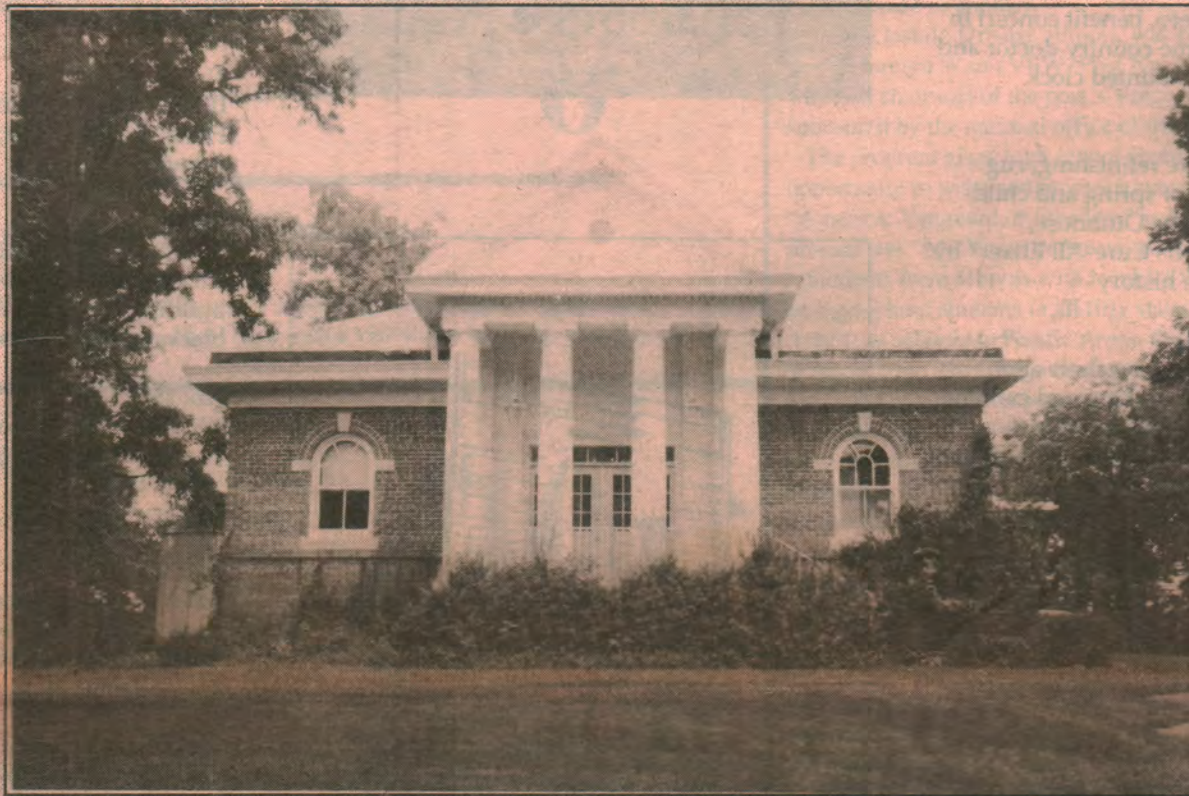


Tales

Winter 1992-93



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Today, The
Walker School
Is A Private
Residence.

The first school held in McLean County (Illinois) was taught in the Dawson cabin. ... Each pupil paid \$2.50 for the four-month school term, taught by Delilah Mullin. In 1827 a log schoolhouse, the first in the county, was built about one-half mile northwest of the present site. At least two other log houses were built in the 1830s, one east of the Dawson cabin and the other west of it. The school district was organized in 1834 and a half-acre lot was obtained from William Walker, whose name the school bears. A small frame house was erected there. ... In 1848 a small lot was purchased at Thomas Orendorff's sugar camp. There the first brick school in the county was built at a cost of \$363.55, paid for by private subscriptions. The remainder of the ten-acre timber tract was brought by the district in 1881. The present beautiful brick building was completed in 1903. Selected in 1913 to be a "model school" for Illinois State Normal University, approved equipment was installed, but the plan was abandoned after one year.

The spacious grounds and building have been kept in excellent condition ... (and) affiliation with Normal University in 1934 for training of rural teachers ... continued for ten years.

— *McLean County And Its Schools*

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AVAILABLE

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Tales from the general store, inc.

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By Ray Elliott

VFW efforts— a benefit to education

For the last five years, I've worked with a man and an organization who put their money and efforts where their mouths are in regard to working with young people through worthwhile projects, offering students financial incentives and creating opportunities for personal growth. They're the kind of people who are used to answering the call for one cause or another.

Clyde Gaskill, Urbana, Illinois, was commander of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 630 for most of that time. He was also chairman of the post's Voice of Democracy (VOD) program sponsored by the national office of the VFW.

The program gives high school sophomores, juniors and seniors the opportunity to write and present a speech about an idea such as "America: Vanguard of Freedom" and similar topics. This year's prompt was "My Voice in America's Future."

Students from schools with local VFWs compete against thousands of high school students in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and American schools in Pacific Areas, the Panama Canal and Europe. Winners from districts go to state competition, then on to Washington, D.C., and national competition.

All the way along, VFWs across the country hold ceremonies, present certificates of achievement and cash awards and generally encourage the students to think about the ramifications of being an American. And the VFW has been sponsoring this program for more than forty years.

Expenses are paid for the state winners to fly to Washington for five days and experience the nation's capital firsthand. At the end of the five days, national winners are announced. Cash and college scholarship funds of no less than \$1,000 are awarded to students finishing in the first twenty-four places. This year's national first-place winner will receive more than \$20,000 in cash and scholarship funds, not counting the value of the trips.

That's not all, though. These winners who make it to Washington also receive a three-day, expense-paid trip to The American Academy of Achievement Conference in New York City during the summer. So the VFW is putting out tens of thousands of dollars each year to do its part in investing in the education of the nation's youth and the future of the country.

In the VOD contest two years ago, then-Urbana High School senior John Schomberg received some \$5,900 in cash and scholarships and the all-expense paid trips when he placed fifth in the nation. That's pretty good pay for writing a five-minute speech, no matter who you are. But far more important to me was the experience he gained from thinking about the idea while war raged in the Middle East.

After the Persian Gulf War was underway, John told me he didn't think he could write the speech. "How can I write about America as the vanguard of freedom," he asked, "when we're fighting for oil, not freedom?"

Good question, I told him. But he figured a way to bring the essence of a democracy together in such a way that showed he had given a great deal of thought to the subject.

"Thinking back to those long rows of pale, white tombstones," Schomberg wrote at the conclusion of his speech in reference to the opening anecdote, "I now see a different face and story behind each one of them. If those soldiers could die for those privileges (we enjoy as Americans), at least we could learn to appreciate them."

That brought tears to Clyde Gaskill's eyes, he told me later. And it also brought pride to his voice. "After John recorded his speech," he said, "I went back to the post and told the boys that we had a winner. I offered to bet that he'd win the state."

Gaskill's enthusiasm has made working with the VOD program easy. Besides the fact that I see a great deal of value in what he and the VFW are doing, his tireless efforts and good nature have made for a comfortable relationship. He genuinely wants to work with schools to benefit young people. And that is a benefit to us all.

This, however, is the last year he will be working with the program. That's too bad. We need more people like Clyde Gaskill and more organizations like the VFW to get involved in education and do more than give lip service to its importance.

Fun times at the country store

By Ascher

As a kid in the Old Country Store, I was privileged to have too much of many good things, such as candy and soda pop. Often there were other children of the neighborhood that would coax me to go into the store and get candy for them. (Sometimes I did, too.)

Now the boy across the road was just a few years older than me, but we did play together much of the time. Naturally, we got into trouble together so many times that are not forgotten.

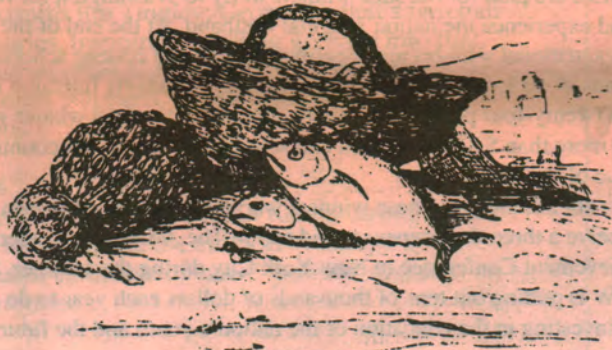
On this particular day, there has come two dozen or more "sample bottles" of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin. You see, the small bottles (maybe one ounce) were molded just like the big bottles that we sold. Why, these sample bottles even had the cork, cork screw and individual boxes just the same as the big bottles. Those sample bottles were just too tempting!

So the clerk quite willingly allowed me to take some of the sample bottles for my playmate and myself. I think it likely that we drank two or three bottles of the samples. Oh we really had a good "drinking party" of Syrup of Pepsin. We thought it was great fun, but not because of the taste. It was simply that I had slipped the samples out of the store, and the little boxes were really enticing. As we pulled the cork and swallowed the substance, we gave no thought to the consequences.

Then, the next day came. I assure you it was not a day for play. But we were really busy boys. My mother assured me that she would not need to give me a laxative for more than a week at least.

That playmate of mine was killed in the Korean Conflict in 1950, I'm told.

Just another true story out of the Old Country Store.



Ready for fishing?

By Ascher

In about April of every year, the lure of the ponds, streams and sloughs came to many of the folk in the neighborhood. The Old Country Store was ready to supply the needs with a big variety of fishing hooks, lead weights (called sinkers), fishing line and "bobbers." Well, we even had a complete fishing set of the line, bobbers and sinker for about twenty cents. Though it was not thought to be the best for the avid fisherman, we did sell many of these "economy sets."

Have you ever tried to pick one fishing hook out of a box of one hundred hooks? It is no fun. The clerk was always puzzled as to how these fishing hooks could possibly get tangled and hooked together so well. It was real common to get a finger or two pierced with the point or barb of a fishing hook while trying to untangle them. Of course, the fisherman had to decide which size of fish to catch before buying the hooks, as we usually had four sizes of hooks.

Then there was the sinker problem. If the fisherman went to a stream with much current, he usually wanted a heavier sinker. And we had several weights of sinkers, too. We could usually search out a ten- or twelve-foot bamboo pole to sell the would-be fisherman, too.

Bait? No, we did not sell bait unless the fisherman wanted some longhorn cheese or bologna for the hook.

At the Old Country Store, it did not take long to outfit the fisherman ready for the "try" for some fish. Well, I've known some fishermen to take some sardines, crackers and old-fashioned weiners for a snack, and maybe bait, too.

Look at positive aspect of King and his plea

The judgmental tone of the letter (in *Tales*, Fall 1992) questioning Rodney King's value to society symbolizes what is wrong with this country. We are too quick to judge, condemn, categorize, criticize and put down people instead of offering a hand and accepting, understanding and trying to help people.

I believe it all goes back to how we were treated as children. Those of us who have been involved in drugs, drinking too much, violence, breaking the law, eating too much, arrogant behavior and stepping on other people, among many other abusive, compulsive behaviors, have something in common: In one way or another, we were mistreated as children. The statistics related to child abuse are unbelievable. Too many of us were physically and/or sexually abused.

But many more of us suffered a more subtle form of emotional or psychological abuse. The abuser often didn't even know what he/she was doing. In the name of trying to help us, they criticized us, told us what was wrong or bad about us instead of what was good about us and paid careful attention to our negative behavior while they ignored any positive behaviors. But they didn't help us. They made us feel insecure, self-destructive and bad about ourselves. We lashed out at others, as well as ourselves. We carried on the cycle. We looked for love in all the wrong places. We looked for comfort in drugs, alcohol, food, gangs, the crowd from the wrong side of town.

Instead of criticizing and judging Rodney King, let's congratulate him for trying to make a bad situation better by asking, "Can we all get along?" Let's start looking for the good in people, regardless of how hard we have to look. Let's focus on the positive. Let's try to understand and look past the negative.

— UNSIGNED

Editor's Note: The Project Get Along manuscript is currently with a literary agent in Chicago, who is working to secure a publisher. In response to initial reactions, more submissions from people outside of the Midwest are

Mail's Here

being sought to have more variety of geographic locations represented.

Jasper County had part in childhood

My father was born in Jasper County. When I was a kid, we came down to Jasper County once a month. Sure enjoyed it.

Dad's sister and husband, Lena and Cecil Miller lived on the old home place. I was down there not too long ago; the old house is gone, and the neighbor houses are gone, too.

— LOY SHOOK
Mattoon, IL

Nice to know others 'crazy' enough to run

Please pass on to Jim Elliott ("The experience of a long-distance runner," *Tales*, Fall 1992), that I thought only aging old men were dumb enough to run and run and run—like in Marathons (capped with proper respect like God).

My first took me about 5 hours; 10 minutes, and I've not gotten under 3:40 something yet. I have to do "IT" in 3:35 to make Boston.

I would consider it an honor to do Chicago with Jim next year. I did it first in 1989 and plan to repeat in this Sunday (October 1992), wife and God willing.

Really enjoyed reading about yet another crazy. Somehow I just knew it ran in the Elliott, not only the Tracy family.

— BYRON TRACY
Robinson, IL

Tales relies mostly on readers' support

Your "Pennies for our thoughts" in the (summer 1992) *Tales* must have been aimed at me, for I am one who has enjoyed *Tales* but have never contributed to the expense. I did a little creative writing a long time ago while going to Marshall High School (1940-44) and a little more when I started to Eastern Illinois University (1968-72), and I always think, "Now if I only had the time. ..." I probably won't do much more than write letters and keep up our church history (Zion United Methodist south of Marshall). By the way, we observed our 150th year by having an old-fashioned tent

meeting July 19-24, 1992.

— BETTY TINGLEY
Marshall, IL

Story & Midwest have a warm spot in the heart

I am very impressed and enjoy your issues of *Tales*. Your article on "Sonny & Todd's Big Ride" (Fall 1992) brought a warm spot in my heart. As a lad who was brought up in the Charleston area and Oakland, Illinois, I always had a horse. The last favorite was a quarter horse or mustang that I had to leave behind.

I graduated from Oakland High School and spent twenty years in the U.S. Navy, the last fifteen as an enlisted pilot. I followed that with twenty-two years in the Federal Aviation Agency as a pilot. The last fourteen years of that time, I was an aircraft accident investigator with the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board.

I have been widowed for the past eighteen years and now make my home in the Atlantic City area. (My wife was a local girl.) I am not active as a pilot today, but I enjoy spending three-fourths of my time in a recreational vehicle. I have traveled most of the world but have a very warm spot for the Midwest—a person from which I can spot very quickly when I am in their company.

— GERALD SKELTON
Linwood, NJ

Getting to the point

Continue to admire your efforts.

— W.J. CHAMBLIN
Robinson, IL

We enjoy the paper. Keep up the good work.

— WOODROW & VIOLET SIMPSON
Casey, IL

Keep up the good work. Enjoy *Tales* very much.

— BOB GREEN
Robinson, IL

Herewith a small donation for your publication, which we enjoy very much. We get it through the *Marshall Independent*.

We were raised near West Union, so we know the area well. Our friend, Arlene Watt, could very likely give you some interesting stories.

— TILLA FRANCE McNARY
& OLIVE (FRANCE) KRAL
Berwyn, IL



Unidentified card players near Sadorus in east-central Illinois, taken by photographer Frank Sadorus some time between 1908-1912.

Photo courtesy of the Champaign County Historical Archives

Did You Know...

Will Rogers' letters published

A collection of letters written by humorist Will Rogers was published in November by Neighbors and Quaid. Will Rogers: *Courtship and Correspondence, 1900-1915* by Reba Collins contains letters he wrote during that time to his family and Betty Blake, the Arkansas woman he loved and courted for eight years before she finally said yes.

In these letters, Rogers wrote about himself, revealing his problems and frustrations, his happiness and dreams. Written during the formative years of his life, the letters follow him as he moves from the 20-year-old cowboy in the territorial days of Oklahoma to a happy, successful married man with a young family in New York City.

At 22, he began a two-year journey around the world. During his travels, Rogers wrote letters back home about South America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Paris and London.

The letters provide an insight

into the man who reached the top as a newspaper columnist, movie star, radio commentator, lecturer, philosopher, philanthropist and adviser to presidents. Often listed among a handful of American greats, Rogers is remembered for his quick wit and sharp commentary on politics and human nature. He was killed in a plane crash in 1935.

Historic theater to become innovative children's museum

After many months of negotiating and planning, the historic Orpheum Theatre in downtown Champaign is in the process of being converted into a hands-on, interactive children's museum to increase children's access to science, technology and the arts. The Discovery Place will allow children of all ages to explore and learn at their own pace in a nonthreatening and informal setting.

The Orpheum was built in 1914 as a vaudeville and moving picture theater by the famous architectural firm of Rapp and

Rapp of Chicago. George Rapp, an 1899 graduate of the University of Illinois, and his brother, Cornelius, designed more than 400 theaters during their career.

The anticipated opening of The Discovery Place is October 19, 1994—the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Orpheum Theatre.

Quilt serves as remembrance for AIDS victims

It started as 1,920 panels of a beautiful, elaborate quilt to remember those who have died from AIDS and AIDS-related illnesses. Five years later, the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt has grown ten times as large to represent more than 200,000 American victims.

Last fall, the entire quilt was displayed at the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. It covers nearly ten football fields, or approximately 29 acres, and illustrates the toll AIDS has cost in lives.

The NAMES Project Foundation began in 1987. After the

death of a close friend, Cleve Jones wanted to make people understand the loss and frustration people were feeling from the deadly disease. A small group of strangers who had similar experiences decided to make their very personal tribute into a quilt. Portions of the quilt are regularly displayed throughout the country. The displays have been successful in raising awareness as well as funding for AIDS research and service organizations.

The quilt was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, and a documentary about it received an Academy Award in 1990.

For more information about the display, the NAMES Project, contributing a panel or making a donation, contact the NAMES Project Foundation at 2362 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 or call 415-863-5511.

Book details worth of Coca-Cola collectibles

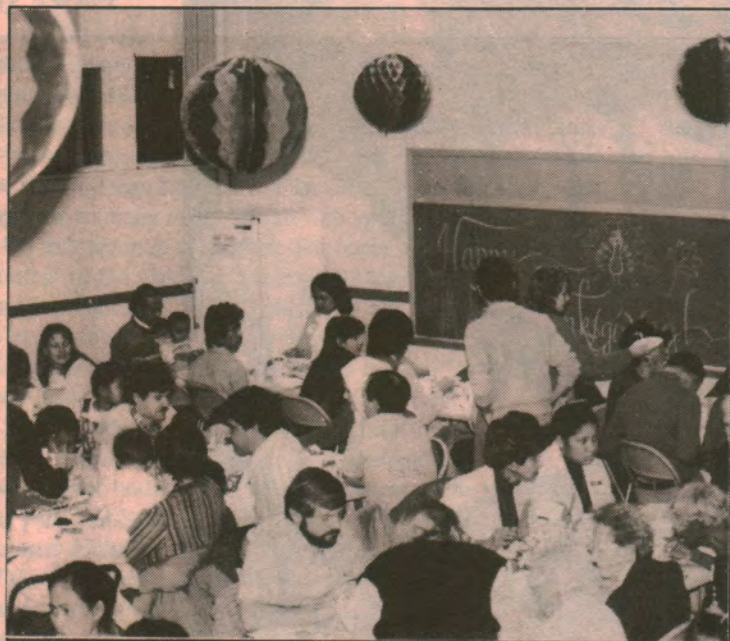
In 1886, Dr. John Styth Pemberton has no idea that his

five-cent mixture of cola syrup with carbonated water would become an American icon. And much of Coca-Cola's world-wide success can be attributed to its original and aggressive promotional campaigns. The Coca-Cola trademark has been imprinted on everything from calendars to Christmas cards.

Many of those long-ago items embossed with the Coca-Cola logo are now sought-after collectibles. *Petretti's Coca-Cola Collectibles, Eighth Edition* (published by Wallace-Homestead, an imprint of Chilton Book Co.) is a comprehensive guide to provide collectors with the most current market values. Dealer and collector Allan Petretti includes toys, bottles and signs in his encyclopedia of Coca-Cola memorabilia. More than 3,250 items are illustrated to help readers determine if their treasure is "the real thing" or a reproduction.

The book is available at various bookstores and antique shops.

H Students provide their community with HAPPY THANKSGIVINGS



By Cari Anderson

It was November 10, 1972, about two weeks before Thanksgiving, when Teresa Lawrence, a sophomore representative to the Urbana (Illinois) High School Student Senate, approached faculty adviser David Lemons about having a Thanksgiving dinner.

"She said to me, 'It seems like every year people do things at Christmas.' She thought people were really as lonely, or more lonely, at Thanksgiving," Lemons said. "It really centers around being a family time."

The night after hearing the suggestion, Lemons attended a local Rotary meeting. He explained the idea of holding a dinner for people at Thanksgiving. The club members thought it was a wonderful idea, and they donated money. One of the men at the meeting worked for the telephone company, and he offered to install a phone in the school's senate office that would be used strictly for the Thanksgiving dinner reservations.

"We had ten days to put a dinner together," Lemons said. The organization had to provide transportation for people who couldn't get to the dinner on their own, find a place to hold the dinner, advertise, and get and cook the food.

One student offered her church, the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, to host the dinner. There was one stove and one small oven to prepare four turkeys. Everyone brought in electric skillets to cook the yams, and people donated pumpkin pies.

With all of the electric skillets plugged in, a fuse blew. "It was a holiday, and there was no one around the church who could turn the power back on. We had no idea where the fuse box was," Lemons said.

After finally getting the power back on, they had to spread out all over the church to cook the yams so they wouldn't blow another fuse.

Louise Green then arrived at the church to drop off two pumpkin pies for the dinner. She saw the trouble the students were having, and she "grabbed an apron and stayed for ten years," Lemons said.

The students were washing dishes from that first dinner when a woman, hired in September at the University of Illinois and apart from her family in Pennsylvania, arrived. She had heard about the Thanksgiving dinner on the radio late that afternoon.

"She raced over here and had tears in her eyes," Lemons said. "It was the first time in her life she had ever been without her family. We got a plate of food for her. That so inspired us that we've done the dinners ever since."

There were seventy-five people at that first Thanksgiving dinner. "We thought we had done a major job," Lemons added.



The next year's Senate president didn't think there should be a dinner that year. However, the dinner was on again the following year. A student who knew of the trouble encountered at the Pennsylvania Avenue church volunteered her church, the First United Methodist Church, to be the host site. Using this church solved the main problem: There were many ovens.

The group used real china at the second Thanksgiving dinner. The students also had to wash all of the plates, cups, saucers and silverware that 220 people used.

Tommy the Golden Turkey made his debut at that second dinner. Tommy is a seven-foot-tall turkey that sings and dances for guests. "We always try to get the tallest student to be Tommy so we can say we have a seven-foot turkey," Lemons said.

The third year of the dinner in 1975 accommodated 331 people. By the fourth dinner, they had 440 people in attendance. They planned for 500 for the fifth dinner and had the largest turnout of 551.

"In the beginning, we had a piano, but you can imagine how hard it was to hear with that many people. Somewhere along the line, we picked up Earnie and Jesse Adam," Lemons said.

Earnie solved the music problem by walking around the room, playing his accordion and singing. His son, Jesse, made balloon animals and other creations for what started out being just for the kids. "We quickly realized," Lemons said, "that everybody loves a balloon."

The Adams have attended the dinners ever since.

Turkey carols also have been a tradition at the dinners. These are Christmas carols changed to fit a Thanksgiving theme. At the first dinner, there were two carols, and two more were added every year until a list of well-known Christmas melodies was completed.

Another dinner tradition is the awarding of prizes to the oldest man and woman, the youngest, the couple married the longest, the family with the most members present, the person who came the farthest and the person who has lived in Champaign County the longest.

The live flower centerpieces are also given away each year: sometimes to the oldest, sometimes to the youngest. "Some of the regulars come early and sit at the tables with the prettiest centerpieces, hoping to win one," Lemons said.

Breaking tradition, Lemons said the dinner had always been geared toward international students and senior citizens. "We then realized that you can be a family and be alone." So the group began to target publicity at the entire community, including families

*"It was the first time in her life
she had ever been
without her family.*

We got a plate of food for her."

and homeless people.

With more community involvement sometimes came more problems. Once there was even a bomb threat.

"We had to evacuate everyone to Lincoln Square (Mall)," Lemons said. "There was an 82-year-old woman who couldn't walk, so they had to carry her in her chair."

The people sang Christmas carols until the police said it was safe to go back into the church.

Another time, several years later, there was a heavy snow on Thanksgiving morning, and no one could get out on the streets. Lemons knew that the turkeys had to have time to roast or they wouldn't be ready that night. So he called the mayor of Urbana and explained the situation. The mayor sent snow plow crews out to clear Race Street. Then Lemons walked several blocks to Race Street where he had a cab picked him up.

"Once I got to the church, I called my wife so she could tell me what to do. I was having a terrible time running back and forth from my wife to the stoves.

"In the meantime, the taxi driver is laying on his horn. I went outside, very frustrated, to tell him to be patient when, click. The door locked and my keys were inside."

Lemons finally got back into the church and, in keeping with tradition, the Thanksgiving dinner was again held and turkey was served. The turnout was very high because of the bad weather; the interstate was closed and many people could not go where they had planned.

"If the weather's good, then attendance is low; and if the weather is bad, the attendance goes up," Lemons said.

One year, two people, Al and Linda, were standing in line waiting for name tags when they began talking. They sat at the same table and talked all through dinner. At the end of the evening, Al asked Linda for a date and she accepted.

The next year, as reservations for the dinner were being taken, one student received a phone call from Linda. She asked if she and her husband, Al, could come back and celebrate the one-year anniversary of their meeting.

"Everytime I tell that story I get teary-eyed," Lemons said.

Another year, a couple's fiftieth wedding anniversary fell on the day of the dinner, but their family rescheduled a party for the following week so the couple could still attend the dinner.

Although many things are now traditional at the dinner, some things are not. Throughout the twenty

years of the dinner, it has "lost its homey touch," according to Lemons. In the beginning, people donated pumpkin pies, but because of an outbreak of salmonella poisoning, they had to buy 500 individually wrapped pieces of pie. "It was easier, but it's a trade-off; everything became more industrialized," Lemons said.

There is one thing that has not changed over the years. And that is the donations from people of food, flowers and money, as well as their time. More than 100 service clubs, businesses, banks, florists and grocers have provided the students with turkeys, bouquets for centerpieces and numerous other contributions.

But on Thanksgiving Day, it is the volunteers who pull together the loose ends. About ten students work all day at the church to set up the day before. The next morning, volunteers show up throughout the day, beginning at 8 a.m. At 4 p.m., most of the high school student volunteers arrive. About 150-200 students are involved in some way each year. They usually serve as food runners or waiters.

Before the dinner begins, Lemons tells them all the same thing: "The dinner can't start until we get there."

Other volunteers, as well as the local bus service, provide transportation for about 150 hungry guests. Turkey, yams, stuffing, mixed vegetables, rolls, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie are served at the annual feast.

Geneva Siems of Urbana has attended nineteen of the twenty dinners.

"It was just a handful of people when it started," she said. "I just think it's wonderful. So many people enjoy it. One lady said she hopes it never stops."

Siems has relatives in town and stops by their homes on Thanksgiving, but she likes to attend the Urbana dinner to socialize.

"I just feel comfortable going up there. There's a lot of people my age and everything. I know it's a lot of work for those kids. They seem to enjoy it, the ones I talked to."

Immediately after the dinner, at about 8:30 p.m., students and other volunteers clean up and then attend a pizza party at Lemons' home.

Then a few weeks later, Student Senate members send all the guests a Christmas card thanking them for coming to the dinner.

And about nine months later, invitations are mailed out and advertising plans all begin again in preparation for another year.

Cari Anderson is a senior at Urbana High School.



*"We then realized that
you can be a family and be alone.*

*So the group began to target
publicity at the entire community."*

Photos courtesy of David Lemons

Reminiscing in a school

While most country, one-room schoolhouses were lucky to have an acre and a frame

building, Walker School, three or miles southeast of Bloomington, Illinois, had ten acres, a stately brick structure and one of the most educationally progressive environments of the time.

Bloomington attorney John Pratt and his writer wife, Jerry, currently live in the converted schoolhouse and showcase for country living. Roy Roberts, Pontiac, and Edmund Sweeney, Bloomington, who lived on a nearby farm most of his life, are former students with fond memories of their school years at Walker. Now well into their eighties, they still like to come back to visit the school grounds whenever they can.

"I imagine I get down maybe once a year," Roberts said, sitting on a couch with his old friend in the room where they both had received all their formal education. "I just drive in and look around. I didn't pass the seventh grade, so I was here nine seasons. And that's my education."

On this day, the Pratts opened up their home so Roberts and Sweeney could reminisce about that education and their school days. Besides Jerry Pratt, family members and neighbors listened as the two men took everyone back to their youth and days when the school was a source of community pride and socials were held there once a month. Another former Walker School student, Norma (Hanell) Ashbrook, who still lives across the road from the school, dropped by later to add to the stories.

"I enjoy coming back and just looking and talking to that fellow there," Roberts said, gesturing to the Pratts' neighbor, John Hembrough, standing with a video camera on his shoulder. Hembrough lives in one of the two houses that had been built on the ten acres after the school had closed permanently in the 1950s.

When Roberts and Sweeney come back to the school grounds, they see the exterior of the building that still looks pretty much the same as it did in their school days. The only changes outside that the Sycle family, who originally converted the schoolhouse into a home, had made was

to add four white pillars to the front and two frame wings to the back. One side includes bedrooms and a bath, the other side a porch and garage.

"The outside of it (the school), other than that building right there," Roberts said, motioning to the additions, "and the big posts in front, still looks the same. You feel at home when you come in here."

Inside, the main room of the school has become the living room and the kitchen. Brick taken from the original front porch has been used to create a room divider. A fireplace faces the door on the living room side; a barbecue grill faces the kitchen side.

each year in the early days walked from their farm homes within a mile and a half radius of the school. And the students walked through most kinds of weather.

"Once in a while, in real bad weather," Roberts said, chuckling, "my father would meet me down here on a horse, on old Prince. And I'd get on and ride behind him home. You betcha. He brought me, too, sometimes. It had to be pretty bad."

Sweeney, nearly ninety and eight years older than Roberts, walked a mile or so to school, too, and remembered a big walnut tree halfway to school where kids would stop to warm up in bad weather.

front of the room as he might have done had some student been whispering to him eighty years ago. "No, I don't know anything about that," he said, apparently about a question someone had about the practice of dipping a girl's hair braids in an inkwell. "I don't know anything about that."

Neither he nor Roberts seemed to recall much about pranks or disciplinary problems when they were in school. After Ashbrook, who attended the school long after the men, arrived, she laughed and said she had heard some stories about "these guys" and what had gone on in their time. That helped jog their memories.

"I wouldn't swear to it,"

this one time. But Irene Hollis was the teacher.

"She put him underneath her desk," he said, pointing to the front of the room and talking about the classroom as if it were still there. "Those old desks, they had an opening (in front), you know. She put him under there, and so, he reaches over and pinches her leg. And, boy, you talk about a bunch of kickin' and him ayellin'."

Roberts cackled and covered his mouth as he did. Along with that kind of mischief and their memories of school, they also talked about what they did after school was out for the year.

"What we did mostly was pitch bundles," Sweeney said. "When school was out, we would go thrashing in the thrashing run. His dad was old, my dad was old. And when his dad would come in with a load of bundles, Roy would run and tell him to go sit down. And that same thing was with my dad. When he'd come in with a load, I was up pitchin'. So we were working side by side."

Ashbrook's time at the school was filled with some of the same kind of memories. But her time brought a different type of involvement than just from the community within a mile and a half of the school.

"By the time I came (in 1936)," she said, "we were affiliated with Illinois State Normal University. There was what they called a rural curriculum then. You know, we were different out in the country, and you had to take a different kind of study."

Then an education professor from the university would bring "three or four student teachers" in the morning, come back and get them at noon and bring some more. People other than student teachers also came to observe and see how students were being taught at Walker School.

"Actually, it was a school ahead of its time," Ashbrook said, "People came from all over the state to observe this school. There were teacher conferences. We had special-interest studies, like we did a whole section on bridges. We did one on cheeses. We built a huge boat in the back room, the USS Walker, and we sat in that to study our geography. In our art class, we would make Norwegian hats."

In one project Ashbrook



Ed Sweeney And Roy Roberts

Other than those changes, not much has been done to the inside, either. The wood floors were sanded, stained and refinished. Of course, the chalkboards were taken down and the larch walls retained and bleached. And the ceilings were paneled with mahogany between redwood beams.

But the long, narrow windows are still in place. So are the cloakrooms on either side of the front entrance way. One was made into a small den, the other into a bathroom.

Many of the forty-some students attending one of the eight grades at Walker School

"My dad met me once out of the whole deal," Sweeney said. "That was quite a surprise. Most of them met their kids every day."

One of Sweeney's family members handed him a piece of paper and whispered quietly to him. He listened, his head cocked back over the side of the couch while his old friend talked about their days together in school.

"He was kind of fading out," Roberts said, laughed and jerked his thumb at Sweeney. "He was kind of over the hill when I was just getting started."

With a quick turn of his head, Sweeney looked back to face the

Roberts finally said, regarding whether students did things Ashbrook mentioned like putting gunny sacks down the chimney, "but I think some of that went on."

"As far as I can remember and am concerned, things went pretty slick here. Went pretty slick. Oh, I remember—but now Ed doesn't know this. His brother, Joe, who's been gone, what now, Ed, eight years?—"

Sweeney nodded. "—and I were perfect friends," Roberts said, continuing his story. "Joe that's passed on, he had ideas, now let me tell you. Nothing bad. But he had ideas. I don't remember what happened

oolhouse

By Ray
Elliott

worked on, the students raised chickens and had to figure out what to do with the money when they sold them. The students studied different paintings and decided to buy a Winslow Homer painting called *Icebound* to hang above the clock in the school. The students also bought games.

Having student teachers from the university, taking a field trip to Chicago with the other twenty-five or so students and participating in "wonderful" Christmas programs were all part of the things Ashbrook liked and remembered about the seven years she spent at the school. She went on to school at the University of Illinois and went into extension work.

Roberts had been raised with machinery and became a mechanic when he left the farm. Sweeney took a job selling Fuller brushes after he left school and was trying to find his niche in life.

"He (the man who hired him to sell Fuller brushes) showed me how to pack that bag with those things in there," Sweeney said, twirling his cane between his fingers as it lay across his lap, "and I had an awful time gettin' 'em all in there.

"The first morning I went out to sell brushes, it rained like the dickens. But I did get in a lady's house. And I got the brushes out to show her. And I, I, had a helluva time trying to get 'em back in."

Sweeney didn't remember whether the woman bought a brush.

"I probably left her one," he said and laughed with everyone else. "I was glad to be in out of the rain. I don't know how long I stayed there. I know I stayed too long."

He didn't stay on the job too long, though.

"Well," he said about what he did after he left the woman's house, "I drove home, and I was on the farm ever after that."

But many of Walker School's former students, like Roberts, didn't stay on the farm. Yet many of them, like Roberts, come by since the school has become a home.

"Quite a few people drive in," Pratt said at the end of the visit. "And I often say, 'Would you like to come in?' No one has ever taken me up on it (in ten years)

before. I don't know if they don't want to inconvenience me, or if they want to remember the school the way it was."

Perhaps just seeing the building and the grounds is enough to bring back the fond memories so many former students seem to have for the school. Ashbrook described how she feels, and probably how many others feel, about those years and what they meant.

"I just feel really, really so lucky to have gone to this school," she said. "I couldn't have had a better education. One of the things that was so important, I think, is that you knew people really cared about you. And not just the teachers, but everybody in the community cared. And if you did something wrong, they knew about it. That's something the kids don't always have today. I think it's real important.

"I just loved it all. I can still smell the smells of the building and as you walk across that bridge (between the schoolhouse and the road), that moist, damp smell. I loved school."



Norma Ashbrook

Photos By Vanessa Faurie

'You feel at home when you come in here.'



The Three Walker School Alumni Reminisce Over A Photo Album.

My Voice in America's Future

By John Amberg

It was the summer of 1990, and my younger brother and I were visiting our aunt and uncle who lived outside of Washington, D.C. On the first day of our visit, we rode the subway into the center of the city and boarded a tour bus bound for the Capitol Building. We arrived in the building's east-side parking lot, got off the bus and began walking toward the building.

There were three divisions of steps that led up to the entrance. A line for tours was forming on the right-hand portion of steps. He was holding a large piece of cardboard with something scribbled on it. The spelling was so poor that I could barely make out the message. "I am a veteran of the Vietnam War. I am homeless. Give me a voice," the sign read.

I just stared at him. The line began to move, and I felt an overwhelming sense of helplessness come over me as I was pushed into the building by the current of people. I felt helpless because I didn't know what I could do to help the man. I'd have given him the three dollars I had in my wallet, but the sign didn't ask for money. He wanted something greater than any

material could provide him with. He wanted to be heard. He wanted a voice.

In America, a voice is power. Because free speech is the basis of our society, a voice is the greatest commodity an individual can possess. In a speech given February 14, 1923, author Rudyard Kipling said, "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind." The American spirit mirrors the truth

And I know that men did not die for me to remain silent. However, I must understand how to use my voice effectively. Whenever I question my voice's role in America's future, I remember a poster that was on the wall in my American history class. The poster quoted William Allen White. It said, "Liberty is the one thing you can't have unless you give it to others." That saying stuck in my mind. As I think

oppressed black population how to fight with words to gain civil rights. These men taught Americans that having a voice is not only an end in itself, but also a means to that end.

My generation will soon assume America's leadership positions. Our collective voice will no doubt be strong. But my voice in America's future must be more than this. Mine must give a voice to the voiceless.

On the evening before we left Washington, we drove into the city to take nighttime pictures of the sights. We walked across the west lawn of the Capitol Building and climbed the stairs overlooking the city. I left the group and walked to the other side of the building. I was curious. Would the man still be there? I turned the corner and saw him. He was sleeping in the same spot as I had seen him before. His sign lay at his side. Above him, atop the roof, was an American flag, illuminated and waving in the wind. I remembered what the tour guide had told us earlier that week. On the very steps where the man slept, every president from Andrew Jackson to Jimmy Carter had been inaugurated. On

these steps, President John F. Kennedy challenged Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

At the time, I didn't know exactly what I could do for my country, even though I knew it had done great things for me. I felt sorry for the man on the steps. He didn't have a home. He didn't have a voice. I wanted to do something to help him, but I felt powerless. I was barely fifteen years old and just beginning to develop a voice of my own.

I heard my aunt calling my name from a distance. I turned and began to walk away slowly, glancing back to see the man once more before I rounded the corner.

It's been two and a half years since that summer trip, but I'll never forget it. Since then, I've thought a lot about what I can do for my country. This experience made me realize that as my future becomes America's future, the greatest thing I can do for my country is to let it hear my voice.

Amberg, a UHS senior, received 2nd place in the 7th Illinois VFW District.

B E C A U S E free speech is the basis of our society, a **voice** is the greatest commodity an individual can possess.

of this statement. During the formation of our country, the British found out that freedom is addictive. They attempted to take away the freedoms which Americans had begun to enjoy. But our ancestors were already dependent upon freedom—and they had revolutionary withdrawal symptoms.

I now enjoy the freedom that these Americans won for me.

about it now, I begin to see the truth of these words. What is my freedom worth if I don't use it to help others become free?

We enjoy our freedom more fully when we can help others to achieve the same degree of freedom that we possess. Before the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers used their voices to rally Americans to a common cause. In the 1960s, Martin Luther King Jr. taught the

VOICE of DEMOCRACY

By Meghan Gebauer

The fireworks on the Fourth of July used to scare me. I would cover my ears for half an hour every summer as the sounds of independence rang through the air. Tears would often form in the corners of my eyes as the intensity and the strength of the fireworks grew. Each display grew in meaning until the grand finale, when the loudest and most powerful fireworks exploded in a spectacular shower of light.

Standing near my father gave me some comfort and security. He stood silently, knowing that I was scared but wanting me to watch the celebration of this country's achievements. Although this event was frightening, I continued to join my family every summer in its outing to the celebration that scared and intrigued me until the meaning of

those fireworks began to sink in.

Those loud bangs and booms slowly began to speak to me. They were the voices of my ancestors—my great-grandfather who served in France during World War I and my grandfather who served during both World War II and the Korean Conflict—of soldiers, of the people who helped make this country what it is today. They were the voices of Franklin Roosevelt as he spoke to the American people during the Depression, saying, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself," and of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he gave his "I have a dream" speech to thousands of people in Washington, D.C. They were gentle but powerful voices, and as the years passed, my hands only covered one ear, then half an ear, and finally I was able to open both of my ears to the messages that the fireworks were sending. The fireworks were telling me

great things, but I was intimidated by the strength of this country. The people who contributed to the building of this powerful country were determined and strong, and I was afraid that I

W H A T E V E R profession I enter, my **voice** will maintain the ideas of wisdom, perseverance and bravery.

could not follow in their footsteps because I did not have a powerful voice. I wanted so much to be a part of such an awesome reputation, a reputation of bravery in past wars, of wisdom in international politics and of progress in technology and science. I wanted to continue these traditions, but I was intimidated, and I doubted my ability to contribute to America.

Those feelings of fear, however, were the sparks I needed to dedicate myself to the continuation of my country's reputation. The fireworks were telling me that I, too, could be true and

patriotic to this country. I just needed to realize that my voice also had the potential to be a strong influence in the future.

That realization came when I entered high school, and education became the key to my determination in learning about America's past and how I could be included in America's future.

Education, for me, was the solution to my problem. It gave me confidence, and the more I learned, the more I gained toward my goal for a stronger voice. My education was doing more for me than just teaching. As William H. Donaldson, chairman and CEO of the New York Stock Exchange said, "Today, education must do more than teach. It must inspire individuals to make a difference."

I finally found the inspiration for my own voice. All of those years of not knowing my purpose as a voice had come to an end. I saw that hard work and dedication would get me somewhere in life. School was an asset, and I was finally able to focus on my own voice in America's future.

As a future voice, I intend to benefit this country. As a child, I was unsure of my voice, but now

Continued on top of next page

My Voice in America's Future

as a young adult, I am looking forward to the future and how I will be able to affect it. The future is wide open for me to pursue several positions. I may be a voice in education, medical research or the government. But whatever profession I enter, my

voice will maintain the ideas of wisdom, perseverance and bravery. My voice will represent a combination of these ideals that the foundation of this country is based upon. I now have the courage to continue the reputation of this country, and I have the

courage to return to the Fourth of July celebration every summer.

Independence Day is not a threat to my ears anymore. In fact, it is one of my favorite holidays. Just as I have grown and matured, so have the meanings of those messages that

reverberate through the air. They have become a guide, and I listen to them with respect. The messages have given me the strength for my own voice, which I will use in America's future. As President John Kennedy asked, I

hope to "do for my country" by adding my voice to the millions of voices that have contributed in the past.

Gebauer is a senior at Urbana High School.

VOICE of DEMOCRACY

By Cari Anderson

The band was playing, people were talking and laughing, and I was standing in a corner of the American Legion hall eating a piece of wedding cake and observing everything. My thoughts were of marriage as I stared at the happy newlywed couple on the dance floor. I thought of the commitment that had made to each other; for better or for worse they had promised to love, honor and cherish each other in the good times and the bad.

My eyes wandered away from the couple, and I spotted a picture on the wall. It was a picture of "old men" that I almost disregarded with a glance. Something stopped me, though, and I did a double take. My mind shifted from thoughts about the reception to thoughts about the men in the picture. I began to imagine who these people really were. They weren't just old men; they were soldiers and possibly even heroes. They'd fought in Vietnam, Korea and the World Wars. They probably had witnessed more than I could ever imagine—from seeing men half-paralyzed and killed in combat to the little children wounded in war. The men had sacrificed their lives for their country. They'd lost friends, maybe even family, in the wars they'd fought.

The music of the reception was drowned out by my thoughts of the battles I had learned about in history classes and how these men in the picture contributed to those battles. I thought about all the terrible things they must have endured while fighting for their country, everything they sacrificed and everything they lost. I

felt a certain pride overwhelm me, pride that made me feel good about living in this country. These men had done so much. They fought for the future of America, as those before them had fought for the future, for the freedom of this country. Their voices have been heard, their echoes still sound loud and clear.

But what about the future we face today? What about my voice in the future? I doubt I'll fight in any wars, like the men in the picture, but I may be involved in "wars" of other kinds. Anything that threatens the freedoms that this country has provided for its people, I can see myself fighting against.

I can see myself fighting legal battles to protect freedom of the press or other freedoms that have been guaranteed to us in the Constitution, freedoms that we are so lucky to have, for many countries do not. They are freedoms that took much fighting, hard work and time to acquire. But people dedicated their lives to ensure that Americans had these freedoms. I will fight just as hard as those that made them possible to keep these freedoms. I will not fight with a gun, it will be with books and knowledge that I fight. If this is what I choose to spend my life doing, my voice will be the voice of a lawyer.

However, I also believe it is important to preserve the past. I feel that teaching children about the history they have not yet learned is valuable to the future of the country. They need to learn about the battles which soldiers

fought for freedom, about a war in which we fought for civil rights and of all the great accomplishments of this nation: the discovery of electricity, the first automobiles made here, the telephone, medical cures, vaccines and many other great

informed, good or bad, about political, environmental, educational and military events. Freedom of the press gives Americans the opportunity to read, as well as write, whatever they want. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn said at the Nobel

W H A T E V E R I choose, my voice will contribute to the future. Whether I'm preserving the freedoms of America, teaching America's future generations, informing society of events or leading the nation, my voice will be heard.

accomplishments of Americans in the past. As Fustel de Coulange said, "History studies not just facts and institutions, its real subject is the human spirit." I want the children of our nation to feel the spirit of the country in which they live, not just know facts. So it is possible that my voice will speak not as a lawyer but as a teacher, sharing facts and spirit with America's younger generation.

But I also have a passion for writing and am very interested in current events. I feel freedom of the press is one of our greatest freedoms. I want to take full advantage of this freedom and write about what I see and feel. I want to report what is happening in the world to those who cannot be there to see it for themselves. I think the country needs to be kept

Prize Lecture in 1972, "Literature transmits incontrovertible ... from generation to generation. In this way, literature becomes the living memory of a nation." So maybe my voice will be in print, speaking as a novelist or a journalist, writing a living memory of America.

Or possibly, it is a leader that I will become. As a leader, my voice could represent the voice of the people. My voice could communicate with the entire world. I would work to improve world peace, aid those who are in need of help and concentrate on the people and their problems in my own country. Perhaps my voice will speak as a United States senator or maybe even as

the president of the United States.

My mind wandered back to the reception, and I thought again of marriage and the commitment that is made in marriage and how it is similar to the commitment that so many Americans have made to their country. They have stood by their country in good times and bad. When America went to war, they fought for their country and did not abandon it. They raise the American flag and sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" to show the honor and respect they have for their country. I am ready to also make a commitment to this country, ready to accept the challenge to make my voice heard.

It is truly amazing how many different professions my voice could represent. This country provides so many opportunities, and I am free to make my own choice. Whatever I choose, my voice will contribute to the future. Whether I'm preserving the freedoms of America, teaching America's future generations, informing society of events or leading the nation, my voice will be heard. I only hope that, like the veterans in the picture, someday my echo will still sound.

Anderson is a senior at Urbana High School.

My Voice in America's Future

By Beth Brotherton

I was sitting in the passenger seat on the way home from the pool, feeling more than just cold and wet. It had been a disappointing swim meet; I hadn't placed well or swam best times. As a longtime member of the swim team, I'd had great moments but was never a star.

When I looked to the driver's side, I expected pointers on what to do differently because, when it comes to swimming, my dad is both parent and coach. Instead, he explained our family's athletic history and philosophized on four qualities developed in the great athlete: discipline, endurance, desire and confidence. They seemed complex to me, but I was comforted by big words offering an explanation.

Although my dad didn't use the same words, playing a role in America's future has similar characteristics. They are respect, courage, ambition and pride. Respect and discipline are similar; both require obedience of authority and considerations for cultural norms. There is a connection between endurance and courage; they demonstrate perseverance and inner strength. Ambition relates to desire because it displays passion to be the best and importance in setting goals. Pride and confidence relate

because they represent self esteem and love for yourself. By exhibiting these characteristics in my life, my voice will be heard.

In my elementary school, the pledge of allegiance was a ritual performed every day. On its 100th anniversary, there was an organized effort for the entire school to recite the pledge together. In my class of 35 people, only four, including me, stood up. At first, I was embarrassed for standing until I heard

respect.

As a young adult, I am faced with challenges not faced by other generations. I live in a world of war, disease and racism. I no longer make assumptions or trust anyone to be safe. Every day I see violence or sex on television. Part of my effort to be courageous is being able to ignore these influences and follow positive role models. Raymond Chandler, a British novelist, said, "Down these

education. It must mean dreams and goals planned for my life. The motto of the British Special Air Force is "Who dares, wins." If I don't try, I won't succeed. Ambition must drive me to take risks. I must look to the needs of others. Andre Maurois, a French novelist, said, "If men could regard the events of their own lives with more open minds, they would frequently discover that they did not really desire the things they failed to attain."

Through trial and error, progress is made. I need to accept mistakes and not let them get in the way. Often, ambition is put away because of competition. Sports and academics have standards—when I don't meet them, I give up. As I begin to apply to college, I will be filtered through a system that accepts a select few. My abilities have been determined by standardized tests, grade point average and class rank. This won't stop me from showing other important aspects of my character.

I need to have pride for my country and keep it beautiful by making improvements. I need to be conscious of the environment and careful of the world around me. I lived in southern Africa for six years. Once while stopped at a border patrol, a smile spread across the guard's face as he

looked at our passports.

"Ah, America," he said, "dreamland."

To him, it was a dreamland because he had only heard about all that our country has to offer. After a couple of years in Africa, America became a dreamland to me, as well. Pictures of Big Macs would make my mouth water and word of shopping malls would set my heart afire. This is frivolous when compared to the freedom of speech, free elections and fair trials the guard referred to.

Throughout my life, my voice has been similar to my swimming career. I have been a good contributor but never the one in the spotlight. That's what a team needs, and that's what America needs. I won't be the one to stop racial hatred, solve our economic and environmental problems or find the cure for AIDS, but I plan to play my own part. I will demonstrate my voice in small ways by standing for the national anthem, stating my beliefs, not giving up when I fail and working to keep our country beautiful. Voices were given to us as a passageway from our inner soul to the outside world.

In a loud, clear voice, I will say, "I want to make a difference. Let me help."

Brotherton is a senior at Urbana High School.

V O I C E S were given to us as a passageway from our inner soul to the outside world.

people around me saying it was "stupid" or "a weak effort to unify people that was temporary and would never work." It was only then that my face lost its flush as I began to see the way other people viewed the pledge. To me it meant respect; it was a way to say thank you for the right of "liberty and justice for all." This lack of patriotism disillusioned me as much as seeing people remain seated during the national anthem or burning the flag. Both are symbols that represent our country. As part of my voice, I treat them with

streets a man must go who is not himself a man; who is neither tarnished or afraid." I don't need to be mean to survive, just courageous. I have to stand up for what I believe in and question my own assumptions. With AIDS becoming the world's deadliest epidemic, racial warfare in Los Angeles and an increase in violent crimes, I am forced to be cautious as well. It is my job to understand the world around me and not be afraid to state my position.

My ambitions must be more than aspirations of higher

VOICE of DEMOCRACY

By Richard Niemerg

Because I had smacked my brother again for using my baseball glove without my permission, my father punished me by making me sit in the chair until he decided that I had had enough time to think about what I had done and decide for myself if it was worth sitting in the chair for at least two hours.

While sitting there watching television with my father, I began to fall asleep from boredom. Since I was being punished, he kept waking me up and telling me that I was supposed to be thinking about what I had done, not sleeping. After being awakened for the fifth time, I began to watch the news with my father.

A feature came on about flag burning and whether it should be legal. My father was very upset about the issue and couldn't understand why someone would

burn the flag. Being a veteran, he explained what the flag meant to him. But even though my father disagreed with burning the flag, he knew that it was the freedom of speech that allowed it to be burned in protest. The flag meant so much to my father because, not only did he fight for it, he saw people die for it. So this issue really hit home with him, and he surprised me when he added that free speech is too important to disregard because of personal opinion.

This is one of the many freedoms that we take advantage of that's guaranteed under the Constitution. French philosopher Voltaire said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

I intend to let my voice be heard through whatever means possible. Whether it's through music, art or public speaking, I

want to be able to say what I feel whenever I want to. In order to have this right, I must always be aware of what other people say and do.

Recently, the Supreme Court ruled the St. Paul, Minnesota, Hate Law to be unconstitutional. The Hate Law prohibited a person to say or do anything that would offend anyone else of different or the same race, religion or ethnic group.

One night, a skinhead burned a cross on the front lawn of the only black family in the neighborhood. The skinhead was arrested and charged with violating the Hate Ordinance. The case was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, which unanimously ruled that the ordinance was a violation of one's freedom of speech. Therefore, the skinhead was found not guilty on that charge. The

Supreme Court said the law was unconstitutional, but the skinhead could still be charged with illegal trespassing and arson.

The flag burning incident is another example of one's right to free speech. I may not agree with what the man did, but I know it is his right to do so and he may express himself however he sees fit—just as a musician should be able to express himself without fear of being censored or banned from record stores by people who find the music to be offensive or obscene. If you don't like the music, then don't listen to it.

I don't want my voice to be censored by people who disagree with me. So in order for my voice to be heard, we must all protect our First Amendment right. What good is my voice in America's future if I'm going to be censored for saying what I feel?

I want my voice to challenge

those people who try to censor it. I want other people to listen to my voice and respect my views as I listen to their voice. And if we all listen to each other and say what we feel, then maybe our voices can lead to racial harmony.

Thinking back to the discussion I had with my father, I couldn't help but realize how right he was. I remember when he said that free speech is too important to disregard because of personal opinion. So whenever someone says or does something in protest that I disagree with, I always think back to that quote and remind myself that I sometimes say and do things that might offend someone else; and I would like them to treat me with the same respect with which I treated them.

Niemerg is a senior at Urbana High School.

HERALD HISTORIES

from Paris, Illinois, students

Grandma came from a tomato can

By Susi Lynch

My grandma was born into a very large family. She was the seventh child of ten children, the youngest daughter and the pride and joy of her aging father.

When she was little, her older sisters told her she was not really their sister and did not come to their family on a birthing bed as they did. They told her she was left on their doorstep because her real parents did not want a baby with curls and holes in her cheeks.

When the teasing became too much and the hurt too painful, she would go searching for the one person who soothed her hurting. She would climb up in her daddy's big arms and tell him what her sisters had said. He would hold her tightly and make up some funny story about how he had "really" come to have his youngest daughter. Her favorite of those stories is one that she has told for the last sixty years.

"My dad was walking to the outhouse, and there was a bunch of tin cans laying on the ground separate from a group of other tin cans," she said. "He gave them a kick to get them back into the stack. As he began to leave the pile of cans, he heard a baby crying. He went over to the cans, and there lying in a tomato can was the most beautiful baby girl he had ever seen. He picked her up and brushed the tomato juice from her face and took her home in his shirt pocket. She was his special love ever since because he has delivered her himself straight from the opening of the tomato can."

Grandma's days were spent playing mostly. She was too young to help her sisters in the kitchen, and with so many boys,

there was no need for her to do outside chores. She did, however, tend to the garden. And on cold winter nights, she brought in firewood for the fireplace.

The school Grandma attended was two miles from her home. Every day she walked with her brothers and sisters. She would pack her lunch in a small tin box. The school consisted of one room and was heated by a big stove in the front of the room. The first thing she would do after the cold winter walk to school was head for that stove. For school, her mother would wet her hair and put it into long banana curls. When Grandma got to school, the curls were frozen stiff.

Another school memory for my grandmother concerned her stockings. As a child, she had two kinds of stockings: several brown pairs and one white pair for Sunday. She hated the brown ones because they were thick and ugly and an embarrassment. At this time, it was only she and her brothers who walked to school. If her older sisters had still gone to school, she would never have gotten away with her deception. Each school morning, she would leave the house wearing the ugly brown stockings. When she was about a mile from home, she would go to a group of trees and change from her old brown stockings into her Sunday whites. Her brothers were sworn to secrecy and never did tell on her. I think that explains the special bond they have even today.

Grandma's world consisted of her family. She did not have any outside friends that she could name. Her travels were to other family members' homes. A trip into town was a treat that was planned for weeks. And every Sunday, she would watch her mother kill the chickens for dinner.

My grandmother's worst memories about family get-togethers centered around Christmas Days when she was

young. For Christmas, she would get a stocking full of candy and fruit. Under the tree, there were four gifts. Usually, there was a doll, a coloring book and two surprises. On Christmas morning, she would get up and open her presents. As soon as the gifts were opened, however, she would have to eat breakfast, get dressed and then leave her new gifts to go to a relative's house for dinner. She disliked this custom very much. All day, she longed to play with her toys. She swore that when she grew up and had children, she would never make them leave their toys on Christmas. She kept that promise. All of my mother's Christmases were spent at home so the children could play with their gifts.

When Grandma was growing up, she did not realize that her family was poor. She had food, shelter, toys and clothes. Because they never went anywhere that cost money and lived an isolated life, she did not know of the things she did not experience, such as movies, parks and skating. She never regretted her childhood, though.

Grandma loved her mom, but she was not emotionally close to her. Grandma described her as a gentle woman who was always busy cooking, sewing and cleaning. My grandmother's dad was the one with whom she shared her hopes and dreams.

Grandma married the man down the road from her. She said her dad cried at her wedding as if his heart were broken. She was his baby at only seventeen years old. And the man she married was thirty-seven.

My grandmother had five children. She now lives alone. My grandfather died before I was born. She has eighteen grandchildren. For someone who came from a tomato can, she is a pretty special person.

Lynch is a student in Anne Pool's history class at Paris High

School. Lynch's grandmother was born and raised in Edgar County and is sixty-four years old.

Simple life suited her fine

By Andrea White

Stepping through the door of my great-great-aunt's house, I felt as though I had walked back into time. The sturdy, black door with thin, lacy curtains squeaked as I entered. For the next forty minutes, just as many times before, I entered her world of simplicity, happiness, tidiness and abundance of memories of people, places and things which I will never know or see.

At first glance, she is not a beautiful woman as eighty-six years of time and work have taken their toll. She has, however, aged considerably well. Her hair is brown with only a few strands of gray. She wears glasses only for reading. She stands erect, only slightly hunched at five feet, five inches. She is well groomed and neatly dressed. But her hands show the years of labor. Her health is good; she believes in modern medicine but requires a doctor's care only occasionally. While talking with her, one quickly notices her keen memory and good sense of humor.

Lena Inez Burton Snoddy was born December 22, 1905, near Grandview, Illinois. Of five children in the family—including Floyd, Nettie, Lester and Esta—she is the youngest.

As a young girl, she would usually awaken around 5 a.m. First, all the chores had to be done. Inez and her sister, Esta, were responsible for milking the cows. The family then sat down for a hearty, home-cooked breakfast of, generally, meat, gravy, fresh-baked bread, butter, apple butter or sorghum, and coffee.

At about 8:30 a.m., Inez and Esta and brother Lester began their one-mile walk to school. All eight grades were taught in a one-room schoolhouse. The children returned home from school at about 4:30 p.m.

After changing their clothes, Inez and Esta again did the milking and gathered wood for the cook stove. The family ate supper, usually pork, gravy and all the trimmings. After an hour or so of homework or reading by coal-oil lamps, the children went to bed around 8 p.m.

Inez's life now varies only slightly from then. Even today, she gets up around 5:30 a.m. She still lights her cook stove, although now she has an electric range, too. She prefers the cook stove because it provides not only warmth but also heats a small reservoir of water. She fills her wash basin with water brought in from her outdoor well because she has no indoor plumbing or bathroom.

In good weather, she walks a mile each day. On rainy or cold days, she jumps rope indoors. And each summer, she tends a large garden. She no longer mows the lawn with a push mower; her children persuaded her to hire someone to take over this chore.

Some things have changed, however. She now has an electric iron instead of a flat iron. A television sets in the living room. Electric lights have replaced the coal-oil lamps. Nevertheless, her feather bed is still fluffed every day. Her books of poetry still entertain her. Although her life may seem simple, she appears happy and content. A deeply religious person, Inez has often said that her satisfaction from life is based on a verse from the Bible: "... for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Philippians 4:11)

White is a student of Anne Pool's history class at Paris High School in Paris, Illinois.

THE JAMES JONES SOCIETY

Organization offers first-novel award in author's name

Because he had so much material and spiritual assistance in becoming one of the best-known writers of his World War II generation, James Jones always encouraged and helped young writers whenever he could. After the publication of *From Here To Eternity* in 1951, Jones largely financed the Handy Colony for aspiring young writers in Marshall, Illinois, which ran for more than a decade and was operated by his patron and mentor, Lowney Handy.

Throughout the following years, Jones continued helping young writers by recommending their work to publishers. And he always was known for his generosity to friends and fellow writers.

Near the end of his life, he returned to the United States from Paris and spent a year as writer-in-residence at Florida International University in Miami. Other considerations made it impossible for him to stay there and teach another year.

But he knew his own debt to those who had helped him along the way. Acknowledging that at the end of *Eternity*, he said the "book would never have been written" without the people who provided the "necessary nourishment."

Then, of course, the world would not have had the clear picture Jones provided of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as the only major novelist who was an eyewitness to that moment in history. And Jones himself would never have had the chance to become a writer at all, even though he had the raw material any budding novelist would give an arm and a leg to have. So he thought it was important to help other writers.

"I have always had a saying," Jones wrote to the father of a young man who wanted to become a writer, "that I found it peculiar that parents were willing to shell out for seven years or eight for a kid to become a doctor; but they weren't willing

to shell out for the same period for a kid to become a writer. And it takes at least that long to become a writer as it does a doctor."

Now The James Jones Society, a group formed a little more than a year ago to honor the author and his work, is going to continue the practice of encouraging and rewarding writers with the establishment of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship to be given annually to an American author of a first novel in progress. The award is intended to honor the spirit of unblinking honesty, determination and insight into modern culture exemplified by the late James Jones. His family, friends and admirers have established this award of \$2,000 to continue this tradition in his name.

The judges are Kaylie Jones, his daughter and a novelist; Don Sackrider, his colleague at the Colony in Marshall; J. Michael Lennon, one of his biographers; and Patricia Heaman, chairperson

of the English Department at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Eligibility: The competition is open to all unpublished novelists. Work may be submitted for publication simultaneously, but the Society must be notified of its acceptance elsewhere.

Entry Fees: \$10, payable to Wilkes University, must accompany each entry.

Manuscript Guidelines: An outline (three pages maximum) of the entire novel and minimum of 50 pages and a maximum of 75 pages of the novel-in-progress should be submitted. It should be typed (no dot matrix printers) and double-spaced. Your submission will be acknowledged only if a self-addressed, stamped postcard accompanies it. No manuscripts will be returned. Name, address and telephone number should be on the title page, but nowhere else. Pages should be numbered. If a manuscript is selected for the second and final round, its author

will be asked to send additional pages, up to 120 total.

Timetable: All entries must be sent to the James Jones First Novel Fellowship, c/o Department of English, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766, postmarked no later than April 1, 1993. Second-round judging will begin on August 1, 1993, and the winner will be notified by October 1, 1993. Winners must accept the award at The James Jones Society meeting on November, 6, 1993, in Jones' hometown of Robinson, Illinois. Transportation funding will be provided. Officers of The James Jones Society are not eligible for the award.

Independent of the First Novel Fellowship, a \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a Crawford County, Illinois, resident who shows an interest in and a talent for creative writing. Lincoln Trail College officials will determine the scholarship recipient.

Invite a friend or colleague to join

The James Jones Society

Membership / Contribution Form

Name _____ Phone _____

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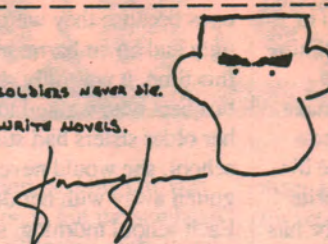
_____ I wish to become a member of The James Jones Society and have enclosed the annual dues payment of \$10.

_____ I support the activities of The Society and would like to make a contribution. Enclosed is a check for \$_____.
(Please indicate how you would like your contribution to be used.)

- To support the James Jones National Book Award to honor promising new writers of fiction.
- To support scholarships for college students interested in writing.
- To support other activities of The Society (mailings, program expenses, newsletter, etc.)

Make checks payable to the LTC Foundation/James Jones Society and mail to Juanita Martin, Treasurer; Lincoln Trail College; R.R. 3, Box 82A; Robinson, IL 62454. Contributions are tax-deductible.
This form may be duplicated for additional memberships and/or gifts.

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE.
THEY WRITE NOVELS.



The Last Word

Helping a country doesn't necessarily mean healing a country

By Beth Brotherton

As the self-appointed protector of world peace, it seems this country's attention always has a focus. In the forties, it was a fascist European dictator. In the sixties and seventies, it was an attempt to halt the spread of Communism in southeast Asia. In the eighties, it was a drug-dealing, murderous authoritarian in Latin America.

This year, the focus is on Somalia, a country without a government, whose battling warlords display no guilt and show no shame while starving their neighbor's child. The United Nations and American intervention has raised questions and cause mixed feelings here at home. There are two sides to the issue. Those who are for intervention claim it would be inhumane to leave the Somali people without food; those against intervention claim we have our own problems in the United States.

I lived in Lusaka, Zambia, in southern Africa for five years and saw, first hand, problems similar to those in Somalia. Pictures of Mogadishu reminded me of my first time in downtown Lusaka. I beheld poverty I had never seen before. I saw a soiled, blind woman with legs deformed by disease, wearing only a tattered piece of material. Beside her, there was a helpless, young boy begging for food. The woman sang out, and though I couldn't understand her words, I could guess her message. I had a couple of ngwee (Zambian coins) in my pocket that I planned to mail to my friends as souvenirs of Africa. I threw my coins onto the ragged cloth the woman and her child sat on.

Living in the United States today, I still see this vision. I couldn't begin to imagine what her life was like. I wondered, what did she think about each day? Where was her family? Was this the only way she could survive? This woman yanked off my rural Illinois blinders.

My encounter with the blind woman happened before I was told by Zambian friends never to give money to beggars. Everywhere I went, there were young boys leading a blind or disabled parent and begging. When I was

nine, that woman touched my tender heart; by the time I turned fourteen, the beggars has become a nuisance. It grew so that the smell of the downtown area would make me sick. I would wait in the car while my mom went to the market because I couldn't stand the Africans yelling at me or pulling on me to get my attention.

I thought that the longer I lived in Zambia, the more African I would become. I liked the local food and learned some of the local language and customs. I learned and sang the national anthem with a personal sense of patriotism. But I also became, like my Zambian friends, accustomed to the blind, disabled and poor. I became as blind as the blind woman.

Many Americans' view of U.S.

intervention in Somalia parallel my encounter with the blind woman. We see pictures on television and in magazines, faces of starvation, of a child bloated from malnutrition with big, brown eyes and no hope. When the woman cried out, I didn't understand her but wanted to help. Similarly, Americans don't understand the underlying problems that have developed over the years that have resulted in the situation in Somalia today. Optimistically, I threw my coins on the woman's cloth, believing I was solving her problems. But my coins didn't solve her problems. They may have satisfied her needs for a day, but they also may have encouraged her to beg the next day.

It is impossible to look down on a humanitarian effort such as

Operation Restore Hope. We should do what we can. But we fool ourselves by thinking we can build a stable government in Somalia and reform it into the image we choose for it. We will feed some, and perhaps convince the rival warlords to make peace for a time. Operation Restore Hope will not solve the root problems that keep people from seeing the value of another clan. How long are we willing to stay in Somalia? Once the soldiers retreat, what will happen?

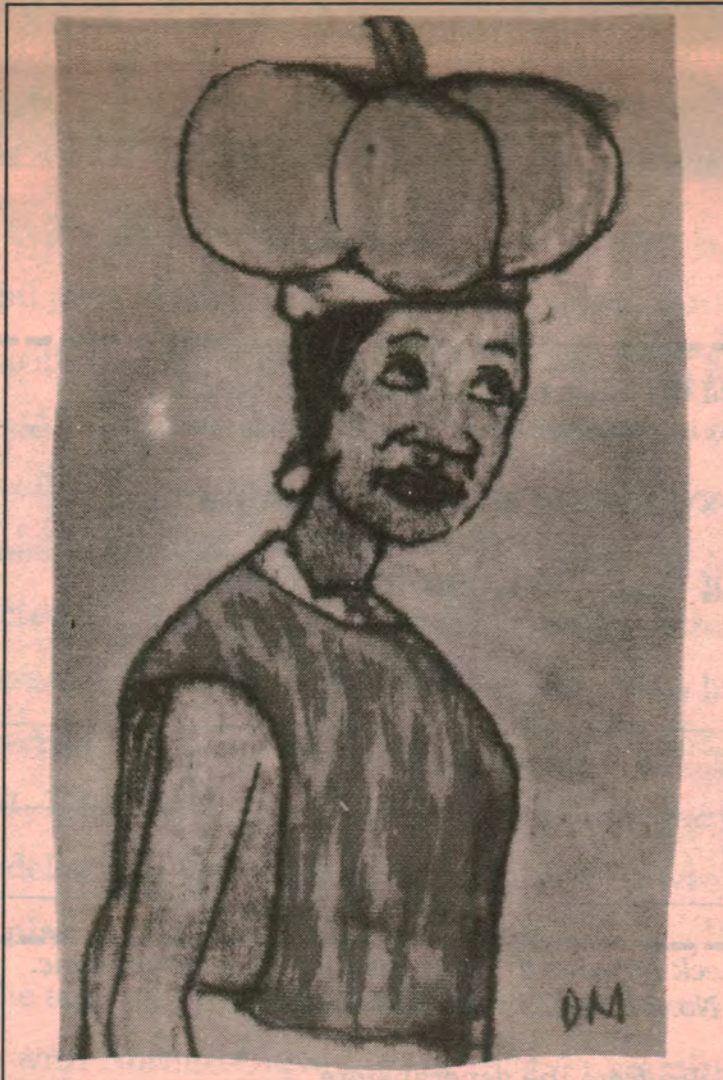
The woman I saw made me want to help every beggar on the streets of Lusaka. I learned that my desire was not feasible and was warned against plans of this kind. That new-found knowledge helped me blockade my sympathy and focus my energy on my own misfortunes. I remember, too, that it was the Zambian people who gave me this knowledge. Were they right? Was it their under-

standing of the problem that made them knowledgeable or just their hardened hearts? When is it time to ignore the pleas? Is there a limit to humanitarianism? What about Yugoslavia and Cambodia, where the U.N. forces already work, or Mozambique, where the U.N. is ready to send troops?

In my mind, the memory of the woman will not go away. It would be simpler for me to pretend that she did not exist and set my goals on bettering my own life, not the life of a stranger ten thousand miles away. It is impossible to fix someone else's world, but likewise, we cannot put it out of our minds.

We need to continue to be givers and give wisely, yet at the same time realize that the cause may be fruitless.

Brotherton is a senior at Urbana High School.



"(President) Clinton's call for higher marginal income tax rates on the wealthy may encourage them to boost their charitable giving as a way to raise their deductions."

— CHICAGO TRIBUNE
FEBRUARY 19, 1993

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