

God made man
because he loves stories.

Another collection of stories
Norma and Del Smith
Christmas, 2001

Book 2001

Elie Wiesel, wrote the words of the cover of our collection in his book, *The Gates of the Forest* (Henry Holt and Company).

I love stories and many a night I will sit with my grandchildren on the stairs going from our living room to the bedrooms in our home and tell them stories. Or while driving in the car on one of those long trips, I will make up stories and they ask me to repeat them over and over again. Sometimes I forget what was in the story and my grandchildren will remind me, "Pop, that's not what you told us last time."

So, we start this years collection with a story about Gilbert. This and many of the pieces on this collection we sent to me, or e-mailed to me by friends from all over this great world of ours. I wish to thank them for thinking of Norma and I.

Dedication

This years collection we decided to dedicate to children. Not only our children, but all children, for they are the future of this world.

We can really learn from them by just sitting and watching them interact with the world.

Have you ever watch a child on his hands and knees watching a bug, or an ant scurrying around on the sidewalk? Pure wonderment.

Have you ever thought what was going through a young baby's mind when as you hold them, they look up at you and smile? What are they really saying?

Have you ever held a small child's hand in yours and taken a walk with them and realize that they are having as much fun as you are?

Have you ever heard a child say, "I really love you," and know that they really mean it? They have no axe to grind.

Have you unexpectedly ever bought ice cream for one of the neighborhood children from the ice cream truck and watched the expression of thanks on their little face?

Have you ever lifted a child and placed her on your shoulders? Can you image just how important that makes her feel? How about you?

Have you ever dried the tears from a small quivering face after a little one has fallen from his bicycle? No words were spoken between you two, but the message is clear.

Have you ever hugged a child just for the sheer joy of it?

Have you ever repaired a toy for a child and given it back to them just to see the expression on his or her face? “You really fixed it?”

Have you ever look at that child next to you in church when she bows her head to pray? There is nothing more precious.

Have you ever received a card or note from a youngster that was addressed just to you where the words were mis-spelled and the crayons were out of the lines? It’s better than winning the Nobel Peace prize.

Have you ever heard, “Can we go to Mom-Mom and Poppy’s house?”

Have you ever experience a child sneaking up on you to scare you, when you knew all along that they were there?

Have you ever watched a child ride on a swing, singing a favorite song, wondering what they were thinking?

Have you ever noticed that children can laugh without first thinking about it?

Have you ever sat on the side of the bed while a child was saying her prayers and knew right then and there that there were angels?

Have you ever had a child ask you, “Can I go with you to the store?” And by saying, ‘Yes’ made that child feel wanted and loved.

BABIES BILL OR RIGHTS - “NO BABY SHALL BE COMPELLED TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIMSELF.

Have you ever.....?

Well you better!

From: GinComer@aol.com
Subject: Daddy's Little Girl
To: djsr@iname.com

Another heart-wrenching tale. Do you send these to Poppy? Does he have e-mail? I hear a few things from time to time which make me think of him and his book (which we just got) and I'd love to send these stories to him. Let me know.

Her hair up in a pony tail, her favorite dress tied with a bow.
Today was Daddy's Day at school, and she couldn't wait to go.
But her mommy tried to tell her, that she probably should stay home.
Why the kids might not understand, if she went to school alone.

But she was not afraid; she knew just what to say.
What to tell her classmates, on this Daddy's Day.
But still her mother worried, for her to face this day alone.
And that was why once again, she tried to keep her daughter home.

But the little girl went to school, eager to tell them all,
About a dad she never sees, a dad who never calls.
There were daddies along the wall in back, for everyone to meet.
Children squirming impatiently, anxious in their seats.

One by one the teacher called, a student from the class,
To introduce their daddy, as seconds slowly passed,
At last the teacher called her name, every child turned to stare...
Each of them were searching, for a man who wasn't there.

"Where's her daddy at?" she heard a boy call out,
"She probably doesn't have one," another student dared to shout!
And from somewhere near the back, she heard a daddy say,
"Looks like another deadbeat dad, too busy to waste his day."

The words did not offend her, as she smiled at her friends,
And looked back at her teacher, who told her to begin...
And with hands behind her back, slowly she began to speak,
And out from the mouth of a child, came words incredibly unique.

"My Daddy couldn't be here, because he lives so far away,
But I know he wishes he could be with me on this day.
And though you cannot meet him, I wanted you to know,
All about my daddy, and how much he loves me so.

He loved to tell me stories, he taught me to ride my bike,
He surprised me with pink roses, and taught me to fly a kite,
We used to share fudge sundaes and ice cream in a cone,
And though you cannot see him, I'm not standing all alone.

'Cause my daddy's always with me, even though we are apart.
I know because he told me, he'll forever be here in my heart".
With that her little hand reached up, and lay across her chest,
Feeling her own heartbeat, beneath her favorite dress.

From somewhere in the crowd of dads, her mother stood in tears,
Proudly watching her daughter, who was wise beyond her years.
She stood up for the love of a man not in her life.
Doing what was best for her, doing what was right.

When she dropped her hand back down, staring straight into the crowd,
She finished with a voice so soft, but its message clear and loud.
"I love my daddy very much, he's my shining star,
If he could he'd be here, but heaven's just too far.

Sometimes when I close my eyes, it's like he never went away."
Then she closed her eyes, and saw him there that day.
To her mother's amazement, she witnessed with surprise,
A room full of daddies and children, all starting to close their eyes.

Who knows what they saw before them, who knows what they felt inside.
Perhaps for a second, they saw him at her side.
"I know you're with me Daddy," to the silence she called out-
What happened next made believers, of those once filled with doubt,

No one in that room could explain it, for each of their eyes had been closed,
But there placed on her desktop, was a beautiful fragrant pink rose.
A child was blessed, if only a moment, by the love of her shining bright star.
And given the gift of believing, that heaven is never too FAR!

Author Unknown

GILBERT (This is the story we wrote about in the opening paragraphs of the collection).

Gilbert was eight years old and had been in Cub Scouts only a short time. During one of his meetings he was handed a sheet of paper, a block of wood and four tires and told to return home and give all to "Dad."

That was not an easy task for Gilbert to do. Dad was not receptive to doing things with his son. But Gilbert tried. Dad read the paper and scoffed at the idea of making a pine wood derby car with his young, eager son. The block of wood remained untouched as the weeks passed.

Finally, I (Mom) stepped in to see if I could figure this all out. The project began. Having no carpentry skills, I decided it would be best if I simply read the directions and let Gilbert do the work. And he did. I read aloud the measurements, the rules of what we could do and what we couldn't do.

Within days Gilbert's block of wood was turning into a pinewood derby car. A little lopsided, but looking great (at least through the eyes of Mom). Gilbert had not seen any of the other kids' cars and was feeling pretty proud of his "Blue Lightning," the pride that comes with knowing you did something on your own.

Then the big night came. With his blue pinewood derby in his hand and pride in his heart they headed to the big race. Once there my little one's pride turned to humility. Gilbert's car was obviously the only car made entirely on his own. All the other cars were a father-son partnership, with cool paint jobs and sleek body styles made for speed.

A few of the boys giggled as they looked at Gilbert's lopsided, wobbly, unattractive vehicle. To add to the humility, Gilbert was the only boy without a man at his side. A couple of the boys who were from single parent homes at least had an uncle or grand- father by their side, Gilbert had "Mom."

As the race began it was done in elimination fashion. You kept racing as long as you were the winner. One by one the cars raced down the finely sanded ramp. Finally it was between Gilbert and the sleekest, fastest looking car there. As the last race was about to begin, my wide eyed, shy eight year old ask if they could stop the race for a minute, because he wanted to pray. The race stopped. Gilbert went to his knees clutching his funny looking block of wood between his hands. With a wrinkled brow he set to converse with his Father. He prayed in earnest for a very long minute and a half. Then he stood, smile on his face and announced, "Okay, I am ready."

As the crowd cheered, a boy named Tommy stood with his father as their car sped down the ramp. Gilbert stood with his Father within his heart and watched his block of wood wobble down the ramp with surprisingly great speed and rushed over the finish line a fraction of a second before Tommy's car.

Gilbert leaped into the air with a loud "Thank You" as the crowd roared in approval. The Scout Master came up to Gilbert with microphone in hand and asked the obvious question, "So you prayed to win, huh, Gilbert?" To which my young son answered, "Oh, no sir. That wouldn't be fair to ask God to help you beat someone else. I just asked Him to make it so I wouldn't cry when I lost."

Children seem to have a wisdom far beyond us. Gilbert didn't ask God to win the race, he didn't ask God to fix the outcome.

Gilbert asked God to give him strength in the outcome. When Gilbert first saw the other cars he didn't cry out to God, "No fair, they had a father's help!". No, he went to his Father for strength. Perhaps we spend too much of our prayer time asking God to rig the race, to make us number one, or too much time asking God to remove us from the struggle, when we should be seeking God's strength to get through the struggle.

"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

Gilbert's simple prayer spoke volumes to those present that night. He never doubted that God would indeed answer his request. He didn't pray to win, thus hurt someone else, he prayed that God supply the grace to lose with dignity.

Gilbert, by his stopping the race to speak to his Father also showed the crowd that he wasn't there without a "dad," but His Father was most definitely there with him. Yes, Gilbert walked away a winner that night, with his Father at his side.

May we all learn to pray this way!

Subject: Positive thought

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.

If He had a wallet, Your photo would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning.

Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen.

He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

What about the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem; not to mention that Friday at Calvary.

Face it, He's crazy about you.

"It Smells Like Rain..."

A cold March wind danced around the dead of night in Dallas as the Doctor walked into the small hospital room of Diana Blessing. Still groggy from surgery, her husband David held her hand as they braced themselves for the latest news. That afternoon of March 10, 1991, complications had forced Diana, only 24-weeks pregnant, to undergo an emergency cesarean to deliver the couple's new daughter, Danae Lu Blessing. At 12 inches long and weighing only one pound and nine ounces, they already knew she was perilously premature. Still, the doctor's soft words dropped like bombs.

'I don't think she's going to make it', he said, as kindly as he could. "There's only a 10-percent chance she will live through the night, and even then, if by some slim chance she does make it, her future could be a very cruel one".

Numb with disbelief, David and Diana listened as the doctor described the devastating problems Diana would likely face if she survived. She would never walk, she would never talk, she would probably be blind, and she would certainly be prone to other catastrophic conditions from cerebral palsy to complete mental retardation, and on and on. "No! No!" was all Diana could say. She and David, with their 5-year-old son Dustin, had long dreamed of the day they would have a daughter to become a family of four. Now, within a matter of hours, that dream was slipping away.

Through the dark hours of morning as Diana held onto life by the thinnest thread, Diana slipped in and out of sleep, growing more and more determined that their tiny daughter would live-and live to be a healthy, happy young girl. But David, fully awake and listening to additional dire details of their daughter's chances of ever leaving the hospital alive, much less healthy, knew he must confront his wife with the inevitable. David walked, in and said that we needed to talk about making funeral arrangements. Diana remembers 'I felt so bad for him because he was doing everything, trying to include me in what was going on, but I just wouldn't listen, I couldn't listen.' I said, "No, that is not going to happen, no way! I don't care what the doctors say; Diana is not going to die! One day she will be just fine, and she will be coming home with us!"

As if willed to live by Diana's determination, Diana clung to life hour after hour, with the help of every medical machine and marvel her miniature body could endure. But as those first days passed, a new agony set in for David and Diana. Because Diana's under-developed nervous system was essentially 'raw,' the lightest kiss or caress only intensified her discomfort, so they couldn't even cradle their tiny baby girl against their chests to offer the strength of their love. All they could do, as Diana struggled alone beneath the ultraviolet light in the tangle of tubes and wires, was to pray that G-d would stay close to their precious little girl. There was never a moment when Diana suddenly grew stronger. But as the weeks went by, she did slowly gain an ounce of weight here and an ounce of strength here.

At last, when Diana turned two months old, her parents were able to hold her in their arms for the very first time.

And two months later-though doctors continued to gently but grimly warn that her chances of surviving, much less living any kind of normal life, were next to zero. Diana went home from the hospital, just as her mother had predicted.

Five years later, Diana is a petite but feisty young girl with glittering gray eyes and an unquenchable zest for life. She shows no signs, what so ever, of any mental or physical impairment. Simply, she is everything a little girl can be and more-but that happy ending is far from the end of her story.

One blistering afternoon in the summer of 1996 near her home in Irving, Texas, Diana was sitting in her mother's lap in the bleachers of a local ballpark where her brother Dustin's baseball team was practicing. As always, Diana was chattering non-stop with her mother and several other adults sitting nearby when she suddenly fell silent.

Hugging her arms across her chest, Diana asked, "Do you smell that?" Smelling the air and detecting the approach of a thunderstorm, Diana replied, "Yes, it smells like rain." Diana closed her eyes and again asked, "Do you smell that?"

Once again, her mother replied, "Yes, I think we're about to get wet, it smells like rain. Still caught in the moment, Diana shook her head, patted her thin shoulders with her small hands and loudly announced, "No, it smells like Him. It smells like G-d when you lay your head on His chest."

Tears blurred Diana's eyes as Diana then happily hopped down to play with the other children.

Before the rains came, her daughter's words confirmed what Diana and all the members of the extended Blessing family had known, at least in their hearts, all along. During those long days and nights of her first two months of her life, when her nerves were too sensitive for them to touch her, G-d was holding Diana on His chest and it is His loving scent that she remembers so well.

When I received the following writing, I thought, "My God, this is exactly how I feel," and was so grateful someone put it into words. I am so grateful for people like Carol Wimmer who made herself vulnerable to write such a passionate filled writing. Possibly you feel the same way too? Peace to you, Dayna

WHEN I SAY, "I AM A CHRISTIAN"

By Carol Wimmer

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting "I am saved." I'm whispering "I was lost"; That is why I chose this way.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble, and need someone to be my guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I'm weak, and pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success. I'm admitting I have failed, and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, which is why I speak His name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge. I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

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"Life Is..."

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is a beauty, admire it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it.

Life is life, fight for it!

Author: Mother Teresa

A SURVIVAL KIT FOR EVERY DAY LIVING

Items Needed:

Toothpick
Rubber band
Band Aid
Pencil
Eraser
Chewing Gum
Mint
Candy Kiss
Tea Bag

Why???

- 1) TOOTHPICK - to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others.
- 2) RUBBER BAND - to remind you to be flexible, things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out.
- 3) BAND AID - to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's.
- 4) PENCIL - to remind you to list your blessings everyday.
- 5) ERASER - To remind you that everyone makes mistakes and that it's OK.
- 6) CHEWING GUM - to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything.
- 7) MINT - to remind you that you are worth a mint.
- 8) CANDY KISS - to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday.
- 9) TEA BAG - to remind you to relax daily and reflect on all the positive things in your life. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, share a word of praise and they always open their hearts to us.

A Devoted Wife

A devoted wife was taking care of her husband, who had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months. When he came to his senses, he motioned for her to come near. "You have been with me through all the bad times," he said. "When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you gave me support. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. You know what?" "What dear?" she asked gently. "I think you bring me bad luck."

CATHOLIC MATH

Little Tommy was doing very badly in math. His parents had tried everything; tutors, flash cards, special learning centers, in short, everything they could think of. Finally in a last ditch effort, they took Tommy down & enrolled him in the local Catholic school. After the first day, little Tommy came home with a very serious look on his face.

He didn't kiss his mother hello. Instead, he went straight to his room and started studying. Books & papers were spread out all over the room and little Tommy was hard at work. His mother was amazed. She called him down to dinner and to her shock, the minute he was done he marched back to his room without a word and in no time he was back hitting the books as hard as before.

This went on for sometime, day after day while the mother tried to understand what made all the difference.

Finally, little Tommy brought home his report card. He quietly laid it on the table and went up to his room and hit the books. With great trepidation, his mom looked at it and to her surprise, little Tommy got an "A" in math.

She could no longer hold her curiosity. She went to his room and said, "Son, what was it? Was it the nuns?"

Little Tommy looked at her and shook his head, no.

"Well then," she replied, "was it the books, the discipline, the structure, the uniforms? WHAT was it?"

Little Tommy looked at her and said, "Well, on the first day of school, when I saw that guy nailed to the plus sign, I knew they weren't gonna be fooling around!"

(TO MY NON-JEWISH FRIENDS-"KINEAHORA" IS WHEN YOU ARE SHOOING AWAY EVIL SPIRITS)

An old Jewish man sat down next to a younger man on the subway. He noticed that the young man had a strange kind of shirt collar.

Having never seen a priest before, he asked the man, "Excuse me sir, but why do you have your shirt collar on backwards?"

The priest became a bit flustered but politely answered, "I wear this collar because I am a Father."

The Jewish man thought a second and responded, "Sir, I am also a Father but I wear mine collar frontwards. So, huh? Why do you wear your collar so different?"

The priest thought for a minute and said, "Sir, I am the father for many."

The Jewish man quickly answered, "I, too, am the father of many. Kineahora, I have four sons, four daughters and too many grandchildren to count.

But I wear my collar like everyone else. Why do you wear it backwards?"

The priest who was beginning to get exasperated thought and then blurted out, "Sir, I am the father for hundreds and hundreds of people!"

The Jewish man was taken aback and was silent for a long time. As he got up to leave the subway train, he leaned over to the priest and said, "Mister, maybe you should wear your pants backwards!"

In The Beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth.

And the Earth was without form, and void,

And darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the Devil said, "It doesn't get any better than this."

And so God created Man in His own image;

Male and female He created them.

And God looked upon Man and Woman

And saw that they were lean and fit.
And God populated the earth
With broccoli and cauliflower and spinach
And green and yellow vegetables of all kinds,
So Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.
And so the Devil created McDonald's.
And McDonald's brought forth the 79-cent double cheeseburger.
And the Devil said to Man, "You want fries with that?"
And Man said, "Super size them."
And Man gained five pounds.
And so God created the healthful yogurt,
That Woman might keep her figure
But the Devil brought forth chocolate.
And Woman gained five pounds.
And God said, "Try my crispy fresh salad."
And the Devil brought forth Ben and Jerry's.
And Woman gained 10 pounds.
And God said, Why doth thou eatest thus?
"I have sent thee heart-healthy vegetables and olive oil with which to cook them."
But the Devil brought forth chicken fried steak So big it needed its own platter.
And Man gained 10 pounds
And his bad cholesterol went through the roof.

And so God brought forth running shoes.

And Man resolved to lose those extra pounds.

And the Devil brought forth cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil to change channels between ESPN and ESPN2.

And Man gained another 20 pounds.

And so God brought forth the potato, a vegetable naturally low in fat and brimming with nutrition.

And the Devil peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fat fried them.

And the Devil created sour cream dip.

And Man clutched his remote control and ate the potato chips swaddled in cholesterol.

And the Devil saw and said, "It is good."

And Man went into cardiac arrest.

And God sighed and created quadruple bypass surgery.

And the Devil cancelled Man's health insurance.

So God showed Woman how to peel the skin off chicken and cook the nourishing whole grain brown rice.

And the Devil created light beer so Man could poison his body, while feeling righteous because he had to drink twice as much of the now-insipid brew to get the same buzz.

And Man gained another 10 pounds.

And Woman ventured forth into the land of Godiva chocolate, and upon returning asked Man, "Do I look fat?"

And the Devil said, "Always tell the truth."

And Man did.

And Woman went out from the presence of Man and dwelt in the land of the divorce lawyer,

east of the marriage counselor.

And the Devil said, "It doesn't get any better than this."

Children always tell the truth.

It was a sunny morning in July. I awoke at 5 a.m. (a little bit later than usual), dressed and had a cup of tea. I then headed to my son's home a few block away. He had schedule to take his wife and boys to Wildwood, New Jersey and I was going to take a ride with him. I arrived at 6 a.m. and Darren, my son, was still sleeping although his wife, Lili and my two grandsons were awake.

I decided to wait out in the R.V., which we packed the night before so as not to disturb the family. D.J. my oldest grandson came out to the R.V. to keep me company. We were playing scrabble on the carpet of the R.V. when we heard yelling from the inside of the house.

"Oh my Dad must be up," said D.J.

"How do you know?," I said.

"It's my mother yelling from the kitchen, I could tell that argument anywhere."

A story from Richie from Queens.

It seems that a young 6-year-old from the neighborhood invited one of her girlfriends to the house to play for the afternoon. The girlfriend showed up at the little girls house and discovered that playing with the little girls brother and his toys was more exciting than playing with the little girl.

After several hours the little girl went over to the phone and dialed the girlfriend's house and asked to speak with the girlfriend's mother. The conversation went something like this.

"You better come over and get your daughter, things are not working out too well here!"

Our two granddaughter's, Norma Jean and Grace came for a visit in early August and we were riding in the car.

"Pop, how old is Mom-Mom?," asked Norma Jean, who is six-years-old.

“Mom-Mom is 57 years old,” was my reply.

“How old are you?”, was Norma Jean’s next question.

“Twenty-two-years-old”, was my answer.

Norma Jean looked at me and said, “If you’re only twenty-two how come you look so old.”

On a positive note:

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.

I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life."

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone.

People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.

Note: people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel....

RH2 (Ray Hartman)

IMPORTANT RECALL NOTICE

The maker of all human beings is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to the serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units.

This defect has been technically termed, 'Subsequential Internal Non-Morality,' more commonly known as S-I-N, as it is primarily symptomized by loss of moral judgment.

Some other symptoms:

- (a) Loss of direction
- (b) Foul vocal emissions
- (c) Amnesia of origin
- (d) Lack of peace and joy
- (e) Selfish, and/or violent, behavior
- (f) Depression or confusion in the mental component
- (g) Fearful
- (h) Idolatry

The manufacturer, who is neither liable or at fault for this defect, is providing factory authorized repair and service, free of charge, to correct this SIN defect.

The number to call for the recall station in your area is: P-R-A-Y-E-R.

Once connected, please upload your burden of SIN by pressing R-E-P-E-N-T-A-N-C-E.

Next, download J-E-S-U-S into the heart.

No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, JESUS repair will replace it with:

- (a) Love
- (b) Joy
- (c) Peace
- (d) Longsuffering
- (e) Gentleness
- (f) Goodness
- (g) Faith
- (h) Meekness
- (i) Temperance

Please see operating manual, HOLY BIBLE, for further details on the use of these fixes.

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human unit without correction, voids the manufacturer's warranty, exposing owner to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded.

For free emergency service, call on J-E-S-U-S

Michael Betterman

Try this out - only takes two ticks!

Count the number of F's in the following text, this isn't a trick:

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RE-SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIF-IC STUDY COMBINED
WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

Managed it? Scroll down only after you have counted them!

OK? How many? Three?

Wrong, there are six - no joke! Read again!

The reasoning is further down...

The brain cannot process "OF".

Incredible or what?

A SINGLE WORD

A minister decided to do something a little different one Sunday morning. He said "Today, church, I am going to say a single word and you are going to help me preach. Whatever single word I say, I want you to sing whatever hymn that comes to your mind."

The pastor shouted out, "Cross." Immediately the congregation started singing in unison "The Old Rugged Cross."

The Pastor hollered out "Grace." The congregation began to sing "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound."

The Pastor said "Power." The congregation sang "There is Power in the Blood."

The Pastor said "Sex." The congregation fell in total silence.

Everyone was in shock. They all nervously began to look around at each other afraid to say anything. Then all of a sudden way from in the back of the church a little old 87 year old grandmother stood up and began to sing "Precious Memories."

Ruth went to her mail box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no post mark, only her name and address.

She read the letter:

Dear Ruth:

I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I would like to visit.

Love Always,

Jesus

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table. "Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner." She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Five dollars and forty cents. "Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least." She threw on her coat and hurried out the door.

A loaf of French bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk... leaving Ruth with grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday.

Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm. "Hey lady, can you help us, lady?"

Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans, she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags. "Look lady, I ain't got a job, ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to.

"Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him."

"Yeah, well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway."

The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and he headed back into the alley.

As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart.

"Sir, wait!"

The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them.

"Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag.

"Thank you lady. Thank you very much!"

Yes, thank you!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering.

"You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one." Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders.

Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street...without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest.

"Thank you lady! Thank you very much!"

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him.

She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox. "That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day." She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth:

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. And thank you, too, for the beautiful coat.

Love Always,

Jesus

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed.

Christian Bumper Stickers

A clean conscience makes a soft pillow.

A family altar can alter a family.

A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.

Are you wrinkled with burden?

Come on into Church for a faith lift!

Be ye fishers of men. You catch them and He will clean them.

Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.

Do your best and then sleep in peace. God is Awake.

Don't put a question mark where God put a period.

Don't wait for 6 strong men to take you to church.

Exercise daily. Walk with the Lord!

Fear knocked. Faith answered. No one was there.

For all you do, His blood's for you!

Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Give God what's right, not what's left!

Give Satan an inch and he'll be a ruler.

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

God doesn't want shares of your life; He wants controlling interest!

God grades on the cross, not the curve.

God loves everyone, but probably prefers "fruits of the spirit" over "religious nuts"!

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

Having truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!

He who angers you, controls you!

He who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

He who kneels before God can stand before anyone!

If God is your Co-pilot - Swap seats!

In the sentence of life the Devil may be a comma, but DO NOT let him be the PERIOD!

Kindness is difficult to give away because it keeps coming back.

Man's way leads to a hopeless end! God's way leads to an endless hope!

Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity.

Never give the devil a ride! He will always want to drive!

Nothing ruins the truth like stretching it.

Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

"Pray" is a four letter word that you can say anywhere (except in a public school).

Prayer - Don't give God instructions - just report for duty!

Read The Bible... It Will Scare The Hell Out Of You!

The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

The Will of God will never take you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

This Church is "Prayer Conditioned"!

To be almost saved is to be totally lost.

Wal-Mart isn't the only saving place!

WARNING: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning!

Watch your step carefully! Everyone else does!

We don't change the message, the message changes us.

We set the sail; God makes the wind.

We're too blessed to be depressed.

When God ordains, He sustains.

Wisdom has two parts: 1) Having a lot to say. 2) Not saying it.

Worry is the darkroom in which "negatives" are developed.

You can tell how big a person is by what it takes to discourage him.

LEARNING AND THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Read it through to the end, it gets better as you go!

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night" --Age 6

I've learned that our dog doesn't want to eat my broccoli either--Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back --Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up again --Age 12

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up --Age 14

I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me.--Age 15

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice --Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures --Age 26

I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there --Age 29

I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it --Age 30

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly just don't know how to show it. --Age 42

I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little note --Age 44

I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his or her need to cast blame on others --Age 46

I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies--Age 47

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow --Age 48

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours --Age 49

I've learned that motel mattresses are better on the side away from the phone --Age 50

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights -- Age 52

I've learned that keeping a vegetable garden is worth a medicine cabinet full of pills -- Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die --Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life --Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, work to improve your marriage --Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance -- Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back -- Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you --Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision --Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer-- Age 72

I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And, to tell the truth, I've seen several --Age 75

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one-- Age 82

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch-holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back --Age 85

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn--Age 92

I learned that you should pass this on to someone you care about.

Sometimes they just need a little something to make them smile--Ageless

Subject: Mothers and Fathers

Just for this morning, I am going to smile when I see your face and laugh when I feel like crying. Just for this morning, I will let you choose what you want to wear, and smile and say how perfect it is.

Just for this morning, I am going to step over the laundry, and pick you up and take you to the park to play.

Just for this morning, I will unplug the telephone and keep the computer off, and sit with you in the backyard and blow bubbles.

Just for this afternoon, I will not yell once, not even a tiny grumble, when you scream and whine for the ice cream truck, and I will buy you one if he comes by.

Just for this afternoon, I won't worry about what you are going to be when you grow up, or second guess every decision I have made where you are concerned.

Just for this afternoon, I will let you help me bake cookies, and I won't stand over you trying to fix them.

Just for this afternoon, I will take us to McDonald's and buy us both a Happy Meal so you can have both toys.

Just for this evening, I will hold you in my arms and tell you a story about how you were born and how much I love you.

Just for this evening, I will let you splash in the tub and not get angry.

Just for this evening, I will let you stay up late while we sit on the porch and count all the stars.

Just for this evening, I will snuggle beside you for hours, and miss my favorite TV shows.

Just for this evening, when I run my fingers through your hair as you pray, I will simply be grateful that God has given me the greatest gift ever given.

I will think about the mothers and fathers who are searching for their missing children, the mothers and fathers who are visiting their children's graves instead of their bedrooms, and the mothers and fathers who are in hospital rooms watching their children suffer senselessly, and screaming inside they can't handle it anymore.

And when I kiss you goodnight, I will hold you a little tighter and a little longer. It is then, that I will thank God for you, and ask him for nothing, except one more day.....

Please pass this on to other mothers and fathers. We get so involved in our daily routines, that we tend to forget what great gifts our children REALLY ARE.

We never know if God is going to give us one more day.

Subject: One worse than the next....

1. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly. When they lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all, that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

2. Two boll weevils grew up in South Carolina. One went to Hollywood and became a famous actor. The other stayed behind in the cotton fields and never amounted to much. The second one, naturally, was known as the lesser of two weevils.

3. A three-legged dog walked into a saloon in the Old West. He slid up to the bar and announced, "I'm looking for the man who shot my paw."

4. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused his dentist's Novocain during root canal work? He wanted to transcend dental medication.

5. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse.

"But why?" they asked, as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."

6. A man entered his local paper's pun contest. He sent in ten different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in ten did.

7. A woman had identical twin sons, and gave them up for adoption. One of them went to a family in Egypt and was named Amahl. The other went to a family in Spain; they named him Juan. Years later, Juan sent a picture of himself to his mother. Upon receiving the picture, she told her husband that she wished she also had a picture of Amahl. Her husband responded, "But they are twins--if you've seen Juan, you've seen Amahl."

And the worst of the bunch:

8. Some friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise the funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the "men of God," the rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. He asked his mother to ask the friars to get out of business. They ignored her, too. So the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving (brace yourself) - That Hugh, and only Hugh, can prevent florist friars.

17th August 2000

THE HAND

A picture began circulating in November. In many people's opinions, it should be proclaimed as "The Picture of the Year," or perhaps, "The Picture of the decade." It won't be. In fact, unless you obtained a copy of the paper you probably will never see it.

The picture is that of a 21-week-old unborn baby named Samuel Alexander Armas, who is being operated on by a surgeon named Joseph Bruner. The baby was diagnosed with spina bifida and would not survive if removed from the mother's womb.

Little Samuel's mother, Julie Armas, is an obstetrics nurse in Atlanta. She knew of Dr. Bruner's remarkable surgical procedure. Practicing at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, he performs these special operations while the baby is still in the womb. In the procedure, a C-section removes the uterus and the doctor makes a small incision to operate on the baby.

During the surgery on little Samuel, the little guy reached his tiny, but fully developed, hand through the incision and firmly grasped the surgeon's finger. The photograph captures this amazing event with perfect clarity.

The editors titled the picture, "Hand of Hope." The text explaining the picture begins, "The tiny hand of 21-week-old fetus Samuel Alexander Armas emerges from the mother's uterus to grasp the finger of Dr. Joseph Bruner as if thanking the doctor for the gift life...."

You can see the actual picture, and it is awesome...incredible.

Here's the website:
HAND OF HOPE

LUTHERAN COFFEE SONG

by Ted & Amy Beitelshes, Camp Conneaut, Ohio for > Lutheran World Relief (tune - The Church's One Foundation)

Our Church's one foundation is coffee, don't you know.
It's always at our potlucks with three kinds of jello.
We need not pew nor building, nor LBW,
but worship without coffee just simply will not do!

We welcome other nations from lands across the sea,
because they grow no coffee in Sweden or Germany.
Regular or Decaf, cream, sugar, maybe tea;
That is how we practice, cult'ral diversity.

While we on earth have union with this most righteous brew,
we'll savor every cupful until our days are through.
Someday we'll justly honor this beverage heaven-sent,
and finally make coffee a Lutheran 'sacrament'!

Maturity

The meaning of maturity:

"To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."

-- Henri Bergson

"If growing up is the process of creating ideas and dreams about what life should be, then maturity is letting go again."

-- Mary Beth Danielson

"The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness."

-- John Keats

This quotation, part of a speech delivered by President Roosevelt at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23, 1910 may be familiar with seniors, however youthful readers may find it inspirational:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deed could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

The following true account is for one of the relatives of Ray Hartman:

Regina Hartman

The French and Indian War (1754-1763) found Pennsylvania, where the blows fell most heavily, unprepared. The governor and the Provincial Assembly were so busy fighting with each other that the frontiers were neglected and undefended. The frontiersmen got no help from Philadelphia; they had to learn to organize their own fighting forces and defend themselves. They paid a high price to defend their families, homes, and properties, but they also learned valuable lessons in frontier welfare and defense.

Their religious faith helped sustain the German Lutherans on the frontier during the dangerous years of the French and Indian War. The story of Regina Hartman illustrates this well.

In the fall of 1755, the French-allied Indians penetrated deep into eastern Pennsylvania. One day they attacked the Hartman's home near present-day Pottsville. Mrs. Hartman and one son were away and so they were spared. Of those who were at home, only ten-year-old Regina survived. She was taken captive and made a slave. When the war ended nine years later, White Lily, as Regina was known among the Indians, was returned by the British to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, along with others who had been captured by the Indians. Mrs. Hartman came, hoping to find her daughter, but saw no one who she could identify as her daughter. When the man in charge asked her if there wasn't something which might remind her daughter of her childhood, Mrs. Hartman began to sing a favorite German Hymn. Regina recognized the hymn and ran to her mother. Later, Regina said that all during her captivity she had continued to repeat Bible passages, prayers, and hymns which she had learned at home. (1)

Regina's Hymn (English Version)

*Alone, and yet not all alone,
Am I in solitude, though drear,
For when no one seems me to own,
My Jesus will to me be near.
I am with Him, and He with me,
I therefore cannot lonely be,
I therefore cannot lonely be. (2)*

1. Lutherans in North America, Richard C. Wolf, Author. Frank W. Klos, Editor. Published by Lutheran Church Press, Philadelphia, PA. Copyright 1965, pp 35.36

2. Taken from the Program at Burial Plot at the unveiling of "The Regina Monument" and the placement of DAR Marker at Christ Lutheran Church Cemetery, Berks County, Pennsylvania on October 11, 1958

Stories from Dickie from Queens:

Dickie has a cousin who has one child - a boy, and he was king of the roost. About a year ago, the little boy's mother gave birth to another little boy. Of course, the younger son now became the king of the roost and is normal in any family. The younger sibling is about 14 months old and one morning the mother saw the older boy sneak into the younger brother's bedroom. There wasn't a sound coming from the bedroom so the mother gingerly tip-toed to the door of the bedroom and peeked in.

The older son was standing on the bed above his younger brother looking down on him with a funny look on his face.

"And what do you think you are doing?" called the mother.

With a start, the little boy sheepishly got off the bed and looked at his mother.

“What were you doing on the bed standing over your brother?” asked the mother.

“I wasn’t going to hurt him, Mom, honestly I wasn’t.....I just wanted to bend him a little.”

Dickie’s grandchildren live in Baltimore, Maryland and Dickie and his wife, Toby get to see them as often as possible. On one such trip Dickie’s 3 year old grandson said to Dickie, “Gramps, I love you so much that when you are sleeping I come downstairs and kiss you.”

Need a child say anything more?

The following is something to ponder . . .

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness ... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married...you are very rare, even in the United States.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful...you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder...you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.

Dentist's sign: Customer Parking, Violators Will Be Given An Appointment!

Vets office: All unattended children given free kitten

Plumber: We repair what your husband fixed

Pizza shop slogan: 7 days without pizza makes one Weak.

At a tire shop in Milwaukee: Invite us to your next blowout.

Door of a plastic surgeons office: Hello, can we pick your nose?

At a Towing Company: We don't charge an arm and a leg. We want tows.

Billboard on the side of the road: Keep your eyes on the road and stop reading these signs.

On an Electricians truck: Let us remove your shorts.

In a Nonsmoking Area: If we see smoking we will assume you are on fire and take appropriate action.

On Maternity Room Door: Push, Push, Push.

At an Optometrists Office If you don't see what your looking for you've come to the right place.

On a Taxidermist's window: We really know our stuff.

In a Podiatrist's office: Time wounds all heels.

On a fence: Salesmen Welcome, Dog food is expensive.

Outside a Muffler Shop: No appointment necessary, we'll hear you coming.

In a Veterinarians waiting room: Be back in 5 minutes, Sit! Stay!

Inside a Bowling Alley: Please be quiet, we need to hear a pin drop.

A counselors office: Growing old is mandatory, growing wise is optional.

DYING OF THIRST

An Arab was walking through the Sahara desert, desperate for water, when he saw something, far off in the distance. Hoping to find water, he walked towards the image, only to find a little old Jewish man sitting at a card table with a bunch of neckties laid out on it.

The Arab asked, "Please, I'm dying of thirst, can I have some water?".

The man replied "I don't have any water, but why don't you buy a tie? Here's one that goes nicely with your robes."

The Arab shouted, "I don't want a tie, you idiot, I need water!"

"OK, don't buy a tie. But to show you what a nice guy I am, I'll tell you that over that hill there, about 4 miles, is a nice restaurant. Walk that way, they'll give you all the water you want."

The Arab thanked him and walked away towards the hill and eventually disappeared.

Three hours later the Arab came crawling back to where the man was sitting behind his card table. He said "I told you, about 4 miles over that hill. Couldn't you find it?"

The Arab rasped "I found it alright. They wouldn't let me in without a tie."

A man left for work one Friday afternoon. But, being payday, instead of going home, he stayed out the entire weekend partying with the boys and spending his entire paycheck. When He finally appeared at home, Sunday Night, he was confronted by a very angry wife and was barraged for nearly two hours with a tirade befitting his actions. Finally his wife stopped the nagging and simply said to him, "How would you like it if you didn't see me for two or three days?"

To which he replied, "That would be fine with me."

Monday went by and he didn't see his wife. Tuesday and Wednesday came and went with the same results. Come Thursday, the swelling went down just enough where he could see her a little out of the corner of his left eye.

Gracie, our three-year-old granddaughter, climbed into bed with her mother and asked, "What is Gods last name?"

My daughter, Dayna had no explanation for that question.

I was relating this story the next morning in my office and Linda Amberger said, "I know what God's last name is!"

"And what pray tell is His last name?" I asked. to which she replied, "Almighty".

Live like there is no tomorrow.
Love like you've never been hurt.
Dance like no one was watching.

Thanks Letty - from Randy Lee's office

It is a spectacular fall afternoon. At 2:30 in the afternoon it is 65 degrees, a little overcast, but a beautiful day. I pick up my two grandsons, D.J. (9) and Jonathan (7) and take them to the new state park overlooking Raritan Bay in Staten Island that once was the girls orphanage property at Mt. Loretta. It is a 125 acre site with open fields, ponds, marshes and a beautiful view of the Bay once you get to the top of the hill.

We parked the car on Hylan Boulevard and proceeded to walk down the macadam road that once was the main entrance to the orphanage. It is closed off now and can be used only for walking and bicycle riding. The boys and I meander along taking in the sites and once on top of the hill overlooking the bay discover a huge rope swing with hauser rope from the tugboats and a large tire attached to the end. The rope swing is on the bluff overlooking the water between Staten Island and the Atlantic Highlands across the bay.

I was pushing Jonathan on the rope swing and asked him if he knew what the name of the land was across the water. I pointed toward the New Jersey side of the bay.

Without hesitation, Jonathan said, "Pop, I know, I know."

"What do we call that land over there?" I added again.

And Jonathan answered, "Italy."

He was close.

TEN RULES FOR MAKING EVERY DAY A GREAT DAY.

1. Think that good things will happen.
2. Express gratitude to a loved one.
3. Put your gripes away in a box.
4. Be patient with an annoying person.
5. Do something special for yourself.
6. Reach out to someone who needs comfort.
7. Focus deeply on each moment.
8. Learn from a mistake.
9. Look closely at a flower or tree you haven't noticed before.
10. Smile.

Thanks Letty for these rules.

Let me see if I've got this right . . .

Let me see if I've got this right.

You want me to go into that room with all those kids and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning. Not only that, I'm to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, behaviorally modify disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and T-shirt messages.

I am to fight the war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for guns and raise their self-esteem.

I'm to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, how and where to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook and how to apply for a job.

I am to check their heads occasionally for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of potential anti-social behavior, offer advice, write letters of recommendation for student employment and scholarships, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and, oh yeah, always make sure that I give the girls in my class 50 percent of my attention.

I'm required by my contract to be working on my own time summer and evenings at my own expense toward advance certification and a master's degree; and after school, I am to attend committee and faculty meetings and participate in staff development training to maintain my employment status. I am to be a paragon of virtue larger than life, such that my very presence will awe my students into being obedient and respectful of authority.

I am to pledge allegiance to supporting family values, a return to the basics and to my current administration.

I am to incorporate technology into the learning and monitor all Web sites while providing a personal relationship with each student.

I am to decide who might be potentially dangerous and/or liable to commit crimes in school or who is possibly being abused and I can be sent to jail for not mentioning these suspicions.

I am to make sure all students pass the state and federally mandated testing and all classes, whether or not they attend school on a regular basis or complete any of the work assigned.

Plus, I am expected to make sure that all of the students with handicaps are guaranteed a free and equal education, regardless of their mental or physical handicap.

I am to communicate frequently with each student's parent by letter, phone, newsletter and grade card.

I'm to do all of this with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, a 45 minute more-or-less plan time and a big smile, all on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps in many states. Is that all?

AND YOU WANT ME TO DO ALL OF THIS AND EXPECT ME NOT TO PRAY?

A CONVERSATION WITH MY GRANDDAUGHTER, NORMA JEAN, AGE 6

"How are you doing in school?" I ask Norma Jean.

"Pretty good, Pop, I have school every day now," was her answer.

"Do you like school, Norma Jean?"

"Yes, I learn a lot," Norma Jean replied.

"Do you go to school Poppy?" was Norma Jean's next inquiry.

"I sure do!" I told her

"I didn't know that grandfathers went to school."

"They sure do."

"What is the name of your school?"

“The School of Hard Knocks.”

“Do they have hard questions there?”

“They sure do.”

“I’m glad I don’t have to go to your school.”

(She will just have to wait.....)

Faith Like a Child

A Nun asked her class to write notes to God... Here was some of the notes they handed in.

Dear God:

I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday. That was cool.

Dear God:

Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you have?

Dear God:

Maybe Cain and Abel would not have killed each other so much if they had their own rooms. That's what my mom did for me and my brother.

Dear God:

If you watch me in church on Sunday, I'll show you my new shoes.

Dear God:

I bet it is very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I'm having a hard time loving all of them.

Dear God:

In school they told us what you do. Who does it when you're on vacation?

Dear God:

Are you really invisible or is it just a trick?

Dear God:

Is it true my father won't get in Heaven if he uses his bowling words in the house?

Dear God:
Did you mean for the Giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?

Dear God:
Who draws the lines around the countries?

Dear God:
I went to this wedding and they kissed right in the church. Is that okay?

Dear God:
Did you really mean "do unto others as they do unto you?" because if you did, then I'm going to get my brother good.

Dear God:
Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

Dear God:
Please send me a pony. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up.

Dear God:
I want to be just like my Daddy when I get big, but not with so much hair all over.

Dear God:
You don't have to worry about me I always look both ways.

Dear God:
I think about you sometimes, even when I'm not praying.

Dear God:
Of all the people who work for you I like Noah and David the best.

Dear God:
My brother told me about being born but it doesn't sound right. They're just kidding, aren't they?

Dear God:
I would like to live 900 years just like the guy in the Bible.

Dear God:
We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school they said you did it. So, I bet he stole your idea.

ALL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE I LEARNED FROM MY GIRLFRIENDS!!

- * Good times are even better when they're shared.
 - * A good long talk can cure almost anything.
 - * Everyone needs someone with whom to share their secrets.
 - * Listening is just as important as talking.
 - * An understanding friend is better than a therapist; and cheaper too!
 - * Laughter makes the world a happier place.
 - * Friends are like wine; they get better with age.
 - * Sometimes you just need a shoulder to cry on.
 - * Great minds think alike, especially when they are female!
 - * When it comes to "bonding," females do it better.
 - * YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD FOR SLUMBER PARTIES!!!!
 - * Girls just want to have fun.
 - * It's important to make time to do "girl things."
 - * Calories don't count when you are having lunch (or any other food) with your girlfriends.
 - * You can never have too many shoes.
 - * GEMS MAY BE PRECIOUS, BUT FRIENDSHIP IS PRICELESS!!!!
-

Subject: Catholics

There were two Catholic boys, Timothy Murphy and Antonio Secola whose lives paralleled each other in amazing ways. In the same year Timothy was born in Ireland, Antonio was born in Italy.

Faithfully they attended parochial school from kindergarten through their Senior year in High School. They took their vows to enter the priesthood early in college, and upon graduation became priests. Their careers had come to amaze the world, but it was generally acknowledged that Antonio was just a cut above Timothy in all respects.

Their rise through the ranks of Bishop, Archbishop, and finally Cardinal was meteoric to say the least, and the Catholic world knew that when the present Pope died, it would be either Timothy or Antonio who would become the next Pope.

In time the Pope did die, and the College of Cardinals went to work.

In less time than anyone expected smoke rose from the chimney and the world waited to see who they had chosen. The world, Catholic, Protestant, and secular was surprised to learn that Timothy Murphy had been elected Pope.

Antonio was beyond surprise, he was devastated because, even with all Timothy's giftedness, Antonio knew he was the better qualified.

With gall that shocked the Cardinals, Antonio asked for a private session with them in which he candidly asked, "Why Timothy?"

After long silence one old Cardinal took pity on the bewildered Antonio and rose to reply, "We knew you were the better of the two, but we just could not bear the thought of the leader of the Roman Catholic Church being called Pope Secola.

This was sent to me by a good friend Thought it was worth passing on

READ THIS. LET IT REALLY SINK IN. THEN CHOOSE HOW YOU START YOUR DAY.

Michael is the kind of guy you love to hate.

He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say:

When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Michael was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Michael and asked him, "How do you do it?"

Michael replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested.

"Yes, it is," Michael said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what Michael said. Soon thereafter, I left the Towe Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Michael was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back. I saw Michael about six months after the accident.

When I asked him how he was, he replied. "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?" I declined to see his wounds, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place.

"The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon to be born daughter, " Michael replied. "Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked.

Michael continued, "...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared.

In their eyes, I read 'he's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Michael.

"She asked if I was allergic to anything. "Yes," I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply.

I took a deep breath and yelled, "Gravity."

Over their laughter, I told them, "I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead."

Michael lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully.

Attitude, after all, is everything.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34

After all to day is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.

You have two choices now:

1. Delete this.
2. Forward it to the people you care about.

I hope you will choose #2. I did.

Subject: Please respond to this email

This poem written by a terminally ill young girl in a New York Hospital. It was sent by a medical doctor - Dr. Yeou Cheng Ma.

Please do what you can to help fulfill this young girl's dream by also reading what is in the closing statement AFTER THE POEM.

SLOW DANCE

Have you ever watched kids
On a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
Slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?
You better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

Do you run through each day
On the fly?
When you ask "How are you?"
Do you hear the reply?
When the day is done
Do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through your head?
You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

Ever told your child,
We'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste,
Not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch,
Let a good friendship die
Cause you never had time

To call and say "Hi"?
You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere
You miss half the fun of getting there.
When you worry and hurry through your day,
It is like an unopened gift....
Thrown away.
Life is not a race.
Do take it slower
Hear the music
Before the song is over.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO HELP THIS LITTLE GIRL ALL FORWARDED
E-MAILS ARE TRACKED TO OBTAIN THE TOTAL COUNT.

Dear All:

PLEASE pass this mail on to everybody you know. It is the request of a special little girl who will soon leave this world as she has cancer.

Thank you for your effort, this isn't a chain letter, but a choice for all of us to save a little girl that's dying of a serious and fatal form of cancer.

Please send this to everyone you know...or don't know. This little girl has 6 months left to live, and as her dying wish, she wanted to send a letter telling everyone to live their life to the fullest, since she never will. She'll never make it to prom, graduate from high school, or get married and have a family of her own.

By you sending this to as many people as possible, you can give her and her family a little hope, because with every name that this is sent to, The American Cancer Society will donate 3 cents per name to her treatment and recovery plan. One guy sent this to 500 people!!!!

So I know that we can send it to at least 5 or 6. Just think it could be you one day. It's not even your money, just your time!!!

"PLEASE PASS ON AS A LAST REQUEST"

Dr. Dennis Shields, Professor Department of Developmental and Molecular Biology
Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
1300 Morris Park Avenue, Bronx, New York 10461

Opening prayer for Kansas State Senate

When minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask your forgiveness and to seek direction and guidance. We know Your word says, "Woe to those who call evil good", but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism.

We have worshiped other gods and called it multi-culturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it alternate lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of Your Son the living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. "

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest. In six short weeks, Central Christ Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea. Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program,

"The Rest of the Story", and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired. With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that again we may be called "one nation under God". If possible, please pass this prayer on to your friends. "If you don't stand for something you'll fall for anything"

To my child.....

Just for the morning, I am going to smile when I see your face and laugh when I feel like crying.

Just for this morning, I will let you choose what you want to wear, and smile and say how perfect it is.

Just for this morning, I am going to step over the laundry, and pick you up and take you to the park to play.

Just for this morning, I will leave the dishes in the sink, and let you teach me how to put that puzzle of yours together.

Just for this afternoon, I will unplug the telephone and keep the computer off, and sit with you in the backyard and blow bubbles.

Just for this afternoon, I will not yell once, not even a tiny grumble when you scream and whine for the ice cream truck, and I will buy you one if he comes by.

Just for this afternoon, I won't worry about what you are going to be when you grow up, or second guess every decision I have made where you are concerned.

Just for this afternoon, I will let you help me bake cookies, and I won't stand over you trying to fix them.

Just for this afternoon, I will take us to McDonald's and buy us both a Happy Meal so you can have both toys.

Just for this evening, I will hold you in my arms and tell you a story about how you were born and how much I love you.

Just for this evening, I will let you splash in the tub and not get angry.

Just for this evening, I will let you stay up late while we sit on the porch and count all the stars.

Just for this evening, I will snuggle beside you for hours, and miss my favorite TV shows.

Just for this evening when I run my finger through your hair as you pray, I will simply be grateful that God has given me the greatest gift ever given.

I will think about the mothers and fathers who are searching for their missing children, the mothers and fathers who are visiting their children's graves instead of their bedrooms, and mothers and fathers who are in hospital rooms watching their children suffer senselessly, and screaming inside they

can't handle it anymore.

And when I kiss you goodnight I will hold you a little tighter, a little longer. It is then, that I will thank God for you, and ask him for nothing, except one more day.....

We get so involved in our daily routines that we tend to forget what great gifts our children REALLY ARE.

We never know if God is going to give us one more day.

Last November just before Thanksgiving Norma and I took a ride to distribute our Christmas book the those of you who live on Staten Island. It gives us a chance a spend some time together and we get out of the house on a Sunday. With hundreds upon hundreds of our collection to get out, we make a point that if we are going near someone's house we delivery rather than mail.

We decided to drop off several books to Roberta and Paul Kleinau at Kitty's Florist on Richmond Road and upon entering the florist shop noticed that Paul was there which was unusual for a Sunday. Paul has just returned from attending church and was on his way out, but Paul always has time to stop and chat. After we hugged one another Paul said that he had two stories for our upcoming collection and couldn't wait to tell us them.

Story one:

Two young boys around 12 years old were standing outside the operation room at a local hospital. Both were pacing up and down. One boy stopped the other and asked him why HE was pacing.

"I'm having my tonsils out today and am worried about the operation," was the boy's reply.

"There's nothing to it, I had my tonsils out. You are only in the operating room for a short time and when you awake, they give you ice cream and jello. There is nothing to it," said the second boy.

"Boy that's a relief," answered the first young boy.

"Why are you pacing up and down?" asked the second boy.

"I have to be circumcised", came a reply from the first boy.

"Boy," said the second boy, "I had that done too when I was just born and couldn't walk for a year."

Story two:

A Christian man was sitting home after retiring and was reading the paper. He was a pious man, a church goer and involved the community and trusted his life to the Lord. His wife came into the room and said to him, "since your retired why don't you trying doing something else with your life."

"I don't know what I want to do, I think that I will just read the newspaper and maybe something will come to mind," said the man. "But it will have to do with something related to the Christian Life, or the church."

Several minutes later the man called his wife. "Look at this. There is an advertisement from a Christian pet store. Here must be another person who has the exact ideals and commitments to the Lord that I do. Come on get your coat on and let's take a ride." Off they went.

It wasn't long before they arrived at the Christian pet store and were speaking with the owner. The man was right, both he and the pet store owner was involved in their church, did outside ministries and believed that they were blessed by having come to the Lord. It was a great conversation.

"You know as long as I am here, perhaps you have a Christian dog that I can buy from you that would make my life complete," said the man.

"Well I really don't have any Christian dogs except for my own dog Luke, but since you are a Christian man, and only because of that would I be willing to part with my dog," said the pet store owner.

"Luke, come here!"

With that a small spotted dog came running out of the back of the pet store and jumped right up on the counter. "This is my dog, Luke, and he is truly a Christian dog."

"How so?" asked the man.

"What this," said the pet store owner. "Luke, go fetch my bible."

Like a shot the dog was off the counter, ran to the back of the store and immediately came back with a bible in his mouth. He jumped up onto the counter and dropped the Bible down in front of him.

"What's so unusual about that," said the man. Any dog can fetch a newspaper or something like that."

"But wait," said the storekeeper, "watch this."

“Luke, turn to John 3:16.”

The dog immediately started to turn the pages of the Bible with his paws and until he came to the Book of John. The dog immediately pressed his nose to one of the pages and there it was, John 3:16.

“That is absolutely amazing,” said the man. “I have never seen anything quite like that.”

The man bought the dog and brought it home. So excited was he that the man and his wife could not wait to have many of their churchgoers to their home for a big BBQ and to show off Luke. The big day came and dozens of Christian church goers were in attendance at this back yard gathering.

After an hour or so the man could not contain himself anymore. “Ladies and Gentlemen: My wife and I thank you for coming to our backyard party and something very special to share with you. We are the proud owner of a Christian dog, by the name of Luke, which we just bought. He is a very unusual dog and will amaze you with what he can do.

The man called to the dog. “Luke fetch me my Bible.”

Off the dog went into the house and returned with the Bible in his mouth. Jumped up on the BBQ table and placed the Bible in front of his master.

One guest said, “So what is the big deal about that, any dog can be taught to fetch a book or a newspaper.”

“But wait, there is more. Luke, turn to John 3:16,” said the man

The dog started to use his paws turning pages one at a time until he came to the book of John. He then put his nose down right upon John 3:16. The guests were amazed.

“Can he do any other tricks,” came a voice from the crowd.

“I don’t know, I never tried asking him for any other tricks,” came the reply from the man, “but I will give it a try.”

With that the man cried out, “Luke heel”

The dog immediately jumped down from table, ran toward his master, knelt down and placed his paw on the man’s head.

Thank you Paul Kleinau for these stories.

Our oldest grandson, D.J. is a very happy child and has the biggest smile. He has two great big front teeth that are separated by a large chasm of gum. When his class picture came back from the photographer, (he's in the second grade) he noticed the two big teeth in the front of his mouth. He asked his father, "Dad, why are my front teeth so large."

To which my son answered, "Your head just didn't grow into your teeth yet."

This involved one of our family members, but I have been sworn to secrecy in telling the next story, so I will not tell or indicate any names.

Wife speaking with husband. "I am so lucky you just love me so much, we have two lovely children, a beautiful home and we are all healthy."

Husband speaking to wife. "I am lucky too. I work 12 hour days and then you let *me* come home and cook supper."

GRANDMOTHERS

When I was growing up as a young child the greatest joy for me was to visit my grandmother, "Nanny" and my grandfather, "Poppy" is Jackson Heights, Queens, New York. Even in the early years, maybe 10-years-old my Mom and Dad would let me take the 109 bus from our home in Staten Island to the Staten Island Ferry. At the ferry in Manhattan I would walk downstairs and grab the train to 42nd street and then transfer to another train going to Queens. I rode the train to Northern Boulevard and then walked down stairs, as the train was elevated in those parts, and hopped another bus to 30th Avenue - a 30 minute ride. After getting off the bus I walked past the big school yard and several blocks more to my grand parents home at 30-12 87th Street.

It wasn't a very big house, in fact it was a row house, but to me it was the ultimate place to spend a day, a week or the rest of my life.

I truly loved my maternal grandparents. I only remember my father's mother as a red headed, smiling lady, but she went to heaven when I was about 7-years-old. My father's dad died before I was born, so for all intents and purposes I had only one set of grandparents.

In those days people and family congregated around one's parents and grandparents. It was no chore to go visit. Every major holiday - Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, my parents would load my brother and I in the old green four door Hudson and head towards the Staten Island Ferry. The only other way to get to my grand parent's house was to take the 69th Street ferry to Brooklyn, but that line was just as bad. Sometimes the line of cars to the ferry stretch over 3 miles. Once we drove off the ferry in Manhattan it was up the East Side Drive to the Queen's Midtown Tunnel, down Northern Boulevard and through Queens to Jackson Heights. It was a 3 to 3 ½ hour trip, one way. The same trip, only reversed happened late in the evening when Mom and Dad would load us into

the car again for the ride home. Fortunately for my brother and I we slept on the way home, except for pit stops to relief ourselves.

My grandparents had a long lasting effect on my life and it was never a bother to go see them. The love, the caring, the sweet smell of fresh bakery coming from my grandmothers tiny kitchen. Sitting with my grandfather who was totally blind and reading the newspaper to him.

As all the family gathered with cousins, aunts, uncle, friends from far and near and your mom, dad and sibling it was a time of great joy to be part of a loving family. You felt comfortable, loved and cared for. You were a part of the whole and you knew it. What a great feeling.

I miss those days and the touch of my grandmothers hand on my head, or the smell of her as she passed by— a smell of fresh baked bread coupled with the faint distinct smell of Noxzema. Sometimes when I am all alone, even now, and just about ready to fall asleep I can almost smell that wonderful woman. I really loved her.

Now why and I telling you a story about my Nanny?

I don't watch much television, I have other things to do, but I happen to run across a program about a soup kitchen someplace in big city on the East Coast. There, hundreds of elderly men and women with no place else to go lined up every day for their big (and probably the only) meal of the day. They stood out there in the cold, all alone, quietly in this line waiting to get into the warmth of the dining room of the church. The minister of the church came out with his coat about his body and welcomed each and every one of the people by name. Not all did he know, as there were new faces every day, but he tried to make them part of the family. Family. I stress family because all these elderly people had one thing in common, they were a family of homeless and street people. Those who slept in cold abandoned buildings or in cardboard boxes under the train tracks. But they were family non the less.

The next scene was a man in his 60's and a younger woman in a van who were delivering food to those families that could not make the food pantry. Either they lived to far away from the food pantry or with six children to dress and hustle across town could not make the trip, never the less carry the boxes of canned goods and stuff home. So, every Sunday the van would be loaded with boxes of food and the trip was made.

Most of the deliveries were in the rundown areas of town. There were no door knobs on the front door. Bathrooms and running water were never available and as for heat, one only had a gas stove or burners from the stove in the kitchen. One elderly woman had a toaster oven lit at the head of her bed. The door of the toaster oven was open and there was an orangy glow from her heater to warm her in this tiny apartment. Most of the families were comprised of woman and children with little evidence of men around and for the most part the head of the household was a grandmother. Why? Because the mother of these children was usually on drugs and not around to love and nuture the children. The grandmother was the giver of love, the provider of comfort, the counselor.....she was seen by these children as their provider. Some of these grandmothers had little income from

public assistance. They would receive \$380 per month and would pay a slum landlord \$350 per month in rent. How can you feed six children and yourself on \$30 per month. Somehow they survived and the food and canned goods that were delivered were a God sent.

In this neighborhood was a Catholic elementary school that was run by an order of Nuns. These neighborhood children would come to school to be taught. They came with old clothes, knotted hair and hungry and tired from being kept away by the rats running over their beds at night. But they were God's children and these Nuns not only had to teach them their three "r's", but had to attempt to teach some spiritual aspects of life to these children.

One Nun in particular thought that she would teach the second grand children the Our Father and how to bless themselves. The Nun started by teaching the children how to bless themselves with "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The children were not impressed, but most of all they didn't understand the term "Father" as they were no fathers around. The father's of these children were non-existent in their households. There was no understanding of what a father's role should be in these children's lives. They did not understand the Father part of the blessing. In fact, the Nun would see a sad expression on the faces of most of these children when the "Father" part of the blessing was used.

All of a sudden it dawned on the Nun and realizing the family structure of these children with no fathers present that it was the grandmother who held that position in the family. It was the grandmother who was the father and mother to these children.

The following morning, as the first grade children were seated in the Nun's classroom the Nun asked the children to rise and the Nun was going to teach them a new blessing. The little children looked at one another, but stood there in silence waiting for the Nun to speak.

"Children, from now on, we are going to repeat the blessing a new way, and I want to repeat after me, 'In the name of the *Grandmother, Son and Holy Spirit*'.

Immediately there were smiles from the children faces as they now understood the blessing. It was the grandmother who took the place of the father and something solid that these children could related to. A new lesson was learned that day.

Now you know why grandmother's are so important.

Del Smith

Life is wonderful when your grandchild crawls up into your lap and proceeds to fall asleep. That is the greatest testimony of love one can experience. Total peace.

"Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me and be my friend."

Were times simpler or were people?

Do you remember a time when.....

Decisions were made by going "eeny-meeny-miney-mo."

Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming, "do over!"

"Race issue" meant arguing about who ran the fastest.

Money issues were handled by whoever was the banker in "Monopoly."

Catching the fireflies could happily occupy an entire evening.

It wasn't odd to have two or three "best" friends.

Being old, referred to anyone over 20.

The net on a tennis court was the perfect height to play volleyball and rules didn't matter.

The worst thing you could catch from the opposite sex was cooties.

It was magic when dad would "remove" your nose with his thumb.

It was unbelievable that dodge ball wasn't an Olympic event.

Having a weapon in school, meant being caught with a slingshot.

Nobody was prettier than Mom.

Scrapes and bruises were kissed and made better.

It was a big deal to finally be tall enough to ride the "big people" rides at the amusement park.

Getting a foot of snow was a dream come true.

Abilities were discovered because of a "double-dog-dare."

Saturday morning cartoons weren't 30-minute ads for action figures.

No shopping trip was complete, unless a new toy was brought home.

"Oly-oly-oxen-free" made perfect sense.

Spinning around, getting dizzy and falling down was cause for giggles.

The worst embarrassment was being picked last for a team.

War was a card game.

Water balloons were the ultimate weapon.

Baseball cards in the spokes transformed any bike into a motorcycle.

Taking drugs meant orange-flavored chewable aspirin.

Ice cream was considered a basic food group.

Older siblings were the worst tormentors, but also the fiercest protectors.

If you can remember most or all of these, then you have LIVED!!!!

Pass this on to anyone who may need a break from their "grown up" life...

I DOUBLE DOG DARE YA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Our five-year-old granddaughter, Gracie, was so pleased to hold Laura's new baby girl, Katlyn Faith. Katlyn was only 3-weeks-old and Gracie immediately took possession of her. Immediately upon returning to Gettysburg where she lives with her sister, Norma Jean and her mom and dad, she couldn't wait to tell her school mates about Katlin her new found *girlfriend*.

So Gracie got on the bus and was soon at school. She was playing with Timmy, one of her school mates and said to him, "I have a new friend and *HER* name is Katlyn Faith."

Timmy replied, "Katlyn Faith is a *boys* name."

To which Gracie piped up in a loud voice, "*He* is not a boy, *He's* a girl!"

A Thought For Christmas

Do you know what would have happened If they had been Three Wise Women Instead of Three Wise Men?

They would have asked directions,
Arrived on time,
Helped deliver the baby,
Cleaned the stable,
Made a casserole,
Brought practical gifts and
There would be Peace On Earth.

Subject: Election Poets

In olden times it could be decades before major events were cast in verse. But the Great 2000 election controversy is so big that a bunch of all-star poets have come out of retirement to quickly set the story to rhyme.

For starters, history buff Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Listen, my children, don't dare ignore,

The midnight actions of Bush and Gore

In early November, the year ought-ought,

Hard to believe the mess they wrought.

Two billion bucks of campaign bounty

All came down to Palm Beach County.

What result could have been horrid

Than the situation we found in Florider?

Edgar Allen Poe is his usual gloomy self:

Once upon a campaign dreary, one which left us weak and weary
O'er many a quaint and curious promise of political lore
While we nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a yapping,
As of some votes overlapping, energy-zapping to the core
"Tis a mess here," we all muttered, as the network anchors stuttered,
Stuttered over Bush and Gore.

Could there be another election with such a case of misdirection, yet
fraught with tension to the core? Quoth the ravens, "Nevermore."

Britain's Edward Lear's limerick is lighter:

There once was a U. S. election
That called for some expert detection:
How thousands of pollers
Could become two holers
Like outhouses of recollection

Ditto Ogden Nash:

I regret to admit that all my knowledge is
What I learned at Electoral Colleges,
So tell me please, though I hate to troubya,
Will the winner be Al, or will it be Dubya?

Joyce Kilmer's a media analyst:

I thought that I would never see

The networks all so up a tree.

Walt Whitman is lyrical, as always:

O' Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip's not done

The ship has weather'd every rack, but nobody knows who's won.

Alfred Noyes rhythmically rumbles:

And still of an autumn night they say, with the White House on the line,

When the campaign's a ghostly galleon and both candidates cry, "'Tis mine!"

When the road is a ribbon of ballots, all within easy reach,

A highwayman comes riding,

Riding,

Riding,

A highwayman comes riding and punches two holes in each.

Dr. Seuss takes a look at election officials

I cannot count them in a box

I cannot count them with a fox

I cannot count them by computer

I will not with a Roto-Rooter

I cannot count them card-by-card

I will not 'cause it's way too hard

I cannot count them on my fingers,

I will not while suspicion lingers.

I'll leave the country in a jam.

I can't count ballots, Sam-I-Am.

Clement Moore adopts a holiday theme:

'Twas the month before Christmas, when all through the courts,

all the plaintiffs made stirring bad ballot reports.

Which leaves the problem:

Perhaps the best way to stop complaints that are raucous is

Start over again, with the Iowa caucuses.

We had just returned from a Christmas Party at Beacon Light Lodge in Tottenville. My two grandchildren, D.J. and Jonathan ran into the house with their balloons and presents. Their mother, Lili, was in the living room decorating a huge 15 foot high Christmas tree. She had lights and beautiful ornaments and tiny ribbons. It was one of the fullest Christmas trees I had even seen and there it was right in the front window of their home.

Lili asked me how I like the tree. I stepped back from the tree and took several minutes looking at it, as I moved my head from side to side. Then I said with a firm but kidding voice, "Lili, its crooked."

Lili, never at a loss for words replied, "I know. that's because there's too much *fur* on one side of the tree." Lili has better words of wisdom than Yogi Berra.

Our good friends Kathy and Ray Hartman have two grandchildren, Ben (5), and Matty (3). They have taught the children a blessing which is "God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food. However, the blessing from Matty came out like this, "God is great, *that is good*, let us thank us Him for our food."

Hedy Page and I were having a discussion and she was reminded of a story her 98 year-old mother told her.....A little boy came running into the house with a bloody nose. His mother asked him what happened, "A boy hit me in the nose," was the little boy's reply.

"Quickly," the mother said, "run out and do something good to balance the world."

DANCE LIKE NO ONE IS WATCHING.

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This," he said, "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite; silk, handmade and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure on it was still attached. "Jan bought this the first time we went to New York, at least 8 or 9 years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is the occasion." He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the mortician. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment, then he slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him and my niece attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning to California from the Midwestern town where my sister's family lives. I thought about all the things that she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special.

I'm still thinking about his words, and they've changed my life. I'm reading more and dusting less. I'm sitting on the deck and admiring the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I'm spending more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings.

Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savor, not endure. I'm trying to recognize these moments now and cherish them. I'm not "saving" anything; we use our good china and crystal for every special event-such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I like it. My theory is if I look prosperous, I can shell out \$28.49 for one small bag of groceries without wincing.

I'm not saving my good perfume for special parties; clerks in hardware stores and tellers in banks have noses that function as well as my party-going friends.

"Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing or hearing or doing, I want to see and hear and do it now.

I'm not sure what my sister would've done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrow we all take for granted. I think she would have called family members and a few close friends. She might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. I like to think she would have gone out for a Chinese dinner, her favorite food.

I'm guessing -I'll never know.

It's those little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew that my hours were limited.

Angry because I put off seeing good friends whom I was going to get in touch with - someday.

Angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write - one of these days.

Angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband often enough how much I truly love him. I'm trying very hard not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. And every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it is special. Every day, every minute, every breath truly is a gift from God.

You've got to dance like nobody's watching, and love like it's never going to hurt....

"People say true friends must always hold hands, but true friends don't need to hold hands because they know the other hand will always be there."

Enjoy the moment!

The rain continued: "From now on, when it rains, IT'S ALL IN THE RESUMES

TO: Jesus, Son of Joseph
The Woodcrafter's Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 25922

FROM: Jordan Management Consultants
Jerusalem 26544

RE: Personnel Evaluations

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization.

All of them have now taken our battery of tests, and we have not only run the results through our computers, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocation aptitude consultant.

It is the opinion of the staff that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capacity.

We have summarized the findings of our study below:

Simon Peter is emotional, unstable and given to fits of temper.

Andrew has absolutely no quality of leadership.

The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interests above Company loyalty.

Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale.

We believe it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau.

James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, definitely have radical leanings. Additionally, they both registered high scores on the manic depressive scale.

However, one of the candidates shows great potential. He's a man of ability and resourcefulness; he is a great networker; has a keen business mind; and has strong contacts in influential circles. He's highly motivated, very ambitious and adept with financial matters. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your Controller and Chief Operating Officer.

All the other profiles are self-explanatory. We wish you the utmost success in your new venture.

What if Jesus had chosen the twelve based on the modern methods of leadership selection? Most of them would have never had a chance to participate. Jesus chooses people not for who they are, but for what they can become in Him. Aren't you glad that when Jesus looked at you, He didn't take you for what you were (a sinner); but He took you for what you could be?

Jesus sees the potential in all of us, and has called us to be disciples. Jesus is still saying, "Follow Me!"

-- Author Unknown

Thanks, Dayna Redman

Thought you might enjoy this recipe!! Perfect for those of you with children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews!! Or if you know someone who does.

Make these the night before Easter. Preheat oven to 300 degrees first. This is important - don't wait until you're done preparing everything else.

You will need:

- 1 cup whole pecans
- 1 tsp. vinegar
- 3 egg whites
- pinch of salt 1 cup sugar
- 1 ziplock bag
- wooden spoon
- scotch tape
- Bible
- Electric mixer
- Baking sheet
- Waxed paper
- oven

Place the pecans in a ziplock bag and let the children beat them with the spoon until they are in small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, he was beaten by Roman soldiers.

~ Read John 19: 1-3

Let each child smell and taste the vinegar. Put one tsp. of vinegar in the mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was on the cross, He was thirsty and the soldiers gave him vinegar to drink.

~ Read John 19: 28-30.

Add egg whites to the vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave his life for us.

~ Read John 10: 10-11

Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste the salt and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears that Jesus's followers shed and the bitterness of our own sin.

~ Read Luke 23:27

So far, the ingredients aren't very appetizing. Add one cup of sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died for us because he loves us. He wants us to know and belong to him.

~ Read Ps:34:8 and John 3:16

Beat the ingredients on high speed for 12-15 minutes until stiff peaks form. Explain that the color white represents purity in God's eyes of those whose sins are cleansed by Jesus.

~ Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3

Fold in the broken nuts. Drop by rounded teaspoons on to waxed paper covered baking sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus was buried.

~ Read Matt 27:57-60

Put the cookie sheet in the preheated oven, and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape to seal the oven door shut. Explain that the tomb of Jesus was sealed.

~ Read Matt 27:65-66

GO TO BED! Explain that they may be sad to leave the cookies in the oven over night. Jesus's followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed.

~ Read John 16: 20 and 22.

On Easter morning open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The Easter cookies are Hollow! On the first day of Easter, Jesus's followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty.

Jesus has Risen!

~ Read Matt 28: 1-9.

It would be wonderful to make Easter more than hunting for candy and colored eggs.

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

Author: Gail Welch

"Why are you crying?" he asked his mom "Because I'm a mother" she told him.

"I don't understand," he said.

His mom just hugged him and said, "You never will."

Later the little boy asked his father why Mother seemed to cry for no reason. "All mothers cry for no reason" was all his dad could say.

The little boy grew up and became a man, still wondering why mothers cry. So he finally asked God, "God, why do mothers cry so easily?"

God said, "You see son, when I made mothers they had to be special. I made their shoulders strong enough to carry the weight of the world, yet gentle enough to give comfort."

"I gave them an inner strength to endure childbirth and the rejection that many times comes from their children."

"I gave them a hardiness that allows them to keep going when everyone else gives up, and to take care of their families through sickness and fatigue without complaining."

"I gave them the sensitivity to love their children under all circumstances, even when their child has hurt them very badly. his same sensitivity helps them to make a child's boo-boo feel better and helps them share a teenager's anxieties and fears."

"I gave them a tear to shed. It's theirs exclusively to use whenever it is needed. It's their only weakness. It's a tear for mankind."

Tickets For Two

A travel agent looked up from his desk to see an older lady and an older gentleman peering in the shop window at the posters showing the glamorous destinations around the world.

The agent being a God-fearing man and having had an exceedingly profitable year, seeing the dejected couple looking in the window was inspired to a rare feeling of generosity. It was Christmas time and in the spirit of Christmas he called them into his shop and said, "I bet that on your pension you could never hope to have a holiday, so I am sending you off to a fabulous resort at my expense, and I won't take no for an answer!"

He took them inside and asked his secretary to write two flight tickets and to book a room in a five star hotel. They, as expected, gladly accepted, and were on their way.

About a month later the little lady came in to his shop.

"And how did you like your holiday?" the travel agent asked eagerly.

"The flight was exciting and the room was lovely," she said. "I've come to thank you. But one thing puzzled me."

"What would that be?" asked the travel agent.

"Who was that old guy I had to share the room with?"

Twas the night before Christmas and Santa's a wreck,
How to live in a world politically correct.
His workers no longer want to be elves,
Vertically challenged they're calling themselves.

And labor conditions at the North Pole,
Were alleged by the union to stifle the soul.
4 reindeer have vanished without much propriety,
Released to the wild by the humane society.

And equal employment has made it quite clear,
That Santa cannot use just his reindeer.
So Dancer and Donner and Comet and Cupid
Were replaced by 4 pigs (and that sure looks stupid).

Runners were removed from his sleigh,
Being determined dangerous by the E. P. A.
And people started to call the cops,
When they heard noises on their rooftops.

Second hand smoke from his pipe made them frightened,
And a fur trimmed suit was called unenlightened.
And to show you the strangeness of life's ebb and flows,
Rudolph's lawyer was suing for use of his nose.

He'd gone on Springer in front of the nation,
Demanding millions in compensation.
So with half of his reindeer gone and his wife,
Saying she's had enough of this life

Joined a empowerment group and left in a whizz,
Demanding that now her title was MS.
And as for the gifts , he had no notion
That making a choice causes so much commotion.

Nothing of leather, nothing of fur,
What to give him? What to give her?
Nothing that may possibly pollute,
Nothing that can aim and then shoot

Nothing that clamored or made too much noise,
Nothing that's just for girls or for boys,
Nothing that's too gender specific,
Nothing warlike or too non-pacific,

No candy that can be harmful to your tooth,
Nothing that embellishes a truth.
And faerie tales, while not yet forbidden,
Like Ken and Barbie are better off hidden.

For they raised the hackles of those psychological,
Who say the only good gifts are those ecological.
Dolls are sexist and should be passe,
Play station will just rot brain cells away.

So Santa sat there quite perplexed,
He didn't know what to do next.
He tried to be merry, tried to be gay,
But you must be careful with that word today.

His sack went limp and fell to the ground,
Nothing acceptable was to be found.
So a gift was needed with no indecision
To please every group and every religion.

Every culture of every hue,
Everyone everywhere (even you).
So here's the gift,
Priced beyond worth

May you and your loved ones enjoy peace on earth!

Sung to the melody of a Winter Wonder Land.

Palm trees wave, are you listenin'?
In the pool, water's glistenin',
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight
Luv'in in a Phoenix Wonderland.

Gone away is the blizzard,
Here to stay is the lizard,
A warm sunny day, we like it that way,
Luv'in, in a Phoenix Wonderland.

In the desert we will have a picnic,
Cactus, sand and rattlesnakes and sun.
Christmas dinner is an old tradition,
It's pinto beans and tacos by the ton.

Later on we'll perspire,
Temperatures rise even higher,
A warm sunny day, we like it that way,
Luv'in in a Phoenix Wonderland.

THE GREATEST OF THESE GIFTS IS LOVE.

A woman came out of her house and saw 3 old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them. She said, "I don't think I know you, but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat."

"Is the man of the house home?" they asked.

"No," she said. "He's out."

"Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. "Go tell them I am home and invite them in!"

The woman went out and invited the men in.

"We do not go into a House together," they replied.

“Why is that?” she wanted to know.

One of the old men explained: “His name is Wealth, he said pointing to one of his friends, and I said pointing to another one, “He is Success and I am Love.” Then he added. “Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home.”

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. “How Nice!!” he said. “Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come in and fill our home with wealth!”

His wife disagreed. “My dear, why don’t we invite Success?”

Their daughter-in-law was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her own suggestion: “Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love!”

“Let us heed our daughter-in-law’s advice,” said the husband to his wife. “Go out and invite Love to be our guest.”

The woman went out and asked the 3 old men, “Which one of you is love? Please come in and be our guest. Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other 2 got up and followed him.

Surprised the lady asked Wealth and Success: “I only invited Love, why are you coming in?” The old men replied together: “If you have invited Wealth or Success, the other two of us would have stayed out, but since You invited Love, wherever he goes, we go with him. Where there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success.

One oppressive winter day, I dragged about the house carrying the weight of the lead sky. I had so much to do that it felt like I’d never finish. The telephone rang. It was my friend Penny. “Kathleen and I are going to the diner for lunch. Come with us.”

I heaved a dutiful sigh and explained that I had too much to do. I hung up and turned to the desk. Outside, thick wet flakes of snow began falling, sticking to the window like lacy invitations. Come out and play they seemed to say. I pictured my friends at our favorite diner. I was hungry. And I had a headache.

Ten minutes later I was in my car, wipers slapping, slush hitting the fenders, guilt weighing me down. As I pulled into the parking lot, I could see my friends through the window. They were laughing.

When I joined them, Penny was telling a story. I leaned in to listen to my friend whose bubbling laughter cannot be resisted. We ate steaming bowls of chowder and shared funny stories until tears ran down our cheeks. My headache was gone.

When I finally returned home, the pile of work looked different – not as high or foreboding. Perhaps because I was seeing it through a fun-washed spirit that had scrubbed duty down to a manageable size.

Sharp Smyth

Just before Christmas our dear friend, Richie Rodin, received a phone call from one of his relatives that they would like Richie to play Santa Claus for the children at the family gathering. Richie was so excited and pleased to be asked to play this important part. Richie's cousin said to Richie, who is Jewish, "Hey, remember you can't say Gezi ge zunt (a Jewish Blessing) you have to say Ho, Ho, Ho." So Richie was practicing his Ho, Ho, Ho's.

When Richie was telling me his story I told him I had an alternative for him. When he meets all the Jewish children playing Santa Claus he should say, "Gezi ge HO."

Remember Santa Claus is ecumenical.....

About a week before Christmas, our family bought a new nativity scene.

When we unpacked it, we found two figures of the Baby Jesus. "Someone must have packed this wrong," mother said, counting out the figures. "We have one Joseph, one Mary, three wise men, three shepherds, two lambs, a donkey, a cow, an angel and two babies. Oh, dear! I suppose some set down at the store is missing a Baby Jesus because we have two."

"You two run back down to the store and tell the manager that we have an extra Jesus. Tell him to put a sign on the remaining boxes saying that if a set is missing a Baby Jesus, call 7126. Put on your warm coats, it's freezing cold out there."

The manager of the store copied down mother's message and the next time they were in the store they saw the cardboard sign that read, "If you're missing Baby Jesus, call 7126."

All week long we waited for someone to call. Surely, we thought, someone was missing that important figurine. Each time the phone rang, mother would say, "I'll bet that's about Jesus," but it never was.

Father tried to explain, there are thousands of these scattered over the country and the figurine could be missing from a set in Florida or Texas or California. Those packing mistakes happen all the time. He suggested we just put the extra Jesus back in the box and forget about it.

"Put Baby Jesus back in the box! What a terrible thing to do" we children said. "Surely someone will call," mother said. "We'll just keep the two of them together in the manger until someone calls."

When no call had come by 5:00 on Christmas Eve, mother insisted that father just run down to the store to see if there were any sets left. "You can see them right through the window, over on the counter," she said. "If they are all gone, I'll know someone is bound to call tonight."

"Run down to the store?" father thundered. "It's 15 below zero out there!"

"Oh, Daddy, we'll go with you," Tommy and Mary began to put on their coats. Father gave a long sigh and headed for the front closet. "I can't believe I'm doing this," he muttered.

Tommy and Mary ran ahead as father reluctantly walked out in the cold. Mary got to the store first and pressed her nose up to the store window. "They're all gone, Daddy," she shouted. "Every set must be sold."

"Hooray," Tommy said, "The mystery will now be solved tonight!" Father heard the news still a half block away and immediately turned on his heel and headed back home.

When we got back into the house we noticed that mother was gone and so was the extra Baby Jesus figurine. "Someone must have called and she went out to deliver the figurine," my father reasoned, pulling off his boots.

"You kids get ready for bed while I wrap mother's present."

Then the phone rang. Father yelled, "Answer the phone and tell 'em we found a home for Jesus." But it was mother calling with instructions for us to come to 205 Chestnut Street immediately, and bring three blankets, a box of cookies and some milk.

"Now what has she gotten us into?" my father groaned as we bundled up again. "205 Chestnut. Why, that's across town. Wrap that milk up good in the blankets or it will turn to ice before we get there. Why can't we all just get on with Christmas? It's probably 20 below out there now. And the wind is picking up. Of all the crazy things to do on a night like this."

When we got to the house at 205 Chestnut Street it was the darkest one on the block. Only one tiny light burned in the living room, and the moment we set foot on the porch steps, my mother opened the door and shouted, "They're here, oh thank God you got here, Ray! You kids take those blankets into the living room and wrap up the little ones on the couch. I'll take the milk and cookies."

"Would you mind telling me what is going on, Ethel?" my father asked. "We have just walked through below zero weather with the wind in our faces all the way."

"Never mind all that now," my mother interrupted. "There is no heat in this house and this young mother is so upset she doesn't know what to do. Her husband walked out on her and those poor little children will have a very bleak Christmas, so don't you complain. I told her you could fix that oil

furnace in a jiffy."

My mother strode off to the kitchen to warm the milk while my brother and I wrapped up the five little children who were huddled together on the couch. The children's mother explained to my father that her husband had run off, taking bedding, clothing and almost every piece of furniture, but she had been doing all right until the furnace broke down. "I been doin' washin' and ironin' for people and cleanin' the five and dime," she said. "I saw your number every day there on those boxes on the counter.

When the furnace went out, that number kept goin' through my mind -- 7162, 7162. Said on the box that if a person was missin' Jesus, they should call you. That's how I knew you were good Christian people, willin' to help folks. I figured that maybe you would help me, too. So I stopped at the grocery store tonight and I called your missus. I'm not missin' Jesus, mister, because I sure love the Lord. But I am missin' heat. I have no money to fix that furnace."

"Okay, Okay," said father. "You've come to the right place. Now let's see. You've got a little oil burner over there in the dining room. Shouldn't be too hard to fix. Probably just a clogged flue. I'll look it over, see what it needs."

Mother came into the living room carrying a plate of cookies and warm milk. As she set the cups down on the coffee table, I noticed the figure of Baby Jesus lying in the center of the table. It was the only sign of Christmas in the house. The children stared wide-eyed with wonder at the plate of cookies my mother set before them.

Father finally got the oil burner working but said, "You need more oil. I'll make a few calls tonight and get some oil. Yes ma'am, you came to the right place," father grinned.

On the way home father did not complain about the cold weather and had barely set foot inside the door when he was on the phone. "Ed, hey, how are ya, Ed?

Yes, Merry Christmas to you, too. Say Ed, we have kind of an unusual situation here, I know you've got that pick-up truck. Do you still have some oil in that barrel on your truck? You do?"

By this time the rest of the family were pulling clothes out of their closets and toys off of their shelves. It was long after our bedtime when we were wrapping gifts.

The pickup came. On it were chairs, three lamps, blankets and gifts. Even though it was 30 below, father let us ride along in the back of the truck.

No one ever did call about the missing figure in the nativity set, but as I grow older, I realize that it wasn't a packing mistake at all.

Jesus saves, that's what He does.

Mean Moms

We had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast.

When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches. And you can guess our mother fixed us a dinner that was different from what other kids had, too.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison. She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. She insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labor Laws by making us work. We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do.

She always insisted on us telling the truth the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. By the time we were teenagers, she could read our minds.

Then, life was really tough! Mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so she could meet them.

While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16.

Because of our mother we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property, or ever arrested for any crime. It was all her fault.

Now that we have left home, we are all God-fearing, educated, honest adults. We are doing our best to be mean parents just like Mom was.

I think that's what's wrong with the world today. It just doesn't have enough mean moms anymore.

In 1555, Nostradamus wrote:

"Come the millennium, month 12,
In the home of greatest power,
The village idiot will come forth
To be acclaimed the leader."

...weird.

THE TRUE BREAD OF LIFE.

Norma and I just received an envelope of maybe 4 inches by 6 inches and upon opening the envelope we discovered *Christmas wafers* that were sent to us by Jean Kosnik. The wafers were extremely thin and light and reminded one of the Eucharist that is served in church.

We turned over the envelope and on the back it read:

A LEGACY FROM THE PAST: WIGLIA/STEDRY BECER/KUCIOS - THE VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS EVE.

Hearts and minds enter the cottage, eyes attentive to detail. The room is tidy and clean. From its ceiling dangles multi-colors paper "worlds" and garlands. The atmosphere is a pleasant blend of the scent of freshly cut evergreens and the aroma of ceremonial foods tantalizing the palate. Finally, the anticipation of the four long weeks of Advent culminate in the most reverent, beautiful legacy/tradition Vigil of Christmas Eve.

Earlier, the father had entered the home with a sheaf of grain which he placed in the corner. This represents the home's Guardian Angel. The family table, adomed to be a symbolic manger of Bethlehem, has been hallowed by the hay placed under the fine linen cloth. Since sunset, the youngest child has been peering through the window pane. Soon the child exclaims, "It is here! The Star! With warm hearts the members and guests gather around the food-laden table. They begin the ages-long Christmas Eve Feast with the breaking of the sacred oplatek - *The Christmas wafer*. This is the holiest or all the nights of the year in the Polish home, the Slovak home, and the Lithuanian home. This "Legacy from the Past" is being shared by growing numbers of Christians.

This ancient ritual unites past with present...heaven and earth. An empty place is set in memoriam of ancestors, and/or Christ. There is a high hope that Christ, as the unexpected Guest will come and bless the gathering. "A guest in the home is Christ in the home." As each of the odd-numbered courses is served, a small portion is set aside for the animals. At the first Christmas, when Christ was born, the animals were, were the not, the only honored "eye witnesses" and they deserve to be remembered. Truly "Our Christmas Oblation (sm) OCO is for everyone. Begun millenniums ago, this yearly ritual and rich heritage continues wherever the blessed *Christmas wafer* is shared.

The Vigil centers upon the importance of the *Christmas wafer*. It literally unites family wherever we are upon the face of the earth. *Christmas wafers* have been mailed to each other in this holid season to solidify family unity. Distance and time hold no bond as we are plucked out of earth's measure of these concepts into the possibilities of the realm of cosmic Divinity. This is man's humble attempt at reciprocity of God's love in abandoning the security of eternity for His deepest penetration into human forms as the Son of the Virgin Mary, the Babe of Bethlehem - our Lord Jesus Christ. The Vigil of Christmas Eve in the home is culminated by the family's journey to the Parish Church. Here, after the sacred observance in the home, we praise God for His Wondrous Gift. May the Presence of the Babe of Bethlehem, the True Bread of Life from Heaven, bring to each of us through our

Christmas wafer.....

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS WITH LOVE, JOY PEACE AND HAPPINESS IN THE NEW YEAR.

If you would like you can write to the Christmas Wafer Bakery, POB 99, Lewiston, NY 14092.

THE ONLY FAILURE IS NOT KNOWING HOW TO BE HAPPY!

People ask how I feel about getting old. I tell them I have the same question. I'm learning as I go.

Our grandson, D.J. (8) was riding with his father, Darren, in their Lincoln town car. Darren always put D.J. in the back seat.

The conversation went something like this....."Dad, how come you make me sit in the back seat?"

Darren replied, "When I was a little boy, my father (Poppy) also had a Lincoln town car and would make me sit in the back also."

To which D.J. replied, "Boy, Poppy is so old they must have made cars out of *wood* in those days."

Jessica, our 9-year-old granddaughter just came back from visiting her mother's relatives where Jimmy, her father, played Santa Clause.

"Where did you get that beautiful doll?" I asked Jessica.

"I got it from Santa.....you know..... A/K/A Daddy."

Associated Press 12/31/2000

Victim of IRA blast is buried after 13 years in a coma.

Admiration expressed for wife who bought nursing home where she kept vigil for badly injured husband.

KILKEEL, Northern Ireland-

A man who died 13 years after a bomb sent him into a coma was buried yesterday, closing a story of dogged, uncomplaining devotion by the wife who was constantly at his bedside. Ronnie Hill, 68, was caught in the attack. Noreen Hill bought a nursing home 10 miles east of Belfast in 1991 and lived in a apartment there so she could take care of her husband out of the hospital and provide constant care.

She read the Bible to him, or tuned the radio to broadcasts of rugby and cricket - sports he had once coached. "And I accepted what happened to Ronnie," she said. "I know the Lord could have prevented that, but it wasn't his will. I will be told, at some stage when I meet God, why it happened. But at the moment, I just have to life with it.

Talk about devotion!

Just a reminder that the Ark was built by amateurs and the Titanic by professionals.

Anyone who knows the author knows that he loves ice cream and has set several Poppy's rules to live by for his grandchildren.

1. Ice cream can be eaten for breakfast.
2. When dining out, eat dessert first.
3. If its raining, it's an ice cream day.

That being said for all of your aficionados here is a list of web sites about ice-cream.

WWW.SODAFOUNTAIN.COM - The site gives the history of the soda fountain and historical recipes such as Coca Cola and Pepsi.

WWW.ICECREAMERS.COM

WWW.MAKEICECREAM.COM

WWW.BOMBPOP.COM

WWW.DOITYOURSELF.COM/CLEAN/ICECREAM.HTM

You are on your own now. Don't forget Ralph's Famous Ices in Staten Island and the Corona Ice King in Brooklyn.

The month after Christmas

Tw'as the month after Christmas, and all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.
The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste
All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.
When I got on the scales there arose such a number!
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).
I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."
As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt--
I said to myself, as I only can "You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"
So, away with the last of the sour cream dip,
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
Till all the additional ounces have vanished.
I won't have a cookie, not even a lick.
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.
I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore---
But isn't that what January is for?
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!

This comes from a Catholic elementary school. Kids were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments.

They have not been retouched or corrected (i.e., incorrect spelling has been left in.) Enjoy!

In the first book of the bible, Genesis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.

Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals come on to in pears.

Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.

The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals.

Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.

Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.

The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert.

Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.

The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the hebrews in the battle of Geritol.

The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. he fought with the Finklesteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.

Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna carta.

When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, "a man doth not live by sweat alone."

It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.

The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels. Theepistles were the wives of the apostles.

One of the opossums was St. Matthew who was also a taximan.

St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.

Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

Subject: words for today.

There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you want to pick them from your dreams and hug them.

Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be what you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.

Always put yourself in others' shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other person, too.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

Happiness lives for those who cry, those who hurt, those who have searched, and those who tried, for only they can appreciate the importance of people who have touched their lives.

Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends with a tear.

The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past, you can't go on well in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling.

Live your life so that when you die, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.

Please send this message on:

- * to those people who mean something to you,
- * to those who have touched your life in one way or another,
- * to those who make you smile when you really need it,
- * to those that make you see the brighter side of things when you are really down

* and to those you want to tell how much their friendship/love is appreciated.

And, if you don't forward this on... don't worry about it, nothing bad will happen to you; you will just miss out on the opportunity to brighten someone's day with this message.

I asked Jesus....."How much do you love me?"

And Jesus said....."This much."

Then he stretched out His arms and died.

The young people today are not taught about WWII and the men and women who sacrificed their lives for our country. Today and every day over 1,000 veterans die who were members of the WWII battles. When the last one passes away who will remember? My father was in the 36th Engineers and was engaged in every major battle in the European campaign. He was one of 11 men to come back alive out of his original company.

Once the parades are over, a war is finished for most of us. For veterans and their families however, sometimes the battles have just begun. Seek out the veterans in your area and let them know that you appreciate what they did for us. Seek out the families of our deceased veterans and let them know you have not forgotten their enormous sacrifice. Keep in touch with hospitalized veterans through the VA's Chaplain's Service. You may send cards to:

Headquarters, Chaplains Service
301/110C
Hampton, VA 23667

The goal of a honorable war is more than victory. It is a lasting peace.

When you're away at college, there is something wildly lavish about ordering a pizza. My friend and I had been cramming half the night, and we were starving.

"Got any money?" he asked. "I'm thinking pizza."

I went through my pockets: one dollar bill, two quarters, plus seven pennies in my desk. My friend had come up with another \$1.15.

"I wish you hadn't mentioned pizza," I said. The couch in the living room yielded another forty cents. "Our coat pockets!" I was now a man with a mission. One the way, something told me to stop at the mail table. I was surprised to see a letter in my sister's handwriting. As I ripped open the envelope, a ten dollar bill fluttered to the floor. "Have pizza on your sister." I read in

amazement. She was in the ninth grade at the time —this was her babysitting money. Before the hour was over, we were eating the best pizza in our lives.

I smiled to myself when I remember those empty-pocket days. There will never be another pizza like the one that night. Or maybe there will, I think, as I slip a twenty in an envelope addressed to my sister at college.

“Have a pizza on your brother,” I write. I feel rich beyond description.

Isn't there a brother, sister, cousin, nephew or niece away in college? Why not surprise them?

FRIENDS ARE LIKE ANGELS

My friends are like angels who brighten my days,
In all kinds of wonderful ways.

Their thoughtfulness comes as a gift from above,
and I feel we're surrounded by warm, caring love.

Like an upside-down rainbow their smiles bring the sun,
and they fill ho-hum moments with laughter and fun.

Friends are like angels without any wings,
blessing our lives with the most precious things.

So here is an angel sent from above
to watch over you and the ones that you love

MATURITY

Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence.

Maturity is patience. It is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of a long-term gain.

Maturity is perseverance, the ability to sweat out a project or a situation in spite of heavy opposition and discouraging setbacks.

Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, and discomfort and defeat without complaint or collapse.

Maturity is being big enough to say "I was wrong." And, when right, the mature person need not experience the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so."

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stand by it. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities and then do nothing.

Maturity means dependability, keeping one's word and coming through in a crisis. The immature are masters of the alibi. They are confused and conflicted. Their lives are a maze of broken promises, former friends, unfinished business and good intentions that somehow never materialize.

Maturity is the art of living in pace with what we cannot change, the courage to changed what should be changed and the wisdom to know the difference.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

A weary mother returned from the store
lugging groceries through the kitchen door.
Awaiting arrival was her eight-year-old son
Anxious to relate what his younger brother had done.

While I was playing and Dad was on call,
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall!
It's on the new paper you just hung in the den.
I told him you'd be mad at having to do it again.

She let out a moan and furrowed her brow.
Where is your little brother right now?
She emptied her arms and with a purposeful stride,
She marked to his closet where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as she entered his room.
He trembled with fear.....he knew that meant doom!

For the next ten minutes, she ranted and raved
About the expensive wallpaper and how she had saved.
Lamenting all the work it would take to repair,
She condemned him to his room, totally distraught!

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.
When she saw the wall her eyes flooded with tears.
The message she read pierced her soul with a dart.
It s aid, "I love you Mommy," surrounded by a heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she found it,
With an empty picture frame hung to surround it.
A reminded to her, and indeed to us all,
take time to read the handwriting on the wall.

Thank you Dotty Stratton.

MORSELS.....from the Mouth of Small Fries

OUR 4-year-old grandson was helping in the garden. When he asked what we were planting. I told him it was eggplant. "Oh good!" he replied. "I love eggs."

I INSTRUCTED our son, Jaden, 4, not to eat any cookies before dinner because they'd fill up his tummy and ruin his appetite. A few seconds later, I turned around to see his hands and mouth full of cookies. He explained, "I'm just filling up my back."

PICKLES are one of my son's favorite foods. When I told him I was planning to grow cucumbers in our garden, Nathan, 7, piped up. "Let's make sure we don't pick any until they become pickles."

WHILE making cookies with my 8-year-old granddaughter, I asked her to go to the refrigerator and get two eggs. I told her we'd need to separate them. She placed one of the eggs on the counter across the room and the other egg on the counter nearest me. With a bewildered look, Laura asked, "Now what good does that do?"

OUR son, Aaron, 4, had eaten mostly breaded chicken nuggets and strips before trying his first real chicken drumstick. After taking his first bite, he gave it a curious look and said, "Hey! Who put a bone in the chicken?"

Hi Folks: Got this by Email. it's a long one, but it has truth in it. Thought it might be a good foundation to guide new years resolutions.

The Awakening

A time comes in your life when you finally get it. When in the midst of all your fears and insanity you stop dead in your tracks and somewhere the voice inside your head cries out - ENOUGH! Enough fighting and crying or struggling to hold on.

And, like a child quieting down after a blind tantrum, your sobs begin to subside, you shudder once or twice, you blink back your tears and through a mantle of wet lashes you begin to look at the world through new eyes.

This is your awakening.

You realize that it's time to stop hoping and waiting for something to change, or for happiness, safety and security to come galloping over the next horizon. You come to terms with the fact that he is not Prince Charming and you are not Cinderella, and that in the real world there aren't always fairy tale endings or beginnings for that matter, and that any guarantee of "happily ever after" must begin with you. And in the process, a sense of serenity is born of acceptance.

You awaken to the fact that you are not perfect, and that not everyone will always love, appreciate or approve of who or what you are -- and that's OK. (They are entitled to their own views and opinions.)

And you learn the importance of loving and championing yourself, and in the process, a sense of newly found confidence is born of self-approval.

You stop bitching and blaming other people for the things they did to you (or didn't do for you) and you learn that the only thing you can really count on is the unexpected.

You learn that people don't always say what they mean or mean what they say, and that not everyone will always be there for you, and that it's not always about you.

You learn to stand on your own and to take care of yourself and in the process, a sense of safety & security is born of self-reliance.

You stop judging and pointing fingers, and you begin to accept people as they are, and to overlook their shortcomings and human frailties and, in the process, a sense of peace & contentment is born of forgiveness.

You realize that much of the way you view yourself and the world around you is a result of all the messages and opinions that have been ingrained into your psyche. And you begin to sift through all the crap you've been fed about how you should behave, how you should look, how much you should weigh, what you should wear, where you should shop, what you should drive, how and where you should live, what you should do for a living, who you should sleep with, who you should marry, what you should expect of marriage, the importance of having and raising children, or what you owe your parents.

You learn to open up to new worlds and different points of view. You begin reassessing and redefining who you are and needing, and you begin to discard the doctrines and values you've outgrown, or should never have bought into to begin with, and in the process, you learn to go with your instincts.

You learn that it is truly in giving that we receive. And that there is power and glory in creating and contributing, and you stop maneuvering through life merely as a "consumer" looking for your next fix.

You learn that principles such as honesty and integrity are not the outdated ideals of a bygone era but the mortar that holds together the foundation upon which you must build a life.

You learn that you don't know everything, it's not your job to save the world, and that you can't teach a pig to sing.

You learn to distinguish between guilt and responsibility, and the importance of setting boundaries and learning to say NO.

You learn that the only cross to bear is the one you choose to carry, and that martyrs get burned at the stake.

Then you learn about love. Romantic love and familial love. How to love, how much to give in love, when to stop giving, and when to walk away.

You learn not to project your needs or your feelings onto a relationship.

You learn that you will not be more beautiful, more intelligent, more lovable, or important because of the man or woman on your arm or the child that bears your name.

You learn to look at relationships as they really are and not as you would have them be.

You stop trying to control people, situations, and outcomes.

You learn that just as people grow and change, so it is with love, and you learn that you don't have the right to demand love on your terms just to make you happy.

And, you learn that alone does not mean lonely.

And you look in the mirror and come to terms with the fact that you will never be a size 5 or a perfect 10 and you stop trying to compete with the image inside your head and agonizing over how you "stack up."

You also stop working so hard at putting your feelings aside, smoothing things over, and ignoring your needs.

You learn that feelings of entitlement are perfectly OK, and that it is your right to want things and to ask for the things that you want, and that sometimes it is necessary to make demands.

You come to the realization that you deserve to be treated with love, kindness, sensitivity, and respect, and you will not settle for less.

And you allow only the hands of a lover who cherishes you, to glorify you with his or her touch, and in the process you internalize the meaning of self-respect.

And you learn that your body really is your temple. You begin eating a balanced diet, drinking more water, and taking more time to exercise.

You learn that fatigue diminishes the spirit and can create doubt and fear, so you take more time to rest.

And, just as food fuels the body, laughter fuels our soul, so you take more time to laugh and to play.

You learn that, for the most part, in life you get what you believe you deserve, and that much of life truly is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

You learn that anything worth achieving is worth working for, and that wishing for something to happen is different from working toward making it happen. More importantly, you learn that in order to achieve success, you need direction, discipline, and perseverance.

You also learn that no one can do it all alone and that it's OK to risk asking for help.

You learn that the only thing you must truly fear is the great robber baron of all time, FEAR itself.

You learn to step right into and through your fears, because you know that whatever happens you can handle it, and to give in to fear is to give away the right to live life on your terms.

And you learn to fight for your life and not to squander it living under a cloud of impending doom.

You learn that life isn't always fair, you don't always get what you think you deserve, and that sometimes bad things happen to unsuspecting, good people. On these occasions you learn not to personalize things. You learn that God isn't punishing you or failing to answer your prayers. It's just life happening.

And you learn to deal with evil in its most primal state -- the ego. You learn that negative feelings such as anger, envy, and resentment must be understood and redirected, or they will suffocate the life out of you and poison the universe that surrounds you.

You learn to admit when you are wrong and to build bridges instead of walls.

You learn to be thankful and to take comfort in many of the simple things we take for granted, things that millions of people upon the earth can only dream about; a full refrigerator, clean running water

a soft warm bed, a long hot shower.

Slowly, you begin to take responsibility for yourself, by yourself, and you try to make yourself a promise -- to never betray yourself and to never, ever settle for less than your heart's desire.

And you hang a wind chime outside your window so you can listen to the wind.

And you make it a point to keep smiling, to keep trusting, and to stay open to every wonderful possibility.

Finally, with courage in your heart and with God by your side, you take a stand, you take a deep breath, and you begin to design the life you want to live as best as you can.

- Author Unknown

Subject: Computers

Dr. Seuss Explains Why Computers Sometimes Crash

(Read this to yourself aloud--It's Great!) Let's have a little fun. You owe it to yourself.

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port, and the bus is interrupted at a very last resort, and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort, then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash; and your data is corrupted cause the index doesn't hash, then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house says the network is connected to the button on your mouse, but your packets want to tunnel to another protocol, that is repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall, and your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss, till your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse; then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang, 'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang!

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk and the macro code instructions cause unnecessary risk, then you'll have to flash the memory and you'll want to RAM your ROM. Quickly turn off the computer and be sure to tell your Mom!

WELL! That certainly clears things up for ME

How do you live your Dash?

*I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning — to the end.
He noted that first came her date of birth and spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all was the — dash --- between those years. (1934 - 1999)
For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth.....
And how only those who loved her know what that little time is worth.
For it matters not how much we own, the cars.....the house.....the cash,
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard.....
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.
If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand the way other people feel
And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more,
And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.
If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash might only last a little while
So, when your eulogy's being read with your life's actions to rehash.....
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?*

Author Unknown.

HEART CAUSES

Don't determine your worth by comparing yourself to others.
It is because we are different that each of us is special.
Don't set your goals by what other people deem important.
Only you know what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closest to your heart;
Cling to them as you would your life, for without them life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers
By living in the past or for the future.

By living your life ONE DAY AT A TIME
You live all the days of your life.
Don't give up when you still have something to give.
Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks.
It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don't shut LOVE out of your life by saying its' impossible to find.
The quickest way to receive LOVE is to give LOVE,
The fast way to lose LOVE is to hold it too tightly,
And the best way to keep LOVE is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your dreams.
To be without dreams is to be without HOPE;
To be with HOPE is to be without purpose.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN, but also WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

Life is not a race, BUT A JOURNEY----
TO BE SAVORED EACH STEP OF THE WAY.

Author Unknown.

With all these collections in this book this year by Author Unknown, I think that I should change my name to "Author Unknown." Look at all the credit I could take.

Words of wisdom from Nancy and Dick Redman:

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE MAY NOT SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS,
BUT IT WILL ANNOY ENOUGH PEOPLE TO MAKE IT WORTH THE EFFORT.

Thought for the day:

Live every day to fulfill your personal mission. God has a reason for whatever season you are living right now. A season of loss and blessing? A season of activity or hibernation? A Season of growth or incubation? You may think you are on a detour, but God knows the best way for you to reach your destination.

Get to know your Hymnal

Provided by Ray Hartman

Dentist's Hymn:	"Crown Him With Many Crowns	(LBW #170)
Contractor's Hymn:	"The Church's One Foundation	(#369)
Golfer's Hymn:	"There is a Green Hill Far Away"	(#114)
Gardener's Hymn:	"Lo- How a Rose is Growing"	(#058)
Lawyer's Hymn:	"In the Hour of Trial"	(#106)
Surgeon's Hymn:	"O Sacred Head Now Wounded	(#117)
Jockey's Hymn:	"Ride On, Ride On in Majesty	(#121)
Baker's Hymn:	"O Living Bread From Heaven"	(#197)
Jogger's Hymn:	"O Master, Let Me Walk with You"	(#492)
Boxer's Hymn:	"Fight The Good Fight"	(#461)
Farmer's Hymn:	"We Plow The Fields and Scatter"	(#362)
Prudential Insurance Salesman's Hymn:		
	"Built on a Rock"	(#365)
Defendant's Hymn:	"Just as I am, Without One Plea"	(#296)
Zookeeper's Hymn:	"All Creatures of our God and King"	(#527)
Astronaut's Hymn:	"Earth And All Stars"	(#558)
Obstetrician's Hymn:	"What Child is This"	(#040)
County Maintenance Worker's Hymn:		
	"Prepare the Royal Highway	(#026)
New Orleans Sports Fan's Hymn:	"For All The Saints"	(#174)
Telephone Operators Hymn:	"Jesus Calls Us"	(#494)
Ghost's Hymn:	"Immortal, Invisible"	(#526)
Department Store Clerks Hymn:	"I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"	(#069)
Astronomer's Hymn:	"Brightest and Best of the Stars	
	In The Morning"	(#084)
Excavator's Hymn:	"On Christ, the Solid Rock I Stand"	(#)
Newscaster's Hymn:	"Were You There"	(#092)
News Reporter's Hymn:	"I Love To Tell the Story"	(#390)
Dry Cleaner's Hymn:	"O For a Faith That Will Not Shrink	(#)

—another entry from our friend Ray Hartman.

These songs were taken from the Lutheran Book of Worship

**Hi,
Remember When!**

Close your eyes,
And go back . . .
Before the Internet or the MAC,
Before semiautomatics and crack.
Before chronic and indo;
Before SEGA or Super Nintendo.

Way back. . .

I'm talking about hide and go seek at dusk.
Sitting on the porch, hot bread and butter.
Eating a 'super-doooper sandwich' (Dagwood)
Red light! Green light!
Chocolate milk. Lunch tickets.
Penny candy in a brown paper bag.
Hopscotch, butterscotch, double dutch, Jacks, kickball, dodge ball, y'all!

Mother, May I?
Hula Hoops and Sunflower Seeds, Jaw breakers, blowpops, MaryJanes.
Running through the sprinkler!
I can't get wet! All right; well, don't wet my hair.
The smell of the sun and licking salty lips....

Wait. . .

Catching lightening bugs in a jar.
Playing sling shot and Red Rover.
When around the corner seemed far away,
And going downtown seemed like going somewhere.
Bedtime, Climbing trees, a million mosquito bites and sticky fingers,
Cops and Robbers, Cowboys and Indians, Sitting on the curb.
Jumping down the steps, Jumping on the bed.
Pillow fights.
Being tickled to death; Running till you were out of breath.
Laughing so hard that your stomach hurt!
Being tired from playing.... Remember that?

I ain't finished just yet . . .
What about the girl that had the big bubbly hand writing?
Licking the beaters when your mother made a cake.

Didn't that feel good? Just to go back and say, Yeah, I remember that!

Remember when . . .

When there were two types of sneakers for girls and boys (Keds & PF Flyers),
and the only time you wore them at school, was for "gym."

When nearly everyone's mom was at home when the kids got there.

When nobody owned a purebred dog.

When a quarter was a decent allowance, and
another quarter a huge bonus.

When you'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny.

When girls neither dated nor kissed until late high school, if then.

When your mom wore nylons that came in two pieces.

When all of your male teachers wore neckties
and female teachers had their hair done, everyday.

When you got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas
pumped, without asking, for free, every time.

You didn't pay for air....or drinking water.

And, you got trading stamps to boot!

When laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box.

When any parent could discipline any kid, or feed him or use him to carry groceries, and
nobody, not even the kid, thought a thing of it.

When it was considered a great privilege to be taken out to dinner at a real restaurant with your
parents.

The price of gas was affordable.

Milk came in jars with real bottle caps.

When they threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed...and did!

When being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited a
misbehaving student at home.

Basically, we were in fear for our lives but it wasn't because of drive by shootings, drugs,
gangs, etc.

Disapproval of our parents and grandparents was a much bigger threat!

If you can remember any of these things, I smile with you.

Talk of these things to your children. Don't let these memories fade away completely.

Just talking to your children, friends, or loved ones, and trading memories is a joy.

Life goes quickly. Seize it!

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year olds,

"What does love mean?"

The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined.

"Love is that first feeling you feel before all the bad stuff gets in the way."

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth."

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your french fries without making them give you any of theirs."

"Love is when someone hurts you. And you get so mad but you don't yell at them because you know it would hurt their feelings."

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him to make sure the taste is OK."

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

"When you tell someone something bad about yourself and you're scared they won't love you anymore. But then you get surprised because not only do they still love you, they love you even more."

"There are two kinds of love Our love. God's love. But God makes both kinds of them."

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday."

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."

"Love is when mommy gives daddy the best piece of chicken."

Love is when mommy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones."

"Love cards like Valentine's cards say stuff on them that we'd like to say ourselves, but we wouldn't be caught dead saying."

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

"God could have said magic words to make the nails fall off the cross, but He didn't. That's love."

Let us run the risk of wearing out rather than running out.

Have a nice day:

Love Barry

Once upon a time the colors of the world started to quarrel; all claimed that they were the best, the most important, the most useful, the favorite.

GREEN said, "Clearly I am the most important. I am the sign of life and of hope. I was chosen for grass, trees, leaves... without me, all animals would die. Look over the countryside and you will see that I am in the majority."

BLUE interrupted. "You only think about the earth, but consider the sky and the sea. It is the water that is the basis of life and drawn up by the clouds from the deep sea. The sky gives space and peace and serenity. Without my peace, you would all be nothing."

YELLOW chuckled, "You are all so serious. I bring laughter, gaiety, and warmth into the world. The sun is yellow, the moon is yellow, the stars are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower, the whole world starts to smile. Without me there would be no fun."

ORANGE started next to blow her trumpet. "I am the color of health and strength. I may be scarce, but I am precious... for I serve the needs of human life. I carry the most important vitamins. Think of carrots, pumpkins, oranges, mangoes, and pawpaws. I don't hang around all the time, but when I fill the sky at sunrise or sunset, my beauty is so striking that no one gives another thought to any of you!"

RED could stand it no longer. He shouted out, "I am the ruler of all of you - I am blood - life's blood! I am the color of danger and of bravery. I am willing to fight for a cause. I bring fire into the blood. Without me, the earth would be as empty as the moon. I am the color of passion and of love, the red rose, the poinsettia and the poppy."

PURPLE rose up to his full height. He was very tall and spoke with great pomp. "I am the color of royalty and power. Kings, chiefs, and bishops have always chosen me for I am the sign of authority and wisdom. People do not question me - they listen and obey."

Finally, **INDIGO** spoke, much more quietly than all the others, but with just as much determination: "Think of me. I am the color of silence. You hardly notice me, but without me you all become superficial. I represent thought and reflection, twilight and deep water. You need me for balance and contrast, for prayer and inner peace."

And so the colors went on boasting, each convinced of his or her own superiority. Their quarreling became louder and louder.

Suddenly there was a startling flash of bright lightening - thunder rolled and boomed. Rain started to pour down relentlessly. The colors crouched down in fear, drawing close to one another for comfort.

In the midst of the clamor, rain began to speak: "You foolish colors, fighting amongst yourselves, each trying to dominate the rest.

Don't you know that you were each made for a special purpose, unique and different?

Join hands with one another and come to me!"

Doing as they were told, the colors united and joined hands.

each of you will stretch across the sky in a great bow
of color as a reminder that you can all live in peace.

The rainbow is a sign of hope for tomorrow."

And so, whenever a good rain washes the world, and a rainbow appears in the sky, let us remember to appreciate one another.

~based on a Native American legend

Perceive that which cannot be seen with the eye.

Good Lord, thank you it's Tuesday and I still have the rest of the week to live.

KEEPERS OF THE CLOAK

On a bitterly cold day in fourth-century France, a young soldier named Martin noticed a near-naked beggar shivering by the city gate, ignored by other passerby. Moved with compassion, Martin took his sword and slashed his own cloak in two, giving one part to the beggar.

That night Martin dreamed Christ came to him wrapped in the beggar's half of the cloak. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren," Jesus echoed Matthew 25:40, "you did it for me."

That dream spurred Martin to entrust his life to Christ and resign from the army to serve wholeheartedly as a "soldier of God." After his death, Martin of Tours was canonized by the Catholic Church.

Saint Martin's half-cloak, known in Latin as a *cappa*, was reportedly enshrined; the word for that shrine – *cappella* – eventually evolved into our English word *chapel*. The word *chaplain* literally means "keeper of the cloak."

The title befits men and women who, in the nature of Martin of Tours, brings comfort and hope to modern society's "least of these." Just as Martin recognize Jesus in the beggar, chaplains recognize—and serve those in need.

This will make you think

A young lady named Sally, relates an experience she had in a seminary class, given by her teacher, Dr. Smith. She says Dr. Smith was known for his elaborate object lessons. One particular day, Sally walked into the seminary and knew they were in for a fun day. On the wall was a big target and on a nearby table were many darts. Dr. Smith told the students to draw a picture of someone that they disliked or someone who had made them angry, and he would allow them to throw darts at the person's picture.

Sally's girlfriend drew a picture of a girl who had stolen her boyfriend. Another friend drew a picture of his little brother. Sally drew a picture of a former friend, putting a great deal of detail into her drawing, even drawing pimples on the face. Sally was pleased at the overall effect she had achieved. The class lined up and began throwing darts, with much laughter and hilarity. Some of the students threw their darts with such force that their targets were ripping apart. Sally looked forward to her turn, and was filled with disappointment when Dr. Smith, because of time limits, asked the students to return to their seats.

As Sally sat thinking about how angry she was because she didn't have a chance to throw any darts at her target, Dr. Smith began removing the target from the wall. Underneath the target was a picture of Jesus . .

A complete hush fell over the room as each student viewed the mangled picture of Jesus; holes and jagged marks covered His face and His eyes were pierced. Dr. Smith said only these words, "In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." No other words were necessary; the tear-filled eyes of each student focused only on the picture of Christ.

"On the street I saw a small girl cold and shivering in a thin dress, with little hope of a decent meal. I became angry and said to GOD: 'Why did you permit this? Why don't you do something about it?'"

For a while GOD said nothing. That night HE replied quite suddenly: 'I certainly did something about it -----I made you.'"

"Grandpa's Table"

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table.

But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and

daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about Grandfather," said the son. I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor.

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl. When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food when I grow up."

The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family.

And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth was soiled.

Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently provide a happy home atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives.

The wise parent realizes that every day the building blocks are being laid for the child's future. Let's be wise builders and role models.

"Lord, we ask not that you move the mountains, but that You give us the strength to climb. Life is about people connecting with people, and making a positive difference."

Take care of yourself, ... and those you love, ... today and everyday!"

Thank you Lenny Santasiere

Before I was a Mom

I made and ate hot meals.

I had unstained clothing.

I had quiet conversations on the phone.

Before I was a Mom
I slept as late as I wanted
And never worried about how late I got into bed.
I brushed my hair and my teeth everyday.

Before I was Mom
I cleaned my house each day.
I never tripped over toys or forgot words to lullabies.

Before I was a Mom
I didn't worry whether or not my plants were poisonous.
I never thought about immunizations.

Before I was a Mom
I had never been puked on
Pooped on
Spit on
Chewed on
Peed on
Or pinched by tiny fingers

Before I was a Mom
I had complete control of my mind
My thoughts
My body
And my mind.
I slept all night.

Before I was a Mom
I never held down a screaming child
So that doctors could do tests
Or give shots.
I never looked into teary eyes and cried.
I never got gloriously happy over a simple grin.
I never sat up late hours at night watching a baby sleep.

Before I was a Mom
I never held a sleeping baby just because I didn't want to put it down.
I never felt my heart break into a million pieces
When I couldn't stop the hurt.
I never knew that something so small
Could affect my life so much.
I never knew that I could love someone so much.
I never knew I would love being a Mom.

Before I was a Mom
I didn't know the feeling of having my heart outside my body.
I didn't know how special it could feel to feed a hungry baby.
I didn't know that bond between a Mother and her child.
I didn't know that something so small
Could make me feel so important.

Before I was a Mom
I had never gotten up in the middle of the night
Every 10 minutes to make sure all was okay
I had never known the warmth
The joy
The love
The heartache
The wonderment
Or the satisfaction of being a Mom.

I didn't know I was capable of feeling so much before I was a Mom.

Subject: words for today.

There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you want to pick them from your dreams and hug them.

Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be what you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.

Always put yourself in others' shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other person, too.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

Happiness lives for those who cry, those who hurt, those who have searched, and those who tried, for only they can appreciate the importance of people who have touched their lives.

Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends with a tear.

The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past, you can't go on well in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling.

Live your life so that when you die, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.

..... to those who have touched your life in one way or another,

..... to those who make you smile when you really need it,

..... to those that make you see the brighter side of things when you are really down

..... and to those you want to tell how much their friendship/love is appreciated.

And, if you don't forward this on... don't worry about it, nothing bad will happen to you; you will just miss out on the opportunity to brighten someone's day with this message.

Hi Mom....

Just been thinking and thought about how much fun I have when we get to be together. Talking, drinking coffee, you beating me in scrabble make up my memories of what you and I do best together. I know you must be disappointed at times when I am not home for a holiday but know every time I spend time with you is like a holiday to me. It is not a day that makes a holiday special but the person you spend it with. All the little things you do like making sure we have certain foods in the house for me, the way you make scrambled eggs, the way you make sure that I have my creamer in your house, the way that you wave at me from your kitchen window, how you hug me, make me feel like I am a special person. All the little things that you have done throughout my life have made me feel that I am somebody and I am special, especially to you.

Of course I wish we could spend more time together just you and I alone but I am happy with the time that we do have and cherish those times. We are really lucky that we spend as much time together that we do and most importantly when something is going on in my life, you are the first person I want to call to tell. That has got to count for something....

Well, Mom, just want you to know that I am thinking about you and am so glad that you are my mom. All my love, Dayna-----

A GIFT

Bob worked all his life, but lately had not been feeling well. He didn't have the stamina and the strength he once had. At 62 years old, he felt tired and didn't know why. He never complained and went to work every day. Up early in the morning and arriving home after 6 p.m.

His wife Carol noticed that Bob was not himself. He did not work out in the yard or play with his grandchildren the way he used to.

After a few months of this Carol spoke with Bob and suggested that he may want to go and see a doctor. Bob refused. Bob told Carol that he had been a healthy man all his life and this was probably some phase he was going through. How wrong he was.

Several weeks later Bob had a tough time breathing and Carol was very worried. She made an appointment for Bob to see their family doctor and even drove Bob to the doctor's office as he was in no shape to drive. Once at the doctor's office the doctor suggested that Bob go to the hospital for some X-rays and some tests. The doctor's nurse made the appointment for the hospital right then and there and Carol drove Bob to the hospital. The tests were taken and Bob was told that the results would be sent to the doctor in a few days.

Bob went home to rest.

The doctor called on Friday and asked that Bob and Carol might just want to come and see him at his office. Again, Carol drove Bob to the doctor's office. They were ushered right into the private office and were told that the doctor would be in soon.

The doctor seated himself at his desk and proceeded to tell Bob and Carol that Bob's heart was not well and that it was so bad that open heart surgery would not fix the problem. Bob needed a new heart.....a transplant. Bob and Carol sat there in shock. A transplant. Do you know how difficult it was to get a transplant?

The doctor told Bob that he would put Bob on the computer transplant list and maybe, just maybe there was an organ donor whose heart was compatible to Bob's.

Bob had to quit his job and would sit at home just sitting in his big overstuffed chair. Fortunately his daughter, Pat, was home more often. Pat was 19 years old and was just about to graduate from high school. Pat had a lot of free time and spent a lot of it with her father, Bob. He was happy too that he could spend time with his daughter. Up to now, with his work schedule Pat had grown up before his eyes and he really hadn't spent too much time with her. That changed. Pat and his father talked, kidded, joked and even played cards together. Both father and daughter each enjoying the company of the other.

Patty left a card for her father on the breakfast table. Bob came down for breakfast and saw the card. He pushed his hand against the envelope and broke the seal. Inside was a funny card which said, ‘ I could buy you a new car.....or, I could give you a vacation in the Bahamas,.....or, I could buy you a great steak dinner.....and then Patty had written in her own handwriting or I could give you a new heart. I love you Patty.

Pat was sitting at the kitchen table one evening as Bob came to sit and get ready for dinner. Bob noticed that Patty was writing something and leaned over to look. Patty was filing out an organ donor card on the back of her driver’s license. Bob told Patty that she was doing the right thing. She put the organ donor card in her wallet and they all sat down for supper.

At the end of the month, during the summer, Patty told her father that she was going to a party at one of the colleges that she was interested in attending. The college was 700 miles away and she and a girl friend were going to drive down to the college together. The day arrived and Bob helped Patty put her luggage in the trunk of the car, gave her a few extra dollars, a few words of advice and kissed her on the cheek. Bob and Carol hugged Patty and told her to be careful.

Patty and her girl friend was just elated that they were taking their first trip to “look over” a college and were in that car in a flash. They drove down the drive way of the home and before entering the street Patty slowed down and waved and through a kiss to her father. They were off.

The phone ringing at this late hour. Bob turned on the light on the bed table next to his bed, put on his glasses and read the clock. It was 3:30 a.m. Who could be calling at this late hour? He picked up the phone, while Carol was wiping the sleep from her eyes.

“Hello, this is Patty’s father,”.....and then there was a complete silence as Bob was listening. He put the phone back in the cradle and turned to Carol, his wife.

“Honey, there’s been an accident”.....”and”.....there was a stillness in his words..... “Patty car was totally demolished and she is in a coma and in critical condition.” Bob broke down in tears and Carol was in shock. They both were crying. How could this happen? Our little girl. They hung up the phone and just sat there not saying anything to one another.

Bob was first to speak after a long silence. Patty is in a local hospital, so let’s get dressed and get to the hospital after fast as possible.

Carol responded that they should call the hospital and even though they were confident that Patty would recovered, they should advise the organ donor nurse that Patty had signed an organ donor card and it was in her wallet. Bob picked up the phone and called the hospital. There it was settled. If Patty was to leave his earth someone would benefit from her organ donations.

Bob and Carol quickly loaded the car and began their long trip to the hospital 700 miles away. There wasn’t much conversation during the lonely ride.....just the sound of the tires pounding on the pavement and the sound of the wind rushing against the windshield.

The hospital was quiet when Bob and Carol arrived. They parked the car and entered the main entrance and were ushered to the critical care unit on the 4th floor of the hospital. There their beloved Patty was, in a small room and with all kinds of tubes, machines and I.V. bottles. Patty was lying so still when Carol leaned over and kissed her daughter on the forehead. Bob could not control his tears anymore and sat down in the chair next to Patty's bed and began to cry. He tried to muffle the sound of his crying as not to be heard by other nurses and patience the CCR, but it was no use.

Carol just stood by her daughter and stroked her pale skin and told Patty how much they loved her.

The doctor appeared and asked both Bob and Carol if they would step into the visitors lounge so that they could talk. Slowly Patty's parents turned, after giving one last look at Patty, walked down the hall and into this brightly lit room. The doctor did not have great news. In all probability Patty would not last the day. It was a hard moment in the lives of Bob and Carol.

Bob and Carol were then escorted to the organ donor nurse's office and sat down in two leather chairs. Moments later a pleasant lady walked into the room and sat behind the small desk. She introduced herself and told Bob and Carol just how sorry she was about Patty. The woman took some papers and forms from a yellow file folder and after reviewing them asked Bob and Carol to sign the organ donor permission, which they did. Bob and Carol said very little and just answered the questions asked of them. The organ donor nurse told Bob and Carol that it would only take about 20 minutes to get the information on Patty's organs on the computer and out to the world. There were many people out there waiting for a new heart.

The organ donor nurse then suggest that Bob and Carol might want to rest in one of the apartments that were available at the hospital for people who wished to stay near a loved one. The room was clean and neat, with two double beds, a couple of end tables, a television, dresser.....not to dissimilar from what you would see at a hotel.

After the nurse left their room Carol was so exhausted that she lowered herself onto one of the beds and quickly fell asleep. Bob could not sleep, he lay there in the dark with all this clothes on and his mind raced a million miles to all those times he and Patty had shared together, especially the past several months. God must have had a special plan for them.

It was 3 a.m. in the morning and sleep was no where to be found for Bob. He got up from his bed and quietly opened the door of the apartment and walked down the hall. He did not know where he was going, but he knew that he just had to get out of there. He wandered the halls of the hospital. It was quiet and the only sounds Bob could hear were the sounds of his shoes hitting the brightly polish floors. His shoes kind of squeaked. Bob went to the 4th floor and stood by Patty's bed. Patty's breathing was assisted by a machine and she just lay there.

For a hour Bob stood by his daughter's bedside, praying and holding Patty's hand. A nurse came in and asked Bob if he and Carol would please go back to the organ donor nurse in her office

as she wanted to speak with them. Bob woke Carole, and they went to see the organ donor nurse. Upon entering the office and after seating themselves, the nurse said to Bob that when she logged on the computer of prospective donor recipients, she noticed that Bob's name appeared on that list. Why hadn't Bob mentioned this to the nurse?

"You know Bob, you are the likely candidate for your daughter's heart." The thought never entered Bob mind. Neither Carol or Bob mentioned it to the nurse. While in the organ donor nurses office a report came down that Patty had gone home. Bob and Carol and the nurse just sat there in silence.

The conversation was renewed and the nurse asked Bob about taking Patty's heart. Bob did not know what to say. The nurse was quick to add that normally an organ recipient would be found almost immediately, but there was a glitch in the computer and the nurse still had not punched the information into the computer. It was almost 3 hours since their last meeting. Bob did not answer the nurse. He did not know what to say. He rose from his chair and headed back to his apartment with Carol in tow. Carol stopped for a cup of coffee and Bob proceeded to wait at the elevator for the ride to his floor.

Then it happened! From out of nowhere came the sweet voice of his beloved Patty. "Daddy, please take my heart. It was the gift that I most wanted to give you and couldn't. Now I can give you that gift of a new heart. Please Daddy take my heart."

Bob was stunned. He felt faint, he almost passed out, but managed to hold onto the wall next to the elevator. He was sweating and breathing heavily. He stumbled down the hall towards the nurses office and ran into Carol coming from the coffee shop.

Bob could not get the words out fast enough. "Carol, Patty came to me as I was getting on the elevator and asked me to take the gift of her heart. I think I am doing the right thing."

Six hours later Patty's heart was beating in her father's chest. Buta..bom.....buta.....bom.

Bob's body did not reject Patty's heart and Bob now has pink cheeks and can do all the things he used to do. He got the greatest gift of all and that heart remains a part of him, not only physically, but every beat of his heart reminds him of his dear, sweet daughter. What a gift.

Bob and Carol now tour hospital and do lectures to tell their story about Patty's heart and just how important it is to be an organ donor.

Patty must be very proud of her father.

Me and MY fears

Provided by Jim Smith

I feared being alone, until I learned to like myself.

I feared failure, until I realized that I only fail when I don't try.

I feared success, until I realized that I had to try in order to be happy with myself.

I feared people's opinions, until I learned that people would have opinions about me anyway.

I feared rejection, until I learned to have faith in myself.

I feared pain, until I learned that it's necessary for growth.

I feared the truth, until I saw the ugliness in lies.

I feared life, until I experienced it's beauty.

I feared death, until I realized that it's the beginning.

I feared my destiny, until I realized that I had the power to change my life.

I feared hate, until I saw it was nothing more than ignorance.

I feared love, until it touch my heart, making the darkness fade into endless sunny days.

I feared ridicule, until I learned how to laugh at myself.

I feared growing old, until I realized that I gained wisdom every day.

I feared the future, until I realized that life just kept getting better.

I feared the past, until I realized that it could no longer hurt me.

I feared the dark, until I saw the beauty of the starlight.

I feared the light, until I learned that the truth would give me strength.

I feared change, until I saw that even the most beautiful butterfly had to undergo a metamorphosis before it could fly.

Equation:

1 cross
+ 3 nails

4 given

That's the whole gospel message simply stated.

Take 60 seconds give this a shot! Let's just see if Satan stops this one. All you do is -

1. Simply say a small prayer for the person who sent you this, (Father God bless this person in whatever it is that You know he or she may be needing this day!)

2. Then send it on to others!

Within hours, others have then prayed for you, and you caused a multitude of people to pray to God for other people. Then sit back and watch the power of God works in your life for doing the thing that you know He loves.

HOW GOD TALKS TO US

By RITA GRAFF

One day when I was working in Pastoral Care, at Eger Nursing Home, Pastor Nilsen came in to select hymns for services. I asked him if we could sing "In the Garden" as that was my favorite hymn. He said, "Not this Sunday, because an organist was going to play for us and had already chosen a program."

I went to the Sunday Services and the topic of the sermon was "How God Talks To Us." Just as Pastor Nilsen was bringing Holy Communion to me the organist started playing "In the Garden." Pastor Nilsen and I looked at each other and broke out in a smile, because God was really talking to us.

Rita Graff is our dear friend and has been in Eger Nursing Home for 10 years with M.S. Rita has had M.S. for 44 years and for the past 20 years she has been confined to a wheelchair. I go to visit Rita on a regular basis and it is SHE who cheers ME up, not me cheering her up.

Rita was telling me a story about when she developed M.S. one of her problems was walking with a normal gait. Her father has devised a large dog harness and he would walk behind Rita as she walked and trained herself. In the event that Rita started to falter her father would pull the harness and she would rite herself. It was a training scenario that seemed to help Rita.

On summer evening after work Rita's father hooked her up to harness and she started

walking down the sidewalk in front of her house in another practice session, the man next door, who probably drank more than he should have would holler, "Hey, George make sure she doesn't pee on my grass!"

Talk about a sense of humor. There should be more people like Rita around. It would make our world just a little bit better I think.

George Santayana wrote,

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

*Here's what **you** would say:*

"Those who cannot remember the past always look forward to a houseful of relatives during the holidays."

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING OLDER WHEN:

**You know all the answers but nobody asks you any questions
You get winded playing checkers.
You need a fire permit to light all of your birthday candles and
You need oxygen after blowing them out.
You order Geritol on the rocks.
You sink your teeth into a thick steak and they stay there.
You stop to think and sometimes forget to start again.
Your pacemaker opens the garage door when a cute gal goes by.
The only whistle you get is from the teakettle.
A fortune-teller wants to read your face.
You finally get it all together, but can't remember where you put it.
You pray for a good prune-juice harvest.
Everything hurts. And what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
You feel like the morning after, and you haven't been anywhere.
Your little black book contains only names ending in M.D.
You look forward to a dull evening.
You join a health club and never go.
You need glasses to find your glasses.
You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.
Your knees buckle, but your belt won't.
You have too much room in the house and not enough in the medicine cabinet.
YOU WONDER WHY MORE PEOPLE DON'T USED THIS SIZE PRINT.**

Contributed by our old, old, dear friend Kathy McCarthy.

WHAT IS JOY?

WHAT IS A BLESSING? WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN LIFE?

1. Hearing my wife walking on our creaking kitchen floor in the morning as she makes the coffee.
2. Hearing my wife, Norma say, "Good morning Delbert."
3. Having tremendous meals planned and prepared by a loved one.
4. Sitting at the kitchen table reading the Sunday newspaper and not saying anything.
5. Making a mistake and not having anyone say you did.
6. Getting those little surprise gifts from your spouse that you really wanted and didn't really want to go out and buy yourself.
7. Hearing, "Honey I'm home."
8. Knowing that she only have eyes for you.
9. Sitting in your easy chair, looking across the room and looking at the same face for 36 years.
10. Knowing she loves you in spite of yourself.
11. Seeing your wife in the kitchen window waving goodbye to you as you go off to work
12. Having your grown sons call you every morning just to say hello.
13. Going to church with your children on Sunday mornings.
14. Spending quality time with your family as an extended feeling.
15. Having your grown up children as partners in the family business.
16. Hearing your grandchildren yell, "Here comes Mom-Mom and Poppy."
17. Being kissed and hugged by your 30 something year old children every time you meet.
18. Sharing a meal together.
19. Feeling the soft touch of my granddaughter as she lays in my arms, sound asleep.
20. Hearing, "I love you Poppy."
21. Getting a call from your daughter every morning giving you a blow-by-blow description of what she is doing and how the grandchildren are.
22. Going to bed at night and knowing you are loved.
23. Quietly thanking the Lord for another day.
24. Being invited to your son's or daughter home and really wanting to go .
25. Having a good relationship with your son's wife or your daughter's husband.
26. Trusting HIM.

Del Smith

This is a very good message about the way we approach problems in life.

EAGLES IN A STORM

Did you know that an eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks?

The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it.

The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.

When the storms of life come upon us -- and all of us will experience them -- we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God.

The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them.

God enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure and disappointment in our lives. We can soar above the storm.

Remember, it is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them.

The Bible says, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31

Rudyard Kipling once received an unusual letter from a student at Oxford University. Gossip had it that Kipling received a shilling a word for whatever he wrote. The student enclosed a shilling and requested, "Please send us one of your words." Kipling's prompt reply was, "Thanks."

Norma and I were in Gettysburg the latter part of January to visit our grandchildren. On the way back from shopping with Gracie, our four-year-old granddaughter in the back seat I was teasing her that she was a 'little frog.' To which she replied, "I not a frog, I just a children."

And by the way my grandchildren never get hiccUPS, they get HicDOWNs.

My son Jim was sitting at our dining room table having lunch one rainy day and we were discussing our lives together. Jim said, "Thank you for carrying me when I needed it the most." To which I replied, "There was a better man than me carrying you when you needed it."

Don't complain about the rust on the fire escape when the building is burning.

WHO I AM MAKES A DIFFERENCE

You may have read this story already, but I felt it was worth sending again.

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in High School by telling them the difference they each made. She called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First she told each of them how they had made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters, which read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference."

Afterwards the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honored whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out, find somebody to honor, give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened."

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted, by the way, as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat his boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said, "Well, sure." The junior executive took the blue ribbon and placed it right on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring Somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine. He thinks I'm a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon that says "Who I Am Makes a Difference," on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor.

As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought about you. I want to honor you. My days are really hectic and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you!"

The startled boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "Dad, earlier tonight I sat in my room and wrote a letter to you and Mom explaining why I had killed myself and asking you to forgive me. I was going to commit suicide tonight after you were asleep. I just didn't think that you cared at all. The letter is upstairs. I don't think I need it after all." His father walked upstairs and found a heartfelt letter full of anguish and pain. The envelope was addressed, "Mom and Dad."

The boss went back to work a changed man. He was no longer a grouch but made sure to let all his employees know that they made a difference. The junior executive helped several other young people with career planning and never forgot to let them know that they made a difference in his life... one being the boss's son. And the young boy and his classmates learned a valuable lesson.

Who you are DOES make difference. You are under no obligation to send this on to anyone... not to two people or to two hundred. As far as I am concerned, you can delete it and move on to the next message. But if you have anyone who means a lot to you, I encourage you to send him or her this message and let them know. You never know what kind of difference a little encouragement can make to a person. Send it to all of the people who mean anything important to you, or send it to the one, two, or three people who mean the most. Or just smile and know that someone thinks that you are important, or you wouldn't have received this in the first place. Remember that I give you a blue ribbon.

WHO YOU ARE MAKES A DIFFERENCE, AND I WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT!!

Words of wisdom from a five-year-old.

This five-year-old was just enamored with the movie Titanic, especially with the fact that so many men give up their seats in the lifeboats for the women and children that were aboard. He asked his mother why anyone would do this for someone else knowing that they would surely die.

His mother explained that what they did was “*sacrifice*” their lives for someone they loved. “It was just as Jesus *sacrificed* his life on the cross so that we may live.”

There was a moments silence and then the boy remarked, “Yeah, but Jesus was only dead for three days.”

The young boy was Peter Geitner. His great grandfather was Tim Mara the founder of the New York Giants in 1925. This story was related by our good friend Richie from Queens.

KNOWING YOU'RE A, B, C'S.

Norma has all the cards ready in her special book for birthdays, holidays, Christmas, Easter, Ground Hog Day and Valentines day. She buys them months in advance and a week before each holiday she signs them and mails them out.

This Valentines Day I was sitting at the dining room table having lunch when Norma pulled out the cards and for the first time in 35 years asked me to address them and fill them out. Patiently I picked up the pen laying on the table and wrote on the inside right hand side of each card a note to each grandchild. My *dearest* Norma Jean I wrote on the inside cover for our six-year-old.

Several days before Valentines Day my daughter called and I asked her if she had received the cards.

“Oh yes, in fact Norma Jean opened the card herself and read the words on the card. She was reading it out loud to me,” said my daughter. She then continued to hear Norma Jean read, ‘My *cleanest* Norma Jean.’”

“Mom, why would Poppy write my *cleanest* Norma Jean?”

“Cleanest,” my daughter asked. “Let me see that card.”

Dayna looked at the card and I guess in my penmanship, my “d” looked like a “cl” and my “r” looked like an “n”..... *dearest came out cleanest.*

We all got a laugh out of that one.

Things to ponder:

To the world you might be one person; but to one person you might be the world.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger.

Real friends are those who, when you feel you've made a fool of yourself, don't feel you've done a permanent job.

A coincidence is when God performs a miracle and decides to remain anonymous.

Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.

I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to.

Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

People gather bundles of sticks to build bridges they never cross.

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% of how you respond to it

Did it ever occur to you that nothing occurs to God?

Life is like an onion; you peel off one layer at a time and

sometimes you weep.

Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

There are two things I have learned: There is a God. And I'm not Him.

Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked.

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you're beyond the need of God's grace.

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean 'you know what the Bible means?'" The son replied "I do know." "Okay " said his father. "So son what does the Bible mean?" "That's easy Daddy, it stands for Basic Information Before Leaving Earth"

You will note that the format of the collection has changed and that the margins have been decreased and there is underlining. Don't ask me how this happened. I guess I downloaded some story from the Internet and there was a Hyperlink in the content that changed this format. I could not fix it, so I decided to live with it, just as I live with my relatives. You can nothing about that either.

The Editor.

GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU SMILE.....
ESPECIALLY SINCE IT'S A TRUE STORY.

ON JULY 20, 1969, AS COMMANDER OF THE
APOLLO 11 LUNAR MODULE, NEIL ARMSTRONG
WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON
THE MOON. HIS FIRST WORDS AFTER
STEPPING ON THE MOON, "THAT'S ONE
SMALL STEP FOR MAN, ONE GIANT LEAP FOR

MANKIND, " WERE TELEVISED TO EARTH AND
HEARD BY MILLIONS.

BUT JUST BEFORE HE RE-ENTERED THE
LANDER, HE MADE THE ENIGMATIC REMARK
"GOOD LUCK, MR. GORSKY."

MANY PEOPLE AT NASA THOUGH IT WAS A
CASUAL REMARK CONCERNING SOME RIVAL
SOVIET COSMONAUT. HOWEVER, UPON
CHECKING, THERE WAS NO GORSKY IN
EITHER THE RUSSIAN OR AMERICAN SPACE
PROGRAMS.

OVER THE YEARS MANY PEOPLE QUESTIONED
ARMSTRONG AS TO WHAT THE "GOOD LUCK,
MR. GORSKY" STATEMENT MEANT, BUT
ARMSTRONG ALWAYS JUST SMILED. ON JULY
5,1995, IN TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA, WHILE
ANSWERING QUESTIONS FOLLOWING A
SPEECH, A REPORTER BROUGHT UP THE
26-YEAR-OLD QUESTION TO ARMSTRONG.

THIS TIME HE FINALLY RESPONDED. MR.
GORSKY HAD DIED, SO NEIL ARMSTRONG
FELT HE COULD ANSWER THE QUESTION. IN
1938 WHEN HE WAS A KID IN A SMALL
MIDWEST TOWN, HE WAS PLAYING BASEBALL
WITH A FRIEND IN THE BACKYARD. HIS
FRIEND HIT THE BALL, WHICH LANDED IN
HIS NEIGHBOR'S YARD BY THE BEDROOM
WINDOWS. HIS NEIGHBORS WERE MR. AND
MRS. GORSKY. AS HE LEANED DOWN TO PICK
UP THE BALL, YOUNG ARMSTRONG HEARD
MRS. GORSKY SHOUTING AT MR.GORSKY.
"SEX! YOU WANT SEX?! YOU'LL GET SEX
WHEN THE KID NEXT DOOR WALKS ON THE
MOON!"

TRUE STORY.

If the stable gate is closed, climb the fence.

God put firewood here, but every man must gather and
light it himself.

THE BIBLE

Telling of God's word is what it's for,

Telling that if you find God, you'll be lost no more.

For I read it both day and night,

I and the Bible, my book,

it's in its scriptures where I look.

to my heart, it brings pure delight.

In my heart I store its scriptures.

In my mind it frames a picture.

In my life it gives me wisdom,

for it tells of the gifts from Him.

It tells of the commandments,

for which we should live by.

It tells of the place in Heaven

reserved for me when I die.

The light in your life will never go dim,

if you read of the words of Him.

Avoid the Bible and you'll remain lost,

for the price it pays, it's not worth the cost!

I, like the Bible, can tell of the word,

to all of God's children who haven't heard.

To go to Heaven you have to accept in your heart,

the love-salvation of God which the Bible departs.

THE WALL OF LIFE

—
A funeral service is being held in a synagogue for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service, the pallbearers are carrying the casket out when they accidentally bump into a wall jarring the casket.

They hear a faint moan. They open the casket and find that the woman is actually alive.

She lives for 10 more years and then dies. A ceremony is again held at the same synagogue and at the end of the service the pallbearers are again carrying out the casket. As they are walking, the husband cries out, "Watch out for the wall!"

As a divorced father, I can't help but worry about my nine-year-old, Katelyn. I see her every other weekend at my farm, and I'd do anything to make her happy. So that Friday when I picked her up from school, you can imagine my dismay when she announced that she wanted a horse for Christmas. "I've been praying for one, Daddy," she declared.

With two households to help support, a horse was out of the question. "Don't get your hopes up, sweetie," I said, my stomach tightening at the thought of letting her down. That night I prayed for myself as well as for Katelyn. *Lord, I'm not asking for a horse. Just help me not disappoint my daughter this Christmas.*

Ten days later, when Katelyn was at her mom's, I was awakened by the barking of my German shepherds. I didn't see anything strange out the window, so I went back to sleep. In the morning I saw what all the barking was about: A beautiful chestnut filly was in our pasture.

A few phone calls located the owners. They lived on a farm a mile away and Totsy, as she was called, had wandered off

at night to my pasture. "I figured she was an early gift from Santa," I said, half-joking. "She's just what my nine-year-old wants for Christmas."

There was a pause. Finally the owner said, "Let me get right back to you."

You can probably picture the delight on Katelyn's face when she saw Totsy in our pasture, and imagine the horse nuzzling her new owner. You can no doubt understand my gratitude to the neighbors who refused to take a penny for their present to a little girl. But most of all I want you to know my amazement at how God answered two prayers——mine and Katelyn's.

My husband, Rich, who'd been adopted as a baby, always brushed aside questions about whether he'd like to find his birth parents, saying, "If they didn't want me then, it's too late now." Still I knew that his stoic surface hid a deep ache. One night I noticed Rich crying at a TV movie about a father and son. I decided to track down his birth family so he might find some closure.

All I had to go on was the information on Rich's birth certificate: his birth date, October 16, 1941; his mother's name, Ruth Hicks Casselman; and her place of birth, Waupaca County, Wisconsin. I wrote to the hospital, went through old phone directories, searched the Internet——but no luck.

The only place left to try was the National Archives in Washington, D.C. One day in November 1999 I went to check the census records there. But I learned that by law, census information isn't released for 72 years. I was crushed. What good was such dated material?
I pulled the latest Waupaca census reel available——1920——from its file drawer. As I passed the first rows of microfilm readers, I overheard a man mention Wisconsin to the older woman with him. *That's interesting.* I thought before going on to my reader.

There was a listing for Hicks——Ruth! Encouraged, I went back for the 1910 reel. Maybe I could get names of relatives to follow up on. The slot where the reel should have been was empty. Then I remembered the folks I had overheard.

I walked over and peeked at their screen. Ruth Hicks, Waupaca County, 1910! Amazed, I asked, "May I take a look when you're done? I'm trying to locate the family of Ruth Hicks . . . " ". . . Casselman?" the woman gasped. "She was my mother! Our family split up when I was little and I'm trying to find my baby brother. I've been looking for him for years."

Later that evening over dinner, the last chapter in the family history was finally closed. Shirley Casselman Garnett met her long-lost baby brother, my husband, Rich.

There's a little old Christian lady living next door to an atheist. Every morning the lady comes out onto her front porch and shouts "Praise the Lord!"

The atheist yells back, "There is no God".

She does this every morning with the same result. As time goes on, the lady runs into financial difficulties and has trouble buying food. She goes out onto the porch and asks God for help with groceries, then says "Praise the Lord".

The next morning she goes out onto the porch and there's the groceries she asked for, and of course, she shouts "Praise the Lord!!!!".

The atheist jumps out from behind a bush and says, "Ha, I bought those groceries - there is no God".

The lady looks at him and smiles, she shouts "Praise the Lord, not only did you provide for me Lord, you made Satan pay for the groceries!!!"

FOOTPRINTS...A New Version

Imagine you and the Lord Jesus are walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord's footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace. But

your footprints are a disorganized stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns.

For much of the way, it seems to go like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord's, soon paralleling His consistently.

You and Jesus are walking as true friends! This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens: Your footprints that once etched the sand next to Jesus' are now walking precisely in His steps. Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, you and Jesus are becoming one.

This goes on for many miles, but gradually you notice another change. The footprints inside the large footprints seem to grow larger. Eventually they disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints - they have become one. This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back.

This time it seems even worse! Zigzags all over the place. Stops. Starts. Gashes in the sand. A variable mess of prints.

You are amazed and shocked. Your dream ends. Now you pray: "Lord, I understand the first scene with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But you walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with you."

" That is correct."

" ... And when the smaller footprints were inside of Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps; followed you very closely."

" Very good. You have understood everything so far."

" ... When the smaller footprints grew and filled in Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like you in every way."

" Precisely."

" So, Lord, was there a regression or something? The footprints separated, and this time it was worse than at

first."

There is a pause as the Lord answers with a smile in his voice. "You didn't know? That was when we danced."

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to weep, a time to laugh A time to mourn, and a time to dance. Ecclesiastes 3:1,4.

Funny how you can send a thousand 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny isn't it? Are you laughing? Are you thinking?

Spread the Word and give thanks to the Lord for He is good!

Hello Everyone:

Father, in the name of Jesus, bless everyone that receives this message in a special way, open supernatural doors in their life today, give them a double portion of your Spirit as we take back everything that the devil has stolen from us:

Health

Finance

Children

Jobs

Homes

Faith

Marriages,

Amen.

You are ushering in another day

untouched and freshly new

so here I come to ask you, God

if you'll renew me, too

forgive the many errors that I made yesterday

and let me try again, dear God,

to walk closer in your way

but, Father, I am well aware

I can't make it on my own

so take my hand and hold it tight

for I can't walk alone.

--helen steiner rice

"How To Say 'I love You' In Different Languages"

English.....I Love You
Albanian.....Une Te Dua
Arabic.....Ana Bhibbik
Catalan.....Testimo Molt
Chinese.....Wo Ai Ni
Eskimo.....Nagli givaget
Finnish.....Mina Rakkastan Sin ua
French.....Je T'aime
German.....Ich Liebe Dich
Greek.....S'Agapo
Hawaiian.....Aloha Wau la Oe
Hebrew.....Ani Ohev Otakh
Hungarian....Se Ret Lay
Irish.....Thaim In Grabh Leat
Italian.....Ti Amo
Japanese.....Ai Shite Imasu
Maltese... ..ien Inhobbok
Persian.....Du Stet Daram
Romanian... ..Te iubesc
Russian.....Ya Lyublyu Tyebya
Spanish.....Te Amo
Swedish.....Jag Alskar Dig
Turkish.....Seni Seviyorum

To all the rocks in your life...

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, rocks about 2" in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full? They agreed that

it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the student again if the jar was full.

They agreed it was.

The students laughed. The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life.

The rocks are the important things -- your family, your partner, your health, your children -- anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car.

The sand is everything else. The small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out dancing.

There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal." "Take care of the rocks first -- the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

Bras--do we really need them?

A man walked into the ladies department of a Macy's and shyly walked up to the woman behind the counter and said, "I'd like to buy a bra for my wife."

"What type of bra?" asked the clerk.

"Type?" inquires the man "There is more than one type?"

"Look Around," said the saleslady, as she showed a sea of bras in every shape, size color and material.

"Actually, even with all of this variety, there are really only four types of bras," replied the sales clerk.

Confused, the man asked what were the types. The saleslady replied : "The Catholic type, the Salvation Army type, the Presbyterian type, and the Baptist type. Which one do you need?"

Still confused the man asked, "What is the difference between them?"

The lady responded, "It is all really quite simple. The Catholic type supports the masses, the Salvation Army type lifts up the fallen, the Presbyterian type keeps them staunch and upright, and the Baptist type makes mountains out of mole hills."

Subject: typos??

These are actual clippings from church newsletters.

We are grateful that there is a paucity of proofreaders (apparently) :

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

Next Sunday is the family hay ride and bonfire at the Fowlers. Bring your own hot dogs and guns. Friends are welcome! Everyone come for a fun time.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you - let the Church help.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to the choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The Lutheran men's group will meet at 6 PM. Steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, bread and dessert will be served for a nominal fee.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased persons you want remembered.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship hall after the B.S. is done.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The eighth graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet

in the church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please, use large double door at the side entrance.

Mrs. Johnson will be entering the hospital this week for testes.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours".

One day while thinking about my garden, God showed me how I could think about my soul in a different way. As a flower garden! He said we could Imagine that when we were baptized, God gave us this beautiful garden (our baptized soul).

It is a beautiful garden with every kind of flower that He envisions for us. He is giving us this garden to tend to and we are free to do whatever we want with our garden. When we die, we present to God our garden that He first gave to us. I thought about everything that it takes to make a beautiful garden and how much deliberate effort it takes to keep the garden free of weeds and the flowers blooming.

A garden needs sunshine, which I see is God and his love for us. A garden needs water, which I see is the life-giving grace that he freely gives to us. In order to have strong and beautiful flowers and plants, fertilizer is needed to feed and nourish the soil and the flowers. In order for a garden to do well, the soil needs to be tilled and broken up. I see this as the struggles and problems we have in our life. God lets things happen in our life in order to soften and nourish the ground (our soul) so that the flowers can have a perfect environment to grow.

By cooperating with the grace that God gives us and being open to His will, we are allowing the seeds that

He has sown for us to grow.

Of course a garden has weeds that always seem to pop up.

Unless we keep control of these weeds they can overtake our garden and choke out all the flowers that were thriving. I see the weeds as the sin and vice that can be in our lives and that can keep us from being more closely united to God. We are free to ignore or pay attention to OUR personal gift from God. God planted the flowers and it's up to us to nourish and tend our garden. Finally I see that WE never planted the flowers and the plants in our garden. Our garden is perfectly suited for us according to Gods eternal plan. God planted the flowers and it's up to us to nourish and tend our garden so that everything God has planned for us can truly be, and that at the end of our life our garden will be most pleasing to our Lord

Our Chorale conductor announced the dress code for our first concerts: suites and ties for men, and long black dressers for women. That's when my parish priest spoke up: "I don't own a tie, but I do have a long black dress."

Oblless181p

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night"

Age 6

I've learned that our dog doesn't want to eat my broccoli either

Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back

Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up again
Age 12

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up
Age 14

I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me
Age 15

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice
Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures
Age 26

I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there
Age 29

I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it
Age 30

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it
Age 42

I've learned that you can make some one's day by simply sending them a little note
Age 44

I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his or her need to cast blame on others

Age 46

I've learned that children and grandparents are
natural allies

Age 47

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how
bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better
tomorrow

Age 48

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift
my spirits for hours

Age 49

I've learned that motel mattresses are better on
the side away from the phone

Age 50

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the
way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost
luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights

Age 52

I've learned that keeping a vegetable garden is worth
a medicine cabinet full of pills

Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with
your parents, you miss them terribly after they die

Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing
as making a life

Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive
for your children, work to improve your marriage

Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance
Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catchers mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back
Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you
Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision
Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer
Age 72

I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles And to tell the truth, I've seen several
Age 75

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one
Age 82

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone - People love that human touch...holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back
Age 85

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn
Age 92

A pastor friend of mine sent this poem to his congregation that he e-mails devotions to. I found it uplifting and decided

to share it with others.

Peace to you and yours, Dayna

God of history and of my heart, so much has happened to me during these whirlwind days:

I've known death and birth;
I've been brave and scared;
I've hurt, I've helped;
I've been honest, I've lied;
I've destroyed, I've created;
I've been with people, I've been lonely;
I've decided, I've waffled;
I've laughed and I've cried.
You know my frail heart and my frayed history -
and now another day begins.

O God, help me to believe in beginnings
and in my beginning again, no matter how often I've failed
before.

Help me to make beginnings: to begin going out of my
weary mind into fresh dreams, daring to make my own bold
tracks in the land of now; to begin forgiving that I may
experience mercy; to begin questioning the unquestionable
that I may know truth; to begin disciplining that I may
create beauty; to begin sacrificing that I may accomplish justice;
to begin risking that I may make peace; to begin loving that
I may realize joy.

Help me to be a beginning for others, to be a singer to the
songless, a storyteller to the aimless, a befriender of the friendless;
to become a beginning of hope for the despairing, of
assurance for the doubting, of reconciliation for the divided;
to become a beginning of freedom for the oppressed, of
comfort for the sorrowing, of friendship for the forgotten;
to become a beginning of beauty for the forlorn, of
sweetness for the soured, of gentleness for the angry, of
wholeness for the broken, of peace for the frightened and
violent of the earth.

Help me to believe in beginnings, to make a beginning, to be
a beginning, so that I may not just grow old, but grow new
each day of this wild, amazing life you call me to live with
the passion of Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends & Neighbors

**It is with the saddest heart I pass on the following:
Please join me in remembering a great icon. The
Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast
infection and complications from repeated pokes
inthe belly. He was 71.**

**Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin.
Dozens of celebritiesturned out to pay their respects,
including Mrs. Butterworth, Jack,the California
Raisins, Betty Crocker,
the Hostess Twinkies,and Captain Crunch.**

**The gravesite was piled high with flours. As long-time
friend, Aunt Jemima,delivered the eulogy, describing
Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was
kneaded.Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but
his later life wasfilled withturnovers. He was not
considered a very "smart"cookie, wasting much of
hisdough on half-baked schemes. Despite being a
little flaky at times, he even still, was a crusty old man
and was considered a roll model for millions.**

**Doughboy is survived by his wife, Play Dough; two
children, John Dough and Jane Dough; plus they had
one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly
father, Pop Tart The funeral was held at 3:50 for
about twenty minutes.**

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An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was
sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots
of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted
by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws.
"You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a
girl in the line said to the little fella.

Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His
grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles.
When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles," she said,
while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles
are beautiful."

The boy looked up, "Really?"

Of course," said the grandmother. "Why just name me one
thing that's prettier than freckles."

The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into

his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse. For my grandchildren, I'd like better. I'd really like for them to know about hand me down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would.

I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated. I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen.

It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep. I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in, I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you, let him.

When you want to see a movie and your little brother wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him. I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely. On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mom.

If you want a slingshot, I hope your Dad teaches you how to make one instead of buying one. I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books.

When you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head. I hope you get teased by your friends when you have your first crush on a girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what ivory soap tastes like.

May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole. I don't care if you try a beer once, but I hope you don't like it. And if a friend offers you dope or a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend.

I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your

Granddad and go fishing with your Uncle. May you feel sorrow at a funeral and joy during the holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through your neighbor's window and that she hugs you and kisses you at Christmas time when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.

These things I wish for you-tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it's the only way to appreciate life.

We secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them

Paul Harvey...GOOD DAY

A message every parent should read, because your children are watching and doing as you do, not as you say.

"When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me good night and I felt loved and safe.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, "Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."

Each of us - parent, grandparent or friend - influence the life of a child.

A young couple got married and left on their honeymoon. When they got back, the bride immediately called her mother. "Well," said her mother, "so how was the honeymoon?"

"Oh, mama," she replied, "the honeymoon was wonderful! So romantic...". Suddenly she burst out crying. "But, mama, as soon as we returned Sam started using the most horrible language- things I'd never heard before! I mean, all these awful 4-letter words! You've got to come get me and take me home... PLEASE MAMA!"

"Sarah, Sarah," her mother said, "calm down! Tell me, what

could be so awful.

WHAT 4-letter words?"

"Please don't make me tell you, mama," wept the daughter,
"I'm so embarrassed they're just too awful! COME GET
ME, PLEASE !!!"

"Darling, baby, you must tell me what has you so upset...
Tell your mother these horrible 4-letter words!"

Still sobbing, the bride said, "Oh, mama...words like: Dust,
Wash, Iron, Cook.."

"I'll pick you up in ten minutes," said the mother.

A Caring Mother's MESSAGE From Heaven

"I still question whether or not there is life after death. I
feel silly to even say this out loud, but I have asked her to
let me know if there is a heaven and if she is happy."

Newsday, Sunday, February 25th, 2001

For her own purposes, Kathy Fontaine's mother passed
away on New Year's Day, 1997. For historical purposes,
she actually died on January 3rd. Her name was Anne
Tropeano, and she lived in Bellmore. Having suffered an
aneurysm on New Year's Day, she lingered, comatose and
brain dead until all other measurable bodily systems
followed her mind.

Her last words to Fontaine, who lives in West Islip, came
earlier New Year's Day: "I'll call you later." The next call
came from Joanne Giodano, Fontaine's sister, of Bellmore.
"She told me about the aneurysm," Fontaine said, "It all
happened so fast. By that time, for all intents and purposes,
my mother was gone.

"It was the worst thing that ever happened," Fontaine said.
"I mean, I know my perspective is prejudiced, but she was
not only the best mother you could have, she was the best
friend you could have. And. For the way I feel, it might as
well have happened yesterday.

“So I get this call, and soon I’m in the Nassau County Medical Center. My son, Christopher, 24, wanted time with my mother. He was in Florida and on his way back. “Please be sure Grandma hangs on until I get there! She did. Christopher got up here late on the 2nd, and she finally passed away on the 3rd.”

“So, here were these three days, with this close-knot Italian family, at what was called at the time NCMC. The strangest thing happened, although, if you knew my mother, they weren’t so strange.

“First, well, several of the patients with her in the intensive care unit were.....you know, on the verge. I mean, they were beyond critical. At one point, they very first night, a woman came up to me, one of the family members of one of the other ICU patients and she said, ‘Can I ask you a favor?’ I said, ‘Sure, what?’” She said my daughter is dying,” Her daughter was just a little older than my son. I don’t know what exactly the problem was, but she said to me, ‘I’m afraid for my daughter to go alone. I’ve been watching your family, and I can see how close you are, and I can see and feel the love for your mother, and I was wondering if you could ask your mother if my daughter could go along with her, so my daughter won’t be alone.’ I said certainly, that I would tell her, and that she would do it; she probably would very much like to do it.

“On the second night, they brought in a young man who had been in an car accident. He was brain dead. The family was there for a couple of yours, and I guess everybody pretty much learns who else everybody is in situations like that. This family had not yet seen anybody from the first family that approached us, but all of a sudden, the young man’s sister came up to me and said, ‘My brother is dying. He’s clinically gone, in fact. But we’re afraid of him being alone in this. Could you please have your mother take him with her.’ This is twice in two nights.

“I went to my mother, and I whispered in her ear, ‘Mom, even in death, you have a kid’s hand in each hand. Even now, you have the responsibility to care for someone else. I believe you can hear me, and I know you’ll take care of these two kids. I love you.’

“Maybe with somebody else, it would have felt unusual to have that happen, let alone twice. But my mother was the type that always was caring for people. No matter what was going on in her life, she was always doing for somebody, being worried or concerned about somebody, helping them, bringing them stuff, counseling them, whatever. I already knew that, anyway, but then, at her wake, my sister and I, and my brother Paul – he lives near me in West Islip—we were floored by the people. We couldn’t keep up with the ‘Thank you.’ ‘Your mother did this for me,’ ‘Your mother, did that for me.’

“So, after a few days, it was over, but I didn’t get over it.” Fontaine said. “I’m 51 years old, and I still question whether or not there is life after death, and I still worry about my Mom, and I feel silly about it. I feel silly to even say this out loud, but, finally, I asked her, at some point, to let me know if there is a heaven, and if she was happy. I even gave her the formula. I said if I ever find a piece of red beach glass, I will know: ‘Yes’ and ‘Yes.’”

“My husband and I have been boating for 20 years,” said Fontaine. “Right now, we have a 34-foot Silverton. We take it over to Fire Island, Antantique, mostly, and we both just love the beach. I’ve been collecting sea glass for all those 20 years. In all that time, I’ve never found red. Anytime you see somebody walking and looking for beach glass, you always says, ‘Find any red? Got any red? You never see it; you never hear of anybody seeing it..

“One day last year, on an oddly warm day in May, my husband says, ‘C’mon, honey, let’s go down to the beach.’ OK, so we go over to Atlantique. We dock the boat, and he says, ‘Let’s go for a walk,” I said, ‘Nah, but he wanted to use his metal detector, and so I said, ‘All right.” We go to the beach. He walks off in one direction with the metal detector, and I take a half dozen steps toward the water, and what’s staring up at me, almost in the shape of a heart: a large piece of red beach glass. I mean, red. I had it made into a pendant. People compliment me on my ruby. My ruby!

“So, now I know.”

Thank you Hedy and Eric Page for sending us this

wonderful story. It's a keeper.

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When Albert Einstein was making the rounds of the speaker's circuit, he usually found himself eagerly longing to get back to his laboratory work. One night as they were driving to yet another rubber-chicken dinner, Einstein mentioned to his chauffeur (a man who somewhat resembled Einstein in looks and manner) that he was tired of speech making.

"I have an idea, boss," his chauffeur said. "I've heard you give this speech so many times. I'll bet I could give it for you."

Einstein laughed loudly and said, "Why not? Let's do it!"

When they arrived at the dinner, Einstein donned the chauffeur's cap and jacket and sat in the back of the room. The chauffeur gave a beautiful rendition of Einstein's speech and even answered a few questions expertly.

Then a supremely pompous professor asked an extremely esoteric question about anti-matter formation, digressing here and there to let everyone in the audience know that he was nobody's fool.

Without missing a beat, the chauffeur fixed the professor with a steely stare and said, "Sir, the answer to that question is so simple that I will let my chauffeur, who is sitting in the back, answer it for me."

Kathleen Mohin sent this story in about a Pretzel.

THE PRETZEL STORY

The pretzel has a deep spiritual meaning for Lent. It has been used for Lent for over 1500 years. The pretzel is made in the shape of crossed arms, because in those days the people crossed their arms over their chest while praying. The breads were called "little arms".

Back in the 5th century the monks in Italy taught young children their prayers during Lent. The word originally was

Latin "pretiola" meaning small reward. The children would receive the small reward when they learned their prayers well. The monks made the treats from bread to remind us that Christ is our bread of life. The salt was added to represent Christ's suffering for us. This is what we should remember throughout Lent. Later the German people coined the term "pretzel" which we use today .

During Let, a along, long time ago, In countries far away, The people made a bread that would Remind them they should pray.

Some water, salt and flower, Were mixed with greatest care, Then the dough was shaped like arms, That cross the heart in prayer.

We too can have this twisted bread, The little pretzel still is here, Reminding us to pray.

I am always playing tricks on our grandchildren. I give them a potato wrapped up as a birthday present, or present them with a brick so that when they get older they can build a BBQ.

Darren and Lili has a big trampoline in the back yard and it is a gathering place for not only D.J. and Jonathan our grandchildren, but the rest of the neighborhood children as well.

Lili is always stressed out when she sees children playing on the contraption as she thinks that one of the children will get hurt. So far none has.

I went to visit Darren, my son, one afternoon and there on the trampoline was D.J. (8) and Jonathan (6) and Zackery their cousin jumping up and down. Their laughter filled the yard. I wandered out to the rear of the yard where the kids were playing and approached the trampoli ne. As usual we play tricks with one another. As the children are jumping up and down they try to get as close to me as possible without me swatting their legs from underneath them. Once I swat their legs they fall on the trampoline with the rest of the children following suit.

Jonathan was the closest to me. As he came near the edge of the trampoline I swatted his legs while he was up on the air and down he went on the trampoline cover with D.J. and Zachery on top of him.

Jonathan hit the rubberized trampoline top and just lay there not moving a muscle with his eyes closed. D.J. and Zachery were still on top of him.

"Jonathan are you all right?" I yelled.

No answer.

"Jonathan, get up? If yelled.

Still no answer.

"D.J., get up off your brother and you too Zackery."

D.J. raised his body from Jonathan's and so did Zackery. Jonathan was just lying there not making one movement. I thought to myself, 'Oh Oh, I really went and did it this time.' I thought that maybe Jonathan had hurt his neck or was unconscious from the fall. I immediately started to climb up on the trampoline, my heart racing to beat the band.

As I got up on my hands and knees onto the trampoline top to reach Jonathan when Jonathan immediately sat up with a smile on his face and said "April fool!!!!!"

Jonathan really GOT the Poppy that day.

My sister Maren through a surprise 50th birthday party for her husband Michael in Scottsdale, Arizona. 100 family members from all of the country, friends and business associates showed up to the country club for this affair.

My brother, Barry flew in from Houston, Texas flew in for the festivities. Barry is five years younger than I and remarked that he will be 55 years old in December.

I remarked that he will then be known as a senior citizen.
"Oh, no," said my brother, "I will not be a 'SENIOR
CITIZEN', I WILL BE A 'JUNIOR SENIOR CITIZEN'".

I guess it's all the way one looks at it.

We had just finished our first Barbi of the season (that's
BBQ for your Yanks) and Norma, my wife, Lili, my son's
wife and her two children were in the car driving home.
How the subject of "hurt" ever came up I don't remember,
but I was telling my grandchildren that a spoken hurt is
worse than a physical hurt. What I meant by that is that if
you say to someone, "I don't like you, or you can't play
with us," that really hurt a persons feelings. He or she
would probably have preferred it if you hit them with a
stick.

With that Lili chimed in with, "kids please remember the
old saying, 'The pen is thicker than the sword.'"

That's one for the record books.

We were at Egger's Ice Cream Parlor in Tottenville.....my
sons, daughter's and grandchildren and had just finished our
sumptuous repast of egg creams, root beer floats and just
plain ice cream with sprinkles.

We finished eating and were standing around the candy
counter with our grandchildren were picking out their candy
when I spied another family sitting in an adjoining booth.

There was a family consisting of a grandmother,
grandfather, mom and dad and a 3 year-old-girl. All of a
sudden the 3 year -old-girl who was covered with ice cream
from head to toe got up from the table and started running
through the people standing in the ice cream parlor. The
only thing you heard was her mother yelling, "**Don't touch**
anybody."

It was Easter morning and K had promised my grandchildren that we would take them to the park. We had to walk over to the next block to get the car because being the holidays there was not enough parking in our housing development.

On the way through a grassed area between the houses, I was walking with D.J., my 9 year-old grandson, when a small dog started barking from one of the decks.

D.J. looked up at the dog and said, “Pop, do you know what kind of dog that is?”

“What kind?” I said to D.J.

“That’s a *Chaloo* Pop!” replied D.J.

“No, D.J., you mean it’s a *Chahuahua*.”

Every April 22nd, my birthday rolls around and this year was no different. My children know that when they come to my birthday party that Norma always gives that they are NOT to bring any presents. That doesn’t mean I don’t get a gift certificate for an ice cream, or my grandson Jonathan giving my an onion all wrapped up. I even get some candy and sweets, but no large gifts.....that’s the rule.

This birthday was different, Jessica my 10-year-old granddaughter came up to me with a very large present wrapped in fancy paper. It was about 18 inches wide and two feet high.

“I wonder what it is?” I said to Jessica.

“I made it myself Poppy just for you”, came Jessica’s reply. So with the rest of the family surrounding me I opened the present. It was a beautiful watercolor of Zeus, the great God.

“Jessica, it is just beautiful. Thank you so much. In fact,

I am going to hang this beautiful painting in my office for all to see," I said. The following morning, good to my word the painting went up on my wall right in front of my desk. I then sat down at began to write a note to Jessica on how much I loved the painting and the time she took to do it.....all by herself. I told her that it was one of most precious gifts I have ever received and that I loved her very much. I mailed the letter.

A week later I happened to stop by Jessica's home. Jessica was sitting at the top of the stairs leading to the second floor when I entered the house. She has the most angelic smile and those dimples.....well, that's another story.

"Hi Pop, I got your note and I just love what you sent me. I keep it under my pillow and read it every night before I go to bed."

Folks, it doesn't get any better than that!!!!!!

I have just come back from spending the day with friend, Willy Navallo and other Masons at Van Cortland Park in the Bronx where we videotape and fingerprint children. The video and fingerprint cards are given to the parents so that in the event a child is kidnaped or taken, the parents can show the tape to the police for easy identification.

It was a long day and Norma had prepared a delightful dinner. I was reading the Staten Island Advance and came across the following article which I immediately included in this collection. It is entitled "Consider God's Invitation to breathe in the silence." It was written by Rev. Tilda Norberg of the United Methodist Healing Ministry.

.....My grandmother Matilda, who died in 1962, never had electricity or running water or a phone. She lived in an isolated cabin on a mountain in Alabama with her dogs and chickens, and a constant sense of God's presence. People would drive out from Birmingham to ask her advice or just to spend time with her, absorbing her peace.

She listened and prayed and sometimes gave them herbal remedies grown in her garden. A self-taught midwife, she was often called upon to deliver babies in the tiny cabins and shacks tucked deep in the woods. Frequently she was

away all night, keeping vigil with a laboring woman or caring for a sick child.

As a kid I thought she was the wisest and holiest person I ever met, and I loved to visit her. I remember her sitting in a rocking chair on the porch after work was done, looking out over the red clay hills, her eyes alight. Occasionally her silent prayer would escape in the audible word or two "Jesus!" or "Thank you" or "Help him, Lord."

A child's tug on her long calico skirt, or a visitor, or a meal to cook on her enormous wood stove could easily capture her attention, but I had the feeling that she was immersed in prayerful solitude all the while. For Granny, prayer flowed through her life like the nearby Warrior River, no matter what else was going on.

My life is infinitely busier and crazier than Granny's, Days are filled with counseling appointments, workshops and retreats to lead, talks to prepare, classes to teach, schedules to meet, phone, fax, and email to deal with.

Over the clamor it's sometimes hard for me to hear the invitation to be in solitude. Yet God's whispered invitation comes to me – and to you–just as it did to Granny:

"Come be alone with me. Let me fill the silence with my presence. Let me talk to you and heal you. Let me show you what to do."

That's why I need to find places and times of solitude. I need to get away from time to time so I can ponder, rest, listen to my own heart, and to God.

I am certain that this same hunger nudges many of the readers of this story. I hope you, too, will find a way to answer God's invitation to quiet down. Consider going away for a day or two or three, to some place where there is spaciousness and silence.

While you are there, don't fill the time with activity or chatter. Instead, try taking a walk alone with God. Listen to gentle music tapes that pull you toward silence.

Find a beautiful place to pray, perhaps outdoors. Cook some food. Sleep a lot. Write in your journal. Listen. Allow your feelings to surface, no matter what they are, and

offer them to God. Breathe in the silence. Let God love you.

THANK YOU LORD A FOR GIVING ME ANOTHER DAY TO SPEND WITH MY FAMILY!

Blessings Seven Fold.

We have friends of mine whose children have married and moved to the far corners of the world. Oft times these children move only a few blocks or a few mile away and the parents do not have the opportunity of seeing them. Maybe the children are too busy or there has been a rift in the family that hasn't been settled. In any event there is a void when parent and child do not interrelate. The extended family as we knew it has almost become a faded memory.

The second saddest thing is when parents who have become grandparents never get the chance to see or interact with their grandchildren and that is a shame. Growing up Norma and I treasured the time we spent with our grandparents and often speak of the great time we had at sleep-overs, dinners or just being around our grandparents and being loved.

Of course sometimes it is the parents or grandparents fault that they don't see their grandchildren or children, but I am not finding fault with either party .

The reason Norma and I are writing of parents, children and grandchildren is for the one and only reason of thanking our children Jim, Darren and Dayna and their respective spouses Maria, Lili and Don for letting us be totally immersed in their families. Our two sons and their families live only minutes away and we see them and our grandchildren all the time. Our daughter Dayna and her husband Don live in Gettysburg, Pa. and we see them every 6 weeks or so.

Norma and I get in the car on a Friday morning and off we go to Gettysburg. Norma Jean and Grace will be at

the front window, their faces pushed to the glass waiting our arrival. When we pull into the driveway they come running out of the garage and into our arms. One has to know that this is the greatest feeling that a grandparent can have. If you ask Grace what her one wish is she will tell you, "I go to Mom-Mom and Poppy's house". I have built a church house, a playhouse that resembles a church with steeple and stained glass windows and trucked it down to Grace's and Norma Jeans house and placed in the back yard. Last summer I built a Noah's Ark Tree house in their back yard complete with animals and a big slide. Every year we add more animals. Don, Dayna's husband has never complained and we love him for it.

We have an toll-free 800 number and anyone of our children or grandchildren can call Mom-Mom by picking up the phone. Dayna speaks with her mother every morning and we get a blow-by-blow description of the days events about her children. This is truly a blessing to be involved. We have a great relationship.

We are a family that "Hugs". My son Jim is 34 years old, 6'tall and weighs 300 pounds and is a bruiser of a man and yet so gentle. Some of his friends saw him hugging me and questioned him as to why he hugged me every time he saw me. He answer, "Because he's my father.....you don't have any trouble with that do you?"

"No Jim," came the reply."

"Good," Jim shot back.

Every Sunday morning I pick Jim up and we go to meetings together. We pick up the coffee and buns and off we go. I treasure these moments.

My son Darren is my partner in the family business and I see him every day at the office. It is certainly a pleasure having a son as a partner. We get along quite well, although sometimes we have "business discussions" which can happen when decisions have to be made with ones business. I love seeing him every day and here too I get a hug at the beginning and at the end of each day.

On the weekends, Darren knows I wake early and at 6:30 a.m. the phone rings and Darren wants to know if I

will be coming over to his house to help him with the R.V. and to do some chores around the house. My two grandson's DJ and Jonathan always run to the door upon my pulling up to the house and rounds of hugs and kisses prevail. Do you know how precious that makes one feel? I do! Lili always has a big hello for me and even lets me take the children for ice cream even though they might have not have dinner yet.

In fact, there is rule that is: if it rains, its an ice cream day. My grandchildren will call after school if it is raining and remind me that its an "ice cream day." I'll pick them up and off we go to Egger's Ice Cream Parlour for our favorite flavor. Spending time with Jessica and Rebecca, Jim and Maria's children is my all time love.

At Darren's and Lili's house, no one objected when during the summer of 1997 we built a two story tree house with swings and full set of stairs to the second level. It is a huge tree house and will hold a dozen adults of deciding weight. It overlooks the pool and trampoline. This summer we are going to have a sleep over some evening.

In the backyard of Jessie's and Rebecca's house I built the Babysitters Club - a full "girls only" playhouse complete with patio, skylight and dutch door entryway. They often play in the club with their friends. Here again, our children had no objection.

We praise the Lord every day and thank him for allowing us to be so close to our children and our six (seven?) grandchildren. Every minute we spend with them is a blessing and certainly is one of our most important aspects of our lives.....that of being involved, of being loved, or loving.

As we end this years collection of stories Norma and I just wanted to let our grown children and all our precious grandchildren know how much we treasure their love for us and our love for them. We are never lonely and have grown closer over the years. We have given them

wings so that they may fly home.

Thanks kids! 143 Mom and Dad.