



February 2009

The Official Paradise Valley Estates Residents' Newspaper

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## An Accidental Mardi Gras

Late on a February afternoon in 1955, aboard our WV-2 Early Warning Aircraft, we departed Corpus Christi, Texas, cleared to Pensacola, Florida, even though there were heavy thunderstorms predicted all along the Gulf. As we flew across Texas, the forecasts became steadily worse. Finally, we were informed that Pensacola was closed; we would have to divert to an alternate field. Our plane commander called the Naval Air Station, New Orleans, a field primarily used for reserve training, and told them we had to make an emergency landing there. At that point, it became obvious, even to naïve young Ensigns like Carroll Harington and me, that this had been his plan all along. NAS New Orleans was closed to outside aircraft during the entire Mardi Gras season, and our “emergency” was a way of getting around that restriction. Certainly, the weather was preventing us from landing in Pensacola, but with an aircraft that had over 25 hours’ endurance, we could easily have diverted all the way to our home base at Patuxent River, Maryland, if necessary.

As soon as we were on the ground, our whole crew of 30 took off for the city. Carroll and I took a taxi that let us out in the middle of the French Quarter. The whole town was brilliantly lighted, and music was playing everywhere. It wasn’t the actual Mardi Gras yet, but the krewes were practicing, so every few minutes a float came by, elaborately decorated, and filled with costumed people, singing,

dancing, or playing musical instruments. As Carroll and I watched from the curb, the krewemen on one of the floats called to us. We couldn’t make out what they were saying, but we waved back. Suddenly,

two of them jumped down, ran over, grabbed us, and hauled us aboard their float. For the next hour or so, we rode around New Orleans in our service dress khaki uniforms on a float with everyone else garbed in their own imaginative version of the *Arabian Nights*. When the parade was over for that night, we were let off near where we had been picked up.

By then, everyone in the French Quarter had seen us or heard about us. As we wandered from club to club listening to the music, we were saluted, cheered,

and, occasionally, hugged and kissed. There was no way we could pay for a drink, and it was all we could do to stay sober enough to catch a cab at dawn and get back to the airfield just in time to change into our flight suits, as the rest of our crew were also arriving, hungover but happy. Some of them had seen us on the float and told the others. We thought we might be in for some trouble, but, apparently, our escapade was viewed as good public relations, and nothing more was said as we headed on to Pensacola, where the weather was now perfectly clear.

—by Marty Wildberger



# A Combined Family

When Charles and Caroline Covey first met at a dance hall in Marquette, Michigan, they found things in common. Charles' first wife had died when they were stationed in England, leaving him with a seven-year-old daughter. The Air Force stationed him as close as possible to where the daughter was living with grandparents in MN. Caroline's first marriage hadn't worked out, leaving her with a daughter and son. They decided to marry, establishing one family, with all three children living with both parents.



Charles was born on Lincoln's birthday on a farm in Minnesota. The doctor arrived by sleigh, as the only transportation possible. Charles was one of six children and grew up doing chores and learning to drive a tractor at an early age. He attended a one-room school, to which he walked a mile-and-a-half each way. Since he'd been driving since age twelve, a car was his transportation to high school. He attended Gustavus Adolphus College, with majors in math and science. He went on to the University of Chicago to study meteorology and graduated as a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps. He had duty in Alaska, Europe, Japan, and England.

The youngest of three girls, Caroline was born in Marquette, where her father was a doctor. She exhibited musical talent at a young age and was sent to Interlochen National Music Camp for eight weeks each of five summers. She studied piano, violin, and choral directing. After going through the public schools, she went to college at Albion, MI, pursuing a music course. When she faced the reality that she would never be a top concert violinist, she made the decision to take nurses' training. After becoming an RN and earning a BS degree, she returned to her

hometown to teach medical and surgical nursing. She also directed a nurses' chorus, which set a pattern wherever she went after that.

After the marriage, and with three children to educate, the Coveys decided they needed to earn more, so Charles retired after twenty years in the Air Force. He made a firm decision that he wanted no more snow, so when a job opened up as a civilian meteorologist at Travis AFB, they moved to Fairfield, taking over a month getting here in a travel trailer. It was

a good experience for the young children. Caroline established or led choruses through all the years. She continued with nursing and became a music therapist with a Fairfield convalescent hospital.

Later Charles attended Sacramento State University to get a teaching credential. He taught eighth grade math at Vanden Middle School. When he observed copying going on, he devised four different tests that looked pretty much alike. One irate mother came in with two papers, one from a student and the other from the copier. She demanded to know why one boy got an A and her son an F with the same answers. When invited to look at the two papers more closely, she understood.

Health matters dictated that it was time to move to PVE, where Caroline continues to share her musical talents. She still teaches piano after 45 years. She has always been happy when she could please people.

—by Joan Teague

# Fall Prevention Class

## Take Note

My grandson Corey and his family moved to Reno last summer. They subsequently invited me to spend the Christmas/Hanukkah holidays with them in their new home. What a marvelous idea! Hoping to expand the forthcoming festive occasion, I even opted for a round trip on the six-hour scenic train ride from Davis.

Corey welcomed me warmly at the train station, but that welcome was nothing compared to what was waiting for me when he opened the door to his home. Three huge dogs of varieties I never bothered to determine, restrained only by a little picket fence that separated the foyer from the family room, howled their greetings, barking and shoving each other and scraping their toenails on the hardwood floor. Three itty-bitty Chihuahuas vied for attention as they yipped and yapped and scrambled about under the feet of the larger beasts.

Corey subsequently controlled the enthusiasm of his canine herd, and I was able to enjoy hugs and kisses from his wife, gracious Jordan, four of my great grand-children, ranging in age from eight to 16, and sundry other related and unrelated guests. For the next several days our numbers varied between 11 and 14. Three or four cats remained in the master bedroom at all times.

Reno was glorious, with sun shining brilliantly on its surrounding snowcapped mountains. It snowed fortuitously only on Christmas Eve and Christmas day, contributing to the ambience of the holidays. The family pets were mostly restrained or outdoors. With the whole family gathered around, we celebrated Hanukkah and Christmas at special dinners with appropriate candlelighting ceremonies

and holiday food. What memories!

What follows is not entirely clear in my mind, not even the day or hour. I had been seated in the dinette, probably snacking on holiday goodies. I stood up, took one step forward and tripped, head over heels, over a big, black, sleeping dog. The dog's

body cushioned the fall of my torso, but my face hit the hardwood floor full on.

My daughter Jane and grandson Corey were at my side instantly, getting me to my feet, determining that the source of the blood was from my nose, applying ice, and assuring me that my glasses were not broken. In a large household, where incidents of that sort are part of the daily routine, my fall engendered little concern with the rest of the family. If I felt a bit loopy, I was able to cover up by holding onto railings or chair backs. I was extra cautious descending the long staircase and climbing over the little

picket fences that limited the dogs' access to designated pet areas.

Back at PVE, I applied every technique I knew to eyes and cheeks to cover up purple marks that shortly evolved into pink, then yellow. My bent glasses will soon be put back in shape, and as to my bent pride – well, that's going to take a little longer.

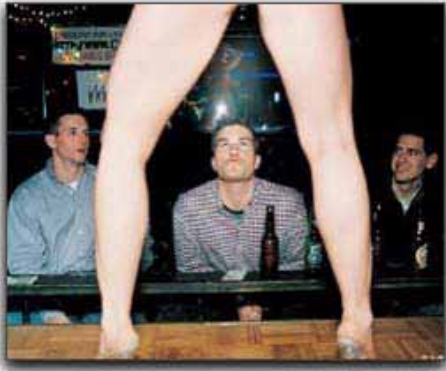
A final thought. Maybe next year I'll visit my daughter in Canada. She has only a cat.

—by Linda Faraday



# Strip Club in Soho

People tell me I've led an interesting life. I don't know how true that is, but I do know that one simple sentence from me



has been known to bring a group of talkative people to a stunned silence. All I had to say was, "I once worked in a strip club in Soho," and the interest I engendered should have made me a wealthy woman.

In fact, I worked behind the bar, not on the staff. I worked at the bar three nights a week from 5 to 10:30 p.m. During the day, I worked 9 to 4 p.m. for Lloyds of London. Then, I would freshen up and catch a bus to Piccadilly Circus. There were four shows a day, six days per week. Each show lasted one hour and 40 minutes. Then, there was a 20-minute interval. This was when I was needed to serve drinks. The club was for members only; one could not just walk in off the street. That was really how I came to apply for the job, because it was advertised as "part-time barmaid for gentlemen's club."

One thing I have learned over the years is that when it's essential to earn more money, you can't afford to adopt a high moral tone about what you do as long as it's legal and aboveboard. I must admit that when I went up the stairs and saw a couple of girls wearing make-up and not much else, I had visions of being abducted, and phrases like "white slave trafficking" and "mysterious disappearances" came to mind. But I really needed the money, and I took the job.

There were eight girls and two gay men in the "cast." Rhoda was a fan dancer. She had two beautiful white ostrich fans, and it was a pleasure to watch her manipulate those fans as she danced. She was nude, but you never saw any more of her than if she'd been wearing a mini-dress. Trixie danced and also was a fire-eating act. The tassel dancer, named Barbara, was billed as Miss Fluffles.

Each show ran for thirteen weeks, so three times a week I would see all of the routines twice, and half of them three times. By the time I'd heard "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" over one hundred times, I knew all the words by heart and a lot of the moves.

Long gloves came off first, followed by several twirls over the head, then a toss over the shoulder before flinging them away. The one infallible rule was that the bra always came off before the bottom of the outfit.

I continued to work in that club for about eighteen months. I met some nice people, saw a side of the entertainment industry that I had no notion of, and paid my bills on time. But I was ready to leave my bartending job. If you see something often enough, it becomes boring.....boring.....boring.

—by Pat Williams

## Solano Winds Honors its Founder

The Solano Winds Community Concert Band will play a concert of patriotic music and other seasonal selections on Tuesday, February 24, in the PVE Multi-Purpose Room.

In addition to the regularly scheduled concert, The Solano Winds band members will be joined by members of many other musical organizations to take part in a special Robert O. Briggs Memorial Festival at the Fairfield Center for the Arts in downtown Fairfield on Sunday evening, February 15, at 7:30 p.m. All of the musicians performing have some former connection to Bob Briggs, either through a UC Berkeley, Armijo High School, or another musical group.

More than eighty-six instrumentalists have registered to play. Several conductors will lead different portions of the program in a tribute to a musician for whom music was a way of life and who shared this passion with his students and colleagues.

Tickets for the event are available at the box office that evening.

—by Liz Wildberger

# Rising to the Occasion

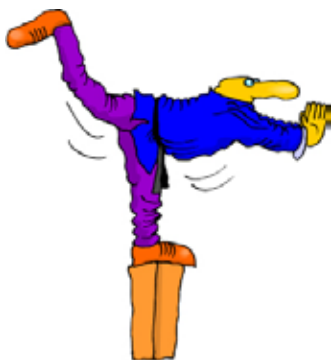
Many of us have developed coping strategies for maintaining balance and equilibrium when we stand up after having been seated for a length of time. Some ensure the coat is pulled down or the dress smoothed out. Others check to see if they have their purse, cane, or other personal items. Babies are masters of balancing strategies when learning how to walk in order to steady themselves prior to taking those first critical steps. One of my ploys is to stand up slowly and offer a few words to dining companions, “The food was delicious this evening.” or “Eating with you was a pleasure.” This brief pause lets me get my bearings before walking.

Oddly enough, few people fall while standing. It is the movement from the standing position to the falling position that seems to be the problem. We in the PVE community tend to enjoy walking from place to place, and while this is good for our coronary health, it can present hazards as well. Walking over uneven terrain and twisting an ankle is a common occurrence. Parking lots are especially worrisome, with raised concrete barriers lurking in front of and beside our vehicles. Sloping curbs can cause one to pitch forward while going to the mail kiosk.

Another familiar situation involving falls is awakening in the dark, unsure of where one is for a few moments. A good strategy is to sit on the edge of the bed, orienting ourselves to the location of furniture in the room, and then turning on a bedside light to guide us to the bathroom.

Developing coping strategies to avoid falling is mentally healthful. Once we determine where we are going, we can lift the chin and walk with pride and confidence, happy to be part of a community that offers so many pleasant ways to walk through life.

—by Ralph Young



# More Than a Menu

*London, WWII, 1943.* My father, Charles Pastori, was busy in his restaurant off Leicester Square serving, among others, General Alexander, Commander of the British Eighth Army. At coffee time, the general thanked him for an excellent meal and asked him as an Italian if he had family in Italy. My father answered yes, he had family living in the north of Italy close to Lake Maggiore, where allied forces were liberating, and that he had not heard from these family members for four years. The general asked him for their address and departed. Three weeks later, he returned to dine and brought messages from my grandparents and the rest of the family. They were all well and alive. My cousins had joined the partisans against the Nazis, but were safe.

*London, post war.* The film *Lawrence of Arabia* was showing at the Odeon-Leicester Square, drawing huge crowds. I was working in my father's restaurant when we received a booking for Field Marshall and Viscountess Alexander of Tunis. On their arrival, I greeted and then seated them. Immediately, the viscountess said how disappointed she was that she had not been able to get seats for the film. I left the table and rushed to my office, where I telephoned Peter, the theater manager at the Odeon-Leicester.

“Peter,” I said, “I have a big favor to ask of you. I need seats for the Alexanders.”

“Old Boy,” he replied, “I will come over and personally escort them to two of our best seats.”

I returned to the table and surprised my guests with the news and assured them that they need not hurry their meal. Peter duly arrived, and the field marshall and viscountess left. Before their exit they thanked me, and I replied that it was a returned thank you for the human kindness shown to the Pastori family during the war.

He smiled.

—by Adrian Pastori



# All Aboard!

I had recently arrived in Korea as a re-tread from WWII and was assigned as deck officer on LST 53. My half-stripe as a Lt(jg) was still pretty shiny. To say that my familiarity with that old landing ship and its condition was limited would be a gross understatement.

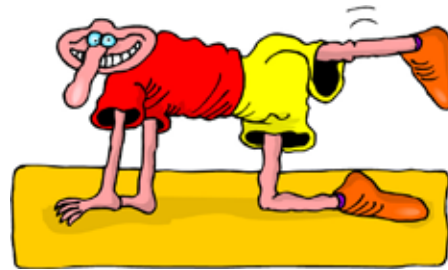
At the time, we were tied up along Pier 1 in Pusan harbor. I had just returned from an errand on shore when I suddenly realized we were about to get underway, and three of my deck crew were on the dock handling lines. Frantically, I motioned for them to get on board. What were they thinking about? I had the gangway returned to the dock so they could reboard. They just made it, but my sense of relief was short-lived, as my chief informed me that he had ordered the men to stay on shore so that they would be able to handle our lines on the other side of the pier, which was our destination. We were moving to facilitate some repair work, but no one had told me.

It was a grand sight to see thick smoke billowing from our stacks as we headed out to sea. I think our top speed was about three knots with a tailwind. My second sense of relief came as we approached the other side. I spied two of our signalmen strolling up the pier. I quickly inducted them into the deck force, and they were able to secure us on the other side of the dock.

—by Jack Lindeman



# Fitness in 2009



Benefits of a downturn: Ouch!

That word seems to sum up our feelings as the economy takes a downward turn. The one

thing we know with certainty is that the effects of our current economic downturn surround us. How can we at PVE weather the storm and become stronger in the long run?

We can continue to provide services and programs that assist our residents at PVE. As you know, we are offering several new classes this year, so if you have not yet tried one, do yourself a favor and try a new class.

The fitness mission statement challenges us to meet the needs of all of our residents at PVE. This is truly a challenge, but with our new programs and continually looking to enhance our program offerings, it is an obtainable one.

This year we have formed a partnership with the Society for the Blind. Our goal is to address the needs of our residents who have low vision. Visual impairment in seniors is directly associated with increased rates of secondary risk factors, including hip fractures, accidents, prescription errors, physical inactivity, and falls.

Positive intervention can counteract downward cycles. One of our goals with this partnership is to ensure that our residents who have vision loss have access to available services to acquire core blindness skills and to support continued independence and productivity.

Even in this time of change, we are ready to advance our programs to embrace the low vision needs of everyone at PVE. We will be holding a wellness seminar soon to introduce this new partnership to you and to discuss the benefits and programs we will offer with the Society for the Blind.

—by Jan Olson, Fitness Manager

# Irony

In Webster's Dictionary the word "irony" is described thus: "The use of words to convey a meaning that is opposite of its literal meaning."

The Miyagishima clan has a reunion every three years in various cities. One night at a banquet at the last reunion, several older members of the family got up to tell stories of when they were growing up in Utah. Ted got up first and said, "I'll bet I'm the only member of this family that had to repeat the first grade." Ted, being the eldest in the family, hadn't had any siblings to talk to, and his parents and relatives spoke only Japanese, since they were recent immigrants.

The irony is, after his retirement from the military, he became an elementary school teacher for the San Jose Unified School District for the next twenty years.

Speaking of the military, when WW11 began, his "draft" classification was abruptly changed from "1A" to "4C," meaning "enemy alien." A year or two later, he was reclassified to "1A" and drafted into the army. After combat duties in Europe, they sent him to Army Language School in Monterey, California, to learn to speak and write Japanese. He was then sent to the Far East as a Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) agent, which required him to have a "top secret" clearance, a far cry from being an "enemy alien!"

Although I was born, raised, and lived all my life in America, thousands of us were placed into concentration camps during the war years. Later, when I went to Japan as a military dependent, I was classified as a "Caucasian" in occupied Japan. Many years later, when we were visiting England, they considered us as "Yanks." What irony!

Recently, my sister had the entire family clan over for Christmas festivities. She also invited many of her elderly widowed friends. One was a ninety-year-old lady who was born in San Francisco, California, but raised in Japan. Jim, our son, was born in Tokyo Army Hospital but left Japan with us when he was four months old. One who was born here in the US spoke very little English, while Jim, born in Japan, speaks very little Japanese. Ironically, they needed an interpreter to understand each other.

—by Grace Miyagishima

# 2009 Big Blow Out

The 2009 Big Blow Out sounds like a title to an old musical movie, but it was actually the opening season for the PVE Golf Club. Before the day was over, most of the players wanted to call it the 2009 Big Freeze Out. 20 players braved the fog (all day), wind, runny noses, watery eyes, and cold fingers. What fools we mortals be, or just plain dedicated golfers.

Slow play by the PVE golfers is creating a serious problem with our association at Paradise Valley Golf Course. Walt has been advised that we must figure out how to speed up play. Common sense, good judgment, knowing where the team stands time wise, and heeding the course marshals instructions will help solve the problem. Otherwise, the club pro will be forced to take more drastic action.

On the lighter side, New Year's resolutions printed on golf balls were handed out by a very high tech method: names were drawn out of the hat. Some good ones stated: Keep your head down- 200 yards, dream on- Follow through- What water-Smile all the time- plus another one with a vulgar statement.

Glen Grewe was awarded a candy bar for the funniest quip of the day. He asked Walt if a 74 was any good? Sounds dumb, but after being so cold it sounded funny and worthy of an award.

3rd place winner(78) : Duncan Kelly, Jim Graham, Betty Tylutki , Bill Cockroft

2nd place winner(77) : Dom Battistella , Jan Hewitt , Larry Clayton ,Glenn Dow

1st place winner(74) : John Gearhart , Warren MacQuarrie , Glen Grewe , Don Reh

—by Walt McDaniel



# Sisters: Davis—Uman

In the 1980s, the university town of Davis, CA., where Don and I lived for 41 years, adopted the Ukrainian city of Uman to be an official “Sister City.” As Davis is, Uman was also a college town in an agricultural area of the Ukraine, USSR. Our sister city organization sponsored a student from Uman College to come to Davis. Soon, in response, up to 12 members of our group were invited to visit Uman and the college there. Those of us going decided see as much as we could on what would probably be our only trip to Russia ever.

Our “in service,” as our Russian government guide was called, met us at the airport armed with the itinerary we had forwarded and paid for in advance. She was a charming young woman, a physician’s wife we learned later, who not only spoke English fluently, but seven other languages as well. We grew to really enjoy her companionship and trusted her to have our best interests at heart. She did - most of the time anyway. She seemed to trust us as well, and very few restrictions were imposed on us. In each location, this lady charmer set us up efficiently in our reserved tourist hotel, where no Russian citizen was allowed to enter, gave us a list of interesting places to visit and ways to get to them, and then pretty much disappeared! She always turned up again on the day before our departure in plenty of time to return our confiscated passports and accompany us to our next destination. We decided the only explanation was that she must have a boyfriend in each city!

Each of us carried a card brought from Davis that said in Russian, “We are Americans visiting your beautiful country. We do not know Russian; do you speak any English? We would enjoy getting acquainted with you.” As we traveled the local subways and buses, we met many friendly folks and a few who spoke English. Most people we met never thought they would ever meet an American.

In Kiev in the Ukraine, a gentleman who did speak English invited all 11 of us to his apartment that evening at eight. He wrote an address to give the taxi drivers. When we arrived and crowded into his very small apartment and sat mostly on the floor around the room, his wife served some cookies she had made. They both taught at the University in Kiev. He was a physicist.

Meanwhile, our perky tour guide was trying to

teach us her Ukrainian national anthem during our trips between cities. She wanted us to be able to sing it in Uman. On one flight to Kiev, we were all sitting together at the front of the plane when she stood up and said, “Now we will sing our song.”

We sang as softly as we could when suddenly the whole plane was filled with the beautiful Ukrainian national anthem! She knew what we didn’t. The Kiev national choir was on our flight.

—by Mary Lou Wheat



## Different Cultures

When we lived in Cairo, Egypt, in the early 50’s we had a houseboy named Muhammad. One day I notice he had a terrible frown on his face and asked him what was wrong. He replied that he had a bad headache. I suggested he take an aspirin but he said he didn’t know what an aspirin was and didn’t have any. I gave him one, thinking one would be sufficient, as he had never had one before.

About half an hour later I noticed Muhammad sweeping the floor but still with a terrible frown on his face, and the aspirin very carefully tied on his forehead with a piece of string. It was all I could do to keep from laughing, but I immediately realized I had not explained to him that he should swallow the aspirin. He questioned whether this “little white thing” could help his head if he “ate” it, but I assured him it was worth a try. Obviously, it worked very well. I had to watch him to prevent his becoming an aspirin addict over every little ache and pain after that, but I think we both learned about each other’s cultural differences in even small things such as this. What a struggle he must have had in tying that aspirin on his forehead with a string!

—by Barbara Fei

# Library News

We had an unfortunate spill in one of the library chairs in the form of some coffee with cream. The spots just won't come out very well, so please do not bring food or drink into your library. Accidents do happen.

When it is time to renew your driver's license, call Bev Clemson, and she will put a booklet and some old corrected tests into your in-house box for you to study. Then, you return the tests and the booklet to Bev, along with your own test if you like, to her box 5205, and she has another to give out. There is no need to hurry, for she has many of these groupings. The tests may appear too old, but they are still good. The laws haven't changed, except to include the cell phone rule.

You can expect a surprise new item in the library soon. We were loathe to cover the window to the paperback room, but now a resident has donated a bookcase that will just fit, and we need the room badly, so we feel constrained to act. Bob McCoy is renovating this bookcase. Watch for a change soon.

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you like, to her box

# A Matter of Spelling

It was at the county fare  
When first I saw her their.  
She had such gorgeous hare,  
That people stopped to stair.  
Should I invite her for a cup of tee?  
I think perhaps I'll wait and sea.

The next time I saw her, it was about a weak.  
All I got was a wee little peak.  
She was with some guy, probably a boar,  
And it made me mad, made me soar.

Then once again we happened to meat,  
And my, I trembled from head to feat,  
But she looked so very, very suite  
My heart began to beet and beet.

Shall now I invite her to have some tee?  
Well, I did it right then, didn't wait to sea.  
She said she was sorry, the answer was know.  
She only goes out with her handsome bow.

"Besides, to my friends I could never tell  
That I'd dated a man who couldn't spell."

—by Ted Terrill

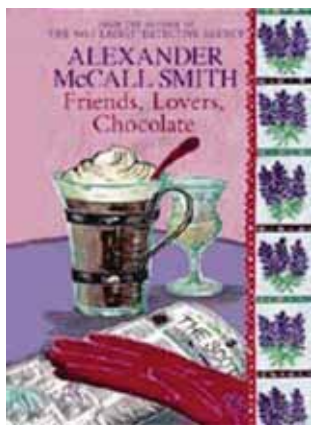
## Move-ins Since the Last Issue

Fred & Nancy Wisner  
From Richmond, CA  
To 5010 Constitution Avenue  
Referred by the Kellys

—by Patti Luccioni



# Clerisy



Mystery is the category for February's book. It is a pity since it is the shortest month, and *Friends, Lovers, Chocolate*, our book selection, has enough bewilderingments to use up at least 31 days.

Consider the author: Alexander McCall Smith himself is a most unusual man. Born in Zimbabwe,

he is a Professor of Medical Law at the University of Edinburgh, who writes outstanding children's books, short stories, and novels.

Reflect upon why "The man in the brown Harris tweed overcoat," introduced by the opening words of the novel, avoids chocolate. The reason is that Ian has survived a heart transplant, and his doctors fear it would prove harmful. Although someone else's vital organ deprives him of chocolate, it provides him with haunting memories of events that never happened to him.

Now add the protagonist, "gently starchy" Isabel Dalhousie, a "force to be reckoned with." Isabel's insatiable curiosity has converted her into a natural lady detective and her formidable, no nonsense manner fairly cries out, "Miscreants, beware!"

Isabel is filling in for her vacationing niece, Cat, at an Edinburgh delicatessen (which purveys many chocolate delights) when she meets Ian. Like him, she wonders if the explanation for those puzzling memories not his own proves that the cellular memory theory might be valid. Isabel also wonders if the unwelcome thoughts of a man with hooded eyes and a scar on his forehead is connected to the former owner's demise. Certainly, this is something Isabel believes is her moral duty to find out even though her friend Jamie says it's none of her business.

Then toss into the mix Isabel's discovery that Jamie is having an affair with a married woman, that her housekeeper has become infatuated with a man at her spiritualist meetings, and that Cat has returned with an Italian lothario soon to follow. The complications result in an enormously engaging and, certainly, a most unusual mystery, written by a master

of English prose.

The mysteries of *Friends, Lovers, Chocolate* will be discussed on the "Third Thursday" (February 19) in the Round Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend Clerisy book discussions.

—by Gaylon Caldwell

## Sled Dog Spud

When I recall my childhood in Ogden, Utah, the most prominent memories seem to involve snow-packed streets and our dog, Spud. Our sledding hill was 23rd Street from Harrison to the reservoir. This area was set aside for sledding, and no cars were allowed. We would tie Spud to our Flexible Flyer sled, and he would pull the sled up the hill so that we kids could coast down. Spud happily followed us down the hill and waited to tow the sled back up.

Among the adults who watched our sledding antics was one of Dad's friends, a respected tradesman and harness maker. As he observed Spud's efforts, he thought he might have a better idea, one that would give all of us kids and the dog more excitement.

He made a harness for Spud to wear. There were two straps with snap hooks to be used for pulling. These could be snapped onto the harness or a sled. Spud, happy to be able to be with us in the invigorating winter air, cooperated willingly as we harnessed him to the Flexible Flyer. He would pull the sled, my sister Avice, and me up the hill. As we rode the sled behind Spud, we laughed at the bits of snow and ice he kicked up from his paws.

We sledged for hours, coming home cheerful and hungry for the dinner we knew our mother had ready for us. All of us slept well, and we were proud of our new harness and happy, willing Spud.

—by Boyd Mathias



# Dining Services Report

A review of the comment cards has brought some interesting observations about what is particularly liked by our residents. The salmon has received the most accolades, both as a special and on the menu. Comfort food is also well liked, with meat loaf, chicken enchiladas, liver, chicken fried steak, and pot roast heading the list.

Occasionally, it has been asked, regarding our food service here at PVE, “How much of our food is prepared in-house, and how much is prepared elsewhere?” Although many things do come into our kitchen ready for cooking, much of it is prepared in-house. Just before the Christmas Eve buffet, I spent two hours in the kitchen watching the activity. David was preparing the cream cheese torts – three of them, in fact. Although they were similar, they were not the same. The cream cheese mixture was turning in the large mixer when I arrived. David had the raw garlic roasting in the oven in olive oil, as were the pine nuts in another oven. He had already put the red peppers in the oven to char, and they were in a container to sweat. He removed the charred skin and disposed of the inner seeds and pulp in preparation for finally cutting into julienne strips. He had earlier made the pesto. Lastly, he finely chopped the sun-dried tomatoes. After lining three bowls with plastic film (no easy task, as it wants to cling before it is placed), he layered the cheese mixture, then pesto and pine nuts, more cheese, then the tomato mixture, finally followed by more cheese. After he finished the second and third torts, they were placed in the refrigerator to chill. Later, they would be unmolded and decorated for the final presentation on the buffet table.

All of this was being done with the cooks coming to ask questions, David being called away to discuss something or answer more questions, and doing his regular job of being Dining Services Director. He told me that he had offered his services to Chef Dwayne, as there were so many preparations to be completed for the Christmas Eve buffet.

Next to David, Quail Creek Sous Chef Mikey was assembling the lavish sandwiches, which consisted of layering several types of sprouts and other vegetables, tightly rolling them, and storing them in plastic film until serving time. And of course, in the background, the soup was bubbling away.

Remember to make your reservations for Valentine’s Day, as it is always a very popular as well as special dinner for everyone.

There were 185 signed comment cards for the month with 93.2% pleased with the food and 97.7% happy with the service. Don’t forget to thank our wait staff for the outstanding job they are doing. And finally, be sure to sign your comment cards so they can be counted. *Bon appétit!*

—by Fred Montanye



## “The Valiant” Update

The full set of proofs, photos, and biographies for the new *Valiant*, were received from Olan Mills on January 14th. They have been reviewed and returned to Olan Mills for final processing and printing, and we hope to have the finished copies to distribute within a month.

It was Jack Biederman who originally volunteered to start and manage this large project. He formed a team which engaged Olan Mills, gathered the photos, and edited the biographies. When his medical treatments made it difficult for Jack to continue, Bill Johnson stepped forward to continue and complete Jack’s work.

—by Bill Gum

# You Can't Get There from Here

In 1949, I was in a reserve unit at NAS Glenview, IL. The USS 43, Coral Sea, was in Mayport, Florida, undergoing a refitting and was preparing for a VIP Caribbean cruise before going back to the fleet.

Commander Droom, our reserve skipper, pulled some strings, and our little group of about forty-five reservists was going to do their summer two weeks of duty, or at least ten days of it, aboard the Coral Sea!

Anchors aweigh! We took off from Glenview, bound for NAS Pensacola for a day or two of field carrier landing practice with the LSOs, who would be joining us at sea. On the appropriate day, the squadron met up with the Coral Sea and landed aboard, all except me and my skipper. My F6F Hellcat was in the shop with a brake problem, and the skipper was going to spend another night in the base hospital with the flu.

The next morning, my plane was okay, and I was getting ready to meet up with the Coral Sea about two hundred miles out. As I was pre-flighting my plane, Commander Droom walked up. "Hey, Stoney," he said, "I'm going to join you. Do you know where the ship is?"

"Yes, sir," I reported. And we took off, Commander Droom flying my wing. Landing on the Coral Sea, we were ordered to make our six qualifying take-offs and landings. I made my sixth landing and was parked way up on the port bow. I shut the engine down, made sure the brakes were firmly locked, hopped out and checked the wheel blocks.

The fun began when I asked, "Where's the pilots' ready room?" I had never been on the Coral Sea. In fact, I had never been on a Navy ship before, unless you counted converted ore carriers, the *Wolverine* and the *Sabel*, where thousands of new Navy pilots had made their first carrier landings.



I headed toward the "island," stepped through a bulkhead out of the noise and asked the first sailor I saw, "Say, Corpsman, could you direct me to the pilots' ready room?"

What an opportunity – for him. With all seriousness, he provided a perfect set of exact directions – all totally wrong!

As I wandered, totally lost and embarrassed, I continued to ask directions from passing sailors. Each one, completely straight-faced provided exactly the directions I needed – all of course, totally wrong!

I came to the conclusion that none of the four or five thousand men on that ship were going to give me the right directions. They all saw a lowly boot ensign in trouble, and they liked his predicament.

Welcome aboard, Ensign Stoneberg!

—by Bill Stoneberg

## The Scrapbook Navy

Going through my ancient wartime scrapbook, I found many reminders of things almost forgotten. There was a wartime sugar rationing book, dozens of match book covers from special places, stubs from railroad tickets; uniform insignia; pictures beginning to turn brown, copies of Navy orders; promotion ALNAVs, and restaurant menus from memorable places. In June 1943, a cherrystone clam appetizer at the Century Room of the Commodore Hotel in New York City was an unbelievable forty-five cents. The highest priced item on that menu was \$2.50. And an ensign made two hundred dollars a month. Sweet!

There was also a copy of a poem called "Trees" in the scrapbook, written by Joyce Kilmer. One of the almost-forgotten but fearsome midshipman school things I had endured was "The Tree." This was a joy killer, indeed. Most of us were "hung" on it for at least one weekend during our training. My restricted weekend was caused by my not typing

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## The Scrapbook Navy (continued from page 12)

fast enough. After that lonely weekend, I practically lived in the typing classroom. Those precious weekends were so blissfully long, from noon on Saturday.

What I really mastered in those typing experiences was a cynical set of phrases to be used in communications. Here are a few I remember best:

- Naval tradition demands: (I've just talked to an old Chief.)
- A growing body of naval opinion: (Two brass hats have agreed.)
- For your information: (Let's both forget it.)
- Give this your immediate attention: (For God's sake, find those papers!)
- Take immediate action: (Do something fast before we *both* catch hell!)
- You will show him every courtesy: (His uncle is an Admiral.)
- The inspection party has departed: (How about a binge tonight?)

Acronyms proliferated during WWII, even as they do today. Most of these old Navy acronyms have been forgotten, but two that I could never forget, as they truly summed up many situations, were: SNAFU (situation normal, all fouled up) and FUBAR (fouled up beyond ALL recognition!)

—by Phyllis Miller

## The Arghhhh! Factor

Genealogy can be a cruel mistress. Rule #1 should read: “If you don't want to know about your unruly ancestors, don't go digging for information about them.” Since I recently discovered that my paternal grandfather was a bigamist, one would think that would be sufficient evidence for abandoning genealogical excavations. But two incidents piqued my curiosity to such a degree that I once more delved into the murky depths – this time on the maternal side.

My daughter, who now resides in Paris with her family, wrote excitedly that they were planning a

week's vacation in Scotland and England and hoped to visit the sites that her Clan Graham husband had researched in tracing his roots to William Wallace (Braveheart). She casually mentioned, “Don't our DAR roots originate in England? Maybe we'll have time to visit Cornwall.”

Whoops! More secrets revealed. On the east of Cornwall is the English Channel and on the west, the Atlantic Ocean. Cornwall is the legendary home of King Arthur and Camelot, the setting for DuMaurier's novels *Rebecca* and *Frenchman's Creek*, and there is a very real Frenchman's Creek that sheltered *real* pirates, among them Owen Fitz-Pen, one of the original Pirates of Penzance and the family's anchor ancestor.

My sister and I had been led to believe that the Thigpen family were colonial farmers, scratching a living out of the dirt in South Carolina, and rising (in the noble, traditional way) to more significant land-owner status as generations unfolded.

Not so! That snitch guidebook at the Cathedral of St. Mary's in Cornwall reveals it all: our illustrious pirate ancestor Owen Fitz-Pen, while out pirating one day in 1620, was taken by the Turks and spirited away to Algiers. The guidebook describes Owen's heroic struggle with 65 Turks, in which he and ten other “Christian captives” took over the ship and sailed to Spain, where he was offered captain's rank and the king's favor if he would become a Catholic. Owen refused, returned to his day job of pirating, and was finally persuaded in later life to accept a Protestant land grant in Ireland. He became a gentleman landowner and raised a family.

So we are the progeny of pirates, we descendants of Cornwall's Owen Fitz-Pen, and when Sunday's *New York Times* described the incredible renaissance of pirate lore, costume, and story, I could only yawn. Reality is much more alluring.

—by Liz Wildberger



# Open at Your Own Risk

Egad! That is hard to open! Of course, that is a sanitized phrase of what many of us say or scream when confronted with the task of opening (fill in the item.) Take pill containers for a starter. Supposedly, most pill containers have been made child proof. Mostly, it seems like they are senior proof. To open a cap you have to exert the right combination of pressure (where the little arrow is lined up) and turn or lift at the same time.

The pills that come in blister packs really raise your blood pressure 10 to 20 points. Those with foil and paper backing require you to first tear the pills apart along the perforated lines, and then try to peel the underside back or push the pill through the foil. If that doesn't work, you use the scissors or a knife to cut the pill out of the blister, hopefully without sniping off the corner of the pill or your finger. Multiply the degree of difficulty by a factor of ten if you have arthritic hands or sight impairment.

The hands-down winners of the stress-strain derby are the hard plastic clamshells. These exasperating packaging devices must have been the gleeful brainchild of a depraved inventor. Plastic clamshells are found on batteries, utensils, toys, and more things than you can shake a stick at. You can't escape them. When confronted with this challenge, I have tried tinsnips, box cutters, heavy-duty scissors, screwdrivers, and chisels. Success is measured not only by getting the gizmo free and undamaged but doing so without cutting yourself on the plastic or the tool used.

Cereal boxes present a different kind of challenge; you must get it open intact and be able to close it. Super glue binds the top in place. Overexuberance will only get you a mutilated top that won't close properly. The second and usually the most difficult task is pulling apart the plastic bag inside. The top edge is sealed tightly, giving only a hint that it can be pried apart. Being somewhat impatient, I usually lose all control and cut off the corner and peel it back. Sometimes the bags tear down the sides



and cereal is spilled all over. This brings forth a few choice words about the cereal companies in Battle Creek, MI, even if it is my old hometown.

Other packaged items that make me bristle while opening include CD's and DVD's, small milk cartons, and take-out cartons for soup and fruit cups from the PVE Café. The cellophane on discs with security bands around the edges provokes a lot of muttering as I try to slip a sharp knife underneath as a starter. The super glue on milk carton covers is not meant to be breached with short fingernails. The Café's hard plastic takeout cartons are covered so snugly they are intended only for residents that do hand exercises on a regular basis or keep a crowbar handy.

Egad, this litany of frustration and pain is hard to close.

—by Hal Carter

## “Film at Eleven”

The Golden Years Salon at the Community Center is a great place to hang out. One can have a delicious cookie, some coffee, and pick up the latest information about the antics and activities of our fellow residents. One morning last week, clients shared some eye-popping news.

“Have you seen Bob out with that cute little Australian sheep dog? He runs round and round, and goes so fast, it looks like his legs are ahead of his nose!”

“Goodness, Bob shouldn't be running around that way. He could fall and hurt himself.”

Head in the shampoo bowl, one client opined: “I'm a little concerned about how forgetful one of my neighbors is getting.”

“Why is that?” the hair stylist asked.

Well, we were meeting them for dinner last night, and when she joined us, she said: ‘I am sorry we are a few minutes late but I couldn't find my black pants. I even took every thing out of my closet, only to realize I already had them on.’

# Sliding Vehicles

We were returning to South Bend after a Christmas spent with my grandparents in southern Indiana. The snow on U.S. Highway 31 had melted midway through that December day and then refrozen late in the afternoon as we wended our way north with my father driving our beautiful, olive-green 1925 Packard touring car.

“Don’t you think you should stop and put the chains on the tires?” my mother asked in a nervous voice.

“Thirty or forty more miles and we’ll be home; it’s not worth the effort.” was the firm reply.

We were driving through the middle of a small town in this era before highways bypassed business districts. Having just reached the only intersection with a traffic light when it turned red, my father put his foot on the brake. Nothing happened. We kept right on sliding easily into the car going the other way. A jarring sound of crinkling metal was followed by the screech of a police siren. It was probably the most exciting event that had taken place in the small town on that day.

The policeman asked, “O.K., what happened here?”

My sister Nancy, sitting beside me in the back seat, piped up, “It was all Daddy’s fault.” Nancy had a highly developed sense of justice.

Mother and Daddy turned around simultaneously saying, “Shush!” to which Nancy replied, “But it was your fault; the light was red.”

The ticket was written up; the chains were tugged on over the tires. Nancy was not popular the rest of the way home.

Many years later, we were returning from a glorious day at Bodega Bay. A heavy rain the night before had saturated the road, covering leaves. Our son-in-law was driving his brand new pickup truck with a



## REMEMBERING . . .

Col. Carl Miller, USAF (Ret)  
Loving Husband and Father  
Arrived: June 18, 1999  
Departed: December 24, 2008



backseat. I had just noticed a sign telling the speed limit, which he was exceeding. Not wanting to be a backseat driving mother-in-law, I said nothing. Going around a sharp curve, the truck refused to turn and slid easily into the oncoming car on the two lane road. It was quite similar to the sensation of sliding on an icy street. Perhaps, because of this, I kept my counsel to myself when the highway patrolman appeared. There were plenty others to assign the blame, which no one disputed.

Does a lesson learned in childhood help you sixty years later?

—by Joan Teague

## Saint Valentine’s Day

St. Valentine, long, long ago,  
Declared a day when we should go  
And give a gift to someone dear,  
And leave it with them for a year,  
Or for a day, or for all time,  
And call this gift a Valentine.

So this sweet gift, the Valentine,  
A treasure that means much to us,  
Became a special thing apart.  
And it has come to symbolize  
The organ which keeps us alive,  
Our dearest jewel, our heart.

—by Elly Vasak

