

LEAS LIT

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LEAS LIT STAFF

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FROM THE DIARY THAT I CARRY AROUND

SINGING FOR MY SUPPER

Early in the fighting in France, I received a ride from the Rear Division Headquarters up to the front line. The driver learned that we had lost the area of road he had traveled so we were returning by another route. It soon became clear that we were lost. Fortunately, we came upon a broken-down tank. The crew expected repairs in the morning. They kindly invited us to share their dinner, and we in return offered to stay with them and share the guard duty during the night. The night passed without incident and as we were waking up, our guards spotted four French civilians coming out of the distant woods. They identified themselves as being of the “Free Forces of the Interior” or Frenchmen who refused to serve in the German army.

These resistance fighters destroyed bridges and blew up trains, then hid out, begging or stealing their necessary supplies and food. Any civilian caught aiding them in any way would be severely punished. These men were asking us for food! When it was discovered that we had none, one of the younger men, speaking English well, knew of a farm community just up the hill. He asked me to join him. As we came in sight of a high stone wall that surrounded a big barn and various out-buildings, he asked me if I could sing “Yankee Doodle Dandy.” I tried, haltingly at first. “Louder, louder,” he urged, and the two of us let go with gusto! Suddenly, the big gate opened and a dozen adult women and many

children were dancing about us. My guide told them of the hungry Yanks and their tank stalled by the roadside.

The women all scattered to their various hovels within the wall. Soon, they were back with more than a dozen fresh-laid eggs, a hunk of bacon, some butter, wrapped in a big leaf, and a small crock of jelly. My helmet was separated from its shell and all was placed within. One woman insisted upon shoving a big round loaf of bread under my arm. To show my gratitude to all, I held the loaf up high and burst into song. Briskly, she again jammed it under my arm. My friend explained that the loaf had a small burnt spot on it and she was ashamed before her neighbors to reveal her poor baking skills!

Thus loaded down with foodstuffs, grateful kisses and embraces, we walked away, singing “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” the song they knew so well.

Joining the others at the tank, we all enjoyed breakfast. There was even a little left to give to the French resistance group, who left shortly to disappear in the dense forest.

PARIS 1944

In the fall of 1944, fighting got bogged down in the deep snows that filled Germany’s forests. Passes to Paris could begin at last. Before we went on leave, we stopped at a Red Cross rest camp for showers and laundered uniforms. A night between clean sheets was a respite from a hole in the ground. I was sitting on my cot sewing my insignia on my jacket. Opposite me sat our Supply Ser-

geant Becker. The Sarge, a big Russian Bear of a guy, was handling his pistol. Suddenly it went off and a bullet whizzed past my ear. It went through the barrack's wall behind me. The Sarge was terribly upset and offered profuse apologies. He begged my forgiveness! I sat there stitching, plunging the needle in and out madly, not quite absorbing what had just happened. Not many years later, after the war ended, I was on business in Manhattan, rushing to an appointment with a client. The streets were busy and the sidewalk crowded. Suddenly, I felt my whole body lifted, high overhead. In my ears I could hear shouting over and over, "Did you ever forgive me Butler?" Yes. It was the Sergeant whose pistol almost ended my trip to Paris those years ago.

But I digress. As I was preparing myself for my trip to Paris, a Red Cross worker handed me an envelope to be delivered to the Place de Vendôme. I traveled without incident and upon arrival I received directions from my hotel and set off. It was St. Catherine's Day and all along my route I was embraced and smothered in kisses by young women. Just as quickly, they were off to another conquest of surprised men. Arriving at the address, I was astonished to discover that I was at the doorstep of a former Royal residence. I was planning to drop the letter in the mail slot and get away unseen in my rumpled uniform. The doorman was at my side, however, and assured me that I was expected. I climbed a circular, white marble staircase and found a lovely lady waiting for me at the top.

It was the Comtesse du Mont Blanc. She embraced me and led me through stately chambers which apparently encompassed the Elizabeth Arden Salon in

Paris. I was walking through a perfumery and discovered that she herself was a chemist. Young ladies would surprise me from behind drapes and shuttered doors and gaily plant still more kisses upon my face. Arriving before a large wall of mirror, I caught sight of my face. It was covered with various shades of lip prints. It was the Countess who gently cleaned my face with a tissue as great tears appeared in her eyes. She explained that I looked so very much like the son she had lost in the war. Following his death, she herself became active in the Resistance Movement and helped form a secret railway for pilots and others wishing to escape the Nazi-held country. She was suspected, but being Canadian, they could not touch her. But in time, she was imprisoned in a Woman's Work Camp in the south of France. They could not make her labor, so instead she used her knowledge of chemistry and perfumery to concoct simple medications that would ease the sick and dying.

She related to me that one night the guards learned by radio that the war was lost. They slipped out of camp, wearing civilian clothes, and left the gates open. She, among other prisoners, wearing only her simple skirt, blouse and wooden-soled shoes, a scarf for her head, walked all the way back to Paris.

A CHRISTMAS ANGEL

When combat in Europe ended in 1945, I received my discharge and looked forward to picking up my interrupted art studies. At last I could get on with my life and wonderful things seemed assured to me. During two and a half years of combat in Africa, Sicily and Europe, there

had never been time to sum up what we Americans had been through. Veterans were urged to forget and turn their thoughts to starting new lives, getting jobs, and becoming self-sufficient citizens. I'd promised myself that I would finish my studies. This I did, and then landed a rather good job with the promise of a career in New York City.

Through all that busy time, there was never an opportunity to talk out my war experiences. Never to hear it all said, what it had meant to me and my future, how it was affecting my values. Without that time to clear the air, old memories found ways to haunt and to taunt me, yes, even torment me. The memories were determined to be recognized. I felt guilty for turning away from them. Didn't I owe it to the comrades I had survived to not let it be forgotten, as had happened after World War I? By holding it all in, I developed a split life. In the company of others, even while enjoying the high spirits of a party, a vision of some past experience might creep into my mind. Only when I relived that moment, would it move on – only to be replaced by yet another horrific scene. Clearly, it was my problem and I must work my way out of it.

Christmas is a time to be with family, but here I was, far removed from friends and family who lived in Michigan. All I had to look forward to was a dreadful New York City office party with every one slightly tipsy and working hard at being merry. All morning I'd be away from the office following up on the progress of several jobs for which I was responsible. The office party was at noon and I was expected to be there.

Arriving at my subway stop on 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue, I just could not make myself leave the platform. I recall wading through each arriving crowd as it poured forth from the train. I paced the length of the platform time and time again. Trains came and went. As I neared the platform's end where the next train would make a roaring appearance from the dark tunnel, I felt everything begin to shake under my feet. The sound was deafening and I made out the bright approaching lantern on the engine. Without plan or forethought, I stepped forward. Why hadn't I thought of doing this before? There was no feeling of pain, just a great sense of relief that this great weight had at long last been lifted from me.

It was moments before I realized that I was still standing on the platform in the arms of a young, plain-clothes policeman. I felt his tight grip. He had noticed that I had not left the station, and remained close by me. He had risked his own life by reaching for me when I tried to leap. He led me to a quiet corner apart from the rushing commuters and asked why I felt the need to do this. Shock settled over me as I realized what I had almost done. I did not wish to go to jail, so I opened up and let it all pour out. Much of it was for having survived so many hundreds of my army buddies.

That gentle man heard me through, then resting his hand on my shoulder he said, "I want you to know that I care about you." His quiet voice and gentle eyes saw deep inside of me. He assured me my great trouble would pass in time. I must not give up. We spoke as we walked up the stairs to street level. In parting, with his hand still on my shoulder, he said, "If ever you need me

again, just think about me and I will be with you.” We warmly shook hands and parted. I left feeling totally renewed. I was ready to take on the office party.

I often remember “my friend” and those gentle eyes. His loving words have never left me.

Todd Butler

MY SHORT CAREER AS A HITLER JUGEND

Snow driven by a cold wind from Bavaria cut into our faces and knees as we walked home in our lederhosen from the *Turnverein* or athletic club. It was winter 1933 and Hitler had just taken power in Germany, but that was far from our minds as we trudged the main street of Seefeld, Austria, with our hands thrust deep in our pockets for warmth. The dark night intensified the cold. Only a few dim street lights showed us the way home. Rudi, a year younger than I, received a lot of kidding about his bare knees. As we walked along the empty street, which paralleled the railroad tracks, between Munich, Germany, and Innsbruck, Austria, the group gradually diminished as kids came to their homes. Finally only Rudi, his older brother Rutger, and I remained to climb up the hill to the *pension* (boarding house) run by their father, Herr Korff. Earlier that evening he had suggested to my father that I might enjoy going to the *Turnverein* with his sons. He said it was just like the Boy Scouts. It met weekly in downtown Seefeld, a small mountain village, in the Austrian Tyrol about 20 miles from Innsbruck.

Except for the closing ceremony I had enjoyed the first evening at the *Turnverein*. Not too much regimentation and lots of exercise equipment. Helpful adults showed us how to jump over the wooden horses, climb the ropes and at the end gave us singing lessons. The selected song "*Deutschland Über Alles*" was the German national anthem. Each of us had individual instruction as an old man banged on an upright piano. Austria was such a land of conflicting contrasts that it did not immediately strike me as strange they were teaching us the

German national anthem rather than the Austrian anthem. After the singing we lined up for the closing ceremony. The leaders shouted “Heil Hitler” with the Nazi salute and the kids all replied “Heil Hitler” with the Nazi salute. No one seemed to mind that I was silent and kept my arm down even though this was obviously a Nazi organization.

We had moved to Seefeld in January 1933 as the heavy cloud cover and smog turned Vienna into a dreary God-forsaken place. Margaret, my mother, thought it was no fit place for man or beast. So on the advice of friends we had moved to Seefeld in the Tyrol. There we could enjoy fresh mountain air, plenty of sunshine and outdoor activities. It was also centrally located, with excellent transportation, so Haggott, my father, could easily visit financial centers in Europe. As part of his sabbatical leave from Columbia University he interviewed most of the leading financiers of Europe. Margaret could also complete her PhD thesis, “Paris as a Financial Center,” which was published after we returned home to the United States.

In Vienna there had been relatively little overt evidence of Nazi sympathy, so I remember my amazement on arriving in Seefeld and seeing most of the baggage handlers wearing uniforms of the Nazi SA, which stood for *Sturmabteilung*, or Storm Division in English. The uniforms did not seem to interfere with their work. However, in the cities of Germany the SA supplied the Nazi party with street fighting thugs. A few months after the Reichstag fire, Hitler murdered the SA leaders to prevent them from threatening his absolute rule.

These uniforms symbolized the contrast between Vienna and the rural areas of Austria. In Vienna public works were named after American heroes such as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. This esteem for the great men of America made one feel good to be an American and proud of our country's heritage. However, the contrasting attitudes between the city and country ultimately resulted in small-scale civil wars within Austria and the destruction of many public works named after Americans.

On moving to Seefeld we stayed at a hotel for the first few days until Dad found an inexpensive *pension*. It was run by the Korff family from Germany and it suited our family needs. I had my own room in a new modern structure which held about 20 guests. Margaret and Haggott had a large room which also served as their study and looked out over the valley below. The *pension* served meals family-style in a common dining room. Two maids made the beds, cleaned and served meals. I do not recall a cook. Each guest room had wash basins but guests on each floor shared a common toilet. At age ten I was the youngest guest. The next youngest was a Dutch lad of about 20 with whom I occasionally skied. After a day on the slopes he could consume vast quantities of food and devour all the left-overs.

Ski school was the first priority, so we, Margaret, Haggott and I, immediately signed up for the lessons. In a few days we could snowplow with the best of them. Neither ski lifts nor rope tows existed. Hence if you wanted to go downhill you first had to laboriously scale the heights with the awkward herringbone step. So we developed aching muscles, struggled for breath at the

altitude and acquired large appetites practicing the heringbone step. In a few weeks we thought we waxed skis like experts, recovered from falls, walked uphill and zoomed down as if born on skis.

Skiing then was more like cross-country skiing today. Not like today's downhill skiing with groomed slopes and boots and skis rigidly locked together. It was much more strenuous than modern skiing with lifts that carry one to the top of a lofty mountain relaxed and rested for the run down manicured trails.

Wearing his dark blue French beret, Haggott looked quite debonair on skis. However, despite the beret, Dad was really clumsy on skis and didn't ski much after the first few weeks. His biggest challenge was getting up after a fall. Without poles and assistance he might have spent the winter struggling in the snow. Margaret was a little more agile but skied only occasionally. I spent every day on skis. No school, no homework to think about. I even dropped out of ski school before completing all my lessons. No cares at all, just the sheer joy of going anywhere in that snow covered valley.

Sometimes after the Korff boys finished school for the day we skied together and explored the valley. I recall one such trip on a warm sunny spring day. The kind of day we could ski in our bathing suits. Somewhere above the village we were making a snowball. When it got about a foot in diameter we thought we should roll it downhill. We did and it got away from us, rapidly picking up the wet snow as it rolled. In a few seconds it grew to about six feet in diameter, gaining speed and momentum, and headed directly for a farmers outbuilding. We

all had visions of it smashing right through the building. Just before it reached the building it suddenly broke apart into a loose pile of harmless snow. What a relief!

Dinnertime at the *pension* often revealed to me what I thought were strange attitudes in our host family. My impression was that Mrs. Korff thought the purpose of her children was to continue World War I. She never directly said so, but her excuses for Hitler's actions – he was in power now – led me to think that was what she wanted. Herr Korff never said much except to complain about the Allies in the war. According to him the nasty French were responsible for making him stay in uncomfortable water-filled trenches. More importantly a steady stream of SA uniformed couriers on bicycles, who went straight to his office, gave one the impression he directed the local Nazi party.

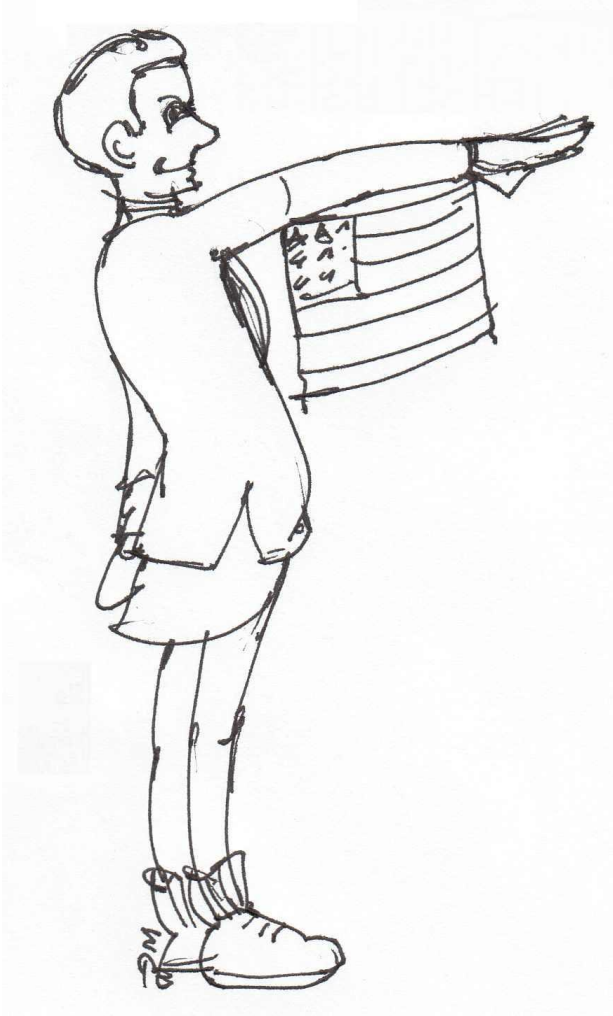
While it was still winter in the Alps, Margaret and Haggott took a train through the Alpine tunnels to Italy to greet spring in Milan. In their absence I made my own amusement, wonderful relaxed unstructured days for me. On their return they enrolled me in a little private school in the valley below the *pension*. I wanted no part of it and after a few days I rebelled. The lessons would do me no good in the States, so that ended that.

In lieu of classes Dad took me to Munich to see the sights and especially to visit the Deutsches Museum. We spent several days there. The museum was a real education. It contained all kinds of exhibits, which could be operated by visitors, to demonstrate engineering and scientific principles. When I pushed a button I could watch iron burn in a stream of oxygen! Some exhibits

were large-scale, such as a coal mine. It boggled my young mind. As far as I know there was nothing like it in the States.

Yet I was happy to see the Alps again out the window of the third-class railway carriage as Dad and I rode back to the mountains. These wooden carriages with their hard wooden seats appealed to me. We could take a picnic lunch like the Germans. I loved munching sandwiches made from authentic German black bread and washed them down with *Himbeersaft* or raspberry juice.

Back in Seefeld the weather had warmed and the hot winds from the Sahara had melted most of the snow so there was not much for an active kid to do now that the skiing was over. This was the reason Herr Korff had suggested the *Turnverein*, which he compared to the Boy Scouts. After the first session and its Nazi salute I doubted the Boy Scout comparison. However, the first evening had been fun so I went back. The run of a well-equipped gymnasium appealed to me. The second session was a repetition of the first with activities designed to draw in active youth. However, this evening when it came time for the “Heil Hitler” the adult leaders noticed that I did not salute. They angrily marched in lockstep over to me and demanded to know why I had not saluted. Before I could reply Rudi answered for me and said, “Gordon is an American.” This sent the leaders marching in lockstep back to the other side of the room for an intense but brief conference. After a few moments’ deliberation they came back all smiles and said that while everyone else said “Heil Hitler” I could say “Heil Roosevelt.” I replied “Americans do not do things like that.”



Some people have accused me of being insensitive to body language, but this time I could tell that I was a painful thorn in their side and no longer welcome.

Thus my career as a Hitler Jugend abruptly ended.

Gordon Beckhart

DOCTOR OF THE PINES 1812 - 1882



Born in the pine woods, fifth child of eleven –
His mother, still fearful, had recently fled
From slavery's hardships to hard-scrabble living –
His childhood and youth spent in getting ahead.

Ahead of the times, ahead of his neighbors,
When prejudice reigned, segregation the rule.
For three years indentured, his labor rewarded
With ten dollars, a suit, and three months of school.

He worked in the farmlands and logged in the woods,
Learning the secrets of forest and field.
The plants that all grew there, the trees and the grasses,
The barks and the roots and the gifts that they'd yield.

With nature his teacher, his faith ever strong,
He set up his practice and watched as they came
By mule cart and wagon, on horseback and foot.
In country and town they'd heard of his name.

His cures became legend, his remedies found
From sassafras, snakeroot, and black mustard seed.
He made ointments, poultices, powders and teas
With boneset and heartsease and sweet Joe-pye-weed.

He overcame poverty, held to his dreams
Securing success against all opposition.
A remarkable man who found truth in earth's bounty
His God was his guidepost: Healing, his mission.

Joan McKeon



Note: James Still's office, crumbling and neglected, is on Church Road, a few yards from Route 541. It was purchased in 2006 by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and was listed in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1995. A marker reads: "About 1860, James Still, 'the black doctor of the Pines', a self-taught son of slaves, made and dispensed his famous herbal remedies from this site."

PERILS OF A ROMAN HOUSEWIFE

“I hadn’t ruled it in and I hadn’t ruled it out.” A last-minute decision – or indecision – made more to myself as I eased unto my travel couch (my husband refuses me the use of a litter). I ordered my couch bearers, Naudrius and Nobbus, to take me downtown to Zowie!’s at the Forum, an exciting new, upscale row of shops built into the south wall of Basilica Jolie. I’d heard that the locals call it Shop Row because that’s what it is. I wanted to see the shops firsthand. Young Scipio followed us with a large basket in which to carry my purchases.

There was such a hustle and bustle in front of the podium steps of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, we barely got through. The entire College of Vestal Virgins was once again celebrating the eternal flame, white-robed virgins spilling out of the temple onto the surrounding pavement. This is an empire where religion and law mix comfortably with politics and commerce. Having gotten past Deified Augustus and all the other messes, you’d think we’d learned our lesson. One deified emperor after another has made us increasingly insensitive to both irony and satire. Thank goodness we now live under our benevolent emperor, Titus. May he live long and die a good man.

We, of course, have our household gods, which are very important to our family. I know just how important *one* is. I have to get him up and have breakfast ready for him every morning and push him out the door, clients or no clients. We still have our live-in children who worship their breadwinner. And our grandchildren? The

“grands” are such a fright. They do the most frightful things these days with those new clay tablets!

Dear me, there was much too much to do today to think about public displays at the Temple of Vesta.

I asked Naudrius and Nobbus to let me down near the end of the street, Vicus Tuscus, behind the Temple of Castor and Pollux, and wait for my return. Scipio followed me. I keep reminding the young man how fortunate that he has such a noble name. Perhaps it’s not good for a slave to hear, but I cannot help myself. When Scipio comes of age, I suggested to my husband, he’ll make a highly valued freedman.

The perfume shop was the first shop in Shop Row. In Rome perfume is what we really live by. The shop’s display of colorful glass and delicately carved marble and amber bottles contained, according to the neat labels, rare scents from India. Lady Messalina – our neighbor, not the former lady of high birth and disrepute – never in all her days smelled as fragrant, although she tries. The shop left a welcome lingering scent of balsam and musk on my garments.

I stopped to see the potter at his wheel. It is good the perfumer was next door; such a sweat and such a foul odor came from his shop. I called to him, “You know, my dear man, Greek ware is so far superior.” Crude man, he uttered a very insulting word. The man had no sense of humor.

The baker and all his bake goods were a welcome sight, until he told me the current price of a loaf of bread. I ordered four large fresh baked loaves of the

best wheat bread and four small loaves of barley bread. He was quite impertinent. He said the current higher price of wheat increased a loaf to eight sesterces. I explained that only a week ago bread was six sesterces at my local baker. I could not resist expressing my ire. “It seems to me that every time Egypt wiggles its big toe the price of wheat increases. I really take it personally. In my opinion this global business must stop. Well, in any case, send the tablet of fare to my husband, he’ll pay it.” I heard a very loud noise. “What is all the shouting and uproar?”

“The emperor is hearing several cases at law in the basilica,” the baker explained. “Only for today, I’m told. With so much boisterous oratory in that great marble hall, ma’am, it gets rather raucous tying and untying all the legal knots.”

Next was a jolly greengrocer. As I handed my list to him, I quite forcefully said, “But, by the power of Zeus, please, no asparagus today! Forgive my vehemence, but we have had our fill of that cultivated weed. We have had it served every Sunday for the past six months!”

“I’ll add that request to my desktop icons,” the grocer snickered, hitching up his tunic.

At the butcher’s I ordered a goose and a chicken to be taken around to the house. The sausage looked so tempting, I asked for four to be added to my order. I made a quick retreat. His shop smelled like the dregs at the bottom of a bottle of Falernian wine. Dreadful.

The fish monger had some fresh fish, just brought in. The scallops, eel, turbot and octopus looked almost appetizing. I thought, if this is an upscale market, where are the delicate black goby or Lucrine Lake oysters? I decided my fish order could wait for another day.

I quickly walked past the bronze smith and the lamp shop.

The wine merchant was an Athenian. I cannot help commenting that there are so many Greeks in Rome, they have taken over the city. It's bad enough Greek is the language of world commerce. Do we have to endure them in our shops, in our streets, even in our schools?

The wine merchant's understanding was stretched to its limit. I purchased two small amphora of a very cheap wine. After much irritation and some heavy persuasion the merchant reluctantly agreed to send the bill to my husband. It's an open secret that here in Rome we all live in pompous beggary.

Next door a sign proclaimed fabulous dining and clean accommodations. The sign also advertised that this was one of the restaurants belonging to the franchise chain of Asellina's of Pompeii. (*Margin note:* This was written a few days before the unspeakable disaster which befell Pompeii and Herculaneum with the loss of many lives, including our great natural historian, Pliny.) The inn looked inviting. Standing at the door, looking in, a thought occurred to me. I might persuade my husband to bring the family for a banquet someday.

I hurried Scipio along. “Come, Scipio, the next shop is the last.” I was overcome by a heavy, unusual aroma. I was intrigued. With the help of Scipio, I made my way through the crowd that had gathered at the front of the shop. When I got closer, I saw writing covering the wall, written in a wacky Latin scrawl:

CACAO

a New VERSATILE food from AFRICA

Processed IN DarK

As MILK ChOcolATE

White

A WonDERFUL LIQUeur

no BETter aphroDISIAC or DIGESTIVE ...

and more I couldn’t see for the crowd. It made no sense to me. I turned away, the aroma was making my head swim. All of a sudden, I felt very tired.

“Hurry,” I said to Scipio, “gather up our things. It’s time to find Naudrius and Nobbus.”

I was glad to get home. The morning was an exciting one but it will be a long time before I shop at Zowie!’s at the Forum.

Chris Darlington





MY SPECIAL TREE

Each spring I watched and waited
For her leaves to find their way
To cover all her branches.
“Patience!!” My tree would say.

I thought she whispered softly,
Knowing that I care,
“Just a little longer now
And the birds will all be there.”

The robins, finch, and cardinals
Will make their cozy nests.
I wait until those special doves
Are there with all the rest.

They seem to know I love them
As they happily fly free,
And, landing on my railing,
They seem to look for me.

That big old tree took care of them
Through rain and snow and all.
She seemed to know they needed her,
That’s why she grew so tall.

I think of all the joy she brought
Through all those happy years,
Until the sound of chainsaws
Confirmed by deepest fears.

They cut her into pieces,
Her graceful boughs fell hard.
I couldn’t bear to look at her
Spread all around the yard.

It's very hard to tell you
How I loved that dear old tree.
I really had the feeling
God put her there for me.

But now that she is really gone
It makes me feel so sad.
They say she was a danger
And I must admit that's bad.

But always I'll remember her
And the pleasure that she gave
With birds among those branches
I tried so hard to save.

Yes, long shall I remember her
With love – and will recall
That all our lovely graceful trees
Are God's great gift to all.

Helen Flynn



MY GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Three score and seven years ago I had a Gettysburg address. Unlike Lincoln's profound Address, mine was 212 Carlisle Street, the Sigma Chi fraternity house at Gettysburg College.

No one thought it was strange that college coeds were living in the Sigma Chi fraternity house. It was the practical way in which the college administration dealt with the problem of too many women and not enough men. The latter were in the South Pacific or battling their way through Germany. So what would normally have been the men's domain was no longer so, at least for the time being.

These were not normal times, but as pro tem residents of 212 Carlisle Street, we tried to hold on to the way things were before the war. Decorating the fraternity house for the winter holidays would be a significant way in which we could keep one of the Sigma Chi traditions going. In this year of 1944 we called our theme "The #1 Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," which was an obvious steal from their signature song, "The Girl of My Dreams."

The project required several coeds willing to wield paintbrushes, for we were about to paint the windows. Paint the windows! Perhaps that sounds like the beginning of a practical joke on Sigma Chi. Actually, the "paint" we were to use was Bon Ami cleansing powder mixed with water until it was the consistency of paint. If we needed color, we simply added food coloring. It was easy to correct mistakes with the swipe of a clean cloth. And when it was time to remove the paint altogether, the

windows were easily washed. Naturally, the Bon Ami paint went on on the inside of the windowpane lest rain or snow undid all our work.

Someone with a great design in mind had us painting igloos and polar bears and lots and lots of snow that kept falling and falling. We must have been especially good at painting falling snow. There was so much of it. The centerpiece was a beautiful Eskimo-clad girl, the 1944 ideal woman with long, long shapely bare legs. She was “The #1 Sweetheart of Sigma Chi” smiling provocatively from her perch above the front porch. She was made of sturdy cardboard, painted with real paint, ready to withstand all weather conditions.

This sweetheart got lots and lots of attention. For one thing, Carlisle Street is a main road leading into the center of Gettysburg. For another, I think it had to do with those long, long legs on a cold winter day. Well she did have boots on, but there was still all this skin between the top of her boots to the bottom of her skirt. Oh, so Betty Grable-ish!

One day there came a knock at 212 Carlisle Street. It was the manager of the local A&P. He wanted to know if the person who painted the windows would come and paint his store windows. “Just the snow decorations; forget the girl,” said the manager. Now, did I volunteer or did I get drafted? Hey, for \$10 I could do that! He was going to supply all the Bon Ami and food coloring. Piece of cake!



You have to remember that grocery stores in 1944 weren't outside the city limits with acres of parking lot. They were right downtown where the housewives could walk. They weren't superstores. By today's standards they were more like "Mom and Pop stores" – small and compact. But to my eyes, as a novice mural painter, so to speak, the two windows that met in the center with the double doors were enormous. They didn't get any bigger than that!

After hours of painting igloos and polar bears, which I had gotten pretty good at doing, I began putting in barns and trees. The more I covered them with snow, the better they looked. Never mind how igloos and polar bears got together with barns and trees. It was the snow that would pull it all together. My memory of it now is that it looked more like a huge blizzard. The manager must have liked it though, because he gave me the \$10 and a bag of apples. He also told me he would like me to come back the next year.

And so a year later I was ready to start another Bon Ami winter scene. This time though I took my friend Frank with me. Now he was an artist. He painted the snow-covered cannons of Gettysburg, children sledding on an Adams County hill, families skating on local ponds that looked familiar. While he painted these wonderful scenes, I filled in snow-covered hills and valleys. And, of course, I made lots of snow falling and falling. This time we each went home with a \$10 bill and a bag of oranges.

Our fame and fortune grew. Well, not exactly by leaps and bounds. Another store manager asked us to come and paint his windows. Frank got even more crea-

tive. There was a scene from the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg showing the cupola of Old Dorm on Seminary Ridge. There was Abraham Lincoln standing in snow up to his knees and snow on his wonderful stove-pipe hat. There was the covered bridge near the farmland where Dwight Eisenhower was later to make his home.

Another job came along and then another. We were going home with dollar bills stuffed in our pockets along with the chickens, oranges or apples. I don't think that Frank and I could have made a living painting murals on storefront windows, but we did become a permanent team in other ways. We merged our two Gettysburg addresses and moved around the corner from 212 Carlisle Street.

I don't know what happened to the “#1 Sweetheart of Sigma Chi.” I like to imagine though that she is frolicking somewhere in heavenly snow that never stops falling and falling. The town of Gettysburg never became known for its Bon Ami murals, nor did my Gettysburg address ever become famous. But Gettysburg had more important things to celebrate. It always will!

Sarah Klos

IT'S GONNA SNOW!

(A True Story of Christmastime Misery – circa 1949)

I have never been particularly skilled at predicting the weather. This is not meant to be a disclaimer for what follows, but is intended to give some perspective to any of my readers who might cancel their travel plans predicated on what I might say now or in the future.



My attempts to prognosticate climatologic events – or perhaps to make such events fit into a pattern of my choosing – has a long history going back over 60 years. When we were 10 years old, Tommy Logan and I placed a lot of faith in our forecasting skills. A ring around the moon was a sure sign that it would snow that night, which meant that school would be canceled the next day. In fact we were so certain of our skills that we would

frequently “game the system” and forgo homework assignments in the belief that such drudgery could wait until after the construction of snow forts and snowball fights that were part of the neighborhood frivolity on a snowed-out school day.

This, however, was a risky business, with considerable downside consequence which became even more severe when Miss Adley became our fourth grade teacher. Miss Adley, a matronly old schoolmarm, had little tolerance for those who did not take homework assignments seriously, particularly miscreants of the male gender. This was discovered by Tommy and me in December 1949, several days before our scheduled Christmas recess. All of Philadelphia was in a festive and charitable spirit – all with the exception of Miss Adley, whose stern and unyielding approach to her pedagogical duties took no holidays. But I get ahead of myself.

Let us return to a Sunday afternoon 60 years ago, where we see Tommy Logan and me exiting from O’Conner’s Confectionary at the corner of Duval and McCallum Streets. Tommy has just purchased a box of candy cigarettes, the kind with realistic looking red tips that come in a box with a camel on the front designed to look like the real thing. We each took one from the box and dangled it from our lips as we walked by Patty Miller’s house, hoping that she would be watching from her bedroom window and would be impressed by our Clark Gable poses. But as we walked by her home and glanced upward there was a sight far more exciting than the image of Patty clasping her heart and sighing at our gallant passing. For, hanging over her roof was a big silvery moon enshrouded with a marvelous ring that meant only

one thing. Patty Miller be damned. "IT'S GONNA SNOW!" we both yelled simultaneously. This was soon followed by another excited exclamation as our 10-year-old reasoning clicked in: "NO SCHOOL TOMORROW!" And since there was just a half day on Christmas Eve, most assuredly, we reasoned, they would forget about bringing us back until after the New Year.

Unspoken was the matter of Miss Adley's homework assignment that was due the next morning. Like all red-blooded males in our class (Homer Davis being the effete exception), Tommy and I had not even begun to think of homework. And now with a ring around the moon and quite assuredly snow on the way, homework was the least of our concerns.

That evening, true to our prediction, it started snowing by 6, slowly at first, but by 7 there was a dusting on the ground. By 8 it was swirling down at a good clip, and when I crawled under the quilts in my attic bedroom at 9, the streets were covered. Nothing to worry about, just wake up in the morning and go forth into wintertime frivolity, with two weeks of vacation to follow.

But then came the morning with heavy rain pelting the gutters outside my window. What had been a pristine winter scene the night before had turned into brownish slush mixed with uncollected leaves and twigs. The thought of the unfinished homework assignment suddenly jolted me back to reality. Part of Miss Adley's disciplined approach to reining in our free spirits was her requirement that any homework malefactor had to confess to her, in writing, his reason for disregarding sacred duty. I knew that Tommy, with his innate ability to pre-

varicate in the direst circumstance would be up to the task. But, thankfully, this was a new experience for me. I did, however, recall that Betty Smith, who was generally acknowledged as being the teacher's pet, was successful with claims of mysterious ailments. And so, before leaving for school that morning, I carefully penned my note:

“Dear Miss Adley,
All weekend long I had a very bad stomach
ache. I am feeling much better now, thank you.
Have a very merry Christmas.
Love,
Pete”

That morning on the way to school I caught up to Tommy. He wasn't happy either and asked me how “schnauzer” was spelled. Almost immediately I realized what Tommy was up to. Miss Adley's greatest affection in life was her pet bulldog named “Mugsy,” and she often spent the morning telling the class about all the cute things her Mugsy had done the night before.

As soon as we got to school Tommy carefully penned his note:

“Dear Miss Adley,
On Friday my aunt's pet schnauzer died. I
am very sad and have been crying all weekend.
I hope Mugsy never dies.
Love,
Tommy”

Both my note and Tommy's were placed in the basket on Miss Adley's desk. But in 1949 pedagogy had no Christmas spirit and it was not long before Miss Ad-

ley, with a perversely Santa-like omniscience, wrote our names in the “AFTER SCHOOL” box in the corner of the blackboard.

That, dear readers, is the sad and true story of the Christmas dreams of two fourth-grade students who were melted by Philadelphia weather.

So please don't ask me if it will snow in the Medford/Lumberton region this Christmas. I suppose that as the song suggests we might dream of such an event. But I would caution you to nonetheless do your homework lest it all turn to slush.

Pete McCord

MY FATHER, THE IMMIGRANT

On April 1, 1940, my father, with my mother, came to the United States of America, a few days before his 54th birthday. I was already here, living in a boys' home on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Father was 6 feet tall, weighed 180 pounds, and had light gray hair, parted in the middle. He wore steel-rimmed glasses as, since childhood, he was quite nearsighted. He was in good shape and had a very upright posture. He had emigrated from Germany, where he had been a judge and later, after forced retirement, head of the Jewish Welfare Agency in Munich. As German law is quite different from U.S. law, he could not practice here. Besides, due to German emigration laws restricting the export of currency by Jews, he did not have the money to study law at a university. So he had to look for a job. His English was accented, but quite adequate. Initially, my parents rented a room with kitchen privileges in a friend's apartment in upper Manhattan at a very reasonable rate.

My father's first endeavor was as a door-to-door salesman. He was instructed by his brother-in-law, my Uncle Lothar, who was quite successful selling personal clothing articles such as shirts, underwear, etc. from a satchel to his friends and acquaintances. Father hated it as he did not want to oblige his friends to buy from him. He always hoped that nobody would be home. He very quickly quit this job.

Next a friend, who was a district manager for the Fuller Brush Company, offered him a route. My father decided to try it, as there was nothing else available. He

was assigned a district in Harlem. So off he went, again from door to door, with his suitcase full of brush samples. When people were home they welcomed him openly in a friendly manner. After all, the Fuller Brush Company was well known. Most of the people he visited asked for the free samples of small brushes. Many of his customers even placed orders to be delivered in the near future. But when the items were delivered at the apartment, the person who had ordered the brushes often did not have the money to pay for them. So my father lost his commission. He soon quit. Actually he was happy about it because he really was not a sales person.

Now mother and he decided they would try to get a job as a couple. Mother considered herself a good cook and father would make a very presentable butler. While they were sitting in the employment agency waiting room, a well-dressed lady came in. She was the wife of the owner of the Howard clothing chain. She looked at my parents and immediately told the agent she wanted to hire them. He pointed out that they had absolutely no experience. But she liked the looks of them and insisted. The next morning a limousine pulled up at their apartment house with the lady in it. My parents entered the car with their luggage. Father brought his typewriter. He always had a large correspondence because he was the head of his dueling fraternity alumni club. They arrived at the estate on Long Island and were told by the manager to clean the glasses in the entertainment wing. At 3 PM the manager came back, handed them ten dollars and told them they were let go and the limousine would take them back. They later found out from another source that, when Mrs. Howard saw my father with the

typewriter, she felt she could not give orders to such a seemingly educated man.

Except for the use of an employment agency for the couples' placement, father never used an agency. All his jobs had come to him via personal recommendations. I really do not know why he did not investigate that avenue. Maybe none of his friends and acquaintances had information about agencies.

My father's next job, based on a recommendation, was sorting iron bars and other debris in a junkyard in Brooklyn. Within two weeks my mother made him stop that work. Her reason was that father had no work clothes and was ruining his good suits with spots from rust and other dirty materials.

Then a cousin offered him a spot in his leather jewelry factory in mid-town Manhattan. It consisted of placing a steel stencil over layers of leather and then hitting it hard with a mallet to punch out the shapes, such as hearts, deer or other figures. This job lasted the longest so far. He did the punching for about six months or so. He was forced to quit as his back was beginning to hurt constantly.

By now my parents had left the room in their friends' apartment and had rented a one-bedroom apartment on 151st Street in Manhattan. As you came into the flat, there was the bedroom, which my parents generously gave to me. After a right turn one went down a narrow hallway, passing the bathroom and the kitchen, leading directly into the large living room where my parents slept on a fold-out couch. My father had a desk in the little den off the living room.

Then an old friend came through. He was a vice-president at Liebman Breweries, makers of Rheingold beer, in Brooklyn. He offered my father a job as weigh master. This meant he had to oversee the truck scales and record the weights of the entering and leaving brewery trucks and keep an accurate record of the results. He did this for a month. Then the brewery decided that function was a waste of time and eliminated it. My father was worried again. But his friend came to the rescue and arranged a job for him as a statistician in the personnel office. It included occasional appearances at court to testify about personnel records. This was a job my father finally liked. In the meantime he had become a United States citizen.

He was forced to retire at the age of 80 after being in that job for 24 years.

Stefan S. Frank

AS TIME GOES BY

Isador Isaac Rabi, Nobel Laureate in Physics, asked, “What is time?” This question has intrigued mystics and philosophers for centuries. The real answer was given only recently by Albert Einstein, who said, in effect, that time is simply what a clock reads.

Time bothers me. What I really mean, I don’t get along well with things that human beings use to tell time, watches and clocks. I read in a book that early clocks enabled Galileo and his successors to solve the mysteries of motion, thus laying the groundwork of modern physics. Other clocks have made it possible for scientists to date the eras of Neanderthal man on earth. Also, they make it possible to measure how long the earth has been in the heavens. I agree, time is important. I should be able to get along with the things man has invented to tell time, but I can’t seem to do so.

I’ve never had good luck with watches. Years ago, I had a watch that ticked properly, but when it was lunchtime it would say seven-forty-five. I dive into swimming pools with non-waterproof watches. I lose watches or break those funny little slats on flexible watch bands.

My problem with clocks is even more disastrous. I was fond of a clock once. I received it at a bridal shower when I was in college. A large Mickey Mouse in a blue suit was in its center and his two plump red arms were continuously out-stretched to tell time correctly. The clock brightened our first kitchen in an apartment in

Pennsylvania. Moving with us a few times, it later ticked happily in our first house. One day in a fit of spring house cleaning, I took the clock off its high-perched hook, dusted a year of grime from it with a paper towel and gave it a good scrub. Drying it and placing it back on the hook, I leaned back to admire Mickey's polished brilliance. He fell to the floor, breaking into many pieces, never to tick again.

Stove clocks, those ingenious inventions, which supposedly go off just as your cake is done to perfection, are the bane of my existence! I either set them wrong or can't get them to tick at all. My husband, an engineer, says it's because I'm not mechanically minded. But later, we had a stove clock that even he couldn't get to work (and he's good at fixing toasters our sons have jammed with forks, and irons our daughters have dropped while pressing prom dresses). We had moved to a new rental home and I decided to prepare a soft-boiled egg for my husband's breakfast. Clocking an egg at 7 AM when I'm barely awake probably wasn't a good idea. But there was that shiny new stove clock, so why not? I boiled the water, set the timer for three minutes and dropped in the egg. Picking up the morning newspaper was a mistake. Sometime later, I realized the timer had not gone off, the water was bubbling furiously and my egg was hard-boiled. So, my husband could have an egg salad sandwich for lunch, I reasoned!

That night my husband tried to fix the stove timer. "It's really broken," he said. A few days later an amazing thing happened. Our fifteen-year-old son, Dan, did fix it! It timed things to perfection. I baked and cooked and reveled in it! Nothing burned and it was such fun teasing

my husband, who hadn't been able to fix it. But all good things must come to an end. After three months of care-free baking, it wouldn't let out a single tick. When I finally got around to telling our landlord about it, he said, "Oh, that stove clock hasn't worked for years."

Scientists say there's much more to be discovered about time. I would add there's much more for me to learn about clocks and watches. Maybe it would help if I read the fine print directions that come with the above. "Oh, dear! It's time to take my cookies out of the oven – I think!"

Jean Nicholson

A TIME TO REMEMBER

Dedicated to Phil Sagi

Norman had waited all week for this Saturday to come. He had done his homework and completed all the household chores so there would be no reason to cancel the hike. When he got up this morning the bright sun added to his anticipation. He gulped down his breakfast and soon the two of them were on their way. He held on to his father's hand tightly as they walked along the broad sunlit street. Their shadows danced in front of them. His father was tall and heavysset. His fedora made him seem even taller. The world around them seemed insignificant, for they were on a great adventure. He had inserted his Pedimeter on his belt; its constant clicking announced how far they had already hiked. The sun, in a cloudless sky, shone down on these two intrepid walkers. This was his day alone with his father. Every now and then he brushed back the hair that had fallen over his eyes.

Before long they heard the sound of airplane engines. In front of them appeared the hangars and the control tower of Floyd Bennett Airport. They hurried over to the airfield fence and watched as the line of twin-engine bombers with English insignias on the tail and fuselage lined up ready for takeoff. The wind created by the engines blew all around them. His father had to hold his hat with one hand to keep it from flying away and held on to Norman's hand with the other. As the planes taxied to the takeoff runway the wind subsided. His father took out the binoculars that he carried and handed

them to his son, who surveyed the entire scene through the glasses. The boy smiled with an intense feeling of joy at seeing the planes – ready to fly away. The father looked down at his son enjoying his delight as each plane slowly lifted off the runway.

An MP came along the fence to where they were standing. “You know,” he said, “No one is allowed on the field.”

His father nodded. “My son loves airplanes; we just wanted to see them take off.”

“OK but no closer, and you better leave when they are all gone.”

Soon the planes were all airborne and, making one last sweep over the field, turned and headed over the bay. Then they were gone. When the last plane was only a shining speck in the sky, they started their journey home. It seemed longer and slower than before. The sun’s long shadows now followed their footsteps. They stopped at a small delicatessen and, standing at the counter, each had a hot dog and a root beer soda. The boy wiped his hand over his mouth. The hot dog, with its mustard and relish, had never tasted better. Holding hands again, father and son walked on. Home was just ahead, and Norman could still hear, in his head, the roar of the plane engines.

Norman felt the vibration of the four Wright Cyclone engines through the yoke of his control column.

His helmet with the earphones and oxygen mask attached made it difficult to hear the engines' roar. His gloved hands gripped the control tightly to keep the plane level. His feet moved the rudder pedals slowly left and right. Don, his co-pilot, continually adjusted the throttles. The sun reflected off the large silver bomber as they headed due east. Around them the contrails, caused by ice crystals as the planes flew at high altitude, of the rest of the formation laid out a white carpet in the sky. Norman pressed the mike button, "OK, guys we're coming up on the IP (the initial bombing point). Watch out for fighters and there is a lot of flak below us. They don't have our range yet. Over and out."

Ever so slowly the black puffs of flak got closer and closer. The plane began to shudder, jerked up, and then began to drop down and sideways. Norman fought the controls to stabilize the aircraft. He pressed his throat mike. "Jerry, we're on the bomb run – the plane is all yours. Over."

"Roger," replied the bombardier as he took over the control of the plane for his bombing autopilot. A large, loud flak burst erupted off the right wing. Norman, his hands in his lap, watched tensely, ready to grab the yoke and tell Jerry to forget the bomb drop. He held back and repeated to himself, "Just give him time, give him time."

"Waist Gunner to pilot, we have smoke coming out of number 4."

"Roger, we're watching it up here, out."

Norman pointed to Don to watch the oil pressure on number 4 engine. It had begun to drop. "I'll let you know if we have to feather it."

"Bombs away!" yelled Jerry, "Let's get the hell out of here!" The plane seemed to lurch upward as the 4,000-pound bomb load left the aircraft and the bomb bay doors closed. Norman quickly took over the controls, turned the aircraft sharply to the left, and dropped about 1,000 feet. He looked out the window and saw the rest of the squadron do the same. The flak intensified and seemed to follow them, black puffs all around them. The sun was now directly in front of them as they headed west.

"Bandits at 3 o'clock high," sang out Sid, the engineer, from the top turret. Norman could hear the staccato firing of the machine guns from every position in his plane.

"Don, close down and feather number 4 and give me more power on the others."

Don pushed the throttles forward on the other three engines. The plane slipped slightly to the right, then with the extra power straightened itself. The flak continued as heavy as ever and more intense.

"Pilot to crew, I'm losing power in number 3 now and the controls are not responding. I won't be able to hold it much longer. It's time, guys, to bail out, bail out!" As Norman gave the command he pushed the red alarm bell. Don next to him gave him a thumb up, unhooked

his seat belt and oxygen mask, checked his backpack chute, and slid down between them to the escape hatch.

“See you downstairs buddy!” he yelled out over the engine noise. Norman felt the wind stream hit him as the escape hatch flew off. He watched out of the side window as the parachutes of the crew opened, looking like white flowers in the blue sky. He tried to put the plane on autopilot, so he could get out of the seat. The control refused to engage and the plane began to sideslip to the left. He kicked in the rudder and slowly leveled off. The plane continued to slowly lose altitude. He watched as the altimeter began to unwind: 20,000, 15,000, 12,000 feet.

“Well I guess we’ll just have to ride you down, big bird, so let’s look for a level patch somewhere down there,” he thought aloud to the empty plane. He unhooked his oxygen mask and gripped the yoke. He wiped the sweat from above his eyes. He fought the controls with his hands and feet as the earth below approached, getting closer and closer. Just ahead a flat, grassy field appeared. Norman wrapped both his hands around the control yoke and pulled hard toward his chest. The engines stalled out as the tail of the plane dropped and the nose came up. With his right hand he pulled down the flap control lever. It was too late to feather any of the engines. The tail hit the ground scraping loudly. Gently he let the yoke fall back and the nose of the plane hit the ground. The whole bomber seemed to vibrate, as if it would break apart, as it skidded along the meadow. The

force of the landing pulled Norman against his seat belt. He instinctively covered his eyes in case the windshield shattered. Ever so slowly the plane came to rest.

A silence filled the cabin. He removed his flying helmet and goggles, letting his hands drop into his lap.

Norman always remembered his father's hand holding his tightly as they stood at the fence and watched the planes flying away.

George Rubin

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A TIME OF GRIEF

When jonquils bloom
And violet and morning glory
Appear in forgotten corners
Of my garden,
I find serenity
And commune with
The progression
Of a season's rebirth.

Why then is it
That winter still
Grips my soul
Oh Lord,
While in the garden
Pigweed creeps
Where jonquils bloom
And bindweed
Chokes the morning glory?

Peter McCord

