Life and Letters

Volume IXa

Life & Letters, a life history writing class, shares its stories once again. The story of each student bears the imprint of all our life stories, and each one is a story that deserves to be told, especially when told in love.

The excitement for me about this class with friends many years my senior is that they are not trying to recreate the past in order to live in it; instead these students recreate the past in order to live by it. Written past is history understood in the light (and sometimes darkness) of the present. That perspective changes things. The writers of these stories are children who, now as adults, understand their parents' struggles; sisters and brothers who can sympathize with their siblings' fears; friends who respect their confidantes' privacy; grandparents who give love before advice; husbands and wives, widows and widowers, who speak as a beloved not just caught up in yesterday's dream, but who live with no regrets. Every relationship, each life, counts, no matter how its story is told. And it's told here in these pages. We invite you to read about lives that matter.

----------Joan Stear
USL, Lafayette, Louisiana
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Front Cover (clockwise from upper righthand corner): Mary Scheps (on right); Ann Lee and mother; Durwood and Wilma Neveu; John Townshend; Nancy Moreau; Iris Durel; Carol Tufts (center); Lorraine Rutkowski (on right); Bonnie Gillis and son; (center) Woodson Hopkins

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Seated, l. to r.: Carol Tufts, Wilma Neveu, Joan Stear, Gordon McGuire, Esther Parker
Standing, l. to r.: Iris Durel, Ann Lee, Lorraine Rutkowski, Nancy Moreau, Bonnie Gillis, John Townshend, Ruth Falk, Charles Cain, Joe Glorioso, Durwood Neveu, Woodson Hopkins, Ed Parker (Missing from photo, Mary Scheps)

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SHARING TIMES OF YESTERDAY
by
Bonnie Gillis

A thousand questions crept into my life, like why did God take my beloved Gene? He worked hard all his life, helped a lot of people. Nothing was too hard for him to do. He was a great believer in "do it yourself." One project was putting a new floor covering in the children's bathroom. He had to take up the commode, had everything back in, set the commode back, took a hammer to get the screw started in the floor, cracked the john, and had to buy a new one. Another time he was going to put an ice maker in the refrigerator. The boys were big enough to help, but were out of pocket; so he said, "You can be my helper." If things didn't go well he said all kinds of ugly words, so this day I said, "See you later. I am going to a movie." When I got back, he was all smiles. "Well, Miss Priss, we have ice now."

That ice maker still works, and that was twenty years ago. I always thought about my Dad saying bad language showed a lack of intelligence. My brother and Mother and Dad never said an ugly word. Gene's father had died when he was seventeen. I think he learned those ugly words in the Navy. After we joined Asbury Gene enjoyed doing things for the people of the church. He would take Ethel Bently to the Farmers Market and to V.I.M. on Wednesdays. Going down Johnston Street was a nightmare to me. Gene would say all kinds of ugly things, like "that bastard" or "that s.o.b.," if someone cut in front or didn't give a signal. Ethel, bless her heart, never blinked an eye; she was just happy to be going to her church. We never knew her husband, the Reverend Bently, who had died before we joined Asbury. It took me a long time to know Gene didn't mean to say things like he did. He just wasn't brought up like we were. I know he was happy to be in my family. Most of all, I am thankful for him being so good to Mother and Dad. They loved him just like their very own. I am grateful he is the father of my four children.

When Gene died January 28, 1989, the Reverend Caraway told me these children weren't mine but only a loan from God. I was so mad at him and the whole world. Finally after four years I know I am a slow learner. Sharing tales of yesterday with a group of talented people has taught me the meaning of friends as we share our joys and tears.

A KEKCHI INDIAN WEDDING FEAST
by
Carol Tufts

On December first of 1945, I set up housekeeping in an Indian village near the rain forest in Guatemala, where my mining engineer husband, Jack Tufts, was exploring for outcrops of lead and zinc. The Kekchi Indians in Coban were such intelligent, outgoing, friendly people that they completely captivated me.

Adela Chun was the fifteen-year-old younger sister of my maid, Paulina. Adela was a superb little saleswoman for the silver jewelry her family made. She had begged me to teach her English phrases, as she wanted to be ready for the influx of American tourists she expected after the war. At first I was reluctant because she was illiterate; but after all, she had the keen Mayan intellect and was bilingual--in her native Kekchi and in Spanish. She could also calculate infallibly in either language.

Adela came to the house about 5:00 p.m. daily after her day in the market. One day she was not her usual bouncy, enthusiastic self. At last, she told me that her parents had decided she should be married. She would become Adela Chun de Ak in March. "But Adela," I said, "You aren't even sixteen yet." "I know,--and I don't want to marry."

I never learned why the decision was made; sister Paulina was almost nineteen, and supposedly, should marry first. I was sure that Adela equated marriage with a sort of bondage that would rob her of her beloved, gregarious life in the marketplace.

Two weeks later Adela asked if "don Jack" and "don Ben" (the miner who held fort at the primitive camp with Jack) would be in town a week from the next Saturday. I assured her that I would send word for them to come.

I began asking questions of the few non-Indian townspeople I knew to learn what was expected of the guests, how we should behave and what sort of gift we should bring. No one seemed to know much, but the general opinion was that two or three bottles of sweet wine and a brief appearance on our part was all that was necessary. Since the party was to be in Adela's home, I knew it would be after the ceremony. The people I had asked were of pure lineage and probably never had been invited to such a fiesta. I later learned that the single, male "ladinos" (half-breeds) made a habit of crashing any and all Indian fiestas.

As the big day approached, Paulina needed more and more time off, and on the Thursday and Friday before the party she wore a path between our houses. She came to borrow my cheap utensils, napkins, plates, and the large platter, plus placemats,--all to serve three. I realized then that Jack, Ben, and I would be dining there. On Paulina's last Friday trip, she said she would come at noon to guide us to the house. I gave her the package of wine bottles then, in order to make our Saturday entrance simpler.

As we approached the thatched dwelling we heard marimba music. Adela and her bridegroom greeted us at the door. He looked like a decent young man, but we never learned his first name. In the large dirt-floored room, there was only one table with our settings for three. People occupied benches along the walls. We met Adela's parents,

I think, but it was all a matter of smiles and nods and body language,--no Spanish among the older people and men.

We three were seated, center front stage, and a fabulous de-boned and reassembled chicken was put before us, with our carving knife and fork. I had read in Holiday magazine about the art of de-boning chickens, but had not expected to see it in such surroundings. We were three uncomfortable, embarrassed people--our every gesture was watched. We tried to eat quickly and yet pretend to be conversing. Actually, we were trying to encourage one another, saying we could soon get up and say "mantioch" ("thank you," in Kekchi) and then leave.

It was not to be! As we finished that memorable meal, Adela came and whispered in my ear, asking if don Jack would dance the first dance with her. Jack protested that he might step on her bare feet, but I told him to shuffle. The top of Adela's head possibly reached Jack's lower rib cage. Next the groom came to claim me. I tried Spanish on him--no result. Soon I felt as gauche and miserable as I had at my first after-school hop. So I amused myself thinking of the few Kekchi words I could use: "thank you," "goodbye," "come here," "go away," "too expensive," "give it to me cheaper," or, of course, I might count to twenty to entertain him.

The dance ended and Jack was able to sit while Ben danced with the bride and I was swept away by a young crasher. He was trying English with me. "I leekay you because you volk and volk." He liked me because I "work and work." When we switched to Spanish, I learned that he had watched me weeding the garden.

That dance over, we decided to be firm. "We must leave," we protested. We circled the room, shaking hands, exclaiming, "mantioch." Out the door we went.

On the way home we three felt we had behaved badly, but Jack pointed out that it was our first time as guests of Kekchi Indians, and it was their first time as hosts to three gringos. What else were we to do?

A CONVERSATION WITH MYSELF
by
Lorraine Rutkowski

If I could talk to my teenage self, I would ask many questions, I would say many things: Write down your dreams. What do you want? Where do you want to live? Are you interested in being independent and financially secure? Where would you like to work? What would you like to be? Who do you want to be? Learn all you can about what you need to know to achieve these things. Review your dream list often and never give up. Nothing is beyond you; you can do anything anyone else has ever done. Study and prepare--go for it! "You can grasp an idea with such force that it becomes a reality."

Don't be afraid to try something because you're afraid to fail; you will learn by your mistakes and adversity will make you stronger. President Roosevelt has said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."--Believe it!

We will all have our share of tragedies, adversities, pain, and failure, but we can come out a little stronger for having survived them. Knowing that there are compensations in all things can help. Ask yourself how being without one thing gives you something else in its place. When life hands you lemon, try to make a lemonade. Remember, when one door closes another opens.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, in one of his books, had set down a very simple plan for success that really works: "VISUALIZE, PRAYERIZE, ACTUALIZE."

Listen to your heart--do not think that money, power, and prestige are necessary for success. Here is a quote from an unknown author: "I met a man the other day. He has no money; he's never held a prestigious position, but he's on top of his life." That would mean he's not motivated by fear, anxiety, hate, jealousy or any of those destructive emotions. If you <u>are</u> jealous of someone, ask yourself what that person has that you want and how you can acquire it.

Choose your friends, surroundings, and reading materials wisely; remember, in reference to the mind--garbage in, garbage out. Attending a church that renews you spiritually and offers hope, love, and guidance for daily living will be helpful towards this end.

If you want happiness, try these six simple steps taken from the diary of a victorian woman. She resolved every day to:

1. Do something for someone else.
2. Do something for myself.
3. Do something I don't want to do that needs doing.
4. Do a physical exercise.
5. Do a mental exercise.
6. Do an original prayer that always includes counting my blessings.

One last bit of my own advice, above all: Open your eyes to the beauty and wonder of life; don't be so busy chasing rainbows that you fail to enjoy the miracle of today.

BEING ITALIAN
by
Joe Glorioso

I was born on October 3, 1916, in Jeanerette, Louisiana, in a green house on Bayou Teche near the bridge. Pape was Italian, only a few years off "the boat." Mame was Italian; her father and mother were recently off "the boat." We were American citizens, but not quite yet. Americans were Cajuns, Jews, Spanish, Germans, and a mixture of them, sometimes all of them. Me? I knew what I was. I was Italian.

My father had come to the country with the reputed "streets paved with gold." He busted his heart working day and night, sunup to sundown in all season. He saved and saved. He knew how to find the "streets paved with gold." Some of his friends were still dragging their behinds on dusty roads, hoping someone would give them those "gold streets." Pape was Italian.

Unlike Americans, Italians always had a garden. Mame tended the spring flower garden in the front of our second home in New Iberia, nurturing, too, her prized dahlias along the fence in the back yard. Pape had two fig trees, a plum and orange trees, a large pecan tree and two grape vines in the back yard. He staggered his planting of tomatoes, tomatoes and more tomatoes under the trees. We ate them just off the vine or soaked in olive oil, lemon juice and garnished with lots of onions and garlic, imported capers from Italy, blackpepper and salt. We jarred them and we pasted them. On a small plot of ground on Iberia Street, he planted radishes, basil, parsley, endive, and garlic. We were different Americans. We made wine at home with our grapes. We were Italian.

My family had its own iceman, coal man, fruit man, vegetable man, fish man, egg man, and milkman. We bought dozens of summer watermelons from the watermelon man and bunches of bananas from the banana man. Everything was negotiable--the Italian way.

On Sundays, I would awaken to the smell of garlic and onions being sauteed, just right, in olive oil. As I lay in bed with my eyes closed, I envisioned my mother stirring in tomato paste made from garden fresh tomatoes and the browning of a large beef roast, bound for the gravy. We were going to have pasta again.

We had all kinds of pasta: macaroni, rigatoni, spaghetti, and about ten more varieties. Sure, we had pasta every day. Varying the pastas and the seasoning in the gravies made it seem that our diets consisted of much more than pasta. We had chicken gravy, fish gravy, oyster gravy, egg gravy, and meat gravy, but only on Sunday. Americans called our gravies, sauces. They are gravies. We are Italian.

On holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, we had, like most Americans, a small turkey stuffed with oyster dressing. We picked at the turkey, only after finishing our antipasto, minestrone, meatball spaghetti, potato and tomato salads. All of this was consumed with an ample supply of peaches dunked in homemade wine, sucked up--through fennel straws. There were fruits, nuts and homemade cookies.

All of this food was not eaten in one sitting. The children would run off to play; the men and older women would loiter around the table and munch. The young women would begin the cleanup, but not too much. At four in the afternoon, dinner would be over. Americans eat. Italians have an ongoing romance with food.

Those were the twenties and the thirties. Things have changed. My father and mother are gone. My children are married and away. My house is too big. We live in three rooms and a bath. I see my Italian friends at the funeral home. I eat in the cafeteria. I sometime cook meatball spaghetti; it takes me a week to eat all of it. I check my cholesterol, dodge fats, skimp on starch. I don't eat between meals. I haven't baked Italian bread in over twenty years. I buy wine at the grocery store. It's not the same for Italians.

The difference between the Cajuns, Jews, Irish, German, Spanish, and Italian is no longer easily defined, if it can be defined at all. My grandparents were Italian-Italian. My father and mother were Italian-Americans. I am American-Italian. My children are American-American. The tragedy is that my children have been cheated out of a rich and wonderful heritage. I am the last generation of "the boat" Italians.

SHOWDOWN AT GRANNY'S
by
Woodson Hopkins

The way she talked to that chicken would have led one to believe it was almost human; but he knew better. The dumb ol' bird was neither human nor tolerable in his way of thinking. What he was, was a mean marauder of his granny's chicken yard, the lord of the lot, cock of the walk, king of the hill. when he stretched his long neck and spread those short wings to the ground, it was time to get out of there, running as fast as four-year-old legs would take him. He had learned the hard way not to venture too far from the back porch, his haven from claws and pecks.

"No use crying to your grandmother," Myrtle advised him. "Dat rooster has got a pedigree dis long. He's a Rhode Island Red to boot. You know how you are your mother's baby boy? Well, that rooster is your grand mammy's baby, and you best just head for the house and stay there when Red is around. You would do well to notice he don't try no funny stuff when she is watching. I'll tell you dat bird is some smart, being fine born and all dat."

That sent him to contemplate as to who was smarter, he or the chicken. He did not swell on the matter, but instead turned his attention to a plan to eliminate the problem. He wanted Red out of his life. But how? Convinced he had the perfect plan, he approached Myrtle at first chance.

"No, sir!" she screamed. "I ain't gonna have no part of dat," quickly lowering her voice so as not to be heard. "Your granny would stick me in dat boilin' water quicker den a wink."

"All you have to do," he whispered, "is catch Red and throw him in the pot. Pick those feathers clean so Granny won't suspect it is ol' Red. You can tell Granny it was one of the guineas for gumbo, or some'in. She'll figger he got stolen."

"Mercy, she gasped, "dat ain't asking fo nuttin but trouble."

Myrtle's staunch reluctance to help him sent him brooding, but not for long. He would have to "outside" the family for sure. Across the street from Granny lived Mrs. Magness, daughter Marie and son June. Poor June had been born slow of wit, and although he was approaching seventeen years, he was a lovable six, according to the doctors. He would see what June had to say about his plan. When evening light began to fade and Red was securely at roost, he crossed the street looking for June.

Mrs. Magness saw him slipping around her yard and called him by name. "June's not here now," suspecting her visitor was looking for her boy. "That old rooster giving you trouble?" she asked gently. His surprise gave way to a rush of pent up emotions, and he blurted the whole burden of his problem out without breathing in. He held back his tears, waiting for her response. Wiping her hands on a fresh apron, she spoke softly, tenderly: "Sometimes a boy just has to fight back. I don't know how you are going to do it exactly, but you have got to put that bird in his place."

He scooted back across the street beaming satisfaction, but midway across the narrow thoroughfare he suddenly realized he had no weapon with which to demonstrate his new found courage.

Hardly three days past when Jack Shelton showed up with a present for him, a three foot long quirt. Said he picked it up in Mexico for his saddle pal. Demonstrating how the short whip would pop, we would wrap coils of leather around his booted foot like throwing a well aimed lasso. That night, as he recounted Jack's visit, he heard sounds like gears meshing together, and the intricate details of his plan for red began to unfold in his young mind. He had his weapon.

The next day his mother told him she was driving into the city and if he so elected he could stay at Granny's while she was gone. How timely it had all been. The stage was set for the big show down. Just him and Red face to face at dusk. He accepted his mother's offer requesting that he be allowed to wear a long sleeve shirt and thick overalls. "It's going to be pretty warm for those, but if that's what you want, go ahead." She turned away hiding a disguised smile as she departed the room. Sitting in the back seat of the Studebaker, he made last minute plans for the battle. He must not forget anything, he thought. Patting the back pocket of his overalls, he made certain his whip was coiled and ready for use. He had chosen the long sleeved shirt and thick overalls to protect him from those deadly claws and sharp beak.

After announcing his arrival to Grandmother Stallard, he ran to the front yard and followed the dust of his mother's car until it reached the highway. He was surprised when instead of turning left, it went right--back toward their house. But without thought, he dismissed her actions as a simple change of plans, what else?

Everything was ready. As if by cue, Granny reached for her bonnet and began her brisk pace to the back lot where her feathered prizes awaited their feed. After picking up a kernel, Red strutted out the gate of the pen into the larger area of Granny's yard. Granny's back was to them, the sun beginning to set in a fiery ball behind the boy and into the dark, sinister eyes of the bird. He stood a good two feet and walked with a menacing stride toward his prey. The boy braced himself and reached for the quirt not letting Red see what he was doing. When they came close, Red made his predicted lunge, and at that instant and without hesitation, he took a might swing with the whip catching Red's outstretched neck. The end of his leather equalizer wrapped around gizzard and feathers like a coiling boa. He jerked the whip taunt. Red's eyes bulged from his head like a grasshopper's, and he came off the ground neck extended as though a victim of public lynching. He had delivered the blow and now quickly released Red from the clutches of the quirt before Granny could witness the fight. He promptly folded his arms and weapon behind him and began to sing "Hold that Tiger," a favorite hymn he learned in church. Granny smiled and waved, but didn't notice the stagger in Red's strut.

It was amazing what a polite chicken Red turned out to be and how much space he allowed the boy from that day hence. It was also amazing that he saw a dozen quirts like his hanging in the display window of the local saddle shop.

WHAT IT WAS LIKE DURING THOSE WAR YEARS
by
Ann F. Lee

Looking back on the events leading up to WWII--the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and Hitler's invasion of Europe--I remember how quickly our lives began to change. The Sunday of the attack on Pearl Harbor we were "eating out" at the Kilgore Drug Store (they fixed the most delicious Sunday plate lunches) when the regular radio program was interrupted with the news that shook the world, including us there in the drug store.

Immediately the draft board became activated and within a few short months Johnny was called to report to Longview, the county seat, and then to go on to Dallas for his army physical. At that time rain and more rain had sent the Sabine River on a rampage, making it impossible to get from Kilgore to Longview due to high water, so Johnny paid a pilot at the airport five dollars to fly him the 12 miles over the water into Longview. When the Draft Board called--you better be there--come rain or come shine!

The oil and gas company Johnny worked for felt his job was essential to the war effort, so he automatically got a deferment.

It wasn't long until Johnny became part of the home guard when it was organized. They were issued uniforms, had rifle drills, and practiced marching in the downtown section of Kilgore. The women's home guard, of which I became a member, had much the same type of drills once a week. Similar type groups were organized in nearly every town of any size to prepare them in case there was an emergency. This was the most exciting thing that had happened in Kilgore since the oil boom some twelve years earlier. The top brass came from nearby army camps (Tyler, Texas) every Tuesday Night to instruct us concerning our duties as civilians in case our shores were bombed.

The couples in our neighborhood, including Becky and Harry Perkins, Judy and Bill Martin, Mary and Martin Kenefake, feeling it was their patriotic duty to serve any way they could, also became members. As serious as it was we loved the fun we were having when we got all dressed up in our uniforms and marched just like real soldiers. Quite a switch for me from marching with the Rangerettes at Kilgore College a couple of years before. Eventually we were taught how to fold bandages and prepare other First Aid supplies to be sent overseas.

Rationing became a household word along with U.S. Savings Bonds and U.S. Defense stamps. Through our company payroll savings bonds could be deducted from our check -- $18.75 being the smallest which would mature to $25.00 in 10 years. The children in schools were encouraged to buy defense stamps for as little as 10 cents which could be redeemed when they saved enough stamps to be turned into a bond. As we look back that probably turned out to be our first savings plan -- a real blessing in disguise! Through the years these bonds multiplied pretty fast, unless, of course, we might have the sudden urge to cash one in before its maturity.

From our county rationing board we could pick up our books with rationing stamps for sugar, shoes, gasoline, and tires. Scrap metal became a great asset to the war effort,

so all the old junk yards realized big profits when sold to the government. Then the "black market" got started for those who were willing to pay big bucks for the scarce items: like nylon hose, even retread tires. Other hard to get things were cigarettes, and all kinds of meats, especially bacon which could only be found at the grocery store where you charged and paid you bill once a month. If you asked for a particular item that was in short supply the grocer would reach under the counter and slip it into your sack.

Sugar rationing didn't bother us too much as I wasn't into the baking of cakes and pies. With no car gasoline was no problem. But for one of my college friends this was a real problem as she was wanting to drive her car to where her husband was stationed in Daytona Beach, Florida. She simply couldn't beg, borrow, or trade to get together enough stamps (gasoline) for that long Trip from Longview, Texas. She knew we were wanting to go to Georgia to see the folks so she'd drive us to Waycross if we could get enough gasoline at the plant to take us that 900 miles. Now we shudder to think of the danger of that 50 gallon drum of gasoline Johnny installed in the trunk of her car. Along the way she would stop to let Johnny siphon the gasoline out of the drum into her gas tank. After driving two days and one night that little Georgia farm house looked like heaven. The next day Dad Lee filled her tank one last time and we said our goodbyes as she continued on down the coast to Daytona where she planned to live with her husband until he was shipped overseas.

After our nice visit with the folks we came back home to Kilgore on the train which was loaded with soldiers either going to their camps or maybe just going home on leave. Everyone in our Pullman coach soon got to know each other so the one night and 2 day trip was big fun while we played cards, sang and listened to their stories about army life.

MEMORIES OF CLASSMATES
by
Nancy Moreau

In February of 1941 seventeen girls from various sections of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina entered the School of Nursing of Greenville General Hospital in Greenville, S.C. Ten of us were destined to spend the next three years together. The tuition for the three years was fifty dollars, the school would furnish books, uniforms, and shoes. We were two to a room and shared a common bath consisting of about eight was basins, four toilets, six showers, and two bathtubs. We were all in the same hallway on the first floor of the nurses' home. None of us were acquainted with each other except Ruth Poole and Dot Bodenheimer. These two had been friends throughout high school in Winston Salem, N.C.

We washed our undies by hand, hanging them on the radiator in our room to dry. We each had a single bed, chest, and closet. We attended chapel daily at 6 a.m., having make our beds, put our room in order, and dressed in uniform for the day. Chapel and all classes were held in the nurses' home basement. After Chapel we walked along the covered walkway to breakfast in the hospital dining room. Our meals were well balanced and nutritious. The staff and doctors shared a separate dining room.

A second group of students entered the school of nursing in August, 1941. Their graduation exercises were held the same date as ours, bringing the total number of graduates that year to twenty eight.

Bodie, as we called Bodenheimer, was for reason, protected by the whole class. She seemed so young and helpless. She and Poole were roommates. Bodie had many problems with her studies. We tutored her many times. She spent many hours sitting on the floor of her closet studying by that one dim light bulb when lights were supposed to be out.

Ruth Poole, the quieter of the two, was protective of Bodie. Both women, now widowed, still live in Winston Salem. Their rolls are now reversed. Bodie reared five children, spent more years in nursing, is very aggressive. She does all the driving on trips the two of them take. Ruth has one son and is now the follower. These two have remained close friends. Bodie was the only one in our group to fail state board exams but made it on the second try.

Imogene Fitzpatrick was from Georgia. She had a long affected drawl which I believed she practiced daily to perfect. She could put on a great helpless act to create sympathy or escape work. Her attempts did not escape most of our instructors or supervisors.

Ann Justice was from North Carolina, had been reared in a orphanage, or so she told us. She was a great "Con Artist" with a lovable personality. She "wiggled" herself out of many a difficult situation. She broke curfew many times, would deny coming in late even when confronted by the housemother. Justice used only Ipana toothpaste and Ivory soap (that is if any of her classmates had these items). She had no qualms borrowing a classmate's only pair of nylons, telling that person's roommate she had permission.

The tables were turned on her when she rushed off duty one night to meet her current boyfriend at Roy Young's juke joint. She found Fitzpatrick had borrowed the skirt and blouse she intended to wear. She proceeded to borrow Fitz's dress. As Justice was jitterbugging away with her friend, Fitz walks up and says, "Justice, my good dress"--Justice was crushed and complained for days of this humiliation. She never failed to ask for assistance if she fell behind with her work. The patients' charts were written in red ink after seven pm. At midnight a double line was drawn and the new day's date written in. If a classmate was on duty on a floor above or below her, she would send her charts on the elevator to that classmate for the lines to be drawn. We had a system of calling the switchboard operator (nicknamed "Beautiful") to find out the whereabouts of the night supervisor as she would never have allowed this. Justice as dismissed from the school of nursing in our third year.

Mary Frances Henley was from Georgia and roomed with Doris Gillespie. They were the oldest in the class, both twenty eight. Henley was one of the most conscientious in the class. She served on the student council until the Faculty learned she was a divorcee. No one in the class learned this from Henley but through the "grapevine" later. She would have make an excellent nurse but developed tuberculosis in our third year. She was admitted to a sanitarium in the mountains near Greenville. Miss Westfall, our nursing arts instructor, took a group of us to see her several months later. She was on a screened porch with a group of other patients and had just shampooed her hair. She was so happy to see us and still her happy go luck self--at least that was the impression she gave. Their beds were all in a row on this screened porch and it was in the dead of winter. I never saw Henley again. I suppose, in my youth, I was too caught up in my own life. I heard that she became a licensed practical nurse later.

Doris Gillespie was a dependable, slower nurse but one who never cut corners to get the job done faster. I visited her family many times in Easley, S.C. during our school days. She was the one I always begged to bring me a baked sweet potato from home. On one visit, her mother found us in the kitchen eating cold cornbread and raw onion. We would get so hungry for home cooked food. Gillespie was able to visit home more frequently since Easley is quite close to Greenville. We corresponded for years--she married a soldier from Iowa. I heard a few years ago she was in a nursing home in Easley with Alzheimer's.

This school of nursing closed with the 1974 graduating class, having served the city and county of Greenville from 1912 to 1974. A bachelors degree in nursing is now offered by Furman University with the students receiving their hospital experience in the Greenville General Hospital system. A newsletter is sent annually to each former graduate of G.G.H. whose whereabouts is known; the newsletter includes news of graduates, beginning with the oldest class with living members. There is a list of those deceased during the past year, a lost list is also included with a request for information known of them. Homecoming is held the first Saturday in August yearly. All former graduates planning to attend send in their Alumnae dues and reservations for the program and luncheon one week prior to that date. This will be my fiftieth year since graduation. We will gather at the Poinsett Club in Greenville. A special recognition and a corsage will be

given to those graduating twenty five and fifty years ago. Each class sits together; friendships are renewed. Many classes hold their reunion the night prior to homecoming.

A SUMMER VACATION
by
Charles Cain

During my sophomore year at L.S.U., Tom, one of my older brothers who was on the West coast, asked what I had planned for the following summer. I had attended summer school the year before and was thinking of doing very little except camping out on the Sabine River near Merryville and doing a bit of fishing. Tom suggested that I might want to ship out aboard the Texaco tanker, Roanoke. he was second mate and could get me on as an Ordinary Seaman. I think he did not like the idea of my loafing.

He sent money for bus fare out to Long Beach and told me what hotel to stay at when I got there. I had kept in touch with one of my high school buddies who was stationed in San Diego with the Navy. I told him the date I would arrive in Long Beach and the hotel I would be staying at. He came up the day after I arrived in Long Beach. I had used my Baton Rouge address when registering at the hotel and when we returned from supper the desk clerk said there were some young ladies from Baton Rouge and gave us their room number. My Navy friend, Marvin, said they were "pick ups," but I did not think anyone would do such a thing. I am still pretty naive. I called their room and we visited with them for a few minutes. Marvin gave me his fifty cents right away and we left. I asked him why he was so sure. "They talk like girls from home," was his reply.

The Roanoke was in dry dock for a couple of days after I arrived in Long Beach, but I finally went aboard just before she sailed. Tom had told me I had to be 21 years old when I signed on. That was all right since we did not have to show a birth certificate. Tom had the 12 to 4 watch and I was put on the 4 to 8 watch with the First Mate. I had signed on before noon and we sailed just after lunch. I went down to the crew's quarters to take a nap but was wakened shortly with "Mr. Cain wants to see you on the bridge." I learned to "box" a compass that first afternoon.

I went on watch at four P.M. and worked with the deck gang until five, then had thirty minutes off for supper. I stood lookout from 5:30 to 8:00 P.M. on the bow of the ship. When we came off watch at 8:00, there was always sandwich material and milk available. When I was called at 3:30 A.M. to go on watch at 4:00, there was something available for sandwiches. Breakfast was served from 7:30 to 8:30, so we had another meal when coming off watch. I weighed 139 pounds at the beginning of summer and 161 pounds when I left the ship. Five big meals each day will do that to a growing boy!

While standing lookout before daylight one morning, I began ringing up lights ahead to call the mate's attention to them as was the custom. I did not know we were coming in to San Pedro and had already taken on the pilot. After a few clangs of the bell, someone yelled from the bridge, "Quit ringing that blank blank bell." All I could say was, "Aye Aye, Sir."

Each "watch" had eight men; four on deck and four below in the engine room. In addition, there was a day crew and a bos'n, the Captain and the Chief Engineer, and the wireless operator. I don't know how many were in the Steward's Department.

Campbell and I were the Able Bodied Seaman and Ordinary Seaman, respectively. We had to relieve the quartermaster for supper. It was fairly easy to steer the ship at sea because if you got off course a little you would bring it back and compensate. We were going up the Columbia River to Portland, Oregon, and it was my turn to relieve the quartermaster. When I appeared on the bridge the mate says, "Where's Campbell?" My answer was, "He is aft." The mate says, "Send him up here." Going up a channel you usually have a pilot on board and you need an experienced helmsman to change courses often and not overdo it. Over a period of weeks I gained some confidence, and the mate had more confidence in me so he let me take the helm going into San Francisco. I surely felt good about that.

I believe I received no favors from the crew and did not associate with the officers. In port each person was on his own and I did go ashore with the officers. Sparky, the wireless operator, and I went to Santa Monica one evening when the ship was in San Pedro. We were strolling along the mid-way when a toddler came to me calling, "Daddy, Daddy." I took a pretty good ribbing about that even though I had never been in Santa Monica before. We weren't watching the time and missed the last interurban back to San Pedro. We did not have enough money for a cab but we took a cab anyway. We went to my brother's apartment complex and Sparky left me in the cab to satisfy the cab driver while Sparky waked my brother and got the cab fare to get me out of hock.

I did enjoy the summer and it was a good experience. My pay was $40.00 per month and "room and board." I think I made about enough to pay my bus fare out and back.

HOW I CHANGED FROM A BOY INTO A GIRL
SUBTITLE: FROM BOYISH BOBS TO BOBBY PINS
by
Mary Scheps

Shortly before my birth, my father got down on his knees and prayed for a son. At that time, the sex of a newborn infant was always unknown until the baby's emergence into the daylight. It is true that I had a distant relative who was written up in "Believe it or Not" for having an uncanny knack for predicting such things and had even been given a trip to Japan in order to predict the sex of the Emperor's baby; but my relative lived elsewhere.

My father forgave the Lord for failing him in this instance, but he proceeded to make a boy out of me, or at least a tomboy. Instead of dolls, he gave me baseball bats and tennis rackets. He dressed me in overalls and called me the most unfeminine of all names--"Froggie."

Then came the haircutting incident. My father took me to the local barber and make him give me what was called a "boyish bob." My hair was cut just like a boy's.

The next day I walked into the schoolroom where my teacher, Miss Winter, had already gotten started. She stopped talking and stared, and the whole class burst into laughter. If this bothered me, I don't remember it, nor do I remember whether I was elated the next day when all the other girls came to school with their hair cut just like mine.

...just a few more details about my looks. Mama and Daddy finally admitted that I could not see well, since Miss Winter told them that she kept moving me closer and closer to the blackboard until my nose was almost touching it. So they clarified my world with some glasses that were as round as wagon wheels and as black as Brer Rabbit's tar baby. The glasses never got lost since they were always on me, but they got broken may times, and once when a horse threw me, they flew off my face and clarified a patch of yellow bitterweeds.

There was a word for my complexion--sallow--meaning pale and yellowish. The biggest flatterer in New Orleans once told me that I had an "alluring pallor." Well, whether it was sallow or pallor, I don't know, but it proved to be a benefit at the time I am describing, since I was the only daughter allowed to wear make-up. Without it, I looked as though I has left my face at home.

The years went by. Boys were invented--real boys. And some genius devised a marvelous little gadget called a bobby pin. By dampening a clump of straight hair, twisting it around, and clipping it with a bobby pin until it dried, a girl could create a cute little curl in front of each ear, even if her hair were straight as a board. At that time my hair was cut Buster Brown style, with a hedge of dark brown hair coming down to meet the glasses. Is it any wonder that there is not a single photograph of me during my childhood? My parents had a camera alright, but they used it to take pictures of the vegetables they raised in the garden.

So now for my metamorphoses into a girl. Someone invented the permanent wave, and, wonder of wonders, I looked in the mirror one day and saw curly hair. I was spellbound, and like Narcissus in the Greek myth, fell in love with my reflection. I changed my name from Froggie to Mary Esther, my overalls to ruffled dresses and my round black glasses to pale, oval ones.

I hid my geometry medal in a dresser drawer and even let the boys beat me at tennis once in a while. The result was several beautiful love affairs, and if my courage and vocabulary do not fail me, I will tell you about them in my next episode.

MY GOOD BUDDY
by
Durwood Neveu

My first memories of Irvin were of a chubby, round faced boy in the second grade at Mount Carmel Primer. Since none of the kids in my class lived in my neighborhood, I did not see or play with them except at school. It was about the 6th or 7th grade when we became old enough to go outside the familiar bounds of the neighborhood, that we started forming closer ties with the kids in the class. Even so, I would play with Paul Sellers, Warren Butcher, Irvin Broussard and others and they would come over and play with me usually on Saturdays because Sundays were reserved for going to church at St. John's 8 AM student mass and then Sunday dinner with the family. Sunday was considered to be family day.

By the time we were in the 9th grade, all in the class enjoyed a closeness that was unusual in a group as diversified in our backgrounds as we were. Irvin and I continued to become closer friends and in our Senior year (11th grade) we kept close company at school, but Irvin lived quite a distance from my house, especially since our only means of transportation was by hoofing it. That year we decided that we would like to be Chemistry Lab assistants and set up the lab for the next experiment. We got to try out all sorts of interesting things. Once I noticed that the Sodium metal looked rather rusty in kerosene, so I cut a tiny piece of it and put it on a watch glass and put several drops of water on it to clean it. The results were quite amazing. The Sodium danced around the watch glass, got hot enough to break the glass and finally a small explosion occurred with the Hydrogen gas was liberated from the water and ignited. We also made Hydrogen Sulfide gas (stink bomb) and brought it in the classroom during recess. The next class was moved to another room.

After we graduated from Cathedral High, a number of us went to Southwestern in September. In spite of the ridiculously low tuition ($16 for Fall Semester), Irvin stayed out for a year and worked at Heymann's Food Center. Sometime during the year he bought the complete set of the Harvard Classics, read them all and by the Fall Semester of '38 when he enrolled at Southwestern, one would have thought that he had transferred from Oxford. Of course the clods on campus thought he was weird and made fun of him. It was in these years as SLI that we really became close. We would talk for hours discussing the politics of the country and the world and what we thought was wrong with them. Irvin and I along with Willard Jacobs and maybe one other, could have been called campus radicals. One cannot have much of a demonstration with just three or four people, so we just kept our mouths shut.

As I have mentioned before, when the war started in 1941, we considered our options, and by June of '42 decided to enlist in the service in order to try to influence what branch we would be in. We were not Gung Ho characters by any stretch of the imagination and the Medical Corp seemed to be a nice safe spot, so we opted for that. Come to think of it I met very few Gung Ho characters during my 3 1/2 plus in the

service. Mostly it was doing a job that had to be done. As fate would have it, Irvin and I were immediately separated and I next saw him almost 4 years later after it was all over.

In 1946, '47 I was trying, unsuccessfully, to start a flower nursery in DeRidder, LA. Irvin returned to SLI and completed his degree. He then went to LSU graduate school and received his Masters in Psychology. We would see each other once in a while and then we both got married. He moved to Florida and worked at Eglin Field as a federal employee testing the effect of radar on the people who worked with it. We kept in touch and got together at his mother's home when they came to visit her.

The last twenty or so years we haven't seen each other that much. Irvin and Sybil (his first wife) were divorced and a year or so later he married a divorcee about 15 years his junior. Irvin and Lune are living in North Carolina now and we get together whenever they come in to see his brother Russell. Also every so often we will call each other on the phone to, as he puts it, "just checking in." Next to Wilma and my brother Louis, He is my closest friend.

MY GRANDPARENTS' HOME
by
Wilma B. Neveu

My maternal grandparents' home was a large rambling old house with light, airy rooms located on a large corner lot at 218 North Polk Street in Rayne, LA. It sat close to the street and was painted beige. A veranda ran across the front wrapping around the front bedroom to where the side driveway went under the Porte Cochere. Approaching from the street the right side of the porch was screened. Screening the front of the house from the street were some large wood and wire trellis(es) with wisteria vines growing all over them. In the spring the vines were covered with lavender blooms which perfumed the front of the house with sweet smells. The Porte Cochere was made from the same type of frame as the trellis and also had wisteria vines growing all over it.

The yard was nicely landscaped with blue hydrangeas by the porch on the left side of the house by the driveway and pink hydrangeas by the back bedroom by the driveway. There were big camellia bushes on the right side of the house along the fence. By the screen porch on front were shrimp and firecracker plants, and all kinds of plants all around the house. There were two tall Oak trees on the front, one near the corner of the front porch beside the driveway and the other on the corner. From the corner Oak there was a short hedge that grew along the sidewalk to the back of the yard except where the driveway turned and crossed into the side street. This side yard was where my friends, Nell Cunningham, Bobbie Haynes, and Emilie Kahn and I liked to plan the most, although we played all over the yard. At the back of the yard at the end of the driveway was a one car garage, next to the garage was a small storage shed, and to the right of the shed was my grandmother's rose garden. She usually had flowers blooming all around the yard during spring, summer and autumn.

Entering the house from the front porch, I could stand in an open foyer which flowed into a large light filled living room to the right. The living room opened to the screen porch on the front and a glassed-in-porch on the back. To the left of the foyer was the large front bedroom, and back of the foyer was a long narrow dining room which had a side door to the glassed-in-porch. Back of the dining room was a large kitchen with a small breakfast room to the right. The breakfast room was back of the glassed-in-porch. The kitchen also had a door opening to the glassed-in-porch. To the left side of the dining room and back of the front bedroom was a short hall that opened into a small bathroom at the end of the hall. This bedroom had a door that opened onto the side veranda by the Porte Cochere, which was where I slept when I visited my grandparents. Both bedrooms had real working fireplaces when I was very young, but Mama and Papa Campbell had gas heaters placed in the fireplaces when I was about seven or eight. Some time my sister, Louise, would visit our grandparents with me, but usually we visited one at a time.

The walls in all the rooms had beaverboard (sheetrock) painted a light color, and the ceilings were high, about 10 or 12 feet except the breakfast room and the glassed-in-porch which had around 8 or 9 feet/foot ceilings.

My grandparents were living there when I was born, as that is the house in which I was born, and continued to live there until Durwood and I had been married about ten years.

The old house is still there, painted white now, and it seems to stick out like a sore thumb as it is a tall house. There are no plants, trees, or shrubs, and the front porch seems to have been taken into the house.

TO MY CHILDREN:
THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS
by
Iris Durel

I really loved school and I always got along well with my teachers. Geography and English (Language) were my favorite subjects. (Though with all the corrections in punctuation Joan Stear has to make, you'd never guess that.) Our geography teacher, Miss Rowe, took us around the world! No matter which part of the world we were studying at the time, she made you feel as though you were there. She always had a wonderful project going; like the time we were studying about Indians in the West, she had long tables put across the back of the classroom. On these we made a complete Indian village with tepees that were made of sticks and cloth, and mountains made of papiermache. The girls dressed celluloid dolls like Indians and the boys brought plaster of paris (I guess) horse statues from home. When the PTA had their meeting, Miss Rowe had the parents and teachers come into our classroom to see our handiwork. We were very proud! We did many other projects, but that one has always stood out in my mind as the most elaborate and the best!

Recess was fun, too. I can't remember any grass on the school ground at all. There were trees and maybe some grass under the trees because we'd sit on the roots in the shade, if we weren't playing hop-scotch or jumping rope. When the bell rang for recess the girls would run outside and grab the "best spot" for us to play on and one of us would stand on it while the others looked for a stick and a few flat rocks. With the stick we'd draw a hop-scotch in the dirt; the rocks we'd use to play the game. All the boys gathered in another area to play marbles, drawing circles in the dust. Sometimes the girls would try to get into a game of marbles with the boys but they seldom allowed that. They were so-o-o macho. When it rained, we had to stay in our classrooms during recess, as we had no auditorium or cafeteria to go to. We could color, or draw, or play games so rainy days were always fun, anyway. As you know, I am kinda' weird; I love rainy days to this day.

In the mornings, when the school bell rang, we would assemble at the flagpole, the flag was raised, and we had to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Wasn't that nice? We never just ran into the school building mornings, noontimes, or recesses; each time the school bell rang, we had to line up outside and our teachers led us into our classrooms, very orderly and always very quietly.

For my seventh-grade graduation was when I got my first permanent wave. Uncle Bee, my mother's brother, was always very good to us and he took me to Scott to a beauty shop there because we could get a perm for only $1.50. You never saw such a contraption like it in your life. Looking back I can't help but wonder why women put themselves through so much hassle and pain. After being doused with a stinking solution, my hair was rolled up on metal rollers; the operator sat me under this monstrosity of a machine and pulled down long cords with a clamp at the end of each, which was clamped on each curl. The "cooking" began! I came out looking like a frizzed bunny

(sort of like the hair-dos of today, only with much less style) but to a twelve-year-old getting her first perm, I was on cloud nine! My sister, Lil, sent me the money for my permanent which was my graduation present from her. She kept my letter--pleading for that perm--all these years and gave it to me recently (over 55 years she kept it! Wow, is your Mother getting old!). Such chicken-scratch--such an awful handwriting! When I find it I will keep it with my "Memoirs." One thing for sure, I can never complain about any of your handwritings. Why do you think I print all the time?

After graduating from Central School in June, 1938, I went to Lafayette High School which is now Lafayette Elementary. Suddenly I was thrust into the role of a young lady but all I wanted was to be a little girl, still playing dolls, jumping rope, climbing trees. When Jay told me I was getting too old to do those things, it broke my heart.

But I did have my books. All my life I loved to read. I would sit under the house (where it was cool), climb a tree and sit on a limb, or sit on the front porch swing, and read for hours, anything I could lay my hands on. More than once, Mother accused me of being lazy, just trying to get out of my chores. *Chores seemed so trifling when Jo March was trying so hard to solve family problems!* (Little Women) *or when poor Jane was so in love with Mr. Rochester that she had to run away,* (Jane Eyre). *Then there was poor little Cassie (Cassandra) whose mother was mad* (King's Row). With such tragedies for me to live through, who could think of **chores**? When I read those books, I truly became Jo, Jane, or Cassie, or whomever! Once, the Advertiser printed all of King's Row, each day a different segment. I was in "hog's heaven," waiting daily for the next chapter.

Is it any wonder I loved literature so much when I got to high school? *"INVICTUS"* by William Henley has always been my favorite poem, so if you haven't read it yet, please do so now. Read about the poet, too, so that you can appreciate the poem. "Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be, for my unconquerable soul"...Aaaaaah. That's all you'll get out of me; read for yourselves.

FUTURE FARMER
by
John A. Townsend, Jr.

It was always a fun trip but sometimes interspersed with some work. On our scenic annual trip, we drove from Shreveport to Uncle Ike and Aunt Gladys Townsend's farm located roughly six miles north of Oak Grove, Louisiana.

Oak Grove is river bottom land bordered on the west by the Boeuf River and on the east by Bayou Macon, with a number of unnamed creeks interspersed between. we would leave Highway 17 a couple of miles north of Oak Grove, cross the railroad tracks, and continue our journey on a narrow country lane. Abruptly, we rounded a sharp right angle curve, would rumble across a bridge over a rather minor looking creek below and ahead we'd see the clap board house of Uncle Ike and Aunt Gladys.

After a left turn off the road it is only one quarter mile along a gravel lane to the front of the house. We traveled past row after row of waist high cotton, the length of which one could only guess. The cotton made way for soybean, peanuts then corn, and near the house a large garden of a variety of vegetables.

As we unloaded, Aunt Gladys and Cousin Doris would come out onto the front porch to greet us. Uncle Ike, as usual, is off in the fields with his laborers. As always, on one corner of the porch would rest about one half bale of cotton that Aunt Gladys, Doris, and a grown cousin Cora Mae used for ticking in quilt making and pillows, and thoroughly enjoyed by the kids for it was there we normally slept atop blankets during the warm months. From the back porch one could get an idea of the size of the fields and the varied coloring of the different plants making a very pretty geometric grid. In any direction one looked you could see a break in the rows where a drift fence had been built in an effort to blunt erosion and trap the top soil brought in from elsewhere by flooding. The seemingly harmless stream that we crossed just prior to reaching the farm was locally named, Tiger River, but is not shown on any map. Normally it is no more than ankle deep but a time or two we arrived to find it flooded and were met by Uncle Ike in a row boat, leaving our car on dry land while we paddled to the house.

Each year when we made the trip in the spring, we were greeted by a different pattern of planting in the fields since Uncle Ike rotated the crops to keep the soil fertile. The farm was a model for efficient farming. What treatment Uncle Ike used for the boll weevil and other insects was his secret. I never heard the term "insecticide" or the word poison mentioned. For some farmers nearby his methods were controversial, in particular the use of the drift fences. Some seem to think he was "stealing" their top soil. Uncle Ike's answer was that the floods had stolen the land; he simply diverted it to replace what he, himself, lost.

No, the time is not now. It is 1937. Uncle Ike homesteaded a section of land in 1918, shortly after leaving the army, that had formerly belonged to the Indians, remnants of the tribe at Poverty Point State Commemorative area. The area along the railroad, Epps, Forest, Oak Grove, and Terry were bustling cotton producing and shipping locales. Uncle Ike was, as far as I can find out, one of the first farmers in the state to ship

soybeans in commercial quantities. A concern from Georgia purchased them along with the peanuts. It has been many years since I have been to Oak Grove.

Uncle Ike, fed up with government regulations on how much, what, and how to plant, began, in the mid 1950s, to sell off the land to a conglomerate until less than forty acres remained.

On a current highway map of Louisiana there is no longer shown the railroad spur running from Delhi north to Kilbourne alongside Highway 17, nor is the "Tiger River" which meandered across the area between the Boeuf River and Bayou Macon.

SPOUSE (OR SPICE!)
by
Ruth Falk

Over the years, I have found that most young people refuse to listen to their parents' advice on the choosing of a mate--I was one of them. My parents really tried, but I married the man anyway. We had two wonderful sons, Guy and Dean, just three years apart.

However, it wasn't long before I realized that I had made a terrible mistake. Divorce wasn't very popular in those days, but in my case it was absolutely necessary.

But even in unhappy times there can be humorous moments. While attending a party one day, I was introduced to a woman who looked me over for a moment and then said, "You know you don't look like a divorcee." I've often wondered just how a divorcee is supposed to look. That remembrance always brings on a chuckle.

Then came the really difficult years in my life, what with spending eight hours a day at the office, plus the problems that come with the keeping up of a home and the care of two youngsters, I was overworked, and if it hadn't been for my wonderful parents I might not have made it. The boys spent every summer vacation with them. Those months gave me a chance to pull myself together.

Then, several years later, while living in Long Beach, California, I decided to find a new job with better pay. Guy had finished college and Dean was in his last year.

I don't know how I could have been so lucky as to have chosen the right employment agency, but I did. A delightful woman interviewed me and I was assured that my age would not be a problem in the employment field. She said that most firms wanted to employ women whose children were grown or almost grown. She assured me that she would find a good job for me in just a day or two. She called that same evening to say that a very nice man had come in that day looking for a private secretary. He was a metallurgical engineer and owned a steel foundry just a few blocks away. He wanted someone who could also run the office. Then next day I met with him and his top employees, and the following day I accepted his job offer.

I was happy there right from the start and two years later I married the man, or should I say, I married the boss!

Arthur Falk offered to show me the world, and that he did. We traveled constantly and our favorite trip was the ninety day cruise around the world on the President Roosevelt. We had a wonderful time--how we loved to dance. Each night, we managed to outlast the band.

It was while we were dancing that I lost my loved one. We were attending a Valentine's Day party at our church, nine and a half years after we had said our "I do's" and just as we entered the dance floor, Arthur's heart stopped.

In looking back over the years, I realize how fortunate I am that those heartbreaking years with spouse #1 came first and that those wonderfully happy ones with spouse #2 followed. They make for wonderful memories, and believe me, they were the "SPICE."

HALLOWEEN TRICKS AND OTHER DIRTY PRANKS
by
E.D. Parker

My earliest memory of Halloween was sometime before my fifth birthday, when we still lived in Wellington, Texas, that is. A woman dressed as a witch, wearing a classical witch's costume with peaked black hat, came to the door. I had no idea what she wanted, but I was duly impressed with her costume. I don't know whether or not she had a broom on which to ride--she may have left it at the foot of the steps.

My next memory of All Hallow's Eve was after we moved to the farm at Swearingen, a school district about half way between Wellington and Memphis, in the southeastern corner of the Panhandle. In school we paid tribute to the day mostly by drawing and cutting out witches, goblins, black cats, and jack-o-lanterns.

What I remember most about Halloween in the country was the tricks played on the neighbors by "the Big Boys" in the community. I was never involved in this horse play because of my age. The perpetrators were four or five years older than me. During the big night these fellows rode around the community on horseback doing all sorts of annoying things. We made out pretty well with the tricks. About the worst that happened was to get our front gate wired closed. On one occasion three cotton pickers, who lived in our tenant house left their water jug in the field and found it full of dirt the next morning.

Some of the other farmers didn't make out as well. One of the favorite tricks was to put saddles and harness on the milk cows. Most farmers had a few milk cows, and it was common practice to let the cows out to pasture in the daytime but to keep them in the lot at night. It was, therefore, an easy matter to get saddle and harness out of the barn and put them on the cows. These jokers sometimes resorted to more elaborate tricks like putting a wagon on top of the barn. This was done by removing the wheels, disassembling the bed and running gear on the ground and reassembling the whole on the barn roof.

As time passed these tricks became more elaborate, and they eventually started playing tricks on each other. Will Gammage who lived on a farm about one mile east of the Swearingen School was one of their favorite targets. He was a soft spoken, easy going sort of man with a houseful of daughters and no sons. On one occasion one or two of the tricksters plotted a double cross on the others. As a group they planned to play their usual trick on the Gammage farm. One of the group, who was in on the double-cross, told the others he would meet them later at the targeted farm. Well, he did indeed go to the Gammage farm, but he went very early. He told Will what was about to transpire. They got their shotguns ready and waited. When the others arrived later and were busy getting the harness ready for the cows, Will and his informant began shooting into the air. Needless to say there was great consternation in the cow lot with the tricksters running in all directions.

All of which reminds me of another kind of practical joke that happened several years later when I was in high school in Wellington, and it had nothing to do with Halloween. Another group of young men concocted a trick that they played a limited

number of times. Every one in town know about it in short order, so it soon became impossible to find a potential victim. They operated by telling the patsy they know some pretty country girls who were eager to go out with some nice young men. They had previously located a vacant country house or one occupied by a willing confederate. One or two of the conspirators then escorted the eager victim to the supposed home of the pretty girls. After parking their car, they approached the house, always after dark. Just before reaching the door, a man (one of the conspirators) stepped out of the shadows, yelling at the intruders, "You stay away from my daughters, you so-and-so!" and with that began shooting his shotgun into the air. Again consternation resulted and the poor victim usually took off running. At least one of them was said to have run all the way to town. Happily, I was neither a conspirator nor victim in this farce.

LOOKING BACK WITH PLEASURE
by
Esther Parker

When I was a little girl and the weather was very warm Mama used to give us a piece of cardboard to fan ourselves. We girls had pretty flowered fold-up fans but they were just for dress-up occasions. We used the cardboard only at rest time after lunch or at bed time - when busy the heat didn't bother us.

When Mama got our first table fan with about 6 inch blades, we took turns standing directly in front of it. Mama sometimes put it in a open window to cool the room but I guess it really just stirred the air.

I checked in our 1954 encyclopedia and to my surprise found out that air conditioning was first used in the industrial field about 1906, improving steadily through the years but was only for commercial use. The first moving picture theater was fully air conditioned in 1922 then gradually department stores, hotels, restaurants and other large businesses. Not until 1930 was equipment successfully manufactured for small areas such as railway cars and homes.

Most of us used oscillating fans, then window fans and evaporative coolers for dry climates. Then came attic fans which were a great improvement because they cooled the whole house; but with the breeze they also pulled in dust, especially on unpaved streets. I still hate dusting, it's a never-ending chore.

It was heavenly when Central Air became available at a reasonable cost. when we were installing our first central system I had the grandiose idea that it would never be necessary to dust! Well, it didn't eliminate the pesky job, but it did help. Practically every building is now air conditioned. How spoiled we are!!!

It was probably in the early 40s when I saw the new miracle called TELEVISION. It was amazing at the time, but the picture was so small it didn't seem so exciting--the movie's much larger screen was better. Of course, there were surely larger TV's on the market. As the larger screens became available for home use, the price was still too high for some of us. I wondered just when I'd see one up close. It was some years later when we were living in Corpus Christi that Faye and Mel Imken, neighbors, got their first TV and invited our boys over to see cowboy pictures and cartoons with their sons. Ed and I saw Victor Borge for the first time, but we still weren't in the market for one; we jokingly said we'd wait for color. In the summer of '54, Tommy had surgery and was supposed to be quiet for a couple of weeks. the day we brought him home from the hospital Ed left "To go back to work," but returned shortly with--an Admiral, black and white!! Were we surprised and excited! That Admiral served us well for a few years. Our third set was in color as all TVs since have been. We graduated to our present 27", which is most adequate. I've read of the new status symbol of a movie room in homes now, but I've never seen one of those large double picture screens up close. I often think of how much my grandparents and other relatives would be tickled to see the new TVs.

The old ICE BOX was a wonderful improvement and a boon to homemakers. The first one I remember was a three door: two small compartments piggy back on one side

(the top one was for the block of ice) and one long compartment on the other side with shelves for food. In New Orleans the ice man delivered by horse and wagon about every other day. A small drain pipe from the bottom of the ice section ran down to the bottom with a hole and funnel to empty the melted ice into a pan which fit under the box. Or, in some homes, there was a hole in the floor for the funnel to just drip the water under the house. This pan was tricky to get out and empty without spilling all over the floor (which I often did then have to mop). When it was my turn for this chore I tried to remember to do it before it got full.

In the early thirties (I think), Mama bought our first automatic refrigerator, a Servel, which was run by gas and had a large round part on top which probably housed the mechanism to run it. It was great not to have to watch the water pan. About a year later we were almost sickened by an awful odor in the house. The refrigerant and/or gas was leaking. That was the end of a Servel in our home. Our next was an electric model but I don't remember the make. After several models and various sizes and improvements, the ice-maker became my favorite. Now, and for several years, we have seen those with ice water spigots and ice makers on the outside. I don't know what the latest is and don't know what else can be added but somebody somehow will think of more gadgets to add. Only in America??!!