

"Tips and Tales"

November, 2013

Volume 5, Issue 6

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

CAR CLEANING ENDORSEMENT

We had a wonderful car detailing job done by
CHE at 435-9244 on N. Liberty St. downtown.
\$50 for the inside or \$125 for inside and out.
Business is located behind a house.

>Virginia and Dick Bethune

REMINDER ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Any Virginia resident over 55 is allowed to audit
classes at a public university free. At James
Madison University (JMU), the registration fee is
\$20 and a commuter parking pass is \$55 per
semester. I'm auditing two courses in Music
History this semester, 8:00 am and 12:30 pm,
Tuesday through Thursday.

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A MINSTREL OF JOY

Sestina iambic hexameter

A form invented by a twelfth century troubadour

*Note from the Author: The form used in this poem
is the most complex form used in western Europe.
It is called a sestina (6) because it consists of six
verses plus a half verse of recapitulation. The poet
selects six words, each of which will be used once
in each verse as the last word of a line. In each
subsequent verse the six end words are used in a
prescribed, changing sequence. In the final half
verse two of the end words are used in each of the
final three lines. I think the reason the poets must
have liked to use this form was that it was safer
than jousting. The six end words used in this
sestina are: free, load, gift, say, pose, know.*

A traveling minstrel I, my life is thought carefree,
They say my lute is but a "whiff"; "You bear no
load
to tire your bones. You get your cloak and shoes a
gift
From lords of gen'rous mind and purse". And too,
they say
"You eat at noble sagging boards with warm
repose."
The truth and pain I'll never tell; no light they'll
know.

The traders' coin is thought hard won and dear;
their loads
Ache much the back and feet. It's true each thing
they say,
They walk not miles, but scores of leagues. They
cannot know
What wares will sell or rot. At home they re-
compose
With wife and children dear. They're home too
brief - their gifts:
A manor grand, rich food, good staff and life
carefree.

I journey at no cost with the traders rich, who say
"Come trek with us; it is more safe. For us
compose
Your songs of love and home and life carefree."
They think me well disposed, for smile I must - a
gift
I learned to win their laughs and gen'rous coin. I
know
They trek through heat and mire and think I bear
no load.

While they unpack in town, I stroll and songs
compose.
They hear my "Fair Day" songs of love. - I share
my gift.

It helps them dream of joy too fleet. So soon life's
load
Will all their lives engulf. The youth pretend, but
know,
This brief pretend precedes a life that's not
carefree.
Harsh wisdom learned too young! They know, but
never say

"How to be happy throughout life – give us your
gift!"

They quiz. I smile to hide the secret I well know.
The lute that is "a whiff" the truth I can't gainsay.
It needs repair, and shoes with holes are not
carefree.

Rare years a steward adds a dank cloak on my
load.

The peasants' hard earned tips buy less than they
suppose.

Though hard, the life of wand'ring bard is all I
know.

'Tis fun to sing my songs, as if life were carefree.
If I dissemble joy, it is a worthy pose.

I know not where to find an even lighter load.
The youths find happiness and love in what I say.
Though very poor, I share with them a priceless
gift:

Those bright and carefree days before the
crushing load.

It is my gift that they'll hold fast through life and
say:

"Those days expose the only gold I own and
know."

>Frank Barch with enhancement by Miriam.

*"In my many years I have come to
a conclusion that one useless man
is a shame, two is a law firm, and
three or more is a congress."*
-- John Adams

THE SUNNYSIDE VETERANS' GROUP

The Sunnyside veterans' group currently has 105
members from all branches of service who have
served for three to over 35 years. 46 have served

in the Army, 29 in the Air Force, 27 in the Navy
and 4 in the Marine Corp. they have served in
World War II, the Korean War and in Vietnam. A
couple of our vets have served during all three
wars. Six of our veterans are ladies and five of our
veterans served as chaplains.

Our mission is to promote a bond of fellowship
among Sunnyside veterans (men and women) who
have served in the Armed Forces of this United
States of America and to stimulate an interest
towards continued patriotism and service to other
veterans in need.

Our veterans willingly recognize and appreciate
the support their wives provided while they were
in training and serving overseas. (Some for almost
30 years.) In our last May Quarterly Meeting the
wives of our current vets and the wives whose
spouses were members of the Veteran's Group
were invited to come to a special "Hats off to the
Ladies" luncheon and program and we had a
wonderful time.

We were particularly fortunate at our August
Quarterly Meeting to have Ken Drifmeyer, son of
Gene and Helen Drifmeyer, one of our members.
Ken described his work to help veterans mentally
transition from the battlefield to their family and
community life. He used his wife, Gail, and his
Mom and Dad to support his presentation. He not
only gave us a different understanding, but it
entered directly into our hearts. He captivated
everybody's attention. It was one the finest
programs we've had in a long time.

When one of our Vets passes away an America
flag is placed in a walnut flag case, crafted by one
of our members, and is presented to the survivor
at the chapel service. On Nov 11 the Vet's Group
will be participating in Veterans' Day chapel
service. In early Dec we will be working with the
Activities Director in support of the Christmas
Gifts for local children Program. In the meantime
we will be developing other programs for
Veterans.

>Whit Scully

AN UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE

In September 2001 we were invited by a friend who owned a travel agency to join him and other friends for a trip to Iceland. We arrived in Reykjavik early in the afternoon of September 8.

We had been warned that the water is extremely hot. There was a separate regulator for making the water hotter but regulated so you didn't scald yourself. All of their heat is hot water pumped from hot springs. Electricity is created by hydro steam generators so heat and electricity are very inexpensive. The eruptions of hot water through ice is phenomenal, hard to imagine.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon in downtown Reykjavik and saw the Hallgrímskirkja Church, the largest in Iceland with the largest pipe organ. That caught Ruth's eye.

We could tell we were outside the U.S. Houses were colorful, bright orange, yellow and blue. The temperature remained cool but pleasant, around 50 degrees with bright sun. The Icelanders, like the Norwegians enjoy the out of doors.

We checked several restaurants for dinner and found entrees ran about \$20 and dinner isn't served until after 6:00 PM. After sipping a big beer we decided on the special. Ruth had tuna with salad and cous cous and I had salmon. The food was fabulous and our waiter a real charmer from Philadelphia.

Our first day out we were taken to the village of Hveragerdi. There Ruth had a ride on one of the famous Icelandic horses. The breed of these horses is about 700 years old. No other horses are allowed on the Island and if any leave for shows or any reason, they are not allowed back on the Island. They are smaller and have a very smooth gait for which they are also famous.

The change in terrain is unbelievable from volcanic rock and no vegetation to moss covered lava rock to farms where much hay is cut and baled to more lava rock in great mounds covered with moss. We saw the largest lava field on the island. When that volcano erupted in the 1700s the local priest prayed that the lava would not reach the Village of Kirkjubæjarklaustur and it did stop just short of the Village. We saw

volcanoes that may erupt at any time. There are spectacular waterfalls, glaciers, fiords, geysers and fields of sheep, cows and horses. The only animal native to Iceland is the fox. Reindeer have been imported for hunts, an expensive sport. There are no snakes, few birds or bugs but gnats attacked us. Many of the high points on Iceland, the highest only 2000 feet, were Islands before Iceland was created. Only 1% of Iceland is forested. They are planting trees and hope in 40 years to be 35% forested. The best tree seems to be the Alaskan aspen.

The Island is 95% Lutheran. Churches for the most part are on privately owned farms, built by the farmer and the priest is paid by the farmer and /or community. Many villages are not more than a half dozen families many miles from neighboring villages. Iceland has 25 hospitals throughout the Island. These families live in very remote areas but seem to have networks for getting the supplies they need.

We had a trip on the Glacier Lagoon in a vehicle like the duck in Washington, D.C. Surprisingly there are golf courses. They have to work hard to get the greens but perhaps easy to maintain since there is so much water. The one we saw had a sheep grazing on it. Good use of the golf course, we thought.

We visited the site of the original parliament, the oldest in the world. They met first in 930 AD. It sits against the North American tectonic plate where the earth has shifted. The Eurasian plate dropped 200 feet. It was around 1000AD that one of the chieftains decided that Iceland would be Christian.

On Tuesday, September 11, we realized we hadn't died from eating 1000 year old ice from the icebergs. Our breakfasts consistently consisted of meat slices, tomatoes, cucumbers, and cheese with choices of breads and delicious smoked salmon. The breads were really good. They also had cereal, flakes, cheerios, granola and yogurt with various jellies. The coffee is very strong. We were served cod liver oil each morning.

On one of our stops this day we waited on the bus as our host talked with someone that seemed rather puzzling. Eventually we were asked to get

off the bus and were herded into a conference room to be told about the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., that four passenger planes out of Boston had been hijacked and crashed into both towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and somewhere near Pittsburgh. This had happened around 9 AM. We got the news at 4PM (noon in the U.S.). We watched the TV and the news was translated for us.

That evening after dinner the entire state of Iceland opened its churches for prayer. At 9 PM our entire group went to the local Lutheran church where another 7 or more persons joined us. The minister led with scripture and prayer in English and Icelandic after which we sat in silence by candlelight followed by the Lord's Prayer, each in his own language. We wondered how many churches at home did the same. What a wonderful act for little Iceland to do for the U.S.

Wednesday the 12th was a clear, cool, beautiful day. It was hard to think about what had happened the day before. Those who had called home were told we were probably in the safest place. Flags were flying at half mast over Iceland. Europe declared three minutes of silence in memorial. It was really touching to see the hotel personnel gather in the lobby for this moment.

We were to have left for Baltimore on Friday but BWI was not receiving flights. Instead we were taken to the Blue Lagoon. It is tinted blue and quite hot in places. A great steam is created by the cold air above it. We also were taken by the President's home where we visited a little church with beautiful stained glass windows and a beautiful little pipe organ. Ruth was encouraged to play. That didn't take much coaxing. She played America, God Bless America and How Great Thou Art. Years later friends who had been on the tour remembered how touched they were by the playing of those songs.

We went to the airport the next day hoping to be chosen since we were on standby. We did get on the plane at 5:35 PM and arrived 7 hours later at BWI. So many had stories to tell but perhaps none quite like what we experienced with the sympathetic people of Iceland.

> Ruth Williams

GOD'S UTMOST GIFT

An Advent Message

Selecting the utmost perfect Christmas gifts lifts us into the celestial realm on the most resplendent of nights. There, a canopy of stars provide a backdrop for myriads of rehearsing stars. The heavenly orchestra awaits command as an angel choir is ushered into place. An audible hush quells the heavenlies as a breathtaking burst of glory heralds the appearance of the maestro. Every element of the heavens bows as they reflect the eternal light of His presence. Maestro Himself moves to center stage, magnificent train flowing. His very breath directs the angelic choir accompanied by the orchestrated stars. At the foreordained time, He commands the harps to blend with the swelling trumpets. Voiceless cymbals echo their climactic crescendo.

God beckons to the humblest of stars, forever overshadowed by the brilliant illumination of its peers. Nearing God, this now holiest of stars is illuminated by the glory of God. Now dazzling, this star is lofted by God's very breath to take its place, prepared for it above a lowly Bethlehem stable. The atmospheric angels hearken and the utmost of gifts is born on Earth. Clouds over Bethlehem dissipate as if swept off stage by this grand finale.

Our perfect gifts pale in comparison. Only by reflecting God's perfect gift can we express a measure of God's utmost gift. Of course, God's gift to all mankind from heaven to Earth was made manifest in the birth of His son. Let's consider one's own gift: Is it anticipated? God's gift, foretold of old, was long awaited. Is it desirable? God's gift fills a desired void in empty hearts. Will it stand the test of time? God's gift abides forever. Does it bring a blessing? God's gift brings peace, joy, and salvation. Will it be beneficial? God's indispensable gift brings eternal benefits. Can it be shared? God purposed His gift is to be shared. Does it have meaning? God's gift means everything to the state of man.

Does it provide a message? God's Son is His message. Is it age and gender appropriate? God's gift transcends all age and gender barriers. Will it be treasured? Like none other, God's gift is free to all. Does it require care? God's gift cares for us. How will it be wrapped? God's gift was wrapped in swaddling cloths. Love wraps well. Will it be costly? God's gift cost Him His Son, Jesus, His life. Does the recipient deserve it? No, but God's grace provides. Can it be handed down generationally? God's gift is the only gift one will ever care eternally, that is passed on to one's family. Where can one find this gift? God's gift is found in His scriptures as well as in one's heart.

Will it be received? This depends on the recipient. What is my part? God's is the gift; one merely conveys its testimony. A gift wrapped in love and prayers can be hard to refuse. All one can do is present God's gift lovingly and prayerfully – perhaps with a Bible – an old worn well-marked Bible can be our most perfect gift.

God's gift remains in all its selfless glory and holiness. This priceless treasure cannot be forced on anyone who, knowing its content, willfully and habitually refuses it. Nor will God do so, though His humble offer is made repeatedly. If one would peel back the layers of God's gift, one would find its core is love; this is the unspoken desire of every heart.

We, as givers, can but reflect this perfect, transforming, gift. It is our highest calling and ministry to make God's gift available to others by offering our hearts. If one has received this ultimately perfect gift, Christmas is the perfect time to share it. This gift will be eternally remembered, whether or not it is received.

> From Kitty Bennett, shared by Frank Shakespeare

SOARING SENIORS!

October was a good month for Sunnysiders getting off the ground! On the 21st., nine of our community took to the skies in a hot air balloon,

taking off from the Boar's Head Inn in Charlottesville for a perfect hour long early morning flight. After floating over and in a fogbank, and landing in the front yard of an Earlsville family, they retired for brunch at the Boar's Head where they found in the dining room ANOTHER Sunnyside couple (who will remain unnamed here) who THOUGHT they'd sneaked off for a little getaway!



Ready on the right!



Ready on the left!

Here's one Sunnyside aeronaut's explanation:

OVER THE TREETOPS

As the amazing hot air balloon leaves the ground and floats slowly upwards, I leave the noise, uncertainty, anxiety, and complexity of the earth and its world. I feel calmness and peace. I breathe deeply and look around at nature and all its wonders. The quiet of separating from everyday life consumes me. I have a short vacation from TV and electronics, and see a different perspective of life. Above the treetops the wind is soft, the season is changing. I know that the path is uncertain, but I am going where I want to be.

>Marlene Gillikin, after our Hot Air Balloon ride

Earlier in October (on the 14th), Billie Brown and William Young took to the skies in a glider from the Front Royal airport to check off one more item on their bucket lists!



William Young

Billie Brown

It's hard to keep active Sunnysiders on the ground!

OUR SENIOR CLASS TRIP TO NEW YORK CITY

It was a small town and a small school - my first year there and also my last, as I was a senior. The following events made me think that taking the seniors to New York City was a new idea and had never been done before. Our chaperones, Mr. Allen the principal, and the history teacher, Miss Perkins (not their real names), were hardly more sophisticated than we were, and some of us almost got into big trouble. After the show at Radio City Music Hall one evening, one of us asked Mr. Allen if some of us could take the subway down to Coney Island. The dear man must have thought, "These are good kids; they wouldn't ask for anything unreasonable." So he said "yes", and off we went, five of us, on an almost empty train, on and on, maybe an hour or more through the October night until we arrived at the deserted fairgrounds. The Ferris wheel and roller coaster and all the other rides stood like ghosts. We looked around. We looked at each other - and laughed and laughed. About one AM we got back to our hotel and, not surprisingly, were met in the lobby by two worried and angry chaperones.

As if that weren't enough stress for the responsible adults, the next day we attended a Broadway show. It was not a play, not a musical, but a "Review", which turned out to be a series of sexually suggestive skits and dirty jokes. There was enough light in our balcony section for me to

see the countenance of my poor, innocent principal turn white, then red, with embarrassment. I couldn't see Miss Perkins but it wouldn't have surprised me if she had fainted dead away.

To us kids, of course, it was a great lark, but I now cringe for our poor chaperones and imagine that they were better prepared for the next senior trip to New York City - if there was one.

>Florence Raynal

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." - Charles Darwin

A TRIP WITHIN A TRIP

When our oldest daughter graduated from St. Andrews College in 1985, she wanted to "do some fun travel" before settling into a serious job. Her first venture was working for a small cruise line which traveled the Mississippi River from St. Paul, Minnesota to New Orleans, Louisiana. Some months after she began working, her Dad and I decided to rendezvous with her.

On the way to our appointed destination, we stopped at Hannibal, Missouri. Over the years of reading to my third and fourth graders, I had become a huge fan of Mark Twain. That was on my 'read aloud' list to students, and I was eager to see the town and visit the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum. One display at the museum was all about the procedure of boats as they traveled through the lock system in place there in Hannibal. So next, we followed directions to the Hannibal Lock and Dam Site.

We had only been there a few minutes when a very friendly, somewhat weatherworn looking gentleman came by. As the three of us chatted, we learned he was the tugboat captain and he proceeded to say he had just gotten a call to "to up river" about a mile and a half to meet a barge.

He started to walk away . . . then stopped and said, "Would you like to go with me"? I hesitated and said, "What about all those posted "NO TRESPASSING signs?" At that point he turned to squarely face me and aid, "Lady, I own the damn place. Do you want to go or don't you?" Of course we did. We maneuvered a fence and several concrete barriers and climbed on board. . . standing room only.

Here I was on Tom Sawyer's Mississippi River, feeling just as Tom must have!

As we approached the barge, a strange thing happened. The closer we got, the barge appeared to get larger and larger. I've never in my life felt so small and insignificant. All conversation ended as the captain and the roar of that little (but mighty) tug took over. With skilled precision, the captain eased that loaded barge over to our right and lined it up perfectly with the locks, slipping it right into the center of the first lock. We backed off and I breathed again!

What a ride and treasured memory.

>Mae Guthrie

ANY CARTOONISTS OUT THERE?

Who's got a sharp wit and some drawing skills in our community? Perhaps they would like to contribute an occasional original cartoon to Tips & Tales? (Just no partisan politics, please . .

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