Excerpts from Our Pages of Life

Volume XXIb—Thursday Morning Session

Behaviorists, educators, and scientists, even just plain people—mothers and fathers included (especially)—, generally agree upon the importance of repetition in the learning process. Twenty-one is often the number accepted as the magic number to establish habits. Doing something over and over again, twenty-one times, researchers say, makes a thing a habit. This volume of life stories marks the twenty-first time I have introduced such a varied collection. Has it become habit, then? I understand that a good introduction should simply *introduce,* say what's going to be said, invite the reader to listen, and then proceed with no hitches—but to do it automatically? As I sit transfixed, a bit anxious, in front of the computer screen, staring down all the possibilities of what I could say in retrospect of this semester and in praise of my students, I am left dumb. Where has the ability to "do without thinking" gone? Maybe—and this may be a good thing—these writings will never become habit for me, unless there is such a thing as a habit of the heart. I love these people, some who are family to you, others friends, some just brave writers. But I'm afraid I'll never do justice to their work. Not in two hundred words, not in two thousand. In my experience as their teacher (only in title, child in heart), I have seen and heard too much. The unwritten silence, the unseen tears, the between the lines mysteries, the unspoken secrets. My personal investment in the lives and stories of these students discounts me as an objective voice. I have respected their unspoken words, shared their tears, acknowledged life's mysteries, and protected their secrets—*and* I have suffered with them through the writing process! The work's been done, the furrows dug, the seeds planted. All we ask of you as readers, then, is that you reap the reward of these writers' words, habitually spoken (and written!) from their heart (and mine!).

—Joan Stear, USL
Spring 1998

Thanks to the Horizons Department at Lafayette General Medical Center and University College and the English Department at the University of Southwestern Louisiana for their continued support of our efforts. To everyone else, a capital THANKS! (Habit, maybe. Routine, never! Fun, always!)

Front Cover: (*clockwise, beginning at top right corner*) Lucien Martin; Jake Valentine (and gators!); Pat DeLatte; Mary Langford and grandson James; Pat DeLatte

USL LIFE WRITING CLASS
Spring 1998 • Thursday Morning Session

Seated, left to right: **Lois Diehl; Marie LaCaze; Marge DeVillier; Jane Ellen Carstens; Betty Speyrer •• *Standing, left to right:* Lucien Martin; Jake Valentine; Doris Bentley; Joan Ireland; Ruth Maher; Pat DeLatte; Mary Langford; Joan Stear, *Instructor* ••**
Missing from photo: **Rosemary Aycock; Betty St. Dizier**

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MAGIC TIMES

by

Rosemary Aycock

The house on the hill on the outskirts of Natchitoches, the oldest town in the Louisiana Purchase, was not the most convenient location for our one car family with the need to balance travel requirements of Daddy's teaching schedule and Mother's almost daily shopping tasks. But for Brother and me, ages five and seven, it was a dream come true. For next to our house was a deep ravine with a busy stream running through and plants of every variety growing in colorful profusion. Bordering its entire length was the most wonderful canvas--a tall, towering wall--a wall of hard, beige colored sand.

Can you imagine the fun of hide and seek in the foliage, the wonder of discovering and touching jack-in-the-pulpits and Louisiana iris, digging in the sometimes warm, other times cool, water of the stream to capture snails and tadpoles! Most of all, I loved our never ending happy moments of drawing on that fascinating wall.

At times we would hear only the tapping of a noisy woodpecker in the pine trees stretching high above us or the particular calls of the blue jays and mocking birds as they flew through, we knew, to keep us company. Only the cold of north Louisiana winter curtailed our hours of discovery and artistry in our ravine garden. Little did we realize the hours of peace and quiet that same ravine brought to Mother.

In later years, Brother, back from Virginia for a visit, decided we should travel to Natchitoches to check on the old homestead. We located the spot by the sight of the walnut tree still at the front of the property. Seated under its branches, we had spent hours of mesmerized observation as the tanks of General Patton rolled past on summer maneuvers out of Ft. Polk. The house was gone, destroyed by fire. We learned this later when we stopped for meat pies at Lasione's, the famous cafe in town. But our ravine was still there--and yet, it wasn't.

For what seemed a very deep gorge, an active stream, and a towering wall was not to be found. In its stead stretched a less than noticeable depression in the landscape bordered by a small slope to the other side. Only a sliver of water trickled through.

Our eyes met questioning. Was it the seasonal elements and ravages of time that had so transformed our play spot? Or had we changed? Had Brother and I lost the imagination of childhood that makes the ordinary so magical to a five and seven-year-old? We questioned aloud, sharing our disappointment, then walked away, wondering.

GOOD GOLLY MISS MOLLY
by
Marge DeVillier

Claire, do you remember when you and I had limestone spread on our connecting, circular driveways for the first time? We were so pleased and had worked so hard raking and smoothing out the limestone when Ralph Cormier, the man who dug our water well and installed our water pump, drove into the driveway. He turned too short with his huge boat--Miss Molly--and Miss Molly slipped off the driveway into the ditch.

I had just finished smoothing out the limestone--not one stone was out of place in the limestone over the culvert covering the ditch in my driveway. I was sitting in a lawn chair on my small porch attached to my trailer admiring my work when Ralph decided to stop and check on the water pump that I had reported wasn't working properly. So on his way home to Breaux Bridge after a day of fishing and shrimping on the Vermillion Bay, he decided to stop and check the water pump. Ralph misjudged the driveway and messed up all our neat, hard work on my driveway. It seemed like every jeep in the parish stopped and tried to pull him out, but to no avail. It finally took a large truck and chains to pull him out. While the men worked, I asked Ralph's wife, who was sitting in the truck, to come and sit on the porch with me.

The porch was poorly constructed and the rails were wobbly. My lawn chair was lower than the rails so when I adjusted my chair, the legs slipped off the porch and I did a back flip off the porch. If I had had a video of the back flip, I'm sure I could have won $10,000 from America's "Funniest Videos."

Miss Molly finally pulled out of my driveway later that day with very little damage to the boat. Not so my new driveway nor did Miss Molly's owner ever repair the driveway as promised. When I asked him about it he replied, "What's to repair?"

Good Golly Miss Molly!

I GOTTA WALK SWOO-WEE
by
Joan Ireland

I was visiting Patti and Tony at their home in Texas City late in January of 1998–also spending treasured time with my two grandchildren, four year old Tony and three year old Katelyn Rose. After a few hours spent in their company, I realized anew why parents--not grandparents--bear children. They nearly ran my sixty plus legs to the bare bone. However, my story today comes from a story or anecdote my son-in-law told me about little Tony.

Early one morning, Tony (Daddy Tony) saw my grandson, Tony, twist and turn in his bed. Realizing that his son had to go to the bathroom, Tony shook him awake and told him to go to the bathroom. Little Tony, deep in the land of nod, didn't want to wake up so Tony picked him up and sat him on the floor with instructions, "Hurry Tony, run, run to the bathroom!"

Tony, with his eyes shut tight, stumbled to the bathroom with the retort, "But Daddy, I gotta walk swoo-wee." Tony isn't able to say the 'L' sound and some of his words have to be interpreted, but his meaning was clear, he had to walk swoo-wee.

This story reminded me of something that happened to me over 35 years ago.

It was 1963. Ray and I had been engaged since early in the year and were eagerly planning our May 11 wedding. My mother, with a little help from me and a lot of advice from my favorite grandmother, Little Grammy, had finished designing and making my wedding dress.

One night, Ray and I planned to go out to supper at Friendly's–a popular ice cream restaurant that served delicious meals as well as almost every variety of ice cream. As I was getting ready, I saw a new dress that my mother had just bought. It was beautiful and, as my mother and I wore the same size, I asked her, "Mom, are you going anywhere tonight?" She said, "No," but I sensed that she really didn't want me to wear the dress. Then my Dad said, "Oh, let her wear it." With Mom's blessing I wore the dress and left soon after that on my date.

Instead of going down town to Friendly's, Ray drove in an entirely different direction–to his buddies' home–Charlie and Charlotte, who lived on Fall Mountain Lake Road in Terryville, Connecticut. I had never been too enthused with these friends of Ray's. Charlie chewed snuff and spit and Charlotte seemed artificial. I was never comfortable in their home. As they were friends of Ray's I tried to accept them and so, on this day, I went with him and visited with Charlotte while Ray went down to the basement with Charlie.

Meanwhile it was getting late and I was hungry--hungrier than I was happy to spend time with Charlie and Charlotte. Finally, after over an hour went by, I went down to the basement and found Ray and Charlie building shelves in a corner of the basement. I told Ray I wanted to go and he said he would be ready in a few minutes. After a half hour joined the first hour, I was getting upset–very upset. I stalked down to the basement and told Ray, "Ray, I want to go. Hurry!"

Ray's reply, "I can't hurry," was typical of his lifestyle. Whatever he was doing was always of utmost importance--he didn't like to be interrupted. Ray was always precise working always at his own pace which, unfortunately, was much slower than mine. Perhaps this was a result of his occupation as a setup man or engineer as he designed and made tools for four-slide machines capable of doing many functions at the same time. However, his reply, "I can't hurry" was not what I wanted to hear.

Our courtship or engagement almost came to an abrupt halt. I liked to do things quickly. I worked at Spector Freight System and was responsible for expediting and tracing shipments from Connecticut's fast growing industrial to the midwest. I never walked when I could run. Ray's "I can't hurry!" almost became the straw that broke the camel's back. However, Ray came upstairs within a few minutes and we were on our way to Friendly's. A quick kiss and I forgot all the time I had spent waiting for someone (who couldn't hurry).

In due time we arrived at Friendly's and I went to our favorite booth when I saw Ray wasn't stopping. "Where are you going? This is our booth." Ray didn't answer, but proceeded to the door that led into a large room used for banquets and opened the door--to loud cries of "Surprise! Surprise!'

My mother, sister, and friends had surprised me with a surprise bridal shower. As my eyes focused and I saw the sea of family, friends, and church members, I

finally realized the reason Ray couldn't hurry. He had orders to keep me occupied until everyone got to Friendly's so that they could give me a surprise bridal shower.

My mother, especially, had a lot to do before she arrived at the shower. She had to get another dress to wear to the shower. I was wearing the dress she was going to wear as the proud mother of the bride.

When I am tempted to tell someone, "Hurry," I now hold my tongue. There might be a reason for them not to hurry. Perhaps it is just to stop and smell the roses. Or they may have a special party planned for me. I think I'll just walk swoo-wee.

WHO IS THAT ANNOYING PERSON?

by

Lois Diehl

While attending Marietta College, I worked throughout the summers at the Mt. Holly Bank earning personal expense money for the next school year. It was difficult stretching that money throughout my entire freshman year. So the first semester of my sophomore year, I took a part time job with the Mathematics Department to earn a little extra. I was assigned to work with Mr. Raymond Huck. Mr. Huck was a tall silver haired man who was always impeccably dressed. He reminded me of a prim and proper English butler.

Mr. Huck turned over to me the homework papers of two College Algebra and Analytical Geometry classes to grade. I think I was paid seventy five cents for each hour I spent grading. After several weeks of uneventful grading, I found a student's paper that I had graded the previous time with a problem circled that I had marked as incorrect. There was a brief note informing me that I had made a mistake. There was no mistake. I simply could not read the chicken scratching. I regraded the paper and forgot about it. Before long I was getting papers returned after almost every class from this same student with annoying little comments. I was glad when the semester was over and I would never hear from this student again. I had no idea who the annoying student was--a he or a she.

The next semester my advisor, Dr. Theodore Bennett, decided it was time for me to enroll in one of the two required applied mathematics courses, a course requirement for every mathematics major. Dr. Bennett-- a white haired, partially bald, genius--was also Chairman of the Mathematics Department. He was a witty man who liked to play practical jokes. He insisted that I enroll in Dean Sandt's Surveying class. As he signed me up, he laughed and said I would "just love it." Dean Sandt, the diminutive Dean of Men, was one of very few men with whom I could stand eye to eye. I was unaware that he did not like women enrolled in his classes. I'm sure Dr. Bennett would have loved to have been present to see the expression on both our faces when I walked through the door. I knew none of the guys in the class. Most of them were Petroleum Engineering majors, also taking a required class. That first day, Dean Sandt assigned each student to a four member team to work together all semester. That spring I spent a lot of time out in the field, as well as, over the drawing board with my three teammates. Many times when we were together out on the campus, one of the guys

from another team kept hanging out with our group. He always seemed to know where we were working and would strike up a conversation. I finally asked Gene, a teammate, if he knew who this guy was. The name was the same one I had seen the previous semester on the math papers along with the annoying little notes.

I later found out that all those notes were written to get my attention. After persistently showing up wherever I went and asking me out near the end of the semester, I finally went to a movie with him after finals and before I left for summer break. Who was that annoying person? I married him a little more than a year after the Surveying semester.

MY FIRST TWO CARS
by
Lucien T. Martin

In 1937 I had accumulated a few dollars from odd jobs. It was still the Great Depression, and permanent jobs were scarce. My uncle Alexander Constantin had an old Model-T Ford in his garage gathering dust because it needed some mechanical work on the engine. He wanted to get rid of it and told me I could have it for $25.00. I had the money in my back pocket, so we made a bill of sale on the spot. I was the owner of a Model-T Ford that day.

The first thing a man usually does when he buys a car is to kick the tires. My new Ford's tires were all low and one front tire was flat. The spare was also flat. With the air pump in the car, I inflated the low tires.

I jacked up the front wheel of the flat tire and removed it. The rim holding the tire had a hinge to loosen the tire from it. With the tube off, it was easy to locate the nail that caused the flat by running my hand inside the tire. The nail was easy to remove. I aired the tube and ran some water over it to locate the leak. Then I put a sliver of wood about the size of a tooth pick into the hole so it would be easy to locate afterwards. I searched the garage and found a box of patches on a shelf. The tube had to be roughened up with a scraper in the kit. I then a applied a small amount of rubber cement in the kit to the scraped area and spread evenly with my finger. I blew on the cement so it would dry faster before applying the patch, which had a removable cover over it. I peeled the cover off and applied the patch to the prepared surface, putting pressure on it to ensure an even seal. Finally I installed the tube back into the tire, and put the tire back on the rim and then on the car. It was ready to roll. I walked back home that day, though I had done a day's work already. The car could wait another day to get hauled away.

The next morning I milked the cows and did other chores before getting my horse from the pasture. I saddled her and put a collar on. I hung the trace chains and single tree around the saddle horn. After breakfast I talked Pop into coming with me to haul the car back home. He rode in the saddle with me in back for the trip to Uncle Alex's house. When we got there, I took the saddle off Old Bess. We pushed the car

out of the garage to head it in the right direction. I tied a rope to the bumper of the car and hitched Old Bess to the rope.

Pop sat at the steering wheel of the car waiting. He had work to do at home and wanted to get started. I took the reins to guide the horse ahead of the car. The first part of the trip was easy going since it was downhill, but I had to prod the horse to make the uphill portion. It was about a half-mile trip, so it didn't take long to get back home.

I parked the T-Ford under a large chinaberry tree. Now the fun part was to get the car to run. The first thing I did was to lift the hood up and look inside. There was no odometer, but my guess is that it had very low mileage. The Ford had a coil for each cylinder. I took all four coils out, and cleaned and adjusted the points with a "little round" dime. The dime was worn to a smooth surface. It would be my feeler gauge for the coil points adjustment from then on. Into the tool box it went. The distributor was next. That also needed some cleaning and oiling. I took the spark plugs off. The plugs at this time were made in two parts, making them easy to clean and adjust.

What a long day, but I wished it was longer. Supper was ready, so Mom rang her old dinner bell. She didn't have to ring it twice. I was both hungry and tired. I cleaned my hands and face with kerosene. The wash basin was at the water well, which was hand operated. I took a quick bath in the carriage house nearby where Mom had laid out a set of clean clothes for me.

I don't remember supper. It probably was eggs, cornbread, sweet potatoes, and milk. After supper, I went outside and sat on the kitchen steps to admire my first car. There was still a lot of work to be done on it. Pop came out and sat with me.

"I'm going to town tomorrow morning. I'll take your battery to Simon's Garage and have it charged for you. I'll also buy some oil and a can of gasoline for you. My treat," said Pop.

"Thanks a lot, Pop. I owe you one," I replied.

I slept like a log that night. When I go to bed, I leave my worries behind. Well, not this night. I woke up once and had to glance out of the window to see if the old T-Ford was still there. I admired it for a long time before going back to bed.

The next morning I was up early as usual. I did the milking and other chores. I ate breakfast and went to the car. It was still parked under the chinaberry tree.

There are only two things that make a car run—a proper fuel to air ratio and a spark at the right time. I had already worked the ignition system on the previous day, so the next project was to take the carburetor apart. The gasoline was gravity fed to the carburetor. There was some gasoline left in the tank that smelled stale, so I drained it and put it aside. Then I cleaned and adjusted the carburetor, finishing about noon.

Pop was back by then. He gave me the oil and gasoline he had bought. The battery would take two days to charge, he told me. I had enough things to do to the car to last for two days or more.

After dinner I cleaned and oiled every movable part of my Model-T. The engine didn't have a dip stick for checking the oil. Instead, there were two small drain cocks on the engine oil pan. When the oil was low, the lower cock would not leak oil. To add oil, the upper cock was opened and oil added, observing the upper opened cock. When the oil flowed from the opened cock, it was full, then the cock was closed. There was a special tool to open and close the cocks. It had a long handle so you didn't have to crawl under the car to check the oil.

I drained the oil from the crankcase. It looked OK to me. Still, I put the new oil Pop had brought and set the second hand oil aside for later use. I poured the fresh gasoline Pop had brought into the tank. There were no leaks at the carburetor. The car was ready to start. I was tempted to borrow Pop's battery to give it a try.

Instead, I gave the car a good wash job. The paint was still in good shape. One day I would give it a good polish with a can of black Shinola shoe polish.

Pop and I went to Simon's two days later to get the charged battery. The day had come when I could actually see if the car would run when we returned home. I immediately installed the battery in the battery case located under the floorboards of the rear seat.

There were two levers, sometimes referred to as two ears, extending from the steering column. The one on the right was the accelerator, which I set half way. The other was the spark advance. That had to be set as high as it would go to prevent the engine from igniting too soon and creating the engine to backfire and turn backwards. Of course, that would create a problem for the person cranking. Some arms were broken from the spark being advanced too much. Most of the time it only caused the wrist to be twisted. The choke was located on the dash and also in front to the engine right below the radiator, so the person cranking could also choke the engine.

The moment had come. I set the ignition on battery, not magneto, the other setting. The starter button was located on the floor board right next to the seat. I crossed my fingers, pulled the choke out, and pressed the starter button. It fired on the first crank. The whole family was out to cheer. They all climbed in and I took them for a short ride.

Next was the registration, title and license plates. I had to borrow some money from Pop to pay for these transactions. Now that I had transportation, I immediately applied for a job with (G. R. C.) Geophysical Research, a seismic company operating in the Atchafalaya Basin. I was told there was no opening, but when I told them that Mr. Esteve Martin had sent me, I was immediately hired. It pays to have connections and wheels.

The floor boards of my car were made of tongue and groove boards. On cold days by removing the boards, the warm engine air would come directly into the car and keep the car warm.

The Model-T has an individual coil for each piston, four in all. When energized with the battery, the individual coils would buzz, creating a constant spark of electricity to its individual spark plug. The spark created was in the thousands of volts, so intense that it could lignite a piece of paper when placed across the spark. I then conceived the idea of using an extra coil for a cigarette lighter. I wired the coil to a switch on the dash and connected the wire to the battery to produce the spark. A pair of well insulated wires were connected to the spark end of the coil. The bare ends were about 1/4" apart. I tried it on a piece of paper. Bingo! The paper caught on fire. I had just invented a cigarette lighter for a Model-T. I rolled up a cigarette from my pack of tobacco and turned the lighter switch on. A beautiful blue spark arcing across the wires, danced in readiness to light the cigarette. I put the cigarette between my lips and

held the "cigarette lighter" to it. Thousands of volts immediately formed a spark across the cigarette. These facts are well known to me, but the moments before the testing ot my invention, I had forgotten that water is a good conductor of electricity and that tobacco is a damp product, especially when it's combined with the moisture of the lick of the paper on a home made cigarette.

Boom! Bang! Capow! It was like a bolt of lightning had struck me. The car door was open and I was jolted out of my seat, my head hitting the roof of the car. Gravity then took over and I came back down out of the seat on to the ground. The lighter wire fell to the floor of the car. I got up, a bit shaken, and reached the switch and turned it off. Back to the drawing board.

I then installed the hot wire to the dash. Next to it I secured a hook to hold some sheets of paper cut in strips about ½" by 1 ½". To light a cigarette, I would rip off a strip of paper, turn the switch on, insert the paper between the sparks of the lighter and voila a burning piece of paper. Then I could light my cigarette with fire, not electricity. Now I had heat in the car and a cigarette lighter, a radio would be nice to have. My wish came true when a friend of mine offered an old one that needed some work done on it. I bought it to the radio repair shop and had something tuned and a tube replaced. I installed it and it worked.

There was a contraption on the market that could be installed in the exhaust pipe to bypass the muffler when it was opened. I bought one and connected it in the exhaust pipe. When it was open the car would make a lot of noise. I soon discovered that the device was illegal when I made a main drag with it opened. I didn't get fined though, just a warning ticket. I removed the bypass and had my warning ticket voided.

The Model-T was kept running quite well. With plenty of abandoned cars in the neighborhood, I was able to obtain a spare engine which hung on a tree branch, much like a person would keep a spare tire, just in case.

The job with the seismic company was only temporary, lasting 'til the end of summer. I then applied for a job at Mary's Syrup Mill at Gloria Switch. I was hired for the duration of the cane season called "roulaison", about three months or so.

The Model-T came in handy when I worked at Mary's Syrup Mill at Gloria Switch on Gloria Switch Road. If I remember right, the pay at the mill was $3.00 per

day for a 12-hour shift, seven days a week. The mill did not pay overtime, since the Federal law on minimum wage and overtime only applied if the mill sold its product interstate.

I was the only person with a car in my neighborhood, so my three passengers each paid me for transportation to and from the mill.

There was a handle next to the drivers seat to keep the Model-T in neutral. There were three pedals on the floor engaging three brake bands enclosed in a transmission housing full of heavy oil. The one on the right side was for braking. The middle one was reverse and the left one served three functions. Pressed slightly, the car was in neutral. All the way down was first gear and when the pedal was released, the car was in high gear. There was no second gear. The oil in the transmission case became thicker in cold weather causing the transmission to be slightly in gear, even in neutral. Sometimes the car would move forward when the starter was engaged, making it hard for the starter to turn the engine fast enough to get it started. To solve this problem on cold days, I would jack-up one rear wheel off the ground. When the starter was engaged, the jacked wheel would turn freely, causing less friction. That way the engine turned fast enough so it could start easier. [In the enclosed photograph this procedure is evident. Look at the drivers side rear wheel on this cold day when it snowed. It was jacked up ready to start. This day I took the car in the pasture where there was a steep hill. The ground was frozen solid making the car slip and swerve, on purpose of course. That was great fun and taught me the reaction of the car on slippery surfaces.

The low gear, or first band, was usually worn more than the other two. On a very steep levee at Henderson, the low gear band was slipping and the car couldn't go forward. To solve the problem, I turned the car around and put the car in reverse. I had enough grab in reverse to climb this steep hill.

In 1940 Sam Jones was elected governor and Dr. Mark Mouton of Lafayette, his running mate, was Lt. Governor. Dr. Mouton asked me to put the Model-T in the victory parade from Carencro to Lafayette since I had campaigned for the Jones ticket. They furnished me with four strings of mill tokens to drag behind the car. One of their campaign promises was to abandon the sales tax token. The car was decorated looking a bit like a Mardi Gras float. On the rear top of the roof, I had stacked some bricks just

to bully one of the opponent of Sam Jones who had promised to eat the bricks off the court house if Jones was elected.

The parade traveled much too fast for the old car, and the engine broke down before getting to Lafayette. A good Samaritan parked his car next to mine and offered to pull me for the rest of the parade. The tow rope was a piece of barb wire. Since we were behind in the parade, the tow car was traveling much too fast for the Model-T. It began to shimmer so bad, I thought it would literally fall apart. It didn't and we made the parade without any more hitches.

The car was a big hit with the crowd. They loved it so much that I was offered to be in the parade in Lake Charles. They offered to transport the car in a trailer, since the engine had conked out. From the scare of being towed that day, I declined. Now I wish I had accepted.

One summer, my neighbor was offered a job to paint all the Gulf Oil Company's gasoline pumps and sign posts located at country stores in Lafayette Parish only. He had another project at this time, so he offered it to me. As payment, he would collect the money from Gulf and my share would be an old Chevy truck that he had. It had no body or windshield. The gas tank, located under the front seat, was used as a seat. In other words, it had four wheels, a steering wheel, and an engine, which ran real well. We struck a deal. I painted the pumps. I wound up with some leftover paint which was given to me by the company. I was now the proud owner of two cars

I spotted a convertible with a rumble seat at an old car graveyard rusting away, a fender missing. I don't remember the price I paid for it, maybe five or ten dollars, but it was a bargain. Later I paid more for a fender than I had paid for the body. I removed the body from the frame and tied it down on the new Chevy. It got home OK.

The car and the body were incompatible, so I set out to design a method of attaching the two together. I didn't have a steel drill, but I had a wood brace and bit so I chose wood, because wood was easy to drill holes into. I cut to the right length two 2"X4" boards I found in the barn. Then I placed the 2X4's on the frame and used a pencil to mark the holes. After the holes were drilled, I then bolted it to the frame of the car. Next, I placed the body on top of the same 2X4's, marked the holes, then drilled and bolted them to match the body holes.

Now I had a convertible with a fender missing and no top. The fender was hard to find to match the others, but luck was on my side when I located one.

The top was not easy to find. I approached a buggy maker near Cankton who volunteered to custom build a top for me at a very reasonable price. He also volunteered to upholster the seats for the same price. I left the car with him. Meanwhile, I located a windshield at a blacksmith shop. It took only one week to fit the top onto the convertible and finish the upholster job. To my astonishment, the car looked real good except for the rusty body. The left over dark blue, white, and orange paint from the Gulf Oil job was still in the garage. I painted each color on a fender. I mixed the three colors together, each batch with a different combination of colors. I made three trial batches and applied each to the same fender. The next day when the paint dried, I chose a mouse gray color. From my experience on the paint job with Gulf Oil, the car came out looking like it just had a professional paint job done to it.

I figured only white wall tires would go with the new paint job. Seems like everyone in the neighborhood was astonished at what I had done with the car, so word got around that I needed white wall tires. As luck would have it, the hearse at the funeral home in Carencro needed new tires. I cranked up the old Model-T and rushed over to the station who had changed the tires. They let me have the hearse tires for free, inner tubes included. Back home, I noticed the tires were a different size than the wheels on the car. After two days of rummaging through junk yards I finally found the right size wheels for a good price. I immediately painted the wheels to match the car.

I mounted the white walls to the new wheels and onto the car. What a difference those white walls made! I still had some work to do on the rumble seat, though. I was able to register the car and acquired some license plates for it. Now I was the proud owner of two vehicles in running condition.

A vegetable farmer saw the two cars parked in the yard and approached me to sell him the old Model-T. He needed transportation to get his vegetables to market, but had no money right then to pay for the car. He wanted to buy it on credit. I noticed that he had a year old heifer in his pasture and offered the car for his heifer. After two days of deliberation the farmer came over leading the calf on a rope. The deal was made. We both signed a bill of sale, and I was about to become a rancher.

First thing I did was to get Pop's cattle brand from the pantry and brand my heifer on the right hind quarter. Pop branded his cattle on the right front quarter. Over the years my heifer was very prolific. She had only heifers and her heifers had more heifers. Eventually I had more cattle on the ranch than Pop, so I had to sell my share. After all Pop was doing most of the work.

The Chevy was a more reliable car than the Model-T. Two neighbors, Gus and Oscar, and I were without jobs. We pooled our moneys and planned a trip to New Orleans to look for some work. Oscar had an uncle who lived in New Orleans who would help us search for a job. The trip to New Orleans was uneventful. We enjoyed the trip along the way, stopping now and then for a sip of water and a boiled egg.

The bridge across the Mississippi River fascinated us. When I reached the top of the bridge, I put the car in neutral and coasted to the bottom to conserve gasoline. The Chevy only made about 12 miles to the gallon. After crossing the bridge, I drove around under the bridge to have a better look at the construction. I parked on the levee under the bridge to study the map we had of New Orleans and decide how to get to the house of Oscar's uncle's who was expecting us. I settled down on the green grass and gazed at the bridge while eating a sandwich. What a spectacular sight. If we had had a tent, I would have been contented to camp right there.

We all got in the car, Oscar being the navigator, since he had been to New Orleans before and it was his uncle's house we were going to. Soon we were lost in the big city. Gus then took over the navigating. "Stop here, we'll ask this fellow" was the phrase I heard many times. Finally we located the house of Oscar's uncle. Oscar's aunt served us each a glass of cool lemonade and we made plans to visit the Audubon Zoo, since the uncle was not home from work. The zoo was not too far. Oscar's aunt gave us good directions of how to get there and what to see. We spent the rest of the afternoon at the zoo. My first visit ever to a zoo. Like many other visitors, I was most fascinated by the monkeys and spent most of my time in front of their cages.

MY CULTURAL LEGACY
by
Pat DeLatte

According to the New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, the word *cultural* is defined as "The total of human patterns and technology communicated from generation to generation." The word *legacy* is defined as "Anything handed down by an ancestor or predecessor." The *cultural legacy* I aspire to "hand down" to my children, grandchildren and the "generations" to follow consists of what I have received from my ancestors, and also what I have might have added to the "human patterns."

The small amount of research I've done regarding the genealogy of my parents has made me aware of ancestors and the effect they have on future generations. Some cultural patterns, handed down from previous generations, remain traditional. Other patterns have been modified to fit the lifestyles of more recent descendants living in the twentieth century.

French speaking and hard working, my mother's ancestors lived along the bayous of Louisiana. Among them were farmers, cattlemen, and river boat captains. Some were educated but many were not. However, they succeeded in establishing homes and raising families. All were steeped in the traditions of their ancestors, even to retaining the French language. The original patriarch of the Falgout family, Louis Marcel, arrived in the "new world" from Langeais, France, early in the 18th century. It is believed he was a surgeon in the military of the King of France, Louis XIV. His desire for adventure brought him to Louisiana. His skill was needed in the Indian villages located near what is now Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It must have taken a great deal of courage to leave home and cross an ocean on the sailing vessels of that era.

My father's ancestors were also French. His father, Antoine Argence, a blind music professor, from French Algeria, North Africa, immigrated to Louisiana at the end of the 19th century. He came by way of the Sorbonne Academy of Music in Paris, France, to play the church organ and teach music in Morgan City. It was in Lockport, a small town near Morgan City where he met and married Josephine Breaux, a lovely, young French speaking girl of Acadian descent. Coming to America, sightless and alone, he placed his trust in the French speaking, catholic community that brought him

there. His love of music and the talent for playing musical instruments was instilled early on in us, his descendants, and remains an important element in our lives.

With respect for these ancestors, I "hand down" the love of music, interest in all things medical, the excitement of adventure, and pride for our French ethnicity to my children and the generations yet to come.

The religion of our forefathers was Catholicism. My parents continued this tradition with me and my siblings. I raised my children with the opportunity to worship as their ancestors did. From the day each was born, they have had benefit of all the blessings the Catholic Church offers. They have collectively and individually received five of the seven holy sacraments, Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, and Matrimony. There is no ordained priest in the family, therefore no sacrament of Holy Orders has been received. Hopefully, Extreme Unction, the seventh and final sacrament, will be available to each of us when that time arrives. Organized religion has provided the ceremonies that are so important in our culture. Ceremony gives opportunity for family and friends to come together and share the joy of certain blessed events. Ceremony also gives comfort at times when the occasion is sad and difficult, such as the burial of a loved one. As their ancestors before them, my parents had strong belief in the Catholic church and its teachings. They passed this belief down to me. I have continued the tradition. However, I also feel that my faith in a Higher Power, God, supercedes a need for organized religion. The Catholic church has modernized some of its ritual, but the basic faith of our forefathers remains strong.

With the love of God and gratitude for His blessings, I "hand down" the belief that a loving, caring, all powerful Deity will forever watch over and guide us, to my children and the generations yet to come.

My maternal grandmother, Josephine, had no formal education. It was considered unnecessary for the girls in her family to be educated beyond domestic abilities. Her daughter, my mother, Etta, received seven years of grammar school. This amount of years was considered enough education for her to perform her duties on the farm, take care of her parents, and make a better life for herself. The generation into which I was born was expected to finish grammar school and high school. A university degree, still considered a privilege, was a goal for many males, as well as females. Of the three children my parents had, I was fortunate to be the one who attained that goal. With the birth of the next generation, it was regarded as essential

attained that goal. With the birth of the next generation, it was regarded as essential to have a college degree in order to compete for positions available in the workplace. All four of my children, male and female, had the opportunity to go to college and receive a Bachelor's Degree. I anticipate it will be necessary for their children to go beyond a single degree and acquire two or more.

With confidence that they will choose to think, I "hand down" the love of learning and the pursuit of knowledge to my children and the generations yet to come.

Marriage during the days of my earlier ancestors was a lifelong union, but the traditional roles of husband and wife have evolved significantly. Generations ago, under the Napoleonic Code of law, the husband legally owned all the material possessions, and had dominance over the children and the wife. The woman had no rights of her own and had to be obedient to her husband. He basically ruled as "King of the Castle." A few generations later, during the Victorian Era, the wife demanded more freedom to think for herself, but was still considered legal "chattel." Wanting to be considered an equal citizen of the United States, women fought for and won the right to vote. By the middle of the twentieth century, following World War II, wives had demonstrated their ability to be independent and were given the recognition they deserved within the family structure.

When my father died at age 72, my parents had been married for 53 years. I was raised in a loving, stable home. While my father was the"head" of the household, my mother was the "heart." She was the pivot around which everything revolved. The wife's role was to care for and nurture her husband and children. The husband was the provider who went off to work every morning. He returned in the evening to find supper cooked and awaiting his pleasure. My husband and I were the next generation. We were married for 38 years until his death in 1991. We had promised to love and honor, but the word "obey" was eliminated from the vows. My husband, still in the role of provider, left for work each morning. Even though I had a degree in dietetics, I, the wife, stayed at home and raised the children. The difference was that I had a choice. Marriage had become a partnership of equals, husbands and wives who must respect and revere each other. The responsibility of caring for and nurturing the family is shared by both husband and wife. The responsibility of economic stability is often shared as well. Together the parents create a secure and loving environment for the children. Neither partner has dominance over the other, and the community property laws assure equality of material possessions.

With the expectation that marriage is forever, I "hand down" this suggestion, *Marry someone you <u>like</u>!*, to my children and the generations yet to come.

In conclusion, and with love and faith in the future, I "hand down" to the generations yet to come this cultural legacy of family values as it was handed to me:

See the positive in all situations.
Listen to others, they need to be heard.
Offer help to those in need, they may be too proud to ask.
Dream your dreams and achieve your goals.
Be creative, make something beautiful.
Consider every challenge an opportunity.
Sleep well every night and thank God for every morning.

A DAY ON VERMILION BAY
by
Doris B. Bentley

On occasion in the summer of 1934 and '35, a group of boys got together and chartered a shrimp boat from a fisherman at Delcambre Canal to take us for a day's outing in Vermilion Bay. There were no ice chests, but the boys managed to ice the drinks in tubs. The girls made potted meat sandwiches and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Anticipation and planning the details of the outing were an important part of the fun.

We arrived at the Delcambre Canal early in the morning and boarded the fishing boat. Off we went chugging through the Canal into the Vermilion Bay. The Bay leads into the Gulf of Mexico. The fisherman, who knew where it wasn't too deep for us to swim, cast his anchor and we were ready to jump into the water. There was no place to change into swimwear; we had donned our swimsuits under our clothes and had to stay in those wet suits all day until we returned home at dusk. Some of the boys were adventurous enough to dive from the top of the boat!

After the swim, the fisherman cast his net and trawled for shrimp. When the boys pulled up the net, we all went through the catch, threw back the undesirable fish, and gathered the shrimp for boiling. The fisherman docked the boat somewhere along the Canal, and we enjoyed a shrimp boil. (We had consumed the sandwiches earlier in the day.) After eating our fill of shrimp, we chugged back to Delcambre.

As the sun went down, we came alongside the Delcambre dock, unloaded our gear, and headed for home. Everybody looked like boiled shrimp from the day in the sun! And we spent the next week peeling the burnt skin from our shoulders and back! After a few weeks, we were ready for another adventure on Vermilion Bay.

Today, Dr. Odom tells me that the brown spots on my arms are a result of too much sun when I was a kid!!!

DON'T EVER TELL ANYONE THAT I NEVER PICKED COTTON

by

Marie Louise LaCaze

It was a typical August--hot days and blazing sunshine. Cotton harvest was in full swing in Church Point. I heard much conversation about the harvest because Daddy was a cotton planter. Afternoon drives with Daddy to check on production was almost a daily occurrence.

A big search for cotton pickers was in progress. Much recruitment was being done in the town and surrounding area--even among families and high school students. Trucks would come into town to take the cotton pickers to the farms.

I was about ten or eleven years old and became fascinated with all the activity centered around this harvest. Little did I realize that to most of the farmers the profits from this harvest represented their whole year's income.

Having heard all this emphasis on the gathering of cotton, I announced to my parents that I wanted to pick cotton. They were surprised and amused. But after a few days, they realized that I was determined.

"After all," I told them, "the pickers were being paid a cent a pound and some of them had made a whole dollar or more each day."

Mama and Daddy finally agreed. They arranged with my paternal grandparents to let me pick in the field next to their house. (All of the grandchildren called them Mamanell and Papanell--names that had been given to them by their oldest grandchild, Edith David.) Mamanell was only 34 years old when she became a grandmother. She had a baby son named Lionel, who was Edith's age. Edith nicknmed him Nell and gave her grandparents the names Mamanell and Papanell--the parents of Nell.

On this hot and sunny day in August, Mama dressed me in a high-necked, long-sleeved blouse, high socks, a long skirt, and a wide-brimmed straw hat. A sack was provided in which to put the cotton that I would gather.

Daddy took me to the cotton field and showed me how to remove the white cotton from the boll. He told me to avoid getting leaves and trash into my sack because this would create a bad sample for the farmer. In each boll of cotton were seeds which clinged to the cotton fiber and which were removed in the ginning process.

There were other cotton pickers in the field,but they paid absolutely no attention to me. After all, they were busy picking as fast a they could to make their endeavor worthwhile. They welcomed no distractions. They were garbed in denim overalls, long sleeved shirts, wide-brimmed straw hats. Some women wore bonnets. Most of the pickers had large red or blue bandanas tied around their necks to catch perspiration.

Every once in a while, someone from Mamanell's house would come to check on me and to provide a drink of water. Finally, about eleven o'clock, my aunt whom I called NanNan, because she was my godmother, came to get me for lunch. Then, despite my protests, she made me take a nap.

It was probably after three o'clock before they let me go back into the field. Soon after that Daddy arrived. He followed me along the row, putting handsful of cotton into my sack. Then he took me to the place where the cotton was weighed. I had gathered the large amount of 15 pounds of raw cotton and earned 15 cents which was probably a small fortune for a kid in the depressed 30s! I was frankly disappointed to have picked for what seemed a long time and had only 15 pounds!

This was a memorable adventure--one that I never nagged anyone to let me repeat.

WHAT I DID ON MY SPRING VACATION
by
Mary Langford

On March 7 I left the Japanese magnolias, red buds, and azaleas of spring in Lafayette to fly to Chicago where spring is still a hope and a promise. After an overnight in Dallas, I was greeted at O'Hare airport at noon on Sunday by my favorite (and only) son-in-law Rob and my precious (and only) grandson James. With them and my daughter Donna I went directly to a northern suburb for Sunday lunch with son Paul and his wife Jennifer, my favorite (and only) daughter-in-law. We spent the afternoon catching up on news of their activities and watching James' antics.

He is, of course, a beautiful child, slightly small for his age but perfectly proportioned, blond, eyes changing from green to brown, with a mischievous grin. He especially enjoyed playing ball and wrestling with his dad and his uncle. As I watched them, I was carried back to similar scenes enacted thirty years ago on the other side of the world by this same Paul, his brother James for whom this one is named, and my husband.

Back at Rob and Donna's home that evening I unpacked and settled into the first floor bedroom which is designated as mine when I visit. It has an attached bathroom, is very near the kitchen and on the same level as another bedroom and the large living/dining area. Upstairs is Rob and Donna's big bedroom with Cape Cod windows and skylights, another bathroom and the nursery. The roomy basement contains a comfortable den/playroom plus divided areas for workshop, laundry, storage, exercise, and office. We got to bed late, as is our family habit, and I slept the sleep of a weary traveler.

Next morning I found the coffee in its usual place, made a fresh and fragrant supply, then took my mug to the front window which faces a neighborhood park. I opened the vertical blinds to a wondrous sight. Snow had fallen as we slept and now lay inches thick over every bush, tree, street, sidewalk, rooftop, and car. It formed a soft white blanket over the ball field in the park. I felt that I was the first person to see this splendid sight, as no footprint or tire track, or any sign of movement, marred the perfect whiteness. My exclamations brought the others to come and look. James climbed up beside me on the sofa, and with eyes wide and mouth in an O, pointed his

tiny finger at the playground's slide, swings, and climbing frame now covered with white-like spills from a giant box of powdered sugar.

Donna, who was born and grew up in the semi-tropical climate of Hong Kong with its lush greenery and sun-warmed beaches, was much less entranced with the new snow than James and I. She finds the Chicago winters very difficult, and experience told her that in a couple of days the pristine coverlet would become a melting mess of gray slush. Rob called from his second job as a truck driver to tell us not to get out in the car, as conditions were hazardous. And so we spent a cozy day at home getting started on a project which was part of the agenda for my visit.

Donna has recently become a consultant for Creative Memories, and we had agreed that she woud help me to transform my tattered and unattractive book of wedding pictures into a fresh and appealing album. What a good time we had that day and the next as we cropped, mounted, and captioned pictures. She showed me how to make colored backings with special edgings which enhanced the old black and white photographs. We debated over what sort of sticker or die cut would best convey the theme of each page. I delved into old scrapbooks I'd brought and read forgotten love letters, choosing brief excerpts to copy into the new book. I found the tag from matching light blue sweaters Don and I bought in 1953 (MacGregor/wool/$7.95.) One night Paul made quick little drawings of the microscope and caduceus which will serve as illustrations to accompany the story of our engagement. By the end of the visit the book was almost finished, and Donna had fulfilled her promise to me. The only thanks she wanted was the assurance that I would will the album to her.

As you might imagine, all this artistic endeavor was done with many interruptions from not-yet-two James. He has all sorts of toys on each level of the house and entertains himself quite readily with a variety of activities. He's a special fan of Barney and can turn on the TV to enjoy his company. He also opens the freezer to get his own "popsies" and climbs to the top of the kitchen baker's rack for fruit. I'm happy to say that he is a great book-lover. His major interest just now, however, is basketball. Even a snatch of a game on TV catches his attention and rates a comment, as does any basketball goal which he sees from his car seat when he's on the move. He practices his shots on a goal set up in the basement, and at some point in every day he insisted that he and I have a one-on-one competition. He was always the winner.

On Wednesday Rob and Donna took advantage of my free babysitting and both went to work--he as a firefighter and she as a nurse. James and I had the day to ourselves. We snuggled and read. We made a milk shake. We watched Barney and Friends on TV along with other musical shows which caused us to break into spontaneous dances. We ate cheesy dogs for lunch. We made a horn from a special Fisher-Price set of parts and marched through the house to Grandma's version of "Seventy-six Trombones." And of course, we played basketball. I only had to pull rank on him one time. When we went into the kitchen for lunch, James pushed a chair up to the refrigerator/freezer, opened the upper door, and began climbing into the fridge to check out the options. I insisted that he not do that, and prying his fingers loose from the fridge shelf, lifted his protesting little body down out of the chair. He was furious! How he did cry and yell! He went to the back door and hung on the door knob as if to say, "I will not stay in a place where they don't let me climb in the refrigerator!" I distracted him by showing him a picture of a basketball player.

That evening I drove alone about forty-five minutes north to the church where Paul is minister of music. I arrived soon after the choir rehearsal had begun, so I just took a seat and quietly observed. What a pleasure it was to watch our youngest son in action, doing what he trained to do and what he feels God has led him to do. He knows what he wants from the musicians, and he knows how to encourage them to produce it. At one point, in an effort to describe the sort of feel he wanted from a composition, he told the group about his first car--a Ford LTD--which he said had aisles, a downstairs, was the only car that can be seen from the moon, and was like driving a waterbed. Somehow they then sang with that effortless sort of flow.

The next evening I accompanied Paul down into the heart of Chicago to Moody Broadcasting Studios where he had a recording session. The night was crisp and cold. A perfect full moon hung like a single lamp over the magnificent skyline of the city. The recording group seemed casual as they gathered, but once in the studio they gave every effort to producing a harmonious blend of sound that would be used on Moody programs over the next few weeks. Paul was the soloist for the recording. He was also the most experienced musician. I felt a special kind of hunble pride as I heard the comments made by those in the control booth and as I watched Paul deal with the other musicians, conducting himself with quiet confidence as he added his voice to the musical production. He stayed an hour after the others left until he was satisfied that his solo part represented his best. As I watched and listened, I recalled his decision at sixteen that he would pursue a musical career. I thought back over the years of

determined study and effort, the hundreds of lonely hours of practice that had brought him to this point. Earlier he had told me that he gives thanks each time he has a recording opportunity. I gave thanks that I was there to see a grown son doing so well what he loves and what will provide pleasure and inspiration for others.

I spent the next couple of days with Donna and James. I dealt with all the contents of her clothing repair basket. I prepared a casserole to leave in their freezer. I made a marvelous pot of soup that can never to dupicated, as its ingredients were what happened to be in the fridge and pantry. The three of us rented and watched an awful movie and went out for a big scrumptious breakfast next day at a small friendly neighborhood restaurant. We went shopping at my favorite outlet and found they were having a fabulous sale. Trying to fill each minute to the fullest, we reached the airport ten minutes before my flight was to leave on Saturday afternoon.

So that's what I did on my spring vacation: I reveled in one of nature's random acts of beauty. I delved into my own past and attempted to preserve some of it for those who follow me. I participated in the present lives of two of my grown children and their mates. And I caught just a glimpse of the future through the bright eyes of my grandson, the basketball player.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF A BISHOP

by

Bettina J. Speyrer

This is the story of Bishop Maurice Schexnayder, the second Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, a man who was very dear to me. I was his secretary for six years before his retirement in 1972. Some of you knew him when he was the Chaplain at the Catholic Student Center at L.S.U. in Baton Rouge where he served for 17 years before he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Lafayette. Those of you who are not Catholic may be unaware of who I am writing about, but this good Bishop also had many friends who embraced other religions.

I do not feel that I am capable of adequately describing Bishop Schexnayder in terms of his spirituality. I do know that the Church was his life and that he had very few interests outside of his duties as a Bishop. Because I feel so inadequate, I have chosen to write about his human side, which few people have seen. The Bishop was a very private person and I do not intend to divulge any deep dark secrets about him, even if he had any.

As his secretary, I took care of his correspondence, made his appointments, and listened to stories about his days at L.S.U. In his study at his residence, the walls were lined with pictures of his "children" at L.S.U. He had kept in touch with many of them over the years, maintaining a card file with each one's address and sometimes a written personal remembrance. At Christmas time, it was my job to address Christmas cards by hand to each person whose name appeared on the 2,000 cards in his file. Over the years, of course, the file became obsolete, and many cards were returned for inadequate addresses. Bishop Schexnayder agonized over the whereabouts of these persons and often remembered them in his prayers.

The Bishop ruled over his Diocese almost single-handedly. Those were the days before Vatican II, the document which stipulated that a Bishop must establish boards and committees and consult with them before a major decision was made. There were many good priests and lay people who were of service to him, but he saw to it that the final decision remained with the Bishop. This action was rather frustrating, at times, especially to his Chancellor who was in charge of finances and tried to run the Diocese on a budget of sorts. However, if there was a need for money for a charitable cause or

some other need which the Bishop considered crucial, he demanded that it be taken care of, budget or not.

In June of each year, appontments or reappointments of the clergy in the Diocese were made. The priests of the Diocese would shake in their boots in fear of being sent to some remote area of the Diocese, especially those who might have displeased the Bishop in some way. Bishop Schexnayder must have lain awake nights trying to decide where to place his priests. It was quite an art, as he felt each church parish had a personality and he appointed a priest to that parish whose personality, he felt, matched that of the parish. Today, there is a Clergy Personnel Board who advises the Bishop on the placement of priests.

Bishop Schexnayder was generous to a fault and trusted everyone. This fact was well-known to some whose characters were considered unsavory. They knew that if he was approached for a handout, it would likely be given. Many times at night, a vagrant would knock on his door with a hard luck story. The Bishop would open his wallet and extract a few bills without a question. We all warned him that he could be robbed, or worse. He would reply, "My, my, my...they wouldn't do that."

The Bishop never locked his door. One night, he awakened to find a burglar in his room who was going through the pockets of the Bishop's trousers which were hanging on a chair. He confronted the burglar and said, "Young man, I hope you realize you are committing a sin." The young man grabbed the Bishop's wallet which contained several hundred dollars and fled.

At Christmas time, the Bishop received many gifts of food--fruit cakes, baskets of fruit, and one day a large ham was delivered to his office. I sent these items over to his house, and he mused that he did not know who would eat it all. One night I was working late, helping him get his sermon ready for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. My sons were home for the holidays; Dick was home from the Seminary in New Orleans, and Fred was home from the Air Force. Of course, Tony and Mark, Mary and Matt were at home, and they were all waiting for me to come home and prepare supper. I was frustrated, thinking that this Bishop had no idea of my obligations at home.

As if he had read my mind, he said, "I will never use that ham I received today. Why don't you call home and ask someone to come and get it?" I made the call, and almost immediately the older boys were there to get the ham!

On another day, Bishp Schexnayder stood by my desk and asked if I owned a Bible. I was embarrassed as I had to tell him that I did not have one. He disappeared into the hall, and in a few minutes he was standing by my desk with a Bible. He had gone to the Catholic Book Store and purchased one for me. He autographed it and said, "Now you have a Bible. Use it." I could go on and on with many incidents that portray his thoughtfuness and generosity.

Bishop Schexnayder did not drive a car. He had had a minor accident in the years past and gave up driving. However, he did have a chauffeur, so to speak, a kindly black man whom we called BeBe. BeBe literally wore many hats in the Bishop's household. He arrived at the Bishop's house around 6:00 a.m. each day, and his first duty was to act as altar server at the Bishop's private Mass which took place in a small chapel in his home. Next on the agenda was breakfast. BeBe put on his white butler's coat and served breakfast which had been prepared by the "little Mexican nuns" who had been commissioned to take care of the Bishop's household. After the Bishop had gone to his office in the morning, BeBe put on his old straw hat and his work clothes and took care of the upkeep of the yard. However, if the Bishop had to go to Confirmation, or had an appointment away from his office, BeBe put on his chauffeur's hat and drove the Bishop to his destination. BeBe served Bishop Schexnayder faithfully for many years.

The Bishop was fond of giving medals to those who he considered had worked for the "Church" above and beyond the call of duty. On one occasion, he gave such a medal to BeBe. When someone congratulated BeBe on receiving a medal, he said, "Yes, and I deserves it."

After the Bishop retired, BeBe continued to wear his many hats. The two of them were quite a pair, and although BeBe was getting on in years, he felt it was his duty to see to his Bishop's needs as well as he could. At age 85, Bishop Schexnayder became quite ill and was hospitalized. BeBe was by his bedside constantly, and complained that the Bishop would get well if only he didn't take so many pills. His diagnosis was that all those pills were fighting in his stomach and that's what made him so sick.

Early one morning, the Bishop realized he was dying. Monsignor Vincent was living at the Bishop's house and had told the Bishop to call him if he needed help.

Although it was four o'clock in the morning, the Bishop chose to call BeBe to come to the hospital. He told BeBe he needed him and to hurry up and come right away. BeBe said, "I'm hurrying, but can't you wait until I put on my pants?"

That morning Bishp Schexnayder died with his aithful friend, BeBe, at his side. There are many, many more things I could relate, but time and space do not permit. Bishop Schexnayder was a true churchman, and I would venture to say that "they don't make 'em like that anymore."

BEACH ADVENTURES
by
Betty St. Dizier

During my growing up years in New Iberia, there were few recreational facilities. One summertime activity included spending the day at Charenton Beach, located between Jeanerette and Franklin at a town off from what was then Highway 90.

During the 1800's, Lake Fausse Point was a small port used by steam boats. Lake Fausse Point and Grand Lake, where Charenton is located, are a part of the Atchafalaya Basin, eventually draining into the Mississippi River. Charenton, a small village during the 1900s, has all but disappeared since the construction of the levee system.

Our days spent at the Beach were looked foward to with anticipation. Plans for our excursion included taking blankets to sit on (no picnic tables then!). We packed a picnic lunch--usually including peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the chidren and pimento and assorted cheese sandwiches for the adults. We brought our own cold drinks (no Coke machines!). We would change into our suits in a bathhouse of sorts. Our bathing suits, as they were called, were made of wool. It was not conducive to wear these very prickly wool suits except while in the water; so we quickly changed clothes as soon as we got out of the water. Because the bottom of Lake Fausse Point was silt and sticky black mud covered with sharp-edged shells, we had to wear rubber bathing slippers to prevent unnecessary cuts and scrapes. At this time all girls and women wore bathing caps! In retrospect, we must have been a sight to behold!

Several cars would arrive at the beach bearing ever-patient mothers and numerous giggly children. We always looked forward to these outings. The water was bath-tub warm, muddy and sticky, but we thought it was grand!

There were a few small buildings in the beach area. The main structure was a large screened-in building where dances were held on summer weekends. These dances took place long after our famiy groups had packed our gear and taken our sunburned bodies home!

MY DAD--THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN MY LIFE
by
Anna Ruth Boudreaux (Ganucheau Maher)

My admiration for my Dad began at the very early age of just a few weeks. One afternoon just after 5 p.m., Dad returned from work. Mama was busy with the twins, so Dad came up to my crib and said "Boo!" With that surprise, I gave him my very first smile. My response pleased him so much he gave me the nickname of "Boo" and continued to call me Boo for the rest of his life. That first smile was the beginning of my lifelong admiration for my Dad.

Dad was the oldest of eight children, born to a country doctor of Acadian ancestry and a mother of French ancestry. He was born in Ville Platte, Louisiana, the town where my grandfather, Pepere, opened his first medical practice.

Dad was a family man in every sense of the word. At the young age of 26 he became the head of his parent's household at the death of his father. Dad already had three children of his own, but now had to assist his mother with advice and spiritual support. My grandmother, Mimi, still had four children to finish raising and educating. Dad was a sign of loving strength to his mother in her later years as she struggled with the debilitating and incurable illness of Parkinson's disease.

There was never any doubt that Dad was the head of our household. He was firm, but loving, possessing much wisdom. He and Mama had a good relationship throughout their lives. I remember hoping I would have a husband someday who would be in many ways like my father.

Through the years of growing up, Dad was always away during the week as he traveled his territory for Shell Oil Company. He was a hard worker and really enjoyed the people he would meet. He was a salesman in every sense of the word. He never met a stranger. On the weekend he spent all of his time with his family. On Sunday afternoon we either took a ride in the country, went on a picnic, or spent a day of fishing with several other families, or had family members from other towns visit us. Some evenings we all sat around the radio to listen to "Amos and Andy," "George Burns and Gracie Allen," or the "Eddie Cantor Show." Dad would play card games and spend long winter evenings working jigsaw puzzles with us. One thing I enjoyed the most was sitting at the dining room table with maps spread out listening to Dad tell

us of places we would visit one day and the exciting things we would see. Although I was married before this time came, the rest of my brothers and sisters did participate in many of these planned trips of earlier years.

My father was also very resourceful using all of his gifts and talents to the benefit of our family. Mama and Dad subscribed to a monthly magazine, American Home which always contained a house floor plan. There would be conversations of building a new house in "the near future." In 1937, after my sister Rose's death, I remember Dad taking out a large drawing board, and after tacking on a large sheet of crisp white paper, he began to draw a house plan. I had never seen him draw before. He continued to work on this plan, adjusting measurements, adding an extra door or a closet until the plan was just right for our family. We were excited about the prospect of a new home. Everyone in Washington was excited also. There had not been a new house constructed in Washington in many, many years. Although we never discussed this, I always suspected that Dad may have thought the Stafford house we had been renting was not properly heated or insulated, thereby causing the serious illness from which my sister, Rose, had died. He then purchased a quarter of a block on February 5, 1938, from my Grand Uncle Tom Boudreau and proceeded to hire a carpenter and other craftsman to build the house. Dad went to Washington State Bank, a place where he had worked earlier in his life, and made an FHA (Federal Housing Administration) loan for $3,100 to finance the house. His notes, including taxes and insurance were $20.98 a month. It seemed to me from that time on, Dad always had the next house on the drawing board. In all, he built three houses for our family, one for my sister, Rita, and one for Mama's sister, Aunt Aurore Fournet.

During my high school years, our home at 500 Bridge Street was a home where we were always be free to invite friends to play, study, and have parties. Dad set ground rules for us in our social life. He had to know where we were going, who was going to be there, who would walk us there and back, and we had to be home for 10:00 p.m. with no excuses. I thought the rules were pretty tough because it always broke up the party when Rita and I had to leave.

I finished high school in 1941 which was also the year my father went into a new business venture, so he was unable to send me to college. Dad convinced me I could learn the skills I needed to became a secretary at T. H. Harris Trade School in Opelousas. I trusted his judgement and went to T. H. Harris. We moved to New Orleans the following spring where I continued my studies in the evening and worked

as a secretary in day time. In 1970, after many years out of the work force, I went to work as a receptionist and secretary for two veterinarians, Drs. Ray LaCour and Donald Doiron. I registered for the CPS Exam Review at USL to brush up on my skills. The program director, Mrs. Marie Louise LaCaze, encouraged me to sit for the CPS exam. It was a difficult two day exam. Upon completion of the exam, I was certified in 1972. Two years later I took a position as secretary to the Director of Communications for Father Richard Greene in the Diocese of Lafayette. I next became Administrative Assistant to the Director of Lay Development, Ralph Guidroz, then to the same position for the Executive Director of the Louisiana Catholic Conference. My career as a secretary and administrative assistant in the business world has been rewarding, and I have my Dad to thank for guiding me in that direction.

In 1967, when our four children were in school, I decided to become a real estate agent. Dad had retired, and he and Mama had moved to Lafayette. When I wrote to Dad telling him of my plans, he encouraged me to study the text and "go for it." I did just that. When I was notified that I had passed the exam I wrote to tell him the good news. Dad wrote me a wonderful letter, the only letter he had ever written to me, telling me how proud he was of me and that he had no doubt that I could do anything I set my mind to. This letter and his words, *"salesmanship can be a most successful endeavor in accomplishing seemingly impossible goals if you follow a few simple and time proven rules--work hard without neglecting your family. Shoot for the big sales because they pay much more money with the same amount of time."* I still have and treasure this letter. Dad's words of belief in me have encouraged and supported all of my endeavors ever since.

FOODS FROM A TO Z
by
Jane Ellen Carstens

I can tell that I'm not well
When I lose my APPETITE
At other times, I'm apt to eat
Everything in sight!

ASPARAGUS and ARTICHOKES
Fulfill the need for greens.
Aside from that, they satisfy
My ever changing genes.

BANANAS are my favorite fruit.
I eat them all the time.
BEETS are another matter.
I never ever buy them.

CHOCOLATE CANDY, CHOCOLATE CAKE,
CHOCOLATE milk and pie--
If the doctor ever says
I can't have them, I think I just might die.

DANISH pastry is rather tempting.
I try to restrict my consumption
To once a week--because I seek
To meet my diet's function.

At EASTER time, Noelie and I
Would hide EGGS from each other.
Somehow we never found them all
And went crying to our mother.

My aunt had a FIG tree in her yard
It was right next door to ours.
Whenever FIG season rolled around
I'd climb above the flowers.

GRAPEFRUIT ranks high in my choice
Of breakfast dish and snack.
I think the pink is the very best,
And that's a proven fact!

Macdonald's and Burger King
Are known for their HAMBURGERS today.
Judice Inn was an earlier source
And beat them in every way.

ICE CREAM has always been
A favorite dessert for me,
But Blue Bell Home-made Vanilla
Can bring on real ecstasy.

I have a passion for orange JUICE.
I could drink a quart a day.
It satisfies a longing
Unfulfilled in any other way.

KOOL AID was never my thing.
The taste is rather blah.
I always preferred real lemonade
And sipping it through a straw.

I could not live without MILK.
I exult in the fact today
That I can drink as much as I wish
With depression out of my way.

NECTARINES, Tangerines, satsumas and such
Resemble plain old oranges.
The difference is not much.
I like them all. Both whole and squeezed,
My taste buds are always pleased.

OATMEAL may not seem to you
A special dish in any way.
On a cold winter morning,
It helps me to begin my day.

PEACHES, PEACHES are divine
If they are ripe and sweet.
Eaten plain, or in ice cream,
They always are a treat.

The only food that I know
Beginning with a "Q"
Is QUINCE jam or jelly
And either one will do.

RAISINS plan a special role
In foods we eat today.
I like them plain, or mixed with food;
They're tasty, either way.

SALADS add a special touch
To lunch and dinner fare.
Apple, walnut, raisin, and tomato aspic
Complete my favorite pair.

I used to eat TAMALES
Before I tried to diet.
TOMATOES rate high on my list.
When I see one, I buy it.

"U" has been omitted.
It doesn't seem to fit.
Among the wide assortment of foods,
No name begins with it.

Although I like most any ham,
VIRGINIA is my favorite,
Especially if it's honey roasted.
Then I really crave it.

WATERMELON was such a treat
When I was just a tot.
I still enjoy it, and I eat it
When summer days are hot.

No food that starts with "X"
Comes to mind.
But like the movies, perhaps I'll find
X-RATED foods we should not eat
If calories we do try to beat.

Baked YAMS in casserole or skin
Satisfy my taste buds, so
I'm inclined to eat too much.
At times I just cannot say "No."

ZUCCHINI is a tasty veggie
Whether raw or cooked.
It adds ZEST to a salad.
I must admit I'm hooked!

GATORS, GATORS, GATORS
by
Jacob M. Valentine, Jr.

I came to Louisiana in 1960 as the Wildlife Management Biologist for the federal wildlife refuges located on the Gulf Coast from Texas to Florida. I had been a refuge manager at Slade Refuge in North Dakota, Chincoteague Refuge, Virginia, and south Florida Refuges that included Sanibel Island, Key Deer, and Pelican Island. My office was in the Biology Department until I retired in 1982. My job was to advise refuge managers on marsh and wildlife management. During those years I made aerial surveys of alligator nests that gave us an estimate of the population. In 1964 I rummaged through 413 alligator stomachs, collected in 1961, 1962, and 1964. In 1972, I among others published an article on alligator diets on the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, Cameron Parish.

In 1960, because of illegal hunting, there were virtually no alligators in the whole state of Louisiana. Poachers had killed nearly all of the alligators along the coast--the Atchafalaya Swamp, Rockefeller State Refuge, Audubon-Rainy, State Wildlife, Delta and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges.

The most notorious gang of poachers, led by a one-legged man from Maryville, Louisiana, had exterminated all of the gators along the upper Sabine River. Now, they moved south to practice their trade on the Saine Refuge. While agents were watching, this efficient hunter sat in a boat and shot 64 gators with a twenty-two in an hour and a half. After he was caught, the hides were confiscated and sold for $860 by the Fish and Wildlife Service at $7.50 a running foot.

After a major hurricane hit Delta National Wildlife Refuge, one of the richest landowners (oil and cattle) at Pilottown, St. Bernard Parish, was caught with over a hundred gators in his possession. High waters had displaced these from the refuge marshes. No matter how rich these swamp and bayou dwellers are, they can't resist killing game whether ducks or gators. Poaching can be profitable. In 1963, the date of the last legal harvest, the price had risen to $20 a running foot.

An alligator is skinned by running a knife down each side of a row of large scutes. Then the hide is peeled from both sides down to meet at the midline of the

belly. Two hunters then pull the tail hide inside out to finish the job. The hide is scraped of all fat and flesh, heavily salted, and rolled into a bundle. Auctions are now held each year by personnel of the Louisiana Fish and Wildlife Commission at the Rockefeller Refuge. The hide is numbered and sold by the running foot at a silent auction. The potential buyer unrolls each hide, measures and examines it for cuts and imperfections, and makes a bid for a lot.

In 1960, alligators were still being harvested with a five-foot size limit and a 60-day season. The alligator population continued to drop. The rationale for continuing a harvest was to preserve the tanning and exporting industry in New Orleans. Most hides were (and perhaps are) sent to France and the Orient. After the 1963 season the alligator hunting season was closed until an experimental season was instituted in 1974.

State wildlife biologists make yearly aerial surveys over the marsh to estimate the population. The health of the population determines the number of gators that can be taken. A landowner is given a certain number of tags based on the number of acres of good alligator habitat on his marsh. The tags must be attached to the hide when it is skinned.

Louisiana State Fish and Wildlife Commission biologists, land owners, and refuge managers in the early sixties got together with parish commissioners and judges with a will to crack down on poachers. Landowners who protected their lands were promised young alligators to restock marshes. Poachers caught killing gators were heavily fined and put in jail. I 1972, a previously convicted poacher was given a sentence of five years and 165 days of imprisonment.

State and federal wardens patrolled the 85,000-acre Sabine Refuge night and day all summer long. The refuge is divided into seven large units separated by canals. Refuge Manager John Alther erected four surplus navigation towers in strategic locations on the Refuge. These were manned during summer nights by state and federal officers. If headlamps were seen out in the canals, agents tried to catch the poachers before they left the refuge.

Biologists were certain that given protection alligators would recover from their low population status. With poaching eliminated and Mama Gator pooping out thirty or more egg per year, populations quickly increased. Landowners were promised an

unspecified number of alligators if they pledged to protect them. The Sabine Refuge was the only place in Louisiana where gators were numerous enough for live capture.

The next order of business was to catch them. Alligators bask in the sun during cool days and submerge in warm weather. On summer nights they stalk their prey in the canals and ponds. At this time we had little experience in catching live gators, but Ted Joanen and Larry McNease, Rockefeller Refuge biologists, knew enough about alligator habits to improvise a sure-catch method.

On the night of the inaugural hunt, host Refuge Manager John Walther organized the men into two-man crews. Louisiana Game and Fish biologists brought their boats and the refuge provided others. The various crews left the docks after sunset heading for their assigned locales.

On the first night, Assistant Refuge Manager Ernest "Jimmy" Jemison and I left the dock about seven o'clock at night in an outboard motor boat. Before going out we had cut auto inner tubes into one-inch wide rings to wrap around the gator's snout. This was a safety measure to keep the gators from biting. Some crews used duct tape, but rubber bands were easier to put on and take off.

When we get to our assigned catching territory near the end of Central Canal, Jimmy and I sit awhile. It's a dark night, no moon. That's the best time to shine gators. We listen to the sounds in the marsh. A gallinule calls: "Kack, kack, kack." A barred owl asks, "Who cooks for you?" Jimmy imitates the call; the owl calls back and silently flies over to check us out. Mosquitoes and gnats buzz, but they're not biting tonight. Hot and muggy, no breeze.

We eat our sardines and crackers and wash them down with a coke. Supper over, Jimmy starts the motor. He sits in the stern and handles the boat and I stand near the bow as the catcher. I carry a heavy pole about five feet long with a coyote snare attached at the end. We each wear a headlamp that picks up the reflection of the gator's eyes.

As the boat slowly moves forward, I play the light on the water till I see two yellow eyes about a hundred feet ahead. Jimmy cuts the motor to idle and slowly paddles the boat to within a yard or so of this three footer. The gator floats submerged with the upper part of his head above the water. The sound of the motor doesn't spook

him and the bright light holds him steady. We are careful not to bang the sides of the boat--some vibrations cause the gator to slowly sink. Or with a defiant blow with his tail, he may suddenly make a rolling dive.

I carefully place the loop of the snare over the gator's head. This is the crucial moment--don't touch him--slowly, slowly. With a quick upward motion, I jerk the noose tight and the fight is on. In the water the gator twists around and around, but I quickly lift him out of the water. One hanging in the air, the fight is gone. He just hangs there slowly turning in the night air.

I bring the gator into the boat where he ships his tail around, snapping his teeth and hissing. Kneeling, Jimmy slides both hands under gator's beak and clamps the jaws together. A gator has a powerful bite but cannot lift its upper jaw so a person can hold a gator's mouth closed with the fingers of both hands. Gators don't raise their heads, but they sure can shift their jaws to the side. I get a rubber band out and loop it several times around the beak and Jimmy puts him into a burlap bag. Before the night is over we have 32 gators.

ALLIGATOR WRESTLING

One summer night John Eadie and I went out in a pirogue with a small outboard motor. Because of the tipsy boat, whenever I caught a gator, I went ashore with inner tubes, note book, and batteries for my head lamp--a messy arrangement. One gator I took to shore still hanging by the snare. I put the basket down and knelt on the muddy canal bank and held it down with my right hand. Not paying attention, I reached over with my left hand to remove the snare when the three-footer clamped down on my fingers. I was smoking a cigar at the time. You would too if you had to smell twenty or thirty gators on a sultry sweaty night. With the piercing pain of forty or fifty needle-like teeth, the cigar popped out of my mouth and landed on top of the gator's head. When the cigar hit the gator's head, sparks flew in all directions. It looked as if the sparks were coming from my fingers. It felt like it too. In this split second, the gator released his grip. Now I was a bit more careful and held Mr. Gator down while Eadie put on the rubber band. In the morning I went to the Sulphur General Hospital for a tetanus shot. The nurse asked me what happened. When I told her I was bitten by an alligator, she gave me a look of disbelief.

After a night of hunting, we head for the headquarters-dirty, stinking with alligator musk on our clothes and a nauseating stench in our nostrils. But before we can go to bed, we unload all the burlap bags in one of the refuge's garages. The gators pile up in one corner, docile, secure in numbers, seemingly unafraid.

In the morning the alligators are weighed, and tagged. Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries biologists attached metal numbered metal clamps and cut notches in the tail crests to identify each gator. As an experiment, I cut slits in the skin under the lower jaw and inserted small numbered plastic tags. The tag would be found when the gator was skinned. However, with the season closed, the only tags found were on the floors of the poacher's skinning sheds. And they didn't leave any data. During the experimental alligator harvest program in 1972 and 1973, a few of my tags were found by legal hunters. My tagged alligators were now about ten or more years of age and had grown about eight inches per year.

In 1973 I was nominated to the Alligator Recovery Team composed of biologists from all of the states that had alligators. Ted Joanen from Louisiana was the Team Leader. A recovery team is composed of experts on the biology and ecology of an endangered species. One of the Team's duties is to write a recovery plan, but our plan was so complicated and detailed that it was never completed. In the meantime, the alligator on its own returned to its former high population--so high that an experimental hunt was held in 1972 and 1973 and legal hunts have been held every year since.