Celebrating Veterans Week and Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II

The OPC joined the surrounding communities to honor our local Veterans with a week long celebration.

Veterans Week Celebration

Flag raising, Flag Pole Dedication, Pinning Ceremony at the Veterans Tribute of Oakland Township.

Military Uniform Display and WWII Tribute Banner Signing at Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital.

Virtual Celebration of military servicemen and servicewomen, including a special tribute to the Grateful Generation - our World War II Veterans is available to view on the Older Persons Commission Youtube Channel.
“ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY”
The Legacy of World War II

By Richard Dengate

America’s first shot in WWII was fired by the USS Ward on December 7, 1941, against the Pearl Harbor attackers; the last was on August 12, 1945, by the USS Concord on an enemy base in the Kuril Islands. In those 45 months, America and American lives would be changed forever.

Sixteen million individuals donned uniforms and left home for the first time.

Hector “Bill” Duthie, one such local young man, was the Honored Senior in the June 2019 issue of Vintage Views. At 17 years of age, he dropped out of Detroit’s Cass Tech High School in his junior year and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. After training, and at only 18, he was piloting a B-25 Mitchell light bomber in the South Pacific. Read his interesting story on the OPC website under “Get Connected” then “Vintage Views”.

At no other time in American history had a greater proportion of the population participated in a war. Thousands were just out of high school. Others interrupted college, careers, and family life to serve.

Millions came home with experiences forever imbedded in their memories. Among those were 670,846 who returned home with wounds that scarred them for life. Parents, spouses, children, and friends grieved for 405,846 who were returned in body bags and the 30,314 MIAs who were never seen or heard from again. All this human sacrifice—the price paid by the Greatest Generation to eradicate an unspeakable evil, the Fascism that had infected Europe and Asia.

World War II had been coming on since the end of WWI and was accelerated by the Great Depression. This economic implosion created the fertile ground that nurtured the wicked ideology. Authoritarian demagogues came to power as a result of the utter desperation felt by the civilian populations. The financial devastation destroyed hope and generated fear that ultimately progressed to rage, leading to the genocidal war.

The carnage began in 1931 in Asia and 1939 in Europe. By the time the United States entered the conflict, the Axis powers occupied the western Pacific from the Aleutian Islands south to Australia and in Europe from the Soviet Union to Britain. England was the only unoccupied country remaining, but their industrial infrastructure was under attack by bombers and V-1 and V-2 rockets.

America now faced a colossal challenge. We were in a two-front war for which we were totally unprepared. Between the two world wars, a period of isolationism gripped the nation—the effect of which was to allow our military services to deteriorate to a dangerously low level.

In 1939 only 334,000 Americans were active duty members of the military. There was a critical shortage of equipment. Most of the inventory was obsolete. The lack of experienced soldiers and sailors was evident—by example of our local 18-year old bomber pilot. Men were trained using toy rifles and bags of flour for grenades and bombs. America was truly desperate.

Yet America was the only hope for the survival of the western democracies. And...on December 29, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt in a fireside chat said: We must be the great arsenal of democracy!

Industry had to be converted from consumer goods production to that of guns, tanks, planes, ships, and ammunition. Agriculture had to step up production to help feed people in war-torn countries. This would have monumental consequences for the Greatest Generation who occupied the home front. Women and men would have to work the mills, forges, factories, offices, and farms. The shortages of consumer goods required sacrificing and rationing. All of which was accomplished by way of the “alphabet soup” bureaucratic federal agencies of the time. Rationing and price controls insured an equitable distribution of scarce goods and resources. Wartime profiteering was monitored and controlled by the federal government. By learning from problems during all previous wars, production of shoddy and dangerous equipment had to be avoided. The number of civilians working in the federal government grew from 950,000 in 1939 to 3.8 million in 1945.

Between 1940 and 1945, the Greatest Generation on our home soil produced 300,000 planes, 86,000 tanks, 3 million machine guns, and 71,000 naval ships. Agricultural production increased by 25 percent. Fifteen percent of food produced was shipped overseas to our troops and our allies. The federal budget exploded from $9 billion in 1939 to $100 billion in 1945. In 1939 less than 2 percent of the Gross National Product of $91 billion (total output of the economy) went to our military but by 1944 the GNP grew to $166 billion with 40 percent going for the military.

Indeed, we did become the Arsenal of Democracy and rescued the western democracies from annihilation. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Greatest Generation who overcame seemingly insurmountable odds in taking up the challenge that was thrown at them. WWII ended the global depression and American isolationism.

The legacy of those 45 months thrust America into position of world leadership. It also demonstrated what the United States can do when united. Americans took seriously the motto e pluribus unum—out of many one—on the Great Seal of the United States since first proposed in 1776. Americans remembered from Lincoln’s speech on June 16, 1858: A house divided against itself cannot stand. Americans recalled one of the purposes of the Constitution as stated in the Preamble: ...To form a more perfect union.

Without the commitment to national unity and the realization that Americans and our country were all in this together, America would not have defeated the Axis powers.

The greatest tribute we can give every day to our World War II heroes and their sacrifices is to remember our history, restore this commitment to national unity, and honor our “fought-for” democracy. ▼

A reminder... For a delightful OPC video that includes three interviews with local WWII veterans and clips that portray life during this period, go to YouTube and in the search window type “Older Person’s Commission”, then select 2020 Veterans Celebration.
NEWS FROM THE “POLKA DOT PRESS”

By Alyson Denyer

If you thought the Rosies of WWII have been trading their polka dots for new rocking chairs, you would be so wrong. These recent years have found them busier than ever.

Prepare to be amazed if you Google California’s Rosie, Elinor Otto. She retired from Boeing at age 95 and continues to promote the American Rosie the Riveter Association in every way possible—at age 100. She was even on the “Ellen DeGeneres Show” and on ABC’s “To Tell the Truth.” Elinor’s focus is educating and inspiring future generations of women and men.

Travel east to Pennsylvania where Mae Krier, 95, is busy sewing face masks for the COVID cause. They are red with white polka dots of course! Her televisions were televised on the morning and evening news. Last year found her in Normandy, France, with four other Rosies, celebrating the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Always up for a challenge, Mae is also working hard to get support for Senate Bill S.892. The House Bill H.R.1773 has already passed. These bills will award a single, joint Congressional Gold Medal to “Rosie the Riveter” (any female individual who held employment or volunteered in support of the war efforts during World War II) in recognition of their contributions to the United States and the inspiration they have provided to ensuing generations. The medal will be displayed at the National Museum of American History and be made available for display at other locations associated with Rosie the Riveter. “Go for it, Mae!”

The June 2020 issue of National Geographic Magazine presented “The Last Voices of World War II” and five of our Michigan Rosies were interviewed for the article:

Mallie Mellon, now deceased, worked at Briggs Manufacturing burning parts for B-24 bombers built at nearby Willow Run. Having met Mallie, she impressed me with her friendly southern manner and considers the Rosies her family but was, sadly, called to heaven this September just shy of her 101st birthday. (I hope you were wearing your teal eye shadow, Mallie.)

Helen Kushnir, 94, ponders how she managed to hold a rivet gun for over eight hours a day. So small, she could rivet in the hard-to-reach corners of a plane. She avows: not “We Can Do It. WE DID IT!”

Marjorie Haskins, 97, earned $1 an hour working at Briggs in Willow Run with her mother while her husband and brother were at war. “We needed to keep things going.”

Clara Doutly, 98, was a riveter at Briggs Manufacturing, and recalls the neighbors pitching in to help each other. For her, WWII was a time of unity, both working and personally in daily life.

Virginia Basler, 96, drilled holes for the riveters at Willow Run for nine months; she then joined the women’s branch of the Coast Guard Reserve.

Michigan now has three ARRA chapters: the Willow Run Chapter near Ypsilanti, the Eastern Michigan (WOW) Chapter in Eastpointe, and our newest chapter in Cheboygan/Emmet County. Welcome to our up north chapter! Tea parties, parades, meetings, planting Rosie Rosebushes, and birthday celebrations keep Rosies participating all over the United States and busier than ever fulfilling the dream of ARRA’s founder Fran Carter. Fran recently took part in an inspirational video on YouTube highlighting the beginning of the organization and its purpose. Fran is 97 now and thrilled to see how ARRA continues to grow!

Did you know March 21 is officially “National Rosie the Riveter Day”? Fly the American flag in their honor that day. Like our veterans, they comprise America’s Greatest Generation.

Although the 2020 Annual Convention was canceled, hopes are high that the 2021 assembly at Hyde Park, New York, will come to fruition. Our dear Rosies cannot be with us forever. We want to see them gather together to share their stories…and Rosie On!”

VINTAGE VIEWS

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Contributing Writers and Poets

In memory of Jim Ahearn and gratitude for many years of contributions to Vintage Views.

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Discovering How to Make Jewelry

By Brenda Seabright

For some time, I’ve collected old buttons, unusual beads and pearls, but I never attempted to make jewelry with them. During the pandemic, I discovered television programs that teach you how to make jewelry. They explain how to wire wrap, make ear wire for earrings, how to hand knot for making pearl necklaces, how to design, and how to use various tools for jewelry making. They also offer for sale the components, enabling you to accomplish this. Often this includes a variety of different wires (copper, brass, sterling silver); chains to make tassels, decorate your items or for pendants; and leather string in various colors for a more rustic look.

They also sell a variety of spacers, gems, pendants, and findings. There is always some new twist. You can also remake some of your old jewelry or buy items at flea markets and garage sales.

Making jewelry is a challenge for many reasons. Your designs must compete with the manufactured ones which challenges your creativity. Jewelry-making tools can be a learning experience for people not accustomed to using their hands for close tool work. Also, you will need to learn how to make the best use of your materials, and to choose visually appealing colors, complementary or matching shapes, and similar hole sizes.

If you are interested in making jewelry, the OPC offers instructor-led classes, and all materials and tools are provided for your use in the classes. You are very fortunate if you live in the Rochester area for these OPC opportunities.▼

Holiday Shopping—Then, Now, and Tradition

By Nancy Knitter

Guess what? I finished my holiday shopping in July. Of course, it was in the middle of the pandemic, and I had lots of time on my hands. My favorite online shopping sites were taking advantage of the situation and promoting early holiday shopping. Very enticing for a bored shopper. It was so easy to hit that “Buy Now” button! I apologized to my UPS truck driver for all the packages he had to deliver so frequently to my door. He laughed…and said I wasn’t the only one getting a jump on holiday shopping.

I have been reflecting on the many years of holiday shopping opportunities. Oh, how things have changed. As a child, I remember making the traditional list for Santa… after Thanksgiving. Realize, that for me, no television yet so no never-ending toy advertisements in our faces. Our “Wish List” came from the Sears special holiday catalog that arrived… after Thanksgiving. Notice the underlined phrases? The holiday season never started until after Thanksgiving. No holiday music or decorations until after Thanksgiving. Santa arrived from the North Pole on the department store sponsored float in the Thanksgiving Day Parade. And between then and Christmas, Billie the Brownie and Santa could be heard on radio everyday promoting a selection of toys available at the local department store which we would often add to our catalog “Wish List.” Children sent in their letters to Santa; and if yours was read on the radio, you became a neighborhood celebrity. Kids were hooked.

My own children were influenced by television commercials that started to feature the latest hot toys before Thanksgiving. Really? How could parents continue a tradition when soon the day after Halloween marked the full blast into holiday shopping. When we shopped in local stores, we couldn’t avoid holiday décor and music that began for weeks before the holidays actually began. I guess it was meant to put the shopper in the mood. However, by December 24, I did not want to hear Elvis’ Blue Christmas ever again.

For the last few years, online shopping has really taken off. Busy moms and dads, and grandparents like me, appreciate the shopping-from-home convenience. Well, and then there’s the holiday list from the grandkids with their favorite websites where I can purchase gift cards. Oh no! I need to feel wrapping paper and ribbon in my hands. I need to stuff gift bags with tissue and write “To” and “From” cards. After all, gift giving is just as much a pleasure for the giver as the recipient. Tradition!

Start your own tradition, I say. Maybe you already have one or two new ones and some long-time ones. My grandkids receive an ornament every year that has their name and the year on it. As they have grown, they have enough ornaments to cover a small tree. Sooo, yes they want gift cards as their presents; they also love the favorite holiday cookies and special foods that come along with the gift cards. Their Tradition.

My July holiday gift purchases sit in my closet waiting for me to wrap, bag, or box them for family and friends. You can make a safe bet that I will not retrieve my early holiday purchases until after Thanksgiving. It is my TRADITION!▼
Antiques and their mysteries

By Jean Waid

Over 40 years ago, I enjoyed an interesting and informal class on antiques through adult education. An older woman in the class asked if I would be interested in seeing some antiques that an older relative of her husband’s needed to liquidate in Detroit. I purchased a sensational antique oak and gilded ornate frame. This frame would have been worthy of display in a castle! It was that attractive! We liked the colors and subject matter of the thin paper print. It involved horses, a dog and a mansion in a colonial period. I thought perhaps a fox hunt might be on the agenda. This beauty added a focal point in our old living room and again in the living room of our new home. Eventually, we updated our living room. I located a buyer who was en route to purchase this frame. Then I realized we really should remove the antique wood backing on the frame. I heard that sometimes people hid money in the back of old pictures. Often you will see the tan paper backing on a picture torn open, perhaps in a search for a treasure. Many small, old brads held the wood backing to the frame. My husband finally succumbed to my wish to learn what was behind the back board.

The photo depicts period furniture, an Oriental rug, trees, a large building, column, pedestal column and flora. The father and five sons are in dress military uniforms with swords. The youngest son is wearing a nautical outfit and holding a small toy boat. The daughter is wearing a frilly and ruffled dress. A basket of flowers is near her feet.

The last name of the woman in my class was Wilhelm, and it was mentioned that her husband was of German descent. Same name for the elderly lady who sold me the frame. At the time I was not knowledgeable enough about German history to get the significance of the name connection.

Mystery questions formed in my mind:
...Was this frame and photo on display in the Imperial Palace?
...Was it in disguise with a print to get out of Germany and through customs to America?
...Did it travel with the owners on a steamship?
And I pondered...had I discovered the photo decades earlier, would I have contacted a Wilhelm about the photo?

I presume the three Wilhelms that I met were unaware of the photo hidden in the gorgeous frame. I did search on the internet in hopes of locating descendants of the Mrs. Wilhelm who was in my class, without success.

Mystery after mystery… Somewhere, sometime...The rest of the story.
**A Strange Bird**

By Hans Koseck

The garage door happened to be open. And there sat Trudy on top of my car. Nobody knew how she got there nor from where she came. The girls chased her out, and she flew away a short distance. What kind of ugly bird was this? We discovered that she was a Guinea hen. She definitely had adopted us and she lived with us for about one and a half years.

We named her Trudy in memoriam of the white chicken that we had inherited thirty years earlier.

The police commissioners of Detroit and Windsor used to play pranks on each other. Once, when the Detroit cop entered his hotel room in Windsor, there was a white chicken roaming around on his bed. Since we boarded the commissioner’s horses and also Sheila, the 650-pound Detroit police pig mascot, the chicken ended up at our farm. Our son named her Trudy. Our German shepherd Bebe adopted her immediately; and Trudy rested on the dog’s belly between all fours when they both slept.

The new Trudy was a little shy in the beginning, but she loved cracked corn that she learned to pick out of my hand. But she would never let anybody touch her. Guinea chickens are very noisy. They scream and croak loud enough to wake up the dead. And they do it a lot.

Trudy’s favorite hideaway was in with the flowers, weeds, and bushes in the overgrown Sumac patch. When she wanted food she would lift off and come flying to the feeding station. On late winter evenings every night for two hours constantly, she would run back and forth on the deck of the house along the wall and as close to the house as possible. Then she would settle down and sleep.

She dug depressions in the ground into which she placed her eggs. We would find them in the strangest places, even at the neighbors’ houses. She laid many hundreds of eggs, but she stayed single and never produced any issue.

When on one day Trudy did not show up, I went looking for her. I found her in her nest, mortally wounded, her nest and all the eggs destroyed. Now I was able to touch her. I carried her to a safe place where shortly afterward she shut her eyes. I laid her to rest in a grave.

What a beautiful experience we had with our trusting ugly bird!

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**Weird Product Labels**

By Sam Seabright

You may have heard about the hot coffee case, a famous 1994 product liability lawsuit. This case resulted in companies taking more care with labeling product hazards, no matter how unlikely or remote the possibility of injury.

Some products, for example my power saw, will have many pages of warnings based on real or imagined hazards. California is notorious for labeling almost any product thought to contain agents known to cause cancer, including my laptop computer.

Some warnings seem ridiculous until you realize that perhaps some person was injured, say from dropping a device on her foot, so now the warning could say, *May injure you if dropped on your foot.* We have two steam irons, both with the warning, *Do not iron clothes on body.*

I looked through my archives of instruction and warranty manuals (yes, I keep them for years, along with vendor, date and cost notations or receipts).

We have three different brands of blenders, and they all have these identical warnings, verbatim: *Avoid contact with moving parts and Do not put blender in water.*

A notice in our dishwasher instruction booklet says: *Do not allow children to play in the dishwasher.*

I have a chainsaw with this notation in the manual: *Do not hold the wrong end of chainsaw.*

Warning on Brenda’s hairdryer instructions: *Do not use while bathing.*

And I have not even looked through all the manuals!

I have this box that in fine print after *Box May be Heavy,* says *Handles inside for easier lifting. What?!*

Certainly you should read the product manuals; I selected the weirdest ones I could find, but the vast majority of warnings are reasonable and useful.

Here are more actual warning messages I gleaned from the Internet:

*Label on Superman costumes:* *"This costume does not enable flight or super strength."*

*Label on a toy magic broom:* *"This broom does not actually fly."*

*Label on fox/bobcat urine powder:* *"Not for human consumption."*

*Warning label on a wheelbarrow:* *“Not intended for highway use.”*

*Label on a baby stroller:* *“Remove child before folding."*

Presumably, all this caution prevents product liability lawsuits; good luck with that!
Riders of the Purple Sage

By Adam Thiny

Recently I watched a rerun of the TV series “M*A*S*H” which takes place during the Korean War. This particular episode revolved around the hospital staff selecting items to be placed into a 100-year time capsule. Colonel Potter (Harry Morgan) donated his Last of the Plainsmen, a book written by Zane Grey (1872-1939). Mention of Colonel Potter’s obsession with Zane Grey novels seems to be a recurring topic within this show. Could Harry Morgan have been a Zane Grey enthusiast?

Since age fifteen I have been entertained by Grey’s writings, starting with The Spirit of the Border (1906), which constitutes the second episode of his Pioneer trilogy. Now, into my eighties, I still read, and at times re-read, some of Grey’s 60 plus published novels.

Riders of the Purple Sage (1912) is considered Zane Grey’s best novel, ranking sixth on the list of 25 Best Western Novels of All Time as chosen by the Western Writers of America (Louis L’Amour Companion). It may be his best, but Nevada (1928), a sequel to Forlorn River (1927), remains my favorite. Why? Perhaps it’s due to what its subtitle suggests: A Romance of the West.

Romance plays a big part in almost all of Grey’s novels, many plots revolving around two pairs of lovers as depicted in Riders of the Purple Sage. Here, a vengeance seeking gunman, Lassiter, is smitten with ranch owner Jane Withersteen. Venters, Jane’s rider, pairs up with Beth. And then there remains the “Masked Rider,” who also plays a key part in this romantic drama.

At the beginning, seven well-armed Mormons, led by Tull who wants Jane as his wife, are getting ready to flog the rope-bound Venters, a Gentile. They resent Venters’ ongoing friendship with Jane, who is also a Mormon. A helpless Jane finds herself murmuring, “Whence cometh my help?” Suddenly, Tull’s men spy a lone rider coming toward them.


The lone rider enters the ranch compound of Jane Withersteen. He dismounts, two black butted guns sheathed in two black holsters dangling from his hips.

Jane makes him aware of what is about to transpire. The lone rider challenges the seven Mormons. “Who are you?” Tull asks, “We are seven!” But then Venters’ voice echoed, “Lassiter!” When they realize that they are facing Lassiter, killer of their kind, they turn around and ride away. Lassiter remains with Jane, becoming one of her riders.

So, where do Beth and the “Masked Rider” enter this story? Remember, Lassiter is out for vengeance. Years earlier, his childbearing sister was abducted by Mormons. He has tracked down, and eliminated, all of those responsible for this misdeed, except for one. Although, by now Lassiter no longer seeks revenge; his love for Jane has changed him. He no longer wears his guns.

Venters, while riding the range, stumbles across two riders from Oldrin’s gang of rustlers. He shoots them. The one wearing a mask still clings to life. He has a bullet lodged in the chest. While trying to save his life, Venters discovers that the “Masked Rider” is a girl, who turns out to be Beth. He carries her to his hiding place in Surprise Valley, where he nurses her back to health. As expected, they fall in love. Toward the end of the story, Beth will be told that Lassiter is her uncle. Also, she will find out that bandit chief Oldrin acted as her guardian, keeping her safe from the other outlaws.

At the end of this western saga, both pairs of lovers flee, but in different directions. Jane parts with her prized stallions, gifting them to Beth and Venters so, while being chased by Mormon riders, they can make their getaway. Black Star and Night had no difficulty outrunning all horses. But there is her other horse, Wrangle, that both Venters and Lassiter feel is the fastest. The winner is decided when Black Star and Night are stolen. Riding Wrangle, Venters chases the horse thief. To conserve energy, the thief switches back and forth from one black stallion to the other. Sadly, the winner of the race meets a tragic end. When Jane asks Venters which horse won, he lies.

At the end of this western saga, both pairs of lovers flee, but in different directions. Jane parts with her prized stallions, gifting them to Beth and Venters so, while being chased by Mormon riders, they can make their getaway. Black Star and Night had no difficulty outdistancing their pursuers, carrying their riders to safety. Lassiter, now without his guns, and Jane with her adopted daughter Fay are forced by Tull and his followers to retreat into Venters’ former hideout. Reluctantly, Lassiter rolls a huge stone that causes a rock slide, sealing the entrance to Surprise Valley—forever.

Will Lassiter, Jane, and little Fay ever escape from Surprise Valley? Will they reunite with Beth and Venters? Will Jane discover the truth as to which horse won that legendary race? Do not fear, those questions are answered in the sequel, The Rainbow Trail (1915).
Trash or Treasure Continues
By Michael Flannery

As a follow-up to my “Trash or Treasure” article about my baseball memorabilia, in the spring Vintage Views issue, here are a few more stories about other treasured sports collections:

HOKEY
At Joe Louis Arena, they used to put hockey sticks for sale at a souvenir shop in the stadium between the first and second periods of the Detroit Red Wings hockey games. I would occasionally purchase a hockey stick. One evening, a Bob Probert (“The Enforcer”) hockey stick was available, and I purchased it. It is a “Titan” stick and at the time was the longest stick in the National Hockey league. The stick was (and still is) in great condition. Bob Probert was a Red Wings fan favorite and spent 50 hours in the penalty box over his hockey career.

Also, sadly fortunate, I purchased a hockey puck signed by the great Detroit Red Wings defenseeman Vladimir Konstantinov the day after the limousine accident on Woodward Avenue that unfortunately ended his hockey career. On October 5, 2019, Vladimir Konstantinov was inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame.

BOXING
I have obtained a few framed boxing posters. One is of the first fight at Joe Louis Arena (that has been torn down) between Larry Holmes and Leon Spinks for the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship. Another poster is of the World Welterweight Championship between Tommy Hearns and Sugar Ray Leonard in 1981 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

In 1985, I met Muhammad Ali at a signing at a hotel in Troy, Michigan; I have a photo and boxing glove signed by the champ. These are two memorabilia items that I treasure.

When cleaning up my aunt’s basement, I found a menu (and a napkin) from Jack Dempsey’s Restaurant at 50th Street and Eighth Avenue opposite Madison Square Garden in New York City. The menu was signed “Best Wishes Jack Dempsey.” Jack Dempsey “The Manassa Mauler” reigned as the world heavyweight boxing champion from 1919 to 1926.

FOOTBALL
I have obtained a variety of football memorabilia including football helmets (one leather helmet that may have belonged to George Gipp, the great Notre Dame All American), and other helmets, footballs, and pennants. When my son was young and the Detroit Lions held their exhibition practices at Oakland University, we used to watch their practices on the hill. After practice, the Lions players used to climb up the hill to return to the University dorms where they stayed back then. My son would bring his Lions football helmet and footballs and meet the players and obtain autographs. I still display those items today.

Additionally, I have a 1970s electronic football game that still has all of the pieces; I usually display and play the game during the NFL playoffs and Super Bowl. When the 40th Super Bowl was played at Ford Field on February 5, 2006, Somerset Mall held a very nice football exhibit leading up to the event. Seated at a table in the exhibit area was the reigning Miss Michigan and the artist Charles Fazzino who was signing renderings of a poster he drew for the 40th Super Bowl. He penned in some special additional drawings on the poster for me which made it very special.

A friend of ours (my wife and I) participates in the annual Mitch Albom charity auction. One year, she won the bid for a pair of signed Khaki pants of Jim Harbaugh’s (the University of Michigan head football coach) and gifted them to me. Harbaugh’s wife couldn’t stand the $8 pleated Khakis he would buy from Walmart. So, he upgraded his trademark Khakis to Luulemon pants. Hmmm, I am still not quite sure where I can display these pants in my collection.

BASKETBALL
I have acquired a number of Detroit Pistons and other basketball memorabilia that I display at certain times. Special to me is a book signed by the late Pistons coach Chuck Daly whom I met. During the heydays of the Detroit Pistons championship years, I attended numerous games and obtained “Bad Boy” memorabilia. On February 4, 1979, the NBA All Star Game was held at the Pontiac Silverdome. The Detroit Pistons commissioned the artist Tom Pilant to illustrate the event. I was fortunate to acquire one of his lithographs—the original is on display at the NBA Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The Pistons used to play basketball at the Pontiac Silverdome. On March 25, 1985, the Silverdome roof collapsed and the Detroit Pistons played at Joe Louis Arena until the roof was repaired. However, I remember my son and I attended a game after the roof collapsed and the Pistons came back to win with some outstanding play from Bill Laimbeer. I recall the place really rocking and right after the game, the “Four Tops” came out and played for the crowd. It was indeed a very special evening.

I took my family to a Harlem Globetrotters World Tour basketball game at Joe Louis Arena in 2001 celebrating the Globetrotters 75th Anniversary. I acquired the 75th anniversary program and Globetrotter basketball at that game.

A number of years ago, I was shopping at a J C Penney store, and they had for sale two Michael Jordan items. One was a really nice puppet on strings that I gave to my grandsons. A second item was a two-foot statue of Michael Jordan, not in his Chicago Bulls uniform but in his “Tune Squad” uniform which he wore in the movie “Space Jams” alongside Bugs Bunny.

THE OLYMPICS
Kerry Walsh Jennings and Misty Mac-Treanor are three time U.S. Olympic gold medalists who teamed up in Women’s Beach Volleyball; my brother won a bid for a cap signed by Kerry Walsh Jennings to add to my collection. Another piece of Olympic memorabilia very special to me is a baseball from the 1988 XXIV Summer Olympics held in Seoul, South Korea, that my late sister brought back for me.

I hope you liked this part two of stories related to my sports collection as much as I have enjoyed sharing them with you. The collections are very special to me and the memories cherished.
Sunday Drive Therapy

By George Schuetz

I wrote this article for the Vintage Views a few months prior to the beginning of the Covid virus. I have a sense that with the new Covid guidelines for face masks, public gatherings, and social distancing now in place, this article is even more relevant and meaningful than when first authored.

Families are spending more and more time in close quarters than ever before. The ability to spend some time outdoors enjoying each other, viewing nature’s beautiful landscape, allows us to decompress from our quarantine and take a break from our virus-induced confinement. It facilitates our ability to cope and be restorative to our wellbeing. We have “Park Therapy” options also, especially now. Parks and trails in your city are treasures to be discovered. In the city of Rochester Hills, our newest jewel is the beautiful Innovation Hills Park on Hamlin Road. A walk through this family-oriented treasure is guaranteed to put a smile on your face!

Hope you enjoy my article below.

Drive Therapy

Have any of you experienced the driving wars lately? It is getting harder to survive today’s battle of the road warriors. Drivers are texting with one eye and watching the road with the other. Aggressive driving seems to be the way of the road, with a driver riding your tail while another weaves in and out to get in front of you. They switch from one lane to the next then back again, only to find you sitting right across from them at the next traffic light. (Does that bring even the slightest urge to smile at the irony?) It sometimes looks like it’s not just the passengers who are texting or watching a “keep-the-kids-entertained” DVD.

At first, I thought the worst violators were gender specific, then age group specific, but I now realize it crosses the spectrum with no one faction getting a pass. I guess I must be the only one driving perfectly! I must confess even my own children and grandchildren are sometimes guilty of displaying little driver etiquette. It seems like everyone is in a hurry to get where they’re going regardless of time commitments, unless of course there’s a trendy coffee shop in sight. Then they’ll cross three lanes of traffic to stand patiently in line for a paper cup with their name on it filled with the treasured Half-Caf, double-shot Macchiato blah-blah (with skim milk of course).

I reminisce back to a kinder, gentler, quieter time. When as a boy, my family went for drives as pure relaxation therapy! Drive Therapy normally took place on Sundays as most stores were closed back then, but occasionally whenever my parents needed a break from their rush, and no zipping to get trendy coffee! Now wouldn’t that be nice! Okay, I’ll give on coffee moments for all you caffeine lovers!

Two brothers, and myself. My youngest brother would sit up front with mom and dad. The rest of us were destined for the back seat, josting for position with the loser getting the middle seat (with the hump to negotiate). Then, once my father closed the door and settled into the driver’s seat, he would point his finger and issue his standard “Now don’t make me stop this car” warning. It was usually followed by the reward carrot of a possible (maybe if we’re good) ice cream stop. At last, we would hit the Adventure Road!

My extended family all lived on the east side of Detroit so if it wasn’t to Grandma’s house, it was usually down Lakeshore Drive. In the summer, you would roll the windows down to breathe in the cooling road breeze, and you could feel your mind and body simply unwind as we drove. The water and sailboats provided a perfect backdrop for an attitude transformation. It was “Sunday Drive Therapy” with no psychologist or yoga instructor required!

In the wintertime, the snow-blanketed estates were converted into an electric Christmas show. All those lights with each house uniquely themed and brightly lit, attempting to outdo their neighbor. All individually and collectively were especially brilliant to celebrate the season. A handful of homes sent music wafting back to us as we drove by. At some time along the trip, my father always chimed in with his version of Christmas sing-along tunes, aka Mitch Miller. My mom favored Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas,” and we kids all had our favs too that we performed in turn. We were all immersed in the moment and in the closeness of our family.

I guess my message is: Today we could all use a little of that old-time therapy chock-full of patience and enjoyment of our surroundings, not based on always racing to get ahead of each other. Optimize the drive time to think, reflect, and enjoy. Have a quiet time to simply relax, breathe, and see the beauty of the land and people without all the angst. No checking phones, no watching movies, no rushing, and no zipping to get trendy coffee! Now wouldn’t that be nice! Okay, I’ll give on coffee moments for all you caffeine lovers! …Let’s all consider returning to “Sunday Drive” type moments…▼
On September 2, 1945, the USS Missouri battleship (BB-63) was in Tokyo Bay, Japan. Representatives were aboard from the Empire of Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of China (not the current People’s Republic of China), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Dominion of New Zealand. They were there to sign the official papers that ended World War II. The United States battleship was packed with U.S. sailors eager to witness the end of the war.

This year in Hawaii, the USS Missouri passed by the USS Arizona Memorial with honor to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. This event demonstrates a full circle from... the event that brought the United States into the war when the USS Arizona was directly hit by Japanese bombers on December 7, 1941. This pass-by was with honor and reverence to those who lost their lives. The USS Arizona was where the United States military suffered the most casualties. This 75th anniversary remembrance was of the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender aboard the USS Missouri that ended World War II.

“The Greatest Generation”

You have probably heard this term and may know where it comes from, or maybe not. Tom Brokaw coined it almost twenty years ago with his 1998 book *The Greatest Generation*.

What are the four contributing factors of the Greatest Generation? Many have written about it, and the following are the most common views of what makes up this generation.

**Sacrifice and Honor**

United as a country in the face of evil, at home the citizens made sacrifices. The soldiers, both men and women, and those who cared for them, were willing to lose life and limb. This generation came together to sacrifice whatever they could to make the world a better place.

**Frugality**

The lack of jobs and money taught this generation to be frugal with anything they obtained. Food was scarce and bread lines were long. War-time rationing became a way of life. They learned to make do. They also learned creativity in the face of scarcity. Frugality for them wasn’t a badge of honor nor was it anything to be ashamed of. It was simply a way of dealing with life in those times.

**Momentous Changes**

Having just lived through the Great Depression and World War I, they entered one of the most prosperous eras in our nation’s history. The changes this generation witnessed are some of the most pivotal in history. They saw tremendous change in the world. Countries were experiencing great shifts in power. Europe was in upheaval, and the United States had yet to flex its military muscle. American thinking leaned more toward isolation, and the majority of the citizens did not want to enter war with foreign countries.

**Work Ethic**

Whether it was the experience of living through the Great Depression or World War II, this generation was grateful for stability and for the opportunity to work hard.

End of World War II...A Reason to Celebrate, then and now 75 years later

On September 2, 1945, the USS Missouri battleship (BB-63) was in Tokyo Bay, Japan. Representatives were aboard from the Empire of Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of China (not the current People’s Republic of China), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Dominion of New Zealand. They were there to sign the official papers that ended World War II. The United States battleship was packed with U.S. sailors eager to witness the end of the war.
Retrieving & Preserving Personal World War II History

The Greatest Generation might as easily be called the “Quietest”

By Karen M. Lemon

With only three percent of the 16 million American veterans of WWII still alive, time is ticking for the personal experiences and emotions of the service men and women to be recorded for posterity. Oftentimes veterans are reluctant to talk about their experiences during war. Family members learn not to ask—opportunity slips away. Thankfully, there are organizations preserving stories, records, and accounts of the veterans. If you think you’ve missed the chance to learn about your loved one’s military experience, it is not too late to piece together a story. Family members might be able to help or dig through old paperwork and, remember, there is always the Internet.

There are many archives for the armed forces and plenty of military research to be had. Our local library has free genealogy sites for library members to discover information about your family. I was lucky enough to find forty plus letters my dad wrote to his older sister while he was in the Navy. He enlisted in 1946 and, being only sixteen years of age, he had to have parental consent to join. The letters helped me better understand my father who was not very talkative to begin with, much less about his service. While unable to write about what he was doing (military censorship and all), the letters still gave us a glimpse into where he traveled, and sometimes what he saw.

In one letter he wrote about how sad and depressing Naples, Italy, was when he was there—a city that had been bombed. Children were begging, buildings lay in ruins. I could not picture the city he saw. A depressing sight for him and others I’m sure.

Many of my friends’ fathers served in the Korean Conflict. My dad’s experiences involved more world travel than his military comrades which took him to various locations like Naples. He traveled around the world on an aircraft carrier ensuring the Axis countries (Germany, Japan, and Italy) were abiding by the terms established in the Alliance Commission.

The National Archives (archives.gov)

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation’s recordkeeper. Of all documents and materials created by the United States federal government, only one to three percent are so important for legal or historical reasons that they are kept forever. For example, absolutely everything from President Kennedy’s assignation.

On archives.gov, a treasure trove of information is saved and archived. There is so much information and the search feature is complicated as with many government websites. I found some tips while navigating this site on Pinterest.

The genealogy sites are very helpful when explaining how to use the advanced search features. These websites cost money to access the various files. That is why having a public library that provides access is good to know. NARA, National Archives & Records Administration (US), also has many locations across the nation; and when you go in person their computers give you access.

The Library of Congress (loc.gov)

The Library of Congress is not just books and physical offline items. It has a website titled “Experiencing War Stories from the Veterans History Project.”

The “everything search” at the top of the home page covers 17 million catalog records for books, serials, manuscripts, maps, music, recordings, images, and electronic resources. You can search all digitized materials by collection.

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) is the list of headings produced from the subject authority file maintained by the United States Library of Congress for use in bibliographic records. LCSH is a controlled vocabulary.

A subject heading is a word or phrase, which describes or represents a concept or topic. Most subject headings are common, everyday words. For example, “dogs” is a subject heading used in our online catalog. People, places, and organizations may also be used as subject headings.

As with NARA, search criteria are critical. If you are searching at the library, ask for help!

The Internet Archive (archive.org)

Note the National Archives and The Internet Archive web addresses are similar. They operate differently. The Internet Archive is a warehouse for digital materials. This organization began by literally archiving the Internet.

Currently, the Archives provide free, public access to 410 billion web pages (accessible via the Wayback Machine) and 20 million books and texts. (including 180,000 live concerts)

From the website: The Internet Archive is a treasure trove of fascinating media, texts, and ephemera. Items would be lost forever if they didn’t exist here. Yet so many of our community members have difficulty describing what exactly it is...that we do here. Most people know us for the Wayback Machine, but we are so much more.

Use the search box on the home page, and then use the techy tools that appear alongside the results to refine your search. A “metadata” search will return all kinds of content, including images and recordings, while a “text contents” search generates documents only.

Tips for using Advanced Search:

- Wildcards (represent one or more characters): For example:
  ⇒ Question mark (?) as a single or multiple-character anywhere in the word, e.g. re:pt for receipt
  ⇒ Quotation Marks (“ ”) around the topic increase correct searches. e.g. “bow ties are cool”
  ⇒ Asterisk (*) for any number of characters at the end of a root word or between key words. e.g. the three *
  ⇒ AND: two topics; OR: choices; AND: excludes. Tigers OR baseball. Tigers AND baseball. Lions NOT football.
- Capitalization is ignored, and most punctuation marks are treated as spaces. (Remove hyphens from ISBN numbers, but not from ISSN numbers.)
- Don’t dawdle—the advanced search automatically times out and ends your session.

Note: When you search photos and prints, the results are individual images. But when you search all digital collections, the results are collections that contain matching items but may also contain unrelated digital items.

Where to Start your Search

Note: There is a search box at the top of the home page that will help you find whatever you are looking for. It’s your best bet to find whatever it is you want. Alternatively, you can use one of the more advanced search features available. For example, you can use a root word or between key words. e.g. the three *
LEARN ON ME... OPC Support Groups & Support Services

By Karen M. Lemon

Sometimes in our lives we all have pain; We all have sorrow; But if we are wise: We know that there's always tomorrow AND a support group that provides someone with an opportunity to be with people who are likely to have a common purpose and understanding of one another. Members of a support group often share similar feelings, worries, everyday problems, treatment decisions, or treatment side effects.

Whether you have just taken on the responsibilities of a caregiver, had a family member diagnosed with Parkinson’s or a vision condition, or experienced the loss of a loved one, a support group is here to help. Group members share your concerns and will open their hearts to you. Sharing your feelings is cathartic and a big part of the healing and coping process. It is important to realize that both the person giving support to others, as well as those who are dealing with a crisis themselves, benefit from seeking assistance.

Here at the OPC we offer “senior” support groups and “plus link” connections to senior specific support services. With many other groups and meetings available, we also encourage you to find the best fit for your circumstances and schedule. Please refer to the OPC newsletter and website for specific support group meeting days, times, and locations (virtual or in-person).

Caring and Sharing Loss

Family and friends are an important part of the support process, even if they haven’t experienced a close personal loss themselves. Grief is a complicated emotion that can feel like you’ve been knocked off balance. There is no typical or right way to grieve; everyone handles it differently. Expressing your feelings and sharing your story with others in a guilt-free environment will help cope day-to-day and on the most difficult days of your grief journey.

Participating in a grief support group can be a healthy first step in the healing process. You will meet others who are dealing with similar losses and will gain a better understanding of the grief process.

Meetings are the third Friday of the month: 10-11:00 a.m. for newcomers with a recent loss and 11:00 a.m.-Noon for continued encouragement and support. Register in advance by calling 248-656-1403 Ext. 0.

Parkinson’s Support

This group, associated with the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, features a variety of programs presented by PD specialists and therapists. Participants share everyday living tips, experiences, and support. This group brings people together with a common bond to validate concerns while addressing emotional needs.

Members are encouraged to share how they:
- Cope with the day-to-day challenges;
- Get the most from their visit with the doctor and ask questions about medication and therapy;
- Instruct the hospital staff in the event of an admission;
- Tell family and friends about PD (they notice before you realize);
- Empathize with other people in the same situation;
- Maintain a good attitude and even laugh at adversity;
- Define what’s important in life and what can be left behind.

This monthly group meets on the first Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., virtual. Call Brad and Linda Potter 586-612-2744 with questions.

Visually Impaired

If you or a family member want to learn how to adapt with having low to severe visual impairments, this OPC group may be perfect for you. The meetings provide useful information, socialization, and support. Speakers are arranged to address the complex issues that may arise when living with loss of vision.

Meetings are characterized by their cheerful, forward-looking, upbeat nature. Many members have been in this group for years, often developing friendships with others in the visually impaired community. This group is open to the public. The meetings are the fourth or last Friday of the month from 10-11:30 a.m. Call to register 248-608-0246.

Caregiver’s Support

Are you checking with or caring for a family member, friend or neighbor arranging appointments, companionship, or assisting with medication management? Those are just a few of the overwhelming duties a caregiver performs that vary from person to person. However, the underlying concerns and experiences are universal.

Being a caregiver is not easy. Caregivers can be patient, loving, quick tempered, guilty, or overcompensating. Your moods are in a relay race, passing through a range of emotions and feelings.

At an OPC Caregiver’s Support group meeting, you will have the opportunity to share your own experiences and learn from others. You will meet a variety of people who also are caring for someone frail, dependent, or suffering from memory loss or Alzheimer’s disease.

Participants receive information, encouragement, and support. Adult respite is available, but pre-registration is required. Call 248-608-0261. This group will resume monthly meetings in the new year on the first Tuesday of the month from 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Counseling

Easter Seals of Michigan offers in-home and office-based private therapy services with a licensed counselor for any adult 30 and older to discuss in a safe and confidential environment what might be troubling them. For more information or to make an appointment call 877-231-0155.

Senior Support Services

The OPC Senior Resource Department offers information and referral resources available in the community on all aspects of aging. We can connect you to helpful programs and services such as: Meals on Wheels, commodity foods, legal, financial, medical equipment loans, and telephone reassurance calls.

Call 248-608-0249.

Lean on us, when you’re not strong.
We’ll be your friend and help you carry on!
Remember... OPC is always here for you.

~ ~ ~

Thank you to songwriter and singer Bill Withers, who passed away this year, for blessing us with the timeless song “Lean on Me”! A song written about friendship but has brought inspiration to many healthcare workers, choirs, and artists who perform their renditions during the coronavirus pandemic.
By Hans Koseck

Thousands of families are still out of power.
I am fine, except for one thing I have trouble breathing.
The Puffer really works, it helps me breath normal.
The government is broke. Our deficit is now as bad, like the end of WWII.
All our vegetables and fruits are picked by foreners.
The new one's comin' in don't no the english and have no trades and no how.

These are excerpts of my buddy's handwritten letter from March 6. They are typical of his thinking and spelling during these last sixty years of our friendship. He says it and writes it as it is: understand-able. He is one of the most honest persons I know. He is serious and also funny. He does not waste his and others' time with no-nonsense gossip. That's my buddy!

Everybody understands what he is saying and telling. There is no doubt. It's perfectly clear. In a literal sense, there is nothing wrong with it. That's he, or him, whichever you like.

People communicate by speaking and writing, and listening and reading, with the purpose and in such a manner that they are able to understand each other. That's all that counts.

If youngsters understand each other by texting, that is their language. For some people the use of sign language is a substitute for oral communication. And bilingual and multilingual friends and families communicate perfectly by mixing-languages up. That's private and funny and others have difficulty understanding it.

When talking, nobody notices all those silent letters of which many languages have too many. Talk is easy. But in writing, silent letters are included as that's the way words in our languages are spelled and recognized.

North American English orthography, punctuation, and grammar are too complicated. They could be a lot simpler and yet be concise. We could modernize and simplify our current language by using logic. There is no use for placing an apostrophe in my mothers apron and to my hearts content. I have only one of each.

A lot of misunderstanding, doubt, and ink could be saved by using logic in writing. The apostrophe (or why not apostrophy since it's symphony and philosophy) when it's necessary to be used, has to be in the correct space. Does it belong to ladies’ or lady’s?

And, let's officially get rid of the Oxford Comma in a series of three. Tom, Dick and Harry do fine with only one comma. That would save more expensive ink and computer bytes.

Here's my point. Who, actually, cares?! Who has the right to judge, ridicule, or criticize!? Know what I'm saying!? Only the language teacher, the proofreader, and the editor are to be concerned and generous.

At the end of a day, like midnight, “Goodnight.” to my semicolon.
Reflection of Winter Time

Ice rinks and hockey sticks, figure skates and figure eights
Winter Olympic trials and Stanley Cup finals
Snowboards and snow skis zipping down slopes with ease
Snowman making and snowball fighting
Snow squalls followed by heavy snowfalls
Watches of winter stormings and frigid warnings
Plowed streets by salt trucks and sparkling-shoveled walks
Bright sun rays after snowfall of just yesterday
Hometown carriage ride with a loved one by your side
Coming in from the cold with hot chocolate on a stove
Cozied by the fireplace so bright
Warmth on a cold winter’s night
Cutting down a special Christmas tree for all to see
Sparkling outside lights bright in the holiday moonlight
Treasured gatherings with family and friends
Winter time thoughts that will never end

Michael Flannery

Windows of the Soul

It was Adopt-a-Pet Day.
The pets were brushed and on display;
I cuddled an older kitten
with whom I was smitten.
He looked at me with pleading eyes,
"Don’t leave me here alone—you’re my last hope, please take me home."
Months later I woke one night
with Itty jumping on me.
Aware but paralyzed I had to fight
with all my might to move.
Itty had never been in my room before,
But something pulled him through my door.
One spring day I saw a robin building a nest
in the apple tree outside my kitchen window.
Soon she laid her eggs.
Looking forward to new life, I felt blest.
But a few days later our vet
called with the results of Itty’s test;
He was dying of an inoperable tumor.
We were to bring him in when he stopped eating.
Watching him every day was heart rending.
One morning I heard a panicked
 clamor of robins.
I rushed outside
to see Itty beside
a baby robin that had died.
I picked Itty up
and carried him inside;
his eyes searched me to see
if I still loved him
for being what he had to be—I grieved.
The next day Itty stopped eating.
Was it guilt over the robin?
His sad, soulful eyes told me he knew
he’d never see me again.
It’s horrible but I was happy in a way,
that on his final day
our little guy had his last victory—
fulfilling his life as a kitty.
Life’s complexities
compel curiosity.
Not a stoic, I ask why,
With no answers, I sometimes cry.

Brenda Seabright

Snow Lady

Lady dressed in fog amidst the snow
Spritely trimming a tall green winter tree,
Tell me how you live, I want to know.
What centering secretes this life’s torrid flow—
Secures your space with such integrity,
Fragile lady dressed in fog amidst the snow?
Is integrity another word for love’s complete control,
An outgo flow that knows no boundaries?
Tell me how you live, I want to know.
Washington’s men fought bootless, frozen toes
In snow against Great Britain’s tyrannies,
Dear lady dressed in fog amidst the snow.
Brave Bruce led his men in rags with hoes
To battle well-heeled foes to victory.
Lady, tell me how you live, I want to know.

Brenda Seabright
No Fans in the Stands
Oh how the virus has impacted our national pastime
With “No Fans in the Stands” it is like a pantomime
No ticket takers at the stadium’s front entrance
No program and scorecard to record the ballgames events
No usher there to take us to our seats
No concession stands open to buy something to eat
No souvenir shop available to obtain that collectible
No vendor selling the hot dogs that are so delectable
No player interviewed in the clubhouse for the latest scoop
Yet still the familiar sound of broadcasters up in the booth
No cheering for that elusiv inside the park home run
No dugout high fives when great hitting and running is done
No fans catching a ball hit out of the park
But the team has that needed spark.
No getting your favorite star’s autograph before the game
Nothing but the virus is to blame.
No lengthy season for only 60 games it is
Thankfully followed by a World Series with all consequences.
Nothing is sacred with the pandemic all around us
Yet still able to play...still watch the game...certainly a plus
“No Fans in the Stands” we currently live by
“Play Ball!” is in our blood and remains our rallying cry.

Michael Flannery

Not a Cloud in the Sky
Not a cloud in the sky
Such a wonder to the eye
A bright blue hue
Treat so true
Sunny day for all to see
Splendid colors of leaves on the red maple tree
A look up to the heavens a sight so vast
Thinking of our future, present, and past
What’s beyond the blue sky in the universe we call ours
Past the sun and moon and planets and stars
Not a cloud in the sky is something to behold
As looking up above never gets old

Michael Flannery

Garden Seasons... Enjoying the Little Things
Welcome to my garden... Come sit a bit.
Friendships and Nature... Food for the soul.

Red Bud tree bursts spring pink
against robin-egg blue sky.
Daffodils glorious yellows
wake to peek at the sun.

Gentle summer rain
brings that special refreshing clean scent
with pitter-patter of raindrops accompanying
birds singing “in the shower.”

Perennial surprises come, from year to year.
Others I know as I know my own.
But all, “Hello, I’m back” they say to me.

Old-fashioned hot pink Peonies are opening
helped by their ant friends and summer warmth.
Vivid blues of Baby Irises too
burst their early summer colors.

Coreopsis abound brightly shining their yellow glory.
Finches and butterflies and bumblebees
kiss the sweet flower tops in a love affair.

With summer dew still on the grass, I clean the birdbath.
From all around I hear them as they come near.
They wait their turn... And I return to our sunroom.
Now I watch them, flying in and around.

Gorgeous, comfortably warm August summer day.
Blues of the sky. Greens of the trees. Perennials of the rainbow.
Bird songs. Gentle summer breeze. All feed my soul.
I am simply being on our patio glider. A happy place...

On a late summer night the cool fresh air
flows through open windows
to the orchestra of crickets and katydids.
Ahhh, gentle sleeping weather.

Autumn Anemones balance pinks atop willowy stems.
Wild Geraniums mound in stunning purple.
They welcome the rebirth of their friend Obedient Plant
with spikes of pastel lavender-pink blooms.

Even as the golden petals drop from Black-Eyed Susans
and leave summer behind,
there’s the surprise green “petals” underneath
encircling seed heads for the finches.

Garden transitions September to October.
Hydrangeas from summer white to pink to now berry.
Sedum from bright pink to beautiful copper.
Maple trees shade the yard in brilliant reds.

As the page turns to this second autumn month,
I change garden and porch decorations.
“Un-eatable” shiny pumpkins that confuse the squirrels.
Baskets of Mums bursting with yellows and rusts and reds.

Ahhh ...thank you Nature.
In the garden, always music.

Maryann Blodgett Wilshere
The Steamer Trunk

By Bill Mihalic

A dmit it...as a caretaker of family heirlooms that have been passed down through previous generations— and a few hundred contributions of your own—you don’t think about those individual items as stand-alone mementoes; instead, you put them in context. In your mind’s eye you envision future generations— perhaps your great-great-grandkids—rummaging through a steamer trunk they find in the attic—excited by the thrill of discovery, enthralled by the historical documents and entertained by the memorabilia that memorializes their ancestors. (Although they’ll be confounded by weird stuff like dial telephones, pencil sharpeners and pet rocks—as well as evidence supporting the outlandish claim that Grandma and Grandpa were once children.)

Perhaps we’re inspired by movies like “National Lampoon’s Family Christmas,” and the memorable scene in which Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase) is trapped in the cold attic and rummages through a steamer trunk looking for warm clothing. He does find some things (socks for his hands, a hat, a dress), but he also gets caught up in the nostalgia of the moment, looking through the memorabilia in the trunk and even setting up the projector to watch home movies.

Whatever happened to steamer trunks? A little history of trunks of yore: Although trunks had been used as storage and furniture for centuries, the use of large (and sturdier) trunks for vacation travel was only in vogue for the first few decades of the 20th century. “Steamer trunk” has become a generic term for those trunks, but it was actually a specific style, and other popular models were the Jenny Lind, Saratoga, monitor, cabin, barrel-stave, octagon-top, bevel-top, dome-top, and barrel-top trunks.

Steamer trunk fade-out: By 1940 those trunks had all but ceased being used for luggage and were replaced by relatively lightweight suitcases that could be carried by a single person. (And yet, that’s when we added wheels and retractable pull handles.)

Steamer trunks today: A quick check on ebay showed 1,418 vintage steamer trunks for sale, with prices ranging from $100 to $60,000. And, from what I can tell, not one of them is being used—or will be used—as luggage. The most expensive offerings are trunks made by Yves St. Laurent and other design houses, and they’re too valuable to be used for actually holding anything. The least expensive trunks appear to have trouble holding themselves together.

Back to Mr. Griswold: The attic scene may provide viewers with a bit of steamer trunk inspiration, but note this: Clark didn’t go into the attic thinking, “Gee, I’ve got a couple spare hours...I think I’ll sneak up into the attic and go through all the Griswold family heirlooms in the big steamer trunk.” In fact, Clark didn’t even want to be in the attic, and he only opened the steamer trunk because he was cold and showing signs of hypothermia. So, if you want to entice future generations to pore through the family heirlooms, yes, it helps to store them in an intriguing steamer trunk, but you might also need to put a really strong lock on the attic door (and turn the heat down to keep the attic cold).

When prolific inventor Nicola Tesla went to that big power generator in the sky, he left behind 80 trunks and two safes filled with paperwork and inventions. Whoever cleaned out his residence donated it all to the Smithsonian. Brilliant! Instant decluttering! (And I’ll bet the Smithsonian even sent their own truck.) Of course, you can only do that if you’re a descendent of Nicola Tesla. (In other words, Griswold kids, it’s not sufficient to drive a Tesla—you have to be a Tesla.)

These days, family heirlooms are more likely to be stored in workshop storage bins, plastic containers, and/or cardboard boxes left over from the last move (or newer cardboard boxes with that smile on the side.) Sure, classic steamer trunks are beautiful and have a lot more allure, but geeesh, how did our forefathers ever get a loaded steamer trunk up into their attic?

A quandary...will descendants value or even bother to look at all this stuff? Do I organize, label, and store my treasures and heirlooms in a way that encourages descendants to at least take a peek through the plastic or be enticed by the label on the box...or on the trunk?

Last year I came across some documents and memorabilia from the turbulent 60s that I wanted to share with our son and daughter. (No, didn’t find myself locked in a cold attic.) I scanned the documents, took photos of the memorabilia, and wrote up a narrative. I copied everything onto a flash drive. I paused at the keyboard, thought for a second, and in a nod to the heirloom stewards of past generations, I keyed in the only name possible: “Steamer Trunk 1.”▼
By Jim Ahearn

Dear reader, by the time you read this, Baby James will be 20 months old and will have become “Little James.” His mother, our granddaughter, has returned to her teaching assignment, and our home has resumed its daycare designation. I (his great-grandfather) continue to be awed by my wife’s ability at age 82 to care for this child and by the child’s miraculous development.

He now runs at full speed wherever he goes in the house. With his full set of baby teeth he eats everything we put in front of him. How does he know when to chew?

He also mimics everything he sees including the spread-apart leg gait I use to maintain my balance. When he walks behind me, those watching him think it is so cute. But I am astounded by his innate ability to imitate.

Even before he walked we developed a ritual. He’d crawl to me as I sat at the breakfast table and pull himself up on his feet by using my pant leg. He would then raise his arms for me to pick him up and set him on my knee. While I ate breakfast he’d point to what he wanted, be it toast covered with apple butter I dunk in my tea, tiny chunks of turkey sausage with ketchup, or blueberries and banana pieces from my cereal bowl.

When he would come into my bedroom he’d pull himself up beside the bed and pat the mattress to indicate he wanted up. While on the bed he’d demonstrate his hand dexterity, and a mechanical interest, by removing the window cranks on the ledge above the bed’s headboard. Now that he is four inches taller, he is able to place them back onto their exposed metal protrusions.

He has become a neighborhood rock star. My wife walks him around the block several times a week. He pushes his former baby stroller giving his large teddy bear a ride. Neighbors, who happen to be watching, wave to him. He also loves trucks, so when the garbage or recycling trucks come by the drivers look for him waving out the front door or picture window and wave back.

I now estimate he understands about 40 words. But only recently has he begun to say a few. His parents have even taught him how to sign two words: more and please. When he wants more of something, like blueberries, he brings the tips of his fingers on both hands together repeatedly, the hearing impaired sign for more. Then he rubs the palm of one hand in circles on his chest that signifies the word please.

Not only do I consider all this a miracle, but I am overwhelmingly grateful we have been entrusted with great-grandson Little James during this pandemic.

His innocence, his physical, mental and emotional development, his unawareness of the corona virus have all had a positive impact on our own mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being. He is our living beacon of hope, and an assurance that God has not abandoned us.

On Monday, November 23, 2020, Jim Ahearn passed. Jim had already written this story about family as he often did. He had many passions: Family always at the top of the list. Also as teacher, counselor, and tutor. Jim loved baseball and coaching; and he loved to fish. OPC was gifted with Jim’s love of poetry. His poetry and articles about his passions have often been published, including in Vintage Views. He treasured opportunities to share his love of poetry with the young and not so young poets. In 2018, Jim received the esteemed honor as the first Poet Laureate of Rochester. His joy for life overflowed from his warm smile.
My dad, an accountant with a passion for photography also inherited a passion for woodworking. He had a talent for figuring out how to do the most intricate processes from his dad, Joe Senior. Grandpa repaired antiques and any wood furniture for customers so adeptly that the new part was visually indistinguishable from the original parts.

Dad graduated at the end of the Depression and had many life values established during those frugal times. I recall as a kid my being fascinated as Dad and Grandpa Joe repurposed wood to make and repair furniture—the original recycling. When my dad was not at his accounting job, he worked side by side with my grandpa helping and challenging each other. If not woodworking, they were fishing (taking me along many times).

Forward in time to dad being retired, and he and mom now having two young granddaughters. With retirement time on his hands, Dad designed a dollhouse for the girls. From his “I might be able to use this one day” pile of wood pieces in his woodshop, he cut every shingle, every piece of siding, every window and doorway, turned the pillars and the staircase spindles. He decided he wanted to buy the “fancy” front door.

The roof is hinged to reveal the attic living space and the hook that releases the front of the house next to the pillars. The house opens to two floors with a kitchen and backdoor, dining room, living room with a fireplace and two-floor staircase, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. Dad made the grass yard “base” for the house to anchor on.

Since the in-awe faces of his granddaughters upon delivery of this dollhouse and many years of joyful playing with the house, the next generation of two great granddaughters and a great grandson have their own memories of fun and imagination here in the yard and rooms of great grandpa’s legacy.

The house sits quietly now in our second floor landing as the great grandchildren are now teenagers. Perhaps one day the rooms will ring again with the giggles of the next generation of children playing, imagining, and making their own memories.

I know my dad smiles down on us. I feel it in his legacy for life—values of family, work ethic, kindness, joy of people, and love of photography.
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