already asleep, since he had to get up early for work. The opossum didn't move. She couldn't go to bed and just leave it there. She needed to leave the cabinet door ajar to keep the water line from freezing, and she definitely didn't want it loose in the house.

She slowly inched toward the kitchen door that opened to the back porch. Maybe she could shoo it out the door. She tried in vain to get the opossum to leave. Either the opossum didn't want to go out into the cold night, or it was just too scared to move. Either way, the cold night air was filling the kitchen.

Finally, she thought, what would Dad have done? He would shoot it! She slowly went to her bedroom closet, reached into the back of the closet and retrieved her 22 rifle. She hadn't shot it in years. As she loaded the gun, she remembered she and Dad used to target shoot when they were young. She was a pretty good marksman. There was no television then. You made your own entertainment. She quietly made her way back to the kitchen.

The opossum hadn't moved. She hated the thought of firing the gun in the house. But if the opossum wouldn't leave, she had to do something. She moved a dining room chair just inside the kitchen door so she could sit down to rest her arm on a moveable kitchen island nearby. This would help her aim. Only six to eight feet separated the two. Surely, she could hit it. She breathed in the cold air in the room and decided to fire.

The opossum fell over dead. She had shot it right between its' beady little eyes. She waited a few seconds and then gingerly stepped over to the cabinet and picked up the poor creature and flung it out the back door onto the porch. She would dispose of it

tomorrow.

As she was closing the back door, her phone started ringing. Her closest neighbor heard the gunshot and was calling to check on her. She was fortunate to have good neighbors. After telling him what had happened, he told her she should have called him. But Mom never wanted to be a bother to anyone.

Quickly, she got the goldfish in clean water and proceeded to undress for bed. She was exhausted. She would have no trouble going to sleep tonight. She was more confident that she would be alright alone and would meet each challenge as it came.

By Shirley Macy, Breckinridge County

CREATIVE WRITING

MAMA

BARREN COUNTY-MAMMOTH CAVE

CAROLYN WYATT

MAMA

Anna grew up in a small town in Arkansas, the oldest of 7 children. Her parents were sharecropper and she worked in the cotton fields as a small child---gleaning her share of the family's earnings to light the lamp and fill the belly.

It was the tail end of the Great Depression. Food and money were scarce, but the love shared between the members of the Duncan family of 9, was limitless and bountiful. When Anna's mama called them in for lunch from the cotton fields, Anna embellished the meager repast with her insatiable imagination. Biscuits with mustard and onions were often the only food they had. Meat was scarce, and if you could get it, it was expensive. But Anna, and her siblings, pretended what they had were hot, juicy hamburgers. This made the experience more fun, and the hunger pangs didn't hurt as badly that way.

Anna had a baby brother named Charles, who died before he was a year old. The cause of his death has never been told. Anna said he just passed away in the kitchen one day while their mama was feeding him.

The task of preparing Charles for burial fell on Anna. They didn't have money enough for a proper funeral. Anna's daddy gave her \$5, and told her to walk to town to buy Charlie a burial gown. Town was miles away, and the Duncans didn't have a vehicle, so Anna set out walking in order to get her baby brother a garment in which to be buried. On the way into town, a couple in a truck picked Anna up and drove her the rest of the way into town. She returned some hours later to her family home. She had Charles' gown. The family grieved the loss of the baby. Anna's father buried him beneath a big tree next to the house. Days later they found that Charles' remains had been dug up by some pigs. They gotten to him and consumed his little body. Only fragments of his little gown were left.

Hard times didn't stop there either. Soon after, at age 16, Anna met, and married the man of her dreams, a soldier. He took her a long distance away from her childhood home. Soon after moving Anna's husband left for assignment overseas during World War 2. Anna was left alone to take care of herself, but she was accustomed to taking care of others her entire life, and so being alone posed no real problem.

Eventually her husband returned home, and Anna became a mother to a son and 2 daughters. Anna and her husband, Art settled in Colorado, where Art was raised. She never learned to drive, but she had no trouble seeing to it that her children made it to school on time, and that everyone had what they needed.

She was a faithful wife, and devoted mother to her children, and later to the foster children she came to raise, some of whom always thought of Anna and her husband Art, as their parents. She was an exceptional cook, able to make anything from pinto beans and cornbread, to hand-rolled tortillas and green-chili tamales. Anna was as beautiful in her apron as she was in her Sunday best. Anna was an accomplished seamstress. Often times, she and the

girls would go downtown window-shopping, Anna would get an idea, and then go home, make her own pattern from a newspaper, then make the garment from her pattern.

Her red-lipped smile still sits daintily in the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved her. One couldn't help but love Anna. She is missed beyond measure, and we love her forever.

Cultural Arts Barren Co. Mammoth Cave Area

Story: The Visit

Name: Sue Bishop

The Visit

I went to visit my Aunt Estelle who was in the Nursing Home. She was up in years' happy and cheerful. I visited her when I could. One day she told me about a visit and how my family came to visit her family. My parents' sisters and brothers and myself went to visit all day and all night. Now there were five people in her family and five people in our family' for a total of ten people. We were there for supper' breakfast' and probably dinner the next day.

This was at the end of WWII. So many things such as sugar, meat, and lard was rationed or scarce.

Aunt Estelle saw us coming down the road and thought " how in the world can I feed this family.' I don't have a drop of lard or meat in the house. Her husband, Uncle Westley in the meantime or earlier in the day, had gone to the store and put her a surprise on a table under a pan.. She raised the pan up and there was a piece of side meat about the size of a man's hand. She was so happy. Now she would have meat for cooking and lard for seasonings, and also meat and gravy for breakfast.

She was so thankful for that side meat and God's care and provisions.

I'm thankful for her loving memory and this loving story she shared of our families.

The RV

David and I picked her up from the mobile home park in Florida in the last weeks of January. She looked forlorn, just like she had when we left her two months prior, after the death of my mother.

Her paint is gone in places, weathered by storms that sand blasted her as she stood in her spot by the Peace River. This vehicle had been home for my parents for several years. It was a place they traveled across country in. Saw the western skies. She had seen them through holidays and visits from family and friends. Took them south when the weather was cold and north to summers warm breezes.

She had seen my father take care of my increasingly ailing mother. She was privy to their love and to their arguments. Then finally to Mom's final tumble to that place where you have to begin the last walk by yourself.

I spoke to Mom just before Halloween that year. I cannot remember everything that was said. Time and grief play havoc with your memory. I remember a sense that she loved me.

We had, over my adult life, not had the best of relationships. We had been like two different countries trying to make each see that the other knew what they were talking about. Always ready to make war, and always wanting to make peace. When I tell you that this was the most amazingly loving conversation, I had with my mother I want you to believe me. She told me to go easy on my grown daughters, a thing she never did, and then she shocked me by telling me to go easy on myself. After a long minute where I listened to her cough, she said "I love you."

Setting in the RV now I was thinking that was the most amazing conversation have ever had with her. This was the last time I spoke with my mother.

The couple days later Dad answered her phone and said she did not feel like talking. Double pneumonia and then a stroke took her already frail body down the last road.

A road that for once the RV could not take her.

Mom had already had her mass read and been buried in Calvary Cemetery. My father could not bring himself to go back and get the RV. So, it was up to David and I to go get her. As I looked at this old Winnebago with the perfect name of BRAVE. I thought that is what this trip is going to take. A little courage. I prayed that I would have just enough to get me thru this.

As we drove back I again noticed how sad she looked. The words Brave had begun to peel off. It had been a hard few years for her and now she was abandoned. I felt like that abandoned. They sometimes say that things can some time reflect their owners and I believe that in this instance it was true.

When David and I stepped in to begin the drive she smelled like sickness. You know the smell. At that point I was glad my dear husband had gone in first. He looked at me. As we started he was watching me like I was going to explode.

"I have booked us for a couple of nights at Walt Disney World".

Okay folks I love Disney so what my husband was trying to do was to make me smile. He knew this was hard. I think even the universe knew. Because just as we hit the highway the sun came through the clouds and there was a rainbow. Not just a half but a full on rainbow.

I could not help but smile. "That sounds good", I told him.

The first few miles that theory of things becoming like their owners came to mind again.

She was running rough. Okay I was only mildly concerned, because David was hiding a list of problems. The batteries were shot she was running on 7 of 8 cylinders, and 4 year old gas. So maybe rough is an understatement. David did not even stop her as he filled it up with gas. Afraid she would not start again.

My, not the most mechanically inclined father, had been playing with the hot water heater and plumbing so there was not going to be any hot water. Then as we came to our spot in the Fort Wilderness Camp Ground in Walt Disney World it became clear we would not have any heat.

It was as if as my mother had spiraled down so had the RV.

My incredibly patient husband just shook his head and started a list of all the things that needed to be fixed. Then he and I spent three nights in Disney.

It was hard that first night I went to the bath house to shower and just cried till I was exhausted. When I was dressed, we went to the restaurant they have in the campground. I had never eaten there before. Not even with my parents. The conversation turned to my mother and to the RV. "I brought you here," he said, "because you need a break. This is your happy place."

I explained how hard it was to even be here because this is the place my mother had always made sure to bring me. David was tired. I could tell that I was drawing a lot of energy from him. He had brought me here to have a good time. To heal.

I took my cue from him and talked about how I had never been here without someone deciding what we would do. Parents, or later, kids would always seem to guide how I saw the Magic that is Disney World. Could we maybe see what I wanted to see? How I wanted to see it. There are rides I had not been on in years because my grownup girls had out grown them. David agreed and that night as I was crawling into bed. I felt a little of the weight that was on my chest lift.

The night was cold like only Florida in January and February can get. David had been unable to get the furnace to start. We huddled together trying to keep warm. It was not the kind of night you expect in a RV. Once again I was struck that, like my mother, this RV had more wrong with her than she let on.

Mom had tried to show us that she was well. She wanted to pretend that there was a fix for her blindness caused by the diabetes. Or the pain in her head and joints that seemed to make it harder and harder to get around.

Then there was the anger at things left undone and people she thought were letting her down or that she was letting down. Hidden things like the fact that the heat no longer was working.

Next morning David said, "I wonder were that heater of your Dads is?"

I started to laugh. Its right at the end of our bed. I replied.

What was I doing I thought as my husband and I laughed at the thought we had been cold all night because we had not used what we had right in our very hands.

JOY!!!!

My mother had been hard on me. And she had, like this old RV, a lot wrong with her. But she had taught me nothing else if not to pick yourself up. Yes. Grieve, Mourn. But whatever you do, don't cut your nose off to spite your face, one of her favorite sayings. Enjoy the things you are given. Good Friends. Understanding bosses, Coworkers and of course Family.

So David and I went, and we enjoyed Walt Disney World. In the end I learned that like this old Brave Winnebago life can wear you down but there is still joy to be found as you move on down the road.

Amy Fowler
Member of Jessamine County Homemaker