



TIGER RAG

Little Rock Central High School
Class of 1957
Little Rock, Arkansas



Volume III

July, 2010

Number 2

EDITORIAL STAFF

Co-Editors

Joyce Whittecar Brewer
Beni Brown Wilson

Contributing Editors

Tommy Bates (Europe)
Joe Garrison
Joan Sanders Gintella
Sybil Todd Laing
Chaz Cone
Jerry Masters
Linda Razer Orton
Don Payne

Graphic Art Director

Charles Humphrey

Website

www.lrchs57.com



Editor's Corner

Summer Won't Last Forever But The Memories Will

It's a time to escape, unwind, recharge and make those imaginations, fantasies and dreams come true. It's all about taking time to stroll down memory lane with those that you care so much about. It's a time to show your appreciation and count your blessings.

Summer is the high season for family and friends to get together and celebrate. It's one of the most meaningful times of the year, especially when you can enjoy it with those that you love. The days are longer and the outdoors beautiful with the flowers in bloom, the lush foliage and the perfect shade trees. The water is warm, and inviting and ready for swimming and boating.

It's the perfect time to find a happy gathering spot in a serene outdoor place and chill out with family and friends. It's the time to treat someone special and put out the delicious food and drinks and enjoy the festivities.

Yes, we need to make the most of time we have left and be thankful for what we have and enjoy the moment.

What a wonderful world!

Joyce Whittecar Brewer & Beni Brown Wilson, Co-Editors

FEATURED ARTICLE



GORDON SMEAD RATHER, JR.

*By: Joyce Whittecar Brewer & Beni Brown Wilson
Co-Editors*

It's an honor and a pleasure to have Gordon Rather as our Guest for this issue of the Tiger Rag. We are impressed with Gordon's life. Please enjoy a piece of his life with us.



Q. When and where were you born?

A. I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on April 6, 1939.

Q. What did you do after graduating in 1957?

A. After graduating from Little Rock Central High School in 1957, I attended Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee, on a Naval ROTC scholarship.

Q. Have you always lived in Arkansas?

A. Following my graduation from Vanderbilt in 1961, I received a regular commission in the United States Navy and spent four years aboard destroyers. My ship, the USS Goodrich (DDR-831), was based in Mayport, Florida, which is near Jacksonville, Florida, at the mouth of the Saint Johns River. We spent a considerable amount of time deployed with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, operated in the Atlantic up and down the east coast, and made at least one trip to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training. After being discharged from the Navy in 1965, I attended Duke Law School and graduated in 1968. Following graduation, I joined Wright, Lindsey & Jennings LLP in Little Rock and have been a trial lawyer with the firm since that time.

Q. Would you tell us briefly about your family members?

A. My wife, Hayden, is a native of Toccoa, Georgia. Our son, Rick, and his wife, Susan, live in Atlanta, Georgia and have three children, Hayden, Jory and Jayce. Our daughter, Beth, and her husband, Steve, live in Arlington, Virginia and have a daughter named Kate. Our son, Geoff, and his wife, Tiffany, live in Denver, Colorado. We had one other son, Hal, who died in 1992 of Leukemia.



Continued

Q. What are you doing at the present time in your life?

A. At present, I am still actively practicing law with Wright, Lindsey & Jennings LLP in Little Rock. I serve as Chair of our Trial Team and as a member of the firm's Management Team. We are one of the largest law firms in Arkansas, with a history dating back to 1900. I am a Fellow in the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, which is limited to 500 trial lawyers in the United States, and a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers as well. However, most of my involvement at the national level has been with the American Board of Trial Advocates ("ABOTA") where I am a former National President and presently serve on the National Executive Committee. In addition, because I have always been interested in teaching, I participated earlier this year as a member of the faculty at the American Bar Association-ABOTA National Trial Academy which was conducted at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. Later this year, I will also be participating as a faculty member at the first-ever ABOTA Trial College which will be held at Princeton University.

Q. What is the most spectacular thing you have ever experienced?

A. While I have been extremely fortunate over the course of 71 years, like many of you, certain things stand out as the most significant things I have ever experienced outside the incredible good fortune to marry Hayden. First would be my four years in the United States Navy. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I would not be where I am today without that experience. Watching huge waves crash over the bow of our ship, taking a 54° roll in the Atlantic Ocean and wondering if your ship will right herself, and handling your ship alongside a fleet oiler while refueling at night in heavy seas in the Mediterranean will definitely get your attention. By the time I was discharged, I had reached the rank of Lieutenant, served as Operations Officer, and greatly matured in the process. Second, was being elected as National President of the American Board of Trial Advocates ("ABOTA"), which was a once-in-a-lifetime event. I ran against two top-flight trial lawyers from California, both of whom were later elected to serve as National President. During 1996, Hayden and I traveled to ABOTA Chapters all over the country "showing the ABOTA flag." It was without question a high point of my professional career. And third, shooting driven pheasants in Scotland for the past six years with Hayden in the field beside me as my loader and spotter was an unforgettable experience. During our week in Scotland each year, we stayed in a small hotel just outside of St. Andrews where the British Open will be played again this year. The Scots are engaging people and extraordinarily well informed about what goes on in the United States and the rest of the world. But when you concentrate on listening to them talk with each other, English seems like a foreign language given the dialect they use.



Continued

Q. If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

A. If I could go back in time, I would make every effort to use better judgment in dealing with those around me. I would be more thoughtful before saying something and better at recognizing and complimenting the strengths of others. This is something I think I have finally mastered over the years. It would certainly have been beneficial to have accomplished that at an earlier time. I suppose all of us can reflect on things we would do if we could go back in time — such as curing cancer, inventing personal computers or investing in Wal-Mart stock. Mine is just more of a personal note.

Q. When people remember you, what would you like to stand out?

A. When people remember me, I would like them to think of the word “gentleman.” I would like the words “leadership by example” to come to mind. And, I would like to be remembered as an exceptional “mentor.”

Q. Is there something you would change about yourself?

A. That’s easy. Just send me back to age 30 along with Hayden and let us do it all over again. Since that is not going to happen, I would settle for something more modest such as leaving the office earlier and spending less time practicing law.

Q. What is your favorite destination for a vacation and why?

A. I must say that Hayden and I have been extraordinarily fortunate in our travels, primarily through my involvement in the leadership of the American Board of Trial Advocates. We have traveled throughout the United States, gone to other countries, and cruised in the Mediterranean (where I did not have to stand watch while on board the ship). Last year we were in Slovenia and Austria and later in Scotland. This summer we will be on another ABOTA cruise in the Baltic with a visit to Russia. I must confess that I do not have one favorite destination other than the next one.

Q. Who would you invite to a fantasy dinner party....and why?

A. If I could host a fantasy dinner party, I would invite Bill Clinton, David Pryor and Ed Wright. Why Bill Clinton — because he knows something about everything and makes you feel that you’re the absolute focus of his attention. Why David Pryor — because he is one of the most likeable people in the world and because Hayden and I were married by him while he was Governor of Arkansas. And why Ed Wright — because I would like him to see that his confidence in me all those years ago was at least somewhat justified.

Q. One word or phrase to sum you up?

A. Finally, I was asked for a word to sum myself up. Don’t you love it when someone uses several words when asked for one? But since I am a lawyer, all of you know I could list several admirable characteristics I would like to have (in an effort to convince you I have more than one). And then I would say, “But I’ll just pick one.” So instead of trying to be what I am not, I choose “organized.”

MY LITTLE ROCK YEARS



Written By: Mary Claire Shannon Rowe

Continued

Excited, that was how I felt when Mother and I drove up to the front of LRCHS on that fateful late spring day in 1955. Mother was thinking that I might be a little intimidated to go alone, but I was eager to get started on this new opportunity. I insisted that I 'do it myself,' which seems to have been my lifetime illusion.

Mother might have thought that because I was wearing a dressy two-tone lavender knit dress with, of all things, a rhinestone belt of many colors. I thought I looked smashing and confident. Mary Lynn Schwarz, a fellow home roomer, would ask me twenty years later, "What was with that dress?" I laughed with her, and can only guess what they all thought that day.

I had come from Paschal High School in Fort Worth, Texas, no small school itself. I had said a tearful goodbye to my friends. We moved to Little Rock that year for my father's business and I was eager for the new experience; but held out hope that we would be back to Texas within a few years.

We rented a lovely little house on North Martin Street, over the big hill, just across from a large wooded area. My three younger brothers would spend many a day building tree houses, hiking, catching little creatures, digging up beautiful crystals, and all the things little boys do.

Up the hill was a great friend-to-be, Susan Hamilton. My Mother loved to bake, and she usually had warm oatmeal cookies, just coming out of the oven when we children arrived home from school. Susan's mother did not cook. We guessed that the aroma from Mother's oven must have wafted up to Susan's window. She always seemed to show up when Mother was taking a hot cherry pie out of the oven. We were glad to have her join us, although perhaps a tiny bit resentful for having a smaller piece of pie. I had several great neighbors; I couldn't have been luckier. They helped me get acquainted, invited me into carpools, and generally eased my path. Whatever made me think I was doing it on my own?

Car pooling was new to me and the girls in it always made it a fun trip. When I moved to Little Rock I was fifteen. That fall was my "sweet sixteenth" birthday, and I was, perhaps, missing the parties my friends were having in Fort Worth. It was the car pool group that got together and gave me a surprise party. I was so amazed and delighted and grateful for their friendship.

As I recall, our senior year carpool included Susan Hamilton, Sharon Young, Rosemary Millwee, Jan Walker, and me. What a dream team I had joined ! We would have many adventures together during those Little Rock years. They encouraged me to join the Southernaires; I fondly remember the trip to Nashville, where we posed in silhouette as Greek Maidens. The Prima Donna Club was another fun activity we had together. As seniors we threw "The Martians Have Landed Party" as our Senior Event, and I dressed all in blue, with blue hose, shoes, dress, and antennae. I thought I was truly genius in my get-up, until I saw Nancy Neathery and Larry Sims all in green including their faces with outrageous helmets.

I never thought of myself as an athlete, but having to take gymnastics, trampoline, play softball, volleyball, and tennis, prepared me for the miles I walked as a college student. It turned out to be a lot of fun. Our team was the "Shannon Sheebees." Don't ask me what it meant, but we had a great team spirit.

We girls began to have great "adventures" when we got our driver's licenses. I will have to say that Sharon Raney was the ring-leader for many of our trips. There were about twenty or more of us at one time or another. We learned about a spit of land on the Arkansas River to the east of town, where we could hike. Cattle used this land, so it was littered with their droppings. We called it "Cow Paddy Island." We would take

Continued

coolers filled with cokes, water, and sandwiches, and hike for miles. Young pilots from the air force base would be flying up the river for training. They would see this huge gaggle of girls, and swoop down low, wave their wings, and zoom away. We would all giggle.

Another adventure, for "us-twenty," involved a wooded area west of town, where a dry creek ran. Our plan was camping overnight. We knew very little about camping, and I don't recall any tents, bedrolls, pots, mosquito repellant, snake bite kit, or anything. We brought cokes, hotdogs, and cookies. Here were all these girls, and the most makeshift of equipment in the middle of poison oak, mosquitoes, and what all. We had a blast. No one got any sleep, and we left early because it began to mist. The dry creek bed wasn't anymore. What an adventure, one of a kind, to be sure. We had many other adventures, but space does not allow me to mention them.

Lest we think it was all party time, we were about learning during those years. I loved school, and have always thought that LRCHS was the best one. It prepared me for college like few other schools could have done. Despite my poor record in Latin in my sophomore year at Paschal, which I have tried unsuccessfully to forget, I did very well scholastically. I was soon a member of the Beta Club and the National Honor Society, and was very happy to be a part.

Sybil Todd, Sharon Young and I would meet before Miss Daniel's Social Sciences for a drill session on facts and dates. It was a precursor to college study groups, and it helped immensely. I never wanted to be the one who didn't know the answer, and those gals were smart. It was a good challenge.

My family moved back to Fort Worth after my freshman year in college. I went on to graduate from Texas Christian University with a degree in International Affairs. I have pursued education all my life, taking interesting courses. My husband I will celebrate our 49th anniversary in July. We have two sons, a fifteen year old grandson, who is attending my old high school, Paschal, and two granddaughters' six and eight in Nashville.

I write a weekly gardening column for the Smith Country Master Gardeners for our local paper. You can read my column and see my photos at www.tylerpaper.com (click) on "East Texas Life" and then my name-Mary Claire Rowe.

Hope you enjoy.



Mary Claire Shannon Rowe

50th ANNIVERSARY ON SAFARI



Written by the late Sylvia Swaim McWilliams

My husband, Mike McWilliams, and I caught a severe case of the travel bug over fifty years ago when the U.S. Army assigned him to the 46th Artillery in Heilbron, Germany. During the three plus years he was stationed there we were able to spend a little over ninety days traveling, visiting ten countries in addition to Germany. Since that time we have been blessed to visit all seven continents. Naturally our favorite trip is often the one that we are on at the time; nevertheless there are several trips that rise to the top. Without a doubt, our two and a half weeks in the bush of Kenya and Tanzania has to be at the top.

This was our second trip to Africa, the first being to South Africa. Victoria Falls in Botswana and Choebe National Park in Zambia where we spent about four days on safari, enough to know that we wanted to return to Africa for a longer safari. Now we know that we'd love to return again and I give so much of the credit to our incredible guide, Glen Behr, a wonderful young man and fourth generation Kenyan. Glen's great grandfather originally came to South Africa from Holland with the Dutch West Indies Company and for political reasons, like many Afrikaners fled persecution. He took his family and migrated by wagon to Kenya in the early 1900's. In Kenya he set up a plantation where Glen's father, Peter, and Glen both grew up among Kenya's native creatures. Peter was the youngest licensed professional hunter in the history of Kenya. He and the legendary Glen of Peter's life have been dedicated to conservation. He was a founding member of the Masai Mara Conservancy, the reserve that many consider the best in the world for wildlife. Much of the time Glen was at his father's side on safari, surveying, studying the animals, even learning how animals think and in many instances why they behave as they do, and all about the conservation of wildlife in their beloved country. Both Peter and Glen have a deep and consuming passion for all of Africa's wildlife. Back home on the plantation they took in orphaned and injured animals, zebras, lions, monkeys, antelope, etc. nursing them back to health and raising them until they were able to return to the wild. To Glen the animals are treasured friends. He knows many by name, who their siblings are and which territory belongs to which one, not just "this is lion territory" but which lion's territory and what the territorial boundaries were. Glen could identify a species so far away with his binoculars that even with the use of his binoculars and excellent directions the animal still looked like a speck on the horizon to our untrained eyes. Glen would tell us what the speck was in the distance, pull out his wonderful book of wildlife and show us a picture to study and tell us all about that species for that particular animal. If we could pick out a landmark, when we got to the spot we would find exactly what we'd been told we'd see. With Glen as our treasured friend and wise guide we learned to see Kenya's and Tanzania's wild beauty, to understand the cycle of life in a very real way, the way that God made our world, and the purpose for which each animal was created. A perfect circle of life. We were blessed to have Glen as a private guide who picked us up at the airport in Nairobi and stayed with us until we boarded our plane for home two and a half weeks later.

Continued



Mike McWilliams, Guide & Sylvia Swaim McWilliams

Our first day in Kenya was spent in Karen, a suburb just outside Nairobi. That morning Glen and his significant other, Michelle, took us to the Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage, a non-profit charity organization, to see what is being done there. For over twenty-five years the orphanage has been rescuing infant and toddler elephants, and occasionally rhino, that have been orphaned by manmade or natural causes. At the orphanage the elephants are kept in two groups, infant and toddler. When found, each animal is airlifted from where it is found to the orphanage. Each of these animals has a trainer who stays with it 24/7, not always the same trainer but one who is assigned to it, as elephants bond quite easily with their "mother" figure. Without bonding with a variety of trainers, it would be impossible to later release them back into the wild, a process which can take up to ten years. Until the animal is between two and a half and three years old, each of the animals has to be hand fed baby formula given to them in liter size bottles with rubber teats, taught how to care for itself...roll in the dirt, take a mud bath (to protect them from insects and sunburn), interact with each other and to become independent. Only on Sundays for an hour is the public invited in to see the work that is being done here. The animals spend the majority of their day in the Nairobi National Park with their trainers, only to return to their cages in the evening. It is amazing to see a tall native trainer in his long green coat walking a very young elephant around; its ears lined with thick white sunscreen while holding an umbrella over the small animal to keep it from sun burning. The Kenyans are working very hard to conserve and save their beautiful wildlife.

Continued



Feeding the Baby Elephant

The next day we left by plane (12-15 passengers) to head into the bush. Our first stop was Lewa Wildlife Conservancy on the northern slopes of Mt. Kenya in northern Kenya. Lewa was established in 1995 by Ian Craig who turned his more than 40,000-acre cattle ranch into a conservancy with the mandate to protect the area's wildlife and help to improve the lives of the native people. Today Lewa is home to more than 25% of the world's threatened Grevy's zebra population. Among the many other animals you will also find 30 white rhino and 31 indigenous black rhino. Here we stayed in a permanent tent camp. (All tent camps had in tent flush facilities and a designated time of the day when warm (?) water was available for showering) in this camp there were nine guests' tents. We had electricity for two hours each morning and three hours in the evening if there were no glitches with the generators, otherwise we had lanterns. All guests went to the main building for visiting, cocktails and meals. Since there were only three of us, this was a wonderful opportunity to visit with many interesting people who we'd never met otherwise. Every morning we chose to go on early (6 or 6:30) game drives, taking bush breakfasts with us to eat when and where we chose. Usually with a wonderful view, and lots of animals that we could observe while eating. Breakfast was always enjoyed in a spot secluded enough that we could be out of the Land Rover and might even be able to set up a small table. It was in Lewa that we first saw a pride of lions, cheetah, white and black rhino, elephants, both Grevy's and plains zebra, giraffes, hartebeest, impala, jackals, kudu, vervet monkey, oryx, waterbuck, warthog, and several kinds of gazelle. Frequently we were at such an advantage to be just the two of us, our guide and our driver. We could go where we wanted without having to fall in with a large group and with just the four

Continued

of us in our vehicle we could be much quieter, therefore, getting much closer to the animals. When we did get into large groups of tourists all trying to see the same point of interest the noise was too much for the animals. Besides, in large groups my little pocket camera surely made me look silly when other vehicle's might be from Disney, National Geographic, etc. complete with their 4 ft. lens. I haven't mentioned the many interesting birds, both beautiful and of prey. They all play a part in the cycle of life found in Africa.



Rhino in the wild



Giraffe

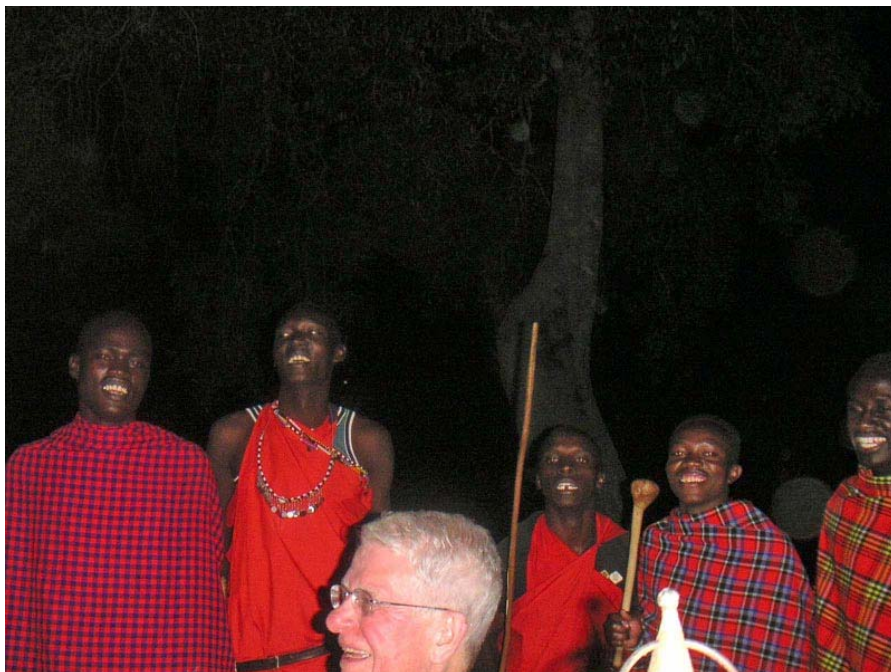
After three days in Lewa we boarded a bush plane and headed for Serian Tent Camp in the bush of the Masi Mara. This had to be my favorite of the camps. First because our driver, Miskil, had been Glen's dad's gun bearer many years ago when Glen was just a little kid, tagging along with his dad on safari. So inspiring. At the Serian Permanent Tent Camp we had to cross a swinging bridge over a rapid and rocky river, inhabited by a large pod of hippos, to get to our tents and the gathering area for camp fires, meets and eating area. Here we had our own warrior to escort us everywhere from dusk until the sun was well up. He was also responsible for lighting the lanterns in our tent, lighting the fire to heat our shower water, bringing us coffee or tea and biscuits before we left on our early morning game drives. Again, we'd load up about 6 or 6:30 and head out for adventure. Miskil seemed to be as one with the land, no matter how rugged or dense. When Miskil sighted a leopard with fresh kill we spent about two hours following it as it moved and finally got to within about 15 feet of the leopard where we watched for ever so long. By the time we finally got near Miskil had won the leopard's trust and it just continued as though we were nowhere around. As if this experience could be topped, it was rivaled that evening as we returned a little after dusk from a four hour drive. Instead of going to camp we came upon a large bon-fire in the distance. When we arrived Glen turned to us and said, "Happy Anniversary, this is your own bush dinner." Mike was as stunned as I was. Neither of us knew about this event, Glen had arranged it. As we looked ahead we saw at least eight of the main staff people from camp, a bar; along the bank of the river was a six foot table covered in a white table cloth, a candelabra on each end, a vase of greenery, an eastern looking lantern, a beautiful book on East Africa and a pair of carved wooden hippo chairs set across from each other. Did I say the moon is shining through the trees and there are hippos slightly down stream singing their own tune. A little bit farther away is another large bon-fire, an oriental style rug nearby filled with pillows for lounging, (if I could have gotten up) as well as a couple of camp chairs. Glen and Miskil stayed until after cocktails and cold and warm appetizers were served. Following all of this there were just the two of us being served a fabulous four or five course meal, ending with a Happy 50th Anniversary Cake.

Continued



Anniversary Cake

But this wasn't all! In comes a group of some twenty young Massai in full regalia who danced around the table then demonstrated some of their dances near one of the bonfire fires. This was like an unbelievable dream. But memories and pictures prove that it was real.



Native Dancers

Continued

We still visited two more areas, both in Tanzania where we found beautiful scenery and a very dry area with still more wonderful animals and people.



'Sylvia Swaim McWilliams, of Little Rock, joined our Heavenly Father on November 29, 2009, with her family surrounding her at her home to say goodbye for now.'

Editor's Note: This piece is published posthumously. We thought it would be a lovely tribute to Sylvia's memory. Her husband, Mike McWilliams, has graciously added photos for us to enjoy along with Sylvia's article.

'FAITH IS THE BIRD WHO SINGS WHILE THE DAWN IS STILL DARK.'

R. TAGORE – BENGALI POET

NORMANDY

Written by Joe Garrison



Normandy Cemetery

My recliner, which is nestled in a corner of our den, is a place of refuge for me after a splendid Memorial Day dinner featuring Barbara's zucchini casserole. Realizing I have only a few minutes for a quick nap before our high maintenance granddaughter will pry me out of it for some fun and frolic, I push back and relax. She has taught her Papa many new skills; like how to put those tiny clothes on Barbie and Ken (my stiff gnarled hands are no match for her quick little fingers). Then, there is hop-sotch which I force these trembling old legs through those little squares on the floor. I tried Jacks one time with her and that was enough. Nevertheless, I am determined to spend as much time with her in whatever activity she chooses because I know these wonderful days are fleeting past and she'll soon have other interests. As I doze in my chair, I ponder the meaning of Memorial Day and the time set aside to remember the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. This country we call America.

Continued

In May of 2000, Barbara and I travelled to Mannheim, Germany to visit our oldest son and his family who was stationed there. He is a career officer in the Army. As you know, Barbara can be kept away from her grandkids only so long! While there, our son suggested we make a trip to Normandy, France which was being prepared for Memorial Day which was the coming Monday. The drive from Mannheim carried us across northern France, through Paris, and ended in the small town of Bayeaux close to the Normandy beach. The trip was about 425 miles and took most of the day making it late in the afternoon for our arrival. The next morning, as I stood on the hills overlooking Omaha Beach and the sea, I tried to visualize the scene 54 years ago when the largest armada of ships in history was moving toward these shores. Awaiting the Americans and allies was Hitler's Atlantic Wall with its guns trained to cover every inch of the beach and beyond. Today, those rusting guns in their concrete bunkers are silent, still pointing outward over the ocean. Some guns lay on the ground partially covered with sand attesting to the carnage that had occurred. When the sun set on D-Day, there were 6603 American casualties; 2499 were fatal. The Normandy beaches were red that day. Many of those who died are buried at the American cemetery on a plateau above the beaches where they fell, called Colleville-Sur-Mer. This would be our next stop.

Upon entering the cemetery's parking area, one is greeted by gardens of flowers of every kind and color; roses, pansies, poppies and many others native to the area. All are meticulously cared for by the tenders. Behind this colorful display is a flagstone wall with a road leading into the cemetery. Small signs along the way instruct visitors to honor the fallen heroes by refraining from loud conversation and wearing inappropriate apparel. Overwhelmed and awed describes my feeling as we entered and were faced with 9386 large white marble crosses under which rested an American soldier. An occasional Star of David is over the Jewish crosses. Four women soldiers are among them. There are three Medal of Honor awardees lying there having gold clad writing on their crosses and a gold star at the top. The name, rank, home state and date of death is etched on each stone. The spirits of each soldier seemed to be hovering over the place, each having a story to tell.

As we viewed the grassy grave sites, the sun hid itself behind low hanging clouds and a light misty rain fell covering shrubbery with dewy drops. The flowers and grass were also heavy with moisture as if all of nature was lamenting the loss of these young Americans. They would never know the joy of seeing their first child born, or watching their son's Little League ballgames, or attending their daughter's first piano recital. Others would never return to their brides leaving them instead as young widows. Moms and dads will mourn the rest of their lives for their fallen child. Yes, I guess it was fitting that the heavens should weep for them. They lie as monuments to the high cost of protecting our way of life. I was very proud of my country for the great care it took in maintaining this honored piece of earth.

At noon, the quietness of the place was broken by chimes which could be heard from every corner of the cemetery. They played slowly, clearly and sweetly: "My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing...." My heart was in my throat by now and I must confess, I joined the heavens in mourning for them and thankful for their service to our country.

We left the American Cemetery hand in hand with each other; I held one of my wife's hands, our son held the other. I felt her tightly squeeze my hand and I knew what she meant by it. We were blessed, walking out of there with our son while other moms and dads were not so fortunate. As we left, the spirits of those 9386 soldiers seemed to say, "We must remain but don't forget us; tell others what you've seen here." Lincoln's closing words in his Gettysburg Address states, "that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead

Continued

shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

In 1982, I was returning home from a business trip in Milan, Italy with a stop for a connecting flight in Frankfurt, Germany. Having some time between flights, I shopped the terminal stores for souvenirs for our kids. I picked up some caps, tee shirts and sweat bands which had the red-yellow-black colors and name of the German Republic on them. I sat down in the waiting area beside a woman who appeared to be in her late fifties. She had graying hair and a pleasant smile on her face. I nodded at her as she watched me stuff the souvenirs into my briefcase. “For your children?” she asked, with her German accent. “Yes, Ma’am.” I answered, whereupon she wanted to know their ages, etc. Now as every dad knows, when questions arise about his kids, he can whip out his billfold full of pictures faster than Matt Dillon draws and fires his Colt 44 on Gunsmoke. Amazingly, she spent time examining each child’s photo wanting to know details about each which I gladly furnished. “Enough about me!” I said, “Tell me about yourself.” She explained that she was returning to Hamburg in north Germany after visiting her sister who lives in Boston. “Family?” I asked. She paused a moment and answered, “I haven’t any. I was married once many years ago to a kind, wonderful man. His name was Wilhelm, we loved each other very much but soon after we were married, he left for the war (WW2). That was the last time I saw him; my Willie never came back. I was notified by the army that he’d been killed in action. You see, over six million Germans died in the war leaving millions of young widows like myself. There weren’t many young men left and I don’t think I would have been able to fall in love again anyway.” The tears in her eyes showed the hurt even more than her words. This was the first time I had heard and seen the disastrous effect of the war on a German. My flight boarding was being announced which ended our time together. I shook her hand and thanked her for sharing it with me. I told her I needed to know her story. There’s also a German cemetery in Normandy a few miles from the American. In it are buried over 21,000 young soldiers. I wonder if the German lady’s Willie lies there.

Most of our male classmates were required in the 1950’s to serve in the military except for special circumstances, but some would spend a lifetime serving our nation:

Richard Almond, Philip Almond, Bob Axtell, Tom Bates (hello, Heidi), Don Dalton, Marvin Gwin, Jack Hammett, Robin Medearis, Kent Shockey, Howard Riley, Roger Steele, Troy Taylor, Don Winkler, Jackie Wood and other names I do not know. Some endured the ferocity of combat in Vietnam, like George Edwards, who saw his buddies die beside him. I say, “GOD BLESS THEM ALL!”

I am awakened from my ponderings and cogitations by a little hand tugging on my shirt. Peering through my half shut eyes I see a small angelic face framed in golden hair and very close to my nose. She is whispering to me with her peanut butter and jelly breath saying, “Papa, Papa, will you color with me?” Duty calls!! Gotta go!

CLASSMATE UPDATE

Sadly enough, we have lost yet another four classmates. Our condolences to their friends and families. May God hold them in the palm of His Hand.

Continued



Shannon Carney Noehring
8/3/39 – 3/14/10



Charles Rolland "Pod" Buie
7/7/39 – 4/15/10



William "Andy" McColey*
8/3/39 – 4/27/10



Leas Campbell
1939 – 5/25/10

*We note that Andy McColey and his family contributed their printing facilities on behalf of the LRCHS Class reunions and directories. We appreciate their generosity on behalf of our class.

SLIPPING AWAY

By: Judy Brown-Lawson

"My mother's soul has slipped away but where it's gone, I could not say."

There always comes a time when you are faced with death. This came to me two weeks ago.

The last day of my mother's life was sunny and warm. I sat beside her bed on a straight chair for several hours, watching the sunlight play against the bamboo curtains that shade her bedroom windows. The only things I could hear were her miniscule breathing and the soft music we played for her constantly. The rolling table, now bereft of food or water, held bouquets of roses, and pictures of my father as a young man, of them as a young family holding my older sister, and the only picture I know of my first sister, Jean, who died two months after her birth.

Three months before, Mother still slammed her fist on the kitchen counter demanding her 'gin and tonic' which was, in fact, ginger ale and lemonade. She could still sing old fashioned bawdy songs and recite poetry learned as a child. She could still order people around – she still kicked ass big time.

In late September, one day her legs failed her. From then on she had to be carried from her bed to the wheelchair, to the couch. She became fretful and retreated to sleep as often as possible. When hospice services were made available to her, she was up to 18 hours of sleep a day.

Rather suddenly, in late October, she stopped eating.

We could not force anything down her throat. Gone the little French omelets I made for her, the creamy tomato soups she would smack her lips over, the English muffins (or French muffins, or Spanish muffins – we would nickname her breakfast every day). Gone her coffee, gone the juices. She turned her face away from everything, and Lydia, her caregiver, finally said we should stop trying to force her.

Continued

She lay in her hospital bed provided by hospice, and still she would always say "Oh that's wonderful" when someone turned her, plumped her pillows, massaged her useless feet, rubbed her forehead, or combed her beautiful curly white hair.

She would murmur often, but we couldn't really hear what; her weakened fingers would drum softly on the bedcovers.

We relayed each other at her bedside. The chaplain came and sat beside her bed, holding her hand and calling her name to her very softly. The priest from her church came and gave her the last rites.

Little by little, we watched her go. One day she could no longer speak, and she would turn her blind eyes to my face, with a silent question I couldn't answer.

Finally, several days before her death, she could no longer swallow and we could not give her water. I asked Lydia to keep her sleeping as much as possible, and so we did. We washed her poor shrunken body, and bathed her mouth with water. We talked to her, and put her favorite 'sleepy doll' she had had with her forever, next to her cheek. Lydia took off her wedding rings, for the first time since my father had put them on 75 years before. We locked them away. Then we took away her hearing aids. She was alone, for the first time. The massage therapist said she was resisting with all her strength; she did not want to go.

The last moment I saw my mother alive was a Monday afternoon. I had finished my stint beside her; my sister had come to replace me. I stood up, stiff from sitting so long, and stretched, and chatted with my sister and Lydia, then left for the horses and home. I felt emptied of almost every feeling except exhaustion. It was hard to concentrate on anything, so I didn't. I just sat and drank glasses of wine and watched TV mindlessly. I called the dogs up into my lap and cuddled them until I could fall asleep.

Very early the next morning, the phone rang and Lydia simply said, "Get over here now; she's going". When we arrived, Lydia was sitting in the living room, her face was bathed with tears.

She told us that earlier, she had fetched the ragged old pink sweater my aunt Alice had knitted for Mother decades ago, and which Mother insisted on throwing around her shoulders despite all the cashmeres we could buy her.

Lydia took the sweater from the closet and laid it gently over Mother. She put her motionless hands on it and whispered into her unhearing ear.

"Here, Fannie; here's Alice's sweater. You have her sweater on you now. You can go now, honey."
And at last, Mother drew one more breath and her soul slipped away.

I don't know where she is now. Her ashes are in a magnificent black and gold urn on my sister's mantle. We have started to laugh again. We're making plans to travel to Europe.

But I don't know where she has gone.

All I know is, on that day, a window opened in my heart and I don't believe it will close again.

In memory of Fannie Delano Gidley Brown
1911 – 2009

Editor's Note: Judy Brown-Lawson wrote this piece in winter, 2009.

THE MOST EXCITING TIME OF MY LIFE

By: Sharon Laessig Protzmann

reprinted from Writers' Rendezvous – 1957

Have you ever pictured the sendoff a queen might have when leaving her homeland? This is exactly how I felt July 6, 1956, as we waited anxiously for our flight to be called at the Little Rock Airport. There were about twenty-five or thirty loyal Girls' Staters who had gone to see us off, talking in an excited tone, singing the Girls' State song, and taking pictures.

Our flight was finally called; and as we winged our way toward Washington, D.C., Mary Jane Melton, the Governor of Arkansas Girls' State, and I were again treated like queens by everyone on the plane. We arrived safely and soundly, considering the last thirty stormy minutes of the flight; a couple of my friends met us, showed us around, and finally deposited us at the gorgeous Statler Hotel. This is the spot where we spent our very first night in Washington, D.C., although we were so excited we only slept about three uneasy hours. The following morning we started a most wonderful week by taking a cab to the American University where we lived the rest of the week in Washington. We spent Saturday getting acquainted with the two other girls from each state, excluding Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the Panama Canal Zone. Sunday we went to church, and then started organizing our mock political parties, getting better acquainted each day, and loving it more. On Monday The United States Capitol was the big attraction, where we sat in on the sessions of the Senate and the House of Representatives, met our Senators and Congressmen, and had a special buffet luncheon in the Old Supreme Court Chamber. That day I had a recording made with Congressman Brooks Hayes, too. As we were noisily awakened, we realized that it was Tuesday, the day we were to visit Mount Vernon. Wednesday was my favorite day because it meant more to me than any other day on the whole trip. We visited Arlington Cemetery and went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where we had a special ceremony, including laying a wreath on the Tomb. Later that day we lunched at the Pentagon, were briefed by two women in each branch of the service, and had the privilege of seeing and hearing Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson; and we were allowed to shop for a little while in the Concourse of the Pentagon. The White House was our first stop on Thursday. We had a special tour by one of the President's assistants, climaxed by our meeting personally the United States Treasurer, Ivy Baker Priest, who signed our dollar bills for us right above her name and Vice President Richard Nixon, who later sent us engraved, autographed cards. Later that day we heard and saw John Foster Dulles at the State Department. That night we elected the President and the Vice President of Girls' Nation. Friday morning Girls' Nation was over, and since our plane didn't leave until that afternoon, former Governor Cherry and his family took us to lunch and showed us around Washington some more. They also took us to the airport.

We started home, two extremely tired and sleepy girls. Our trip home was beautiful since we were in the air at sunset. One of the biggest thrills of my life, though, was when our plane was radioed from Little Rock telling us to be the last to deplane. What could this be? When we finally got off the plane, there were men there taking TV news film. A few friends and my family were there to welcome us home.

"This is My Country" – These are the first stirring and impressive words of that beautiful song. I had never really realized what a precious American heritage I have, what a great country I live in, or how much it could mean to me. As I stood at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier listening to Taps and looking out across the

Continued

rows upon rows of graves, each symbolizing one who died for his country that I might be free, tears welled in my eyes, and I shall never forget the deep feeling I had for these and for my country. To belong to this America is priceless, and I shall never forget standing at attention, saluting and pledging my full allegiance to the flag, and then singing "This is My Country, land of my birth. This is My Country, grandest on earth. I pledge thee my allegiance, America the bold, for this my Country, to have and to hold."



YANKEE DOODLE DANDIES

In 1756 a call went out for volunteers to form a Yankee brigade which would be attached to British forces fighting the troublesome French and Indians in the ongoing wilderness war. From the villages and farms of Connecticut, the eager young recruits straggled in to the advertised place of assembly, the Norwalk home of the group's commanding officer, Colonel Thomas Fitch, son of Connecticut Governor Thomas Fitch. As the Nutmeg irregulars finally gathered in Col. Fitch's yard prior to setting out for Fort Crailo, across the Hudson from Albany, New York, to join the British regulars, they were about as unmilitary looking a group as had ever been seen in America.

Dressed in the clothes they wore when they left their farms, mounted on horses only recently released from plowing duty and armed with muskets designed more for shooting game than Frenchmen and Indians, the ragged little band awaited their marching orders. But before they pulled out, Elizabeth Fitch, Col. Fitch's sixteen year old sister, and some other young women who had come to bid them farewell, became appalled by their motley appearance. Crying, "You must have uniforms of some kind," Elizabeth led the girls into the Fitch chicken yard, where they gathered enough feathers for all hands. "Soldiers should wear plumes," insisted Elizabeth as she and her friends distributed the chicken feathers and ordered each rider to put one in his hat band.

When the curious Connecticut cavalry finally swung proudly into Gen. Abercrombie's headquarters at Fort Crailo, the British soldiers were wildly amused. Nothing seemed more ridiculous to the spit and polish regulars than the thought of having to fight at the side of these colonials whose only distinguishing uniform item was a chicken feather.

"Dudes! Dandies! Popinjays!" called the fine, red-coated soldiers as they gathered about the new arrivals in camp. Dr. Shuckberg, A British army surgeon, was overheard to exclaim, "Why, stab my vitals, they're macaronis!", sarcastically applying the London slang of the day for fop, or dandy, and even provincial troops from Massachusetts and Rhode Island picked up the refrain: "Macaronis! Macaronis, for certain!" As the lads from Connecticut joined in the general merriment which their arrival had created, they heard young Dr. Shuckberg begin to sing the words to a little jingle he had made up on the spot to celebrate the occasion and set to the tune of an old, familiar folk ditty called "Lucy Locket Lost Her Pocket." "Yankee Doodle came to town riding on a pony. Stuck a feather in his hat and called it macaroni."

Continued

So much for legend. The rest, as they say, is history. The nonsense song caught on like no other in American history. It not only survived the French and Indian War, but became the rallying song for colonial troops during the Revolutionary War and Union Army forces during the Civil War. American soldiers in World Wars I and II carried it to international fame. It helped to disperse the Yankee tradition across the northern section of the nation and ultimately made the term "Yankee" synonymous with "American."

While he might overstate the case a bit, historian W. Storrs Lee has also seen "Yankee Doodle" as a peculiarly representative Connecticut contribution to the field of culture and the arts. "Yankee ingenuity," Lee concluded, "did not flow in the direction of sublime artistry....the Connecticut creative artist was droll, whimsical, original, but he shied away from the pretty and the elegant as he would from idolatry." In other words, making a "macaroni" out of a rough farm lad with a chicken feather might not have been an act of sublime art, but it may have been a profound expression of the creative spirit of Connecticut. Perhaps some subconscious realization of this inspired the Connecticut General Assembly, after years of petty wrangling, to agree finally in 1979 to make "Yankee Doodle" the official State Song.

from "Legendary Connecticut" by David E. Philips



OLD BARNS



Who doesn't enjoy the sight of an old barn in summer?



HALF BROKE HORSES

By: Jeanette Wall

I read this book on my Kindle II during February of this year – the weather was awful here in Little Rock and there was not much else to do some of the time. I couldn't have chosen a better way to spend time. This is a novel based on the grandmother of the author. This woman, Lily Casey Smith, had the epitome of 'gumption', wherewithal and a pioneering spirit!

The main character is born into the 20th Century around 1900 and lives out her life in the American west. She had so many hurdles and she managed to jump every one through intelligence and intestinal fortitude. I recommend this book.

Beni Brown Wilson, co-editor

MEDITERRANEAN SUMMER

By: David Shalleck

If you are one of those people who owns 9 houses, 3 yachts and can keep tabs on all you survey longer than 30 minutes, you will be bored with this book. Otherwise, you are in for a delight! I read this one in record time because it was so interesting. It is written by an American hired by an Italian couple with utterly NO budget to contain them as their chef on one of their yachts for a summer. He enlightens the reader with a bit of background, his interview with Il Dottore and Il Signora and his season yachting in the Mediterranean. Shalleck's experiences aboard a beautiful and luxurious yacht are plentiful and fun to read including how he overcomes unexpected guests when he'd only prepared for a few, pleasing his employers by serving dishes in the way they prefer as well as a few surprises and what it's like to cook in a moving ship! To my delight, many of his recipes are recorded in the back of the book.

SHANGHAI GIRLS

By: Lisa See

This book is bound to be made into a motion picture soon. I hope it is well done and as interesting as the book. It covers two sisters in a Chinese family on the eve of World War II. These girls have only known living well and their only worries have been what to wear as they pose for a local artist for magazine covers. Of course, with the onset of war in China, this changes and the saga continues even into the United States

Continued

where they settle in Chinatown and spend their lives as Asian Americans in San Francisco. Living with the cruelty of a war, the cruelty an immigrant in transference endures as well as the strangeness and culture shock of a new world and how these women cope is astounding.

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

By: Stieg Larsson

The late Stieg Larsson has written three books of mystery. This is the first one I read and it is, well, mystifying. I must say I enjoyed the plot and the attempt at solving the mystery by a journalist on a sabbatical of sorts, and his helper, an intelligent young woman - the one with the tattoo. Together, with their individual skills and intelligence and superb reasoning, they endeavor to solve the mystery of a young girl vanishing many years prior to the present time. The long missing girl is a member of a prominent Swedish family. I stopped trying to grasp the plot and outsmart the writer early on and just tried to be patient as the story evolved. Sometimes, that's the best thing to do. I'll read another of Larsson's books whenever I finish with the stack already waiting to read.

THE HELP

By: Kathlyn Stockett

I read this book back in January. It's a novel about segregation from the black woman's point of view in Mississippi during the 60's. Sometimes, it relates the white southern woman's views, too. It hails the morals of a white writer as well.

I enjoyed it for the most part, however had some misgivings about how 'black and white' the book was (no pun intended) regarding different takes on some of it and I thought it was a little shaky and unrealistic in some spots. Overall, it was an interesting book and made me reflect on what life was like for white people and black people during the 1960's in the American south. I learned to like the personalities of most of the black ladies, and they WERE ladies, and the courage and conviction of all of them. This novel contained a fair amount of humor as well.

Thanks to Sybil Todd Laing for the recommendation.

To communicate, we must listen. The Good Lord gave us two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we talk.

----*Coach Lou Holtz*

TIGER RAG CARTOONS





PLEASE COME BACK
FOR FUTURE ISSUES
OF TIGER RAG

