

# "Tips and Tales"

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*An Irregularly Published Independent Screed Produced by and for the Residents of Sunnyside for Sharing News and Information About and of Interest to them*

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*Material for this publication is produced by the residents of Sunnyside's Campus. Everyone is invited to contribute material for consideration for publication. Please send your suggestions, notes, and letters to either of the above residents or to any of the Volunteer Staff (see last page).*

## SURVIVING A TORNADO

It was September 5th 1935 around 4 in the afternoon and we were outdoors playing when we saw William, my mama's helper, coming back to tell us that a bad storm was headed our way. "Miss Ree, you better get those kids inside". Mama told us to get inside and line up along the living room wall and to hold hands. I remember seeing all sorts of things flying around inside the storm headed straight at us. Mama went to get Alfred, a month old, from the bedroom but the tornado hit and the door slammed shut with her still there. The house was lifted off its foundation and landed a few feet away. It seemed like a long time but it was only about 30 seconds. While the house was in the air the kitchen fell off. When the house landed the walls sort of scrunched in. Mama brought Alfred wrapped in a blanket and handed him to Anabel, my oldest sister and asked, "Is he dead?" She was sure that she had squeezed him to death. Luckily, he was ok except for bits of glass plastered to his skin. I remember the look of disbelief on daddy's face when he got home. We were homeless and with no clothes except what we were wearing. In Earl's case that was a pair of yellow pajamas which he had changed into when he got home from school. Mama didn't have time to find him play clothes at the time. That was to come later. All of our clothes and everything that

was in the kitchen was gone. I remember seeing the chickens with no feathers on them and hanging on the fence dead. I think all of the other animals survived. Granddaddy and grandma Spillman lived nearby and we all went down to see if they were ok and found that the front porch roof had fallen in but they were not hurt. We were dispersed between my Granddaddy Raymond's house and friends. Mama, Daddy, Alfred, a month old, Charles, 3 years, and me, 5, all moved in Granddaddy's house which was about two miles away. Anabel, 11, and Betty Lee, 8, went to live with neighbors, the Foster's, and Earl, 7, went to stay with friends, the Vangs. Immediately, Granddaddy Raymond and Daddy went about building us a new home using what they could salvage from the old house and new material as needed. The house progressed slowly with Granddaddy working during the day and Daddy after work. Mama was determined to move in the new house before Christmas and we did. I remember that there were no walls between the living room and the kitchen. It was great fun to run between the rooms through the studs. During the next few months and years we found clothes still on hangers up in the trees and dishes lodged in trees with only small cracks.

>Shared by Jean Watlington

## LETTER FROM "FIGHTING MAD"

The entire following letter applies to my husband, a Captain at the time, 1943-45, stationed in Ledo, Assam (Retired as Colonel, USAR, Harold M Wood). This letter was shown to me by my future in-laws while "Woody" was still overseas. They alleged that the piece was written by him--I don't know for sure and have no proof.

*Dear Editor:*

*I am an infantryman wearing a Quartermaster's insignia, driving an Ordinance jeep and working for the Air Corps. I sleep in India, work in Burma and China, eat British rations prepared in Chinese dishes by Indian cooks which gives me Assam GI trouble for which I am given American pills by Burmese nurses. I shoot at targets in Burma, cleared by Indians, guarded by American with Chinese rations in Indian baskets, backed by American soldiers and lowered by British parachutes. I am A W O L from the unit with which I am on special duty which won't claim me. My orders are issued V.O.C.O., yet I have to refer to written orders when keeping records. My kitchen is inspected by an old Commanding Officer, my mediation booth by my new C.O. and my bed by my C.O. to be. I am played to sleep at night by Indian tom-toms and awake in the morning by singing Chinese. Finally, I am paid by Uncle Sam in Indian rupees to buy Australian beer to drink with American girls to drown my troubles caused by the Japanese.*

*Signed,  
Fighting Mad*

>Shared by Jane Wood

## A BARD'S FAREWELL (Iambic hexameter)

During the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries there were many poor itinerant musicians who performed for tips at fairs and other public gatherings. In the winter, these men sought a manor lord who would take them into their castle. The noble would feed and shelter them; in return, these performers, called "bards,"

would entertain at dinner and for dances. This poem describes a typical experience of a bard. A more fortunate class of itinerant musicians was called troubadours or trouveres.

*The hen that finds its way into my sack till fall,  
Deserts me in this icy clime. The hares I snared  
In seasons past are found cold dead in foxes' dens  
The fish I poached from manor streams are sealed  
in ice.*

*For me this is the fairest time of year. The songs  
I sing in manor halls from frost till spring earn me  
rich meats and treats and more, plus what I feed  
My sack of treasures, not tied down, to sell in  
town.*

*When crocus bloom the steward gives a much  
worn cloak,  
Plus coppers three. But why so few I ask. He  
makes  
A bishop's face "It's for the Trinity." It should  
Be for the Ten Commands! For that I got the  
broom.*

>Frank Barch 2/10/10

## THE GOOD OLD TIMES, THEY AIN'T FORGOTTEN!

We had a most interesting "reunion" on June 15 of this year.

Our good friends Karl and Joan Nieforth spent the week with us - - this is the couple from Connecticut we share a winter vacation with, and also a week here and a week in Connecticut each year. Karl and I were grad students in the same lab at Purdue, 1957 - 1961.

On the sixteenth of June, we had the pleasure of having another of the boys in the same lab, Chuck Davis, and his wife come by for lunch! Now; the three of us all worked for the same major professor, and all defended our doctoral dissertations FIFTY YEARS AGO this coming August!! We were all medicinal chemists (i.e., working on drug design, an interdisciplinary field between organic chemistry and pharmacology). Chuck and Karl worked on derivatives of

diphenic acid, and I worked on analogs of meperidine (master's) and simple cardiotonic aglycones (doctoral). The kind of work we did isn't even done these days, having been overtaken by more sophisticated strategies for "rational" drug design.



Here's the lineup of old geezers -  
me, Pat, Ruth and Chuck Davis, Joan and  
Karl Nieforth.

But boy, did we take different paths after grad school!! Some of you may already know what I wound up doing over the intervening 50 years (teaching at UNC and Sangamon State University, science advisor to State legislature, manager at NSF/ERDA/DOE/FEMA) while Pat raised three kids. Ruth Davis was a pharmacist; Chuck left Purdue to do a post-doc at UVA, then to Eaton Labs in New York, then to med school in New York, back to Eaton, and then spent nearly 40 years as a primary care physician in a tiny, tiny town (Drake's Branch, population: 12,000) in south central Virginia. Ruth helped him set up the practice, starting solo and with four full time physicians when he retired 4 years ago. Nearly 20 years ago, Ruth came down with non-Hodgkins lymphoma - a condition with a 5% survival rate! - and survived! And in their spare time, they spent several periods doing missionary medical work (they are VERY religious!) in Latin America. Four kids (two adopted). Joan Nieforth, Karl's second wife for over 20 years now, and Karl lived in Mansfield Center, CT where he retired as Dean at UCONN's Pharmacy School in 2000.

Among us, almost too many grandkids to count  
<gr>.

We had a ball . . . looking at pictures made during our days at Purdue (including the labs we worked in, and that included one shielded booth I blew up in 1958, evacuating the entire building with a benzyl halide lachrymator!), musing about how we survived constant and casual exposure to stuff that would make OSHA cringe today (i.e., rinsing the reaction tar off our hands with some mixture of methylene chloride, chloroform, toluene, etc. or judging the end of a LiH reduction reaction when the filter pad caught fire) - - let's face it, standards were (ahem) "different" 50 years ago! And "recreation" included playing "dry ice hockey" on the polished lab tops and dropping bottles of metallic sodium and potassium scraps, under toluene, through holes in the ice of the Wabash river just to watch them explode . .

Life is weird.

>Jim Kellett

### **ABOUT GROWING OLDER**

... Attributed to Will Rogers

First ~ Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Second ~ The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Third ~ Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me; I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long way, and some of the roads weren't paved.

Fourth ~ When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

Fifth ~ You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

Sixth ~ I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

Seventh ~ One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

Eighth ~ One must wait until evening to see how

splendid the day has been.

Ninth ~ Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

Tenth ~ Long ago, when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf.

And, finally ~ If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old.

>Richard Williams

### ON EVOLUTION

*Now did we all descend from the ape?  
Or did we by mutation get our shape?  
Was there some form that stood in between  
Us and something poor, ugly and mean?  
Did we slowly grow from that to this,  
Without a mistake and without a miss?*

*Could God have shaped a perfect cell  
And when everything was going well,  
Decided to use it again and again  
And used it until He had made a man?  
Proudly He added the human spirit  
And gave strength, power for us to wear it.*

*Did God in an instant conceive this planet  
And in another, create life to man it?  
Did our God with one word of creation  
Produce a new and bright generation  
That was permitted to make its error  
And subject itself to all kind of terror?*

*Did God mirthfully with one snap of a finger  
Begin a debate that continues to linger?*

*Regardless of how we look at creation  
As one of many in many a nation,  
As must as the poet gave us the clue  
So wisely, "To our own self be true".  
We must acknowledge one central thought -  
Christ came to give everlasting life  
To all that believe. And endless strife,  
Over the how and when of evolution,  
Can never change that glorious solution.*

>Libby Swingle

### A GLORIOUS AFTERNOON

A birdwatcher who has been at this hobby for several years learns that all birds are not created equal. Some species are so rare, or so secretive, that finding one makes for a red-letter day. These days such birds are referred to as "Code 5 birds" (on a scale of 1 to 5). To have seen or heard one of these birds and therefore recorded it on your "life list" gives you status, because you know other birders are envious of your good fortune. I have been birding for 70 years and this was one of my strangest adventures.

This story took place in the late 1950s when I was living in bird-rich country just outside Wilmington, NC. I was pastor to a community made up mostly of commercial flower growers. One of my elders employed a field hand who was frightened by a Barn Owl in a shed, and killed it with a hay fork. Knowing of my interest in birds, the elder brought its corpse to me. It was exquisitely pretty, almost bejeweled, and I was delighted to see one up close, but Barn Owls are (or were) not that rare. I would much rather have seen the bird alive than held it dead in my hands. So in a sense my elder friend "owed me one." It was not long coming.

He called one afternoon to say one of his workers had run down a little bird out in his gladiolus field and captured it. He had never seen a bird anything like it, so he had put it in a box and was sending it over to me. In a few minutes one of his field hands showed up with a cardboard box about five inches square. The top four flanges were each tucked into the other. I had to be exceptionally careful in partially opening the top lest the bird escape. I only needed one glance to know what I had. My heart started pounding at a rapid rate and my fingers fumbled to get the top shut again. What I had seen was black feathers with white speckles, almost like polka dots, on the back of this bird. There is only one small bird in North America that fits that description: a Black Rail.



Rails are birds that live in swamps, and the expression "thin as a rail" is about them. They are built so they can slip between reeds by slimming their posture, thus escaping detection. Black Rails normally are only active in the middle of the night. Few people who wander through swamps looking for them ever see them; they are much more often heard than seen. Of the half dozen rails on this continent, only the slightly larger Yellow Rail is even more difficult to see. What this rail was doing out in a flower field in the afternoon is a great mystery.

Birders love to share their finds, and I had two high school age friends whom I knew would kill to see this bird. I phoned them and we agreed to meet at Greg's house because he had a screened-in porch where we could examine and photograph the rail without fear it would get away from us. Greg had an empty-at-the-moment canary cage. I suggested we put the rail in that--the less the bird was handled, the better, as it was already stressed. So with everything in place, we opened the box and I took out the bird carefully. We took the photographs, one of the boys held the door of the canary cage open, I put the bird in, and closed the cage door. In a flash the bird went right through those bars and flew over into a corner of the screened porch trying to escape us. This little creature, only about 5 or 6 inches long, not much larger than a duckling just out of the egg, made that cage look like it wasn't even there! Believe me, "thin as a rail" is a valid saying!

Birds need to eat frequently to keep up their high metabolism, and this one was hungry and stressed. We caught it, put it back in its box, and drove to a salt marsh of Spartina grass over by the Inland Waterway, opened the box, and let it go. It disappeared promptly into the vegetation, perhaps wondering "What was that all about?" But for the three of us humans, an ordinary afternoon had turned into an unbelievable adventure. And I have an old color photo to prove it.

>John Irvine

## **SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUNNYSIDE COMPUTER CLUB**

Time passes quickly and technology spreads! It is

hard to believe that the Sunnyside Computer Club started at the Highlands over two years ago. Since then, a considerable amount of information has been shared, many friendships strengthened, and more is yet to come.

Meetings continue to be scheduled twice each month; the second and fourth Mondays at 1 PM in the Allegheny room of the Highlands. Attendance has grown to where we have added a back row of chairs and are using the new speaker system to ensure that everyone can hear.

Initially it was somewhat difficult to determine which direction the programs should take. We have a diverse set of computer users here at Sunnyside. Our attendees include folks with a wide range of computer experience using different equipment and software. Sometimes we need help on finding the ON/OFF button, too! "There is no such thing as a stupid question!"

Some participants are just being introduced to living with a computer. Some have a special interest, such as photography or genealogy and wish to maximize their computer skills in these areas. Others have had an entire career based on system development, operating computer systems or using computers to support their activities.

The common factor is that no matter what your experience level, there is a never-ending range of possibilities in expanding how, when, and where your computer and its capabilities can serve you. And what you should do when your computer goes wrong!

We all need occasional assistance with some software or hardware problem. Bring your question or problem to a club meeting. You may be surprised how many people have a similar interest! And our usual emphasis is finding a FREE solution.

Regardless of your level of computer experience, each new program update means a new learning requirement. It seems like a new version of your favorite program will appear just as you are beginning to be comfortable with your current version. Or a new round of advanced computer

hardware appears often. Does it really have wonderful new features which you “can’t live without”? Perhaps we can look at these as the digital equivalent of your old adding machine running out of paper?

Could you use free unlimited voice communication (computer to computer) to any place on earth? Or unlimited calls to any wired or cell phone in the USA or Canada for \$2.99 a month? How about free movies or seeing the TV show that you missed yesterday or 10 years ago? Or near instant delivery of a digital copy of over 2 million free books for your reading pleasure? Or “How do I turn this thing on?”

We recently completed a survey of member’s interests. The majority of our folks use PCs, but Macs are also present. Windows 7 is growing in use, but a number of people still use Windows XP. Many are interested in e-mail and how to protect yourself from computer viruses. We are also sponsoring small group sessions to help with special interests. Our first round of small group sessions covered an introduction to e-Books, readers, free libraries and upcoming opportunities (including a new ending program soon to be available at our local Harrisonburg public library). There will be more on this subject (and others)!

If you have any questions or a special interest, please contact one of the coordinators--Jim Kellett, Mary Yarnell, or Richard Williams. Better yet, come to the next meeting, 2nd and 4th Mondays each month, at 1 PM in the Allegheny Room at the Highlands! Thanks!

>Richard Williams

### **WANTED**

Small glass jars (less than pint-size and no Mason jars) for flowers for patients at University of Virginia. Labels must be removed. (GooGone, available at Dollar Store is good.) Virginia Bethune (568-8336 or [vafromva@live.com](mailto:vafromva@live.com)). I'll be glad to pick them up if it's inconvenient for you to deliver to me. Thank you.

>Virginia Bethune

**THANK YOU!!**

We would like to say thanks to all who contributed books to the Sunny Treasures book sale. It was a great success and as everyone knows the money made went to Sunny Treasures. We had great help with more than 14 residents helping in some way. We plan to have another one in the fall so start saving and collecting books. Cook books also went well.

>Bud and Betty Long

### **FREDA MARTIN**

Freda Martin arrived at Sunnyside in 1995 with more than 100 iris plants. They were initially planted across Massanetta Springs Road behind the rock wall!! Mary Elizabeth Thompson encouraged Freda to have a large garden box built. Freda told Robert Shenk that she didn’t want it to interfere with mowing. With Mary Elizabeth’s help, the irises were dug up and replanted near the upper level parking lot for Village Court Apartments. In the spring, the bright blooms can be seen from Woodside Drive. The blooms are to be seen and enjoyed, but not picked. There are also two standard size boxes near the building. The plants are all named and labeled varieties that can be entered in American Iris Society shows.

Freda became interested in iris after moving in 1957 into a house in Fredericksburg with “flags” in the backyard. Flags are the rather small blue iris found in many old gardens. After visiting a Mrs. Sullivan and seeing her 4,000 plants of many colors, Freda was hooked. As she began ordering more and more plants from the Shriner Iris Catalog, her husband was kept busy digging more and more beds for the iris. She became a member of the American Iris Society - Fredericksburg chapter.

Five years ago Freda was invited by her niece Sherry Morgan to a club meeting for a 90th birthday lunch. She was totally unprepared to be greeted with “SURPRISE!” by family and friends. The highlight of the party was Freda being presented with the Freda’s Gift, a blended blue iris developed by Don Spoon.

At 95 Freda can be seen riding her scooter to the garden box to weed, prune, fertilize, and mulch after the gorgeous blooms have faded in late spring.

>Coni Dudley

## **BOY SCOUT EAGLE PROJECT AT SUNNYSIDE**

On June 4, 2011, Harvey Cox called and told us that Boy Scouts were working on the creek behind his house in the Glen on Glenside Drive. Harvey suggested that this Eagle Scout project would be a good article for Tips and Tales, so he invited us over and his neighbors, Sue and Dick Taylor, provided chairs for Helen and I to observe the work site in comfort.

The creek was originally designed to drain excess water from the lake next to the pavilion down to an existing creek near the west boundary of the Sunnyside property. When the rains were heavy, the creek would overflow the road and the banks and spread water to the backs of several houses on Glenside Drive.

Having been a scoutmaster for four years, I was aware of the amount of planning and dedicated effort necessary to reach the rank of Eagle. The selection, planning, and execution of the Eagle project was most challenging.

Sunnyside was lucky in several ways. In years past, there had been two previous Troop 72 Eagle Projects; one built a bridge over a creek into the northeast end of the lake, and one built a bridge towards the southwest end of the creek. A former member of Sunnyside's corporate staff, Mark Graham, was our contact with the scout troop. Our Buildings and Grounds Director, Robert Schenk, met with the Scoutmaster and the Eagle scouts to approve the Eagle Project, order and coordinate the delivery of materials, and provide supervision during the project days. Our buildings and grounds staff previously cleaned up and dug out the streambed from the lake down to the intersection with the outflow stream, and one staff member stayed with the scouts during the project.



The Scouts Get Started

The Eagle candidate and project leader was Taylor Long of Troop 72 of the Grace Covenant Church. He attends Spotswood High School. Taylor had recruited nine scouts and two adult scout leaders from his troop, briefed them on the project objective, organized them into work parties, and supervised the work progress. One group cut the landscape fabric and installed it over the streambed. The second group carried the rocks and stones from the stock piles to cover the landscape fabric and stream banks. It looked like some of the rocks may have been 25 - 30 pounds each, but each scout would move as much weight as they could carry from the pile to the creek bed. As the distance from the pile to the uncovered landscape fabric got longer, one of the scout leaders drove the John Deere garden truck, with the boys loading the rocks from the pile into the truck, so the rocks could be moved closer to where the scouts were placing the stones.

It looked like the boys ran out of landscaping fabric, so we left the project site. I understand that additional fabric was delivered to the site and the boys came back on the following Saturday to complete the Eagle Project.

The scouts of Troop 72 comprised a cooperative and dedicated group of boys of which we should be proud. I am also proud of Sunnyside for supporting the Boy Scouts of America and providing project opportunities to help them develop the American tradition of helping others.

>Whit Scully

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