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The Mysterious Dottie

Written by: Irene Leland



I was sixteen when I met the man whom my mother could have married.

It was January 31, 1964, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was in town for a professional engagement, and my parents had invited him over to our house that evening for cocktails before a party. I was so excited to be included! It was my father Pete Leland's 57th birthday. It had been twenty-nine years since our guest had proposed to my mom, Dottie. I thought it was unique that my dad and this man were able to cut through jealousy and engage each other in light-hearted fun – displaying their similar qualities of respectful manners combined with wit and humor.

This man of 52 years, who was a year younger than my mother, was tall, elegant, and handsome. I was struck by his statuesque yet graceful presence. I was even more impressed by his warm and gentle demeanour, which was very unlike the many roles he played as the “King of Horror.” The man was Vincent Price. And I was a very enchanted young lady. I was finally getting to meet the famous man who many years before had captured my mother's heart but not her hand in marriage. Mr. Price had fallen deeply in love

with her then, and it was very obvious that his feelings hadn't changed. It was also obvious that she still adored him but felt secure in her decision not to marry him.

Even though they had both grown up in the very fine, cultured environment of St. Louis society, and had experienced a thrilling romance together, my mother had a strong sense of the standards which had been passed down to her from her family. Marrying into the life of the theatre was considered too unpredictable and unstable. This was definitely a mind over heart situation. Knowing my mom and her ways, I was never surprised that she said no, and she definitely made a fantastic choice in my wonderful dad. He treated her beautifully and provided for her well by taking over his father's well-established publishing business.

At the time that Vince proposed to her in January 1935, he had just been cast in a prominent role as Prince Albert in *Victoria Regina* in London. The following May his premiere performance brought rave reviews and launched Vincent Price into stardom. Not long after, he reprised this role on Broadway opposite Helen Hayes. The stage was set and “Uncle Vinny,” as he let me call him, had his feet solidly planted on it. It was a solid footing which would lead him into a solid career. Would it have been a solid life for my mother? Who knows? She met Dad, and that was solid enough for her.

I'll never forget that night when I met this marvellous man. Mother had told me all about him, and of course I'd seen him in the movies. I, Dottie with Vincent and Bob even made up a fun pun which I told my friends: “*Mom ended up marrying Daddy, and that's why I'm so priceless!*” I was active in drama at school and was infatuated with acting. So on that special night, I was not only exhilarated to meet Vincent but also to talk with him about his profession. On March 3rd, after his return to Los Angeles, he wrote to my mother and summed up the event perfectly:

Dear Dottie:

Many thanks for sending me the clip – and for being the same beautiful, delightful, luscious you! Show that to Pete – good for husbands.

I loved meeting Irene – she's a dear and I hope she either does it, the theatre, or gets it out of her system – anyway she can only learn from it how better to communicate with her fellow man –

All Love to you all.

Ever,

Vince



Dottie with Vincent and Bob

(I did go on to have a career in commercial acting, industrial films, and voiceovers. On Vinny's visit in 1978, he expressed how pleased he was that I had found a satisfying niche.)

I also remember during that eventful evening that he proudly showed me a picture of his then two-year-old daughter, Victoria. She looked just like him! I remember wondering who her mother was and what it was like living in their world in California.

During the Christmas of 1999, I was thrilled to receive the biography Vincent Price by Victoria Price. I was ecstatic when I read what Victoria wrote about Dottie and what a significant development their relationship was in Vincent's life. She quotes from his letters to his parents about his intense feelings for Dottie: “I love her more than anyone I've ever met. She has all those qualities of dignity and poise which my three womenfolk have brought me up to look for – you Mommy, Hat, and Lol.” He also describes the lovely ring he bought her. Then two months after he proposed to her, he shared in his letters that he was

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One Legacy
PO Box 1011
Edwardsville, IL 62025



Thank you for picking up the inaugural edition of a publication dedicated to caregivers and care receivers of all ages and walks of life.

Each day has purpose. Every life has meaning. And absolutely, absolutely everyone has a story to tell and a legacy to create.

Welcome to The Family Historian. This monthly journal is a celebration of the fascinating, real-life stories told firsthand by those who have lived and breathed them.

As the founder and publisher of this publication and as a caregiver, I've had the privilege of sitting in waiting rooms just like the one you may be in and of listening to incredible, true

stories from perfect strangers -- stories that had a profound impact on me. These stories also have a profound impact on those who do the telling, giving them the voice to remember and recall pivotal experiences in their lives.

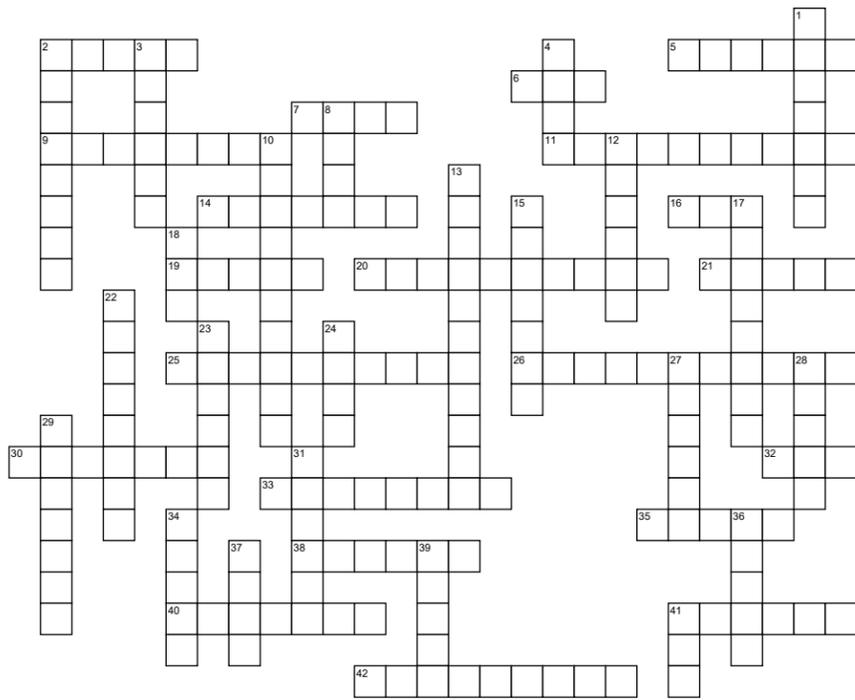
Our mission through The Family Historian is simple: We are committed to purveying these stories (we've got literally hundreds to share already) to inspire, encourage, and comfort those who read them. Do you know someone who has a story to tell? Maybe it's your grandparent, your parent, your neighbor, or maybe it's you.

Here's to the beginning of sharing personal, impactful, legacy-creating stories...because each day has purpose and every life has meaning.

Yours along the journey,

Mike Stith

It's All About Legacy



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ACROSS

- 2 attractive young woman
- 5 participated in 1960's freedom movement
- 6 dog's tail motion
- 7 dining hall food
- 9 highly admired person/thing
- 11 chignon, pageboy, beehive, shag
- 14 giant or name of sunken ship
- 16 boy or young man
- 19 no longer a child
- 20 idiot box
- 21 bonnie and
- 25 mobile library
- 26 hard worker
- 30 eyeglass for one eye

DOWN

- 32 long period of time
- 33 unpredictable person
- 35 loud burp
- 38 head honcho, high-muckety-muck
- 40 cheap looking
- 41 WWII pinup girl
- 42 slang, model T Ford auto

- 12 refrigerator before electricity
- 13 hard worker
- 15 con artist
- 17 pretty girl
- 18 tiny bit or smidgeon
- 22 vintage keepsake
- 23 hairpiece
- 24 vagabond, bum
- 27 small Volkswagen
- 28 actor "..... Flynn"
- 29 illegally produced liquor
- 31 lookout or guard, fence board
- 34 trains athletes
- 36 open man-made passageway for water
- 37 strength of mind, mettle
- 39 a president during Vietnam war
- 41 joke or prank

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If so, then contact us at info@onelegacy.com or (618) 960-7252 and a member of our team will assist you in getting your story shared.



My Life. My Choice. My Home

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Our Own Irish Legend

Submitted by Patricia Bubash, M.Ed., LPC



Today when everyone is choosing to be Irish as an excuse to skip work to watch a parade, drink too much beer, eat green eggs, and hang out with friends, our family, simply, quietly, celebrates our dad, Patrick Eugene McFarland. Truly, to his family, he is a legend, an amazing person.

My dad was born April 27, 1923 to an alcoholic father and a very young mother. His dad had, already, buried one wife when my dad was born. The death of his first wife left him a widower with a handful of children, and a plea from his neighbors to take a young woman

off their hands. The woman was only a child, in her mid-teens. The family had taken her in to help out her parents. They were struggling to feed their own brood without adding another mouth. It was tough times in the Arkansas hills. Lily became the second wife of Robert McFarland and the mother of another six children. My dad was the third boy born to this union. By the time he was 11 years old, both parents had died. The older son, and, his dad's name sake, did his best to keep this hard scrabble family together. It was to my dad's good fortune that the owner of a general store and farm had noticed the living arrangements of this fatherless/motherless home- no real direction, no one taking care of them or providing for basic needs. My dad often begged meals off other families.

One day, having watched this scenario for several months, Harry Collins, offered my dad a place in his house with his wife and two sons. It was not St. Patrick's Day, but it was my dad's lucky day. He lived with this kind, generous, loving couple until he joined

the Navy at the age of 18. Although there was never a



formal adoption, he was a member of their family, introduced as their son, and when he became a dad, we were their grandchildren. Our family was blessed when my dad said, "yes", to going home to live with Harry and Mae Collins.

Why do I say my dad is our Irish legend? My dad did not go beyond fourth grade, but he is a voracious reader, can do basic math better than his grandchildren, and has managed to provide a comfortable living for his family, working even into his 80's. He is the poster child for what the term "work ethic" means. He is not a quitter, he is not a whiner. Even today as he approaches his 91st birthday he views life with an attitude of the "cup is half full". He is our living legend. He has outlived all but one sibling, survived major heart surgery and other

serious health crises, he is very Irish, and he is ours.

Several years ago as I was contemplating a buy out from my school district which would mean retirement (I hate that word, prefer reinventing!) I told my dad how I was so conflicted on what to do. His reply has been something I have revisited often when I start to regret my decision. "Whenever I make a decision, I go with it, and I don't look back. I live with whatever it is I chose to do."

As a child growing up I did not have the close relationship with my dad that my sisters enjoyed. He and my mother had only a brief couple of months as a married couple before he was shipped out. When he came returned to the states, he had a family of two: my mom and me. He didn't have time to learn about being a husband when the role of father was foisted upon him.

I am so grateful for the past twenty some years as my dad and I have gotten to know each other better, listened to each other more, shared more together time, and learned to appreciate each

Continued on back page

The Burner Covers

Written by: Pat Adams

My Mom loved to cover up her burners on her stove with these cheap metal decorated covers. I always remember her stove had them. I guess she didn't like the way the electric elements looked. Who knows? When my husband and I decided to move to West County and ended up about a mile from my parents home, it worked out real nice that she babysat my kids every day at my home. The downside of this wonderful arrangement was she insisted on decorating my stove with burner covers. I hated those things and certainly did not want them on my stove, but what the hey, she was babysitting my 3 kids every day. So I agreed to just look away from the stove.

Every once in awhile I would come home from work and wonder what "that smell" was. I would ask the kids, "Did somebody burn the popcorn?" All I would get in response was, "Nope, no popcorn." H-mmm....that's weird, something really smells burnt. Oh well, I thought and moved

onto the next thing. One day is snowed a lot. I came home from work, again smelling something over-cooked. Not really dwelling on it, as there was always something going on in our household. I walked out on our deck to look at the beautiful backyard all encase in snow. I happened to look down and there in the snow were 3 black circles. Nothing else there except 3 perfect black circles. How odd I thought and then an image popped in my mind of those burner covers. I ran to the stove and sure enough 3 burner covers were missing! Thinking back, I did remember noticing the burner covers decorative patterns had changed a few times! Oh my gosh, my mom was burning the burner covers!

I yelled to the kids to come into the kitchen and asked them what was going on. They finally confessed that Grandma told them not to tell me or she wasn't bringing them donuts anymore, which was something else they

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How I Met My Husband

By Mary L. Smith (MacGillis)



My profession was nursing and with World War II raging I decided to join the war effort as an Army Nurse. My induction ceremony included six other women who were also becoming nurses for the Army. We got all settled in to our quarters on base. That same evening, six young and handsome Second Lieutenants stopped by our quarters to invite us to go with them to the Officer's Club to dance! Of course we were delighted by this invitation and took them up on their offer.

We felt really important being in the Officer's Club. It was all a new adventure. One of the officers asked me to dance and I said yes! Once we started dancing however, I became uncomfortable with the way he was holding me. It felt inappropriate and as I was trying to figure out how to handle it, my eyes connected with one of the other Second Lieutenants who noticed my discomfort. I mouthed the word "HELP" to him, and he came right over to us. He told the other officer "Don't hold my girl so tight" and cut in on the dance.

From that moment on, I knew he was a good man.

That night was the beginning of a new chapter in both of our lives. We began dating and eventually married. After we married, I had to give up being an Army Nurse because at that time you could not be married and be a nurse in the military. Times have certainly changed since then. But we had a very happy life together. We were married for sixty-seven years ultimately having six children. It has been a very full and wonderful life.

Mysterious Dottie

Continued from cover

very upset. In the book, Victoria talks about how nothing else was known regarding the mysterious Dottie including where she came from, who she was, or what had happened to her.

Needless to mention, I could hardly wait to contact Victoria. Thanks to some good local contacts, I was given her phone number in Santa Fe, New Mexico. On January 28, 2000, I made the call, and it was spellbinding. When I said, "I know who the mysterious Dottie is," an electrifying force harged the conversation! We were both jubilant! On top of the basic facts, I told her that the ring he sent her was an exquisite, huge golden

sapphire and arrived baked inside a cake. He was in London. She was in Paris. She accepted the ring and saved it; he had insisted that she keep it.



The Mysterious Dottie. Well, she's not so mysterious any more. Now Vincent's daughter has an answer to the mystique. And, Victoria provided information that I hadn't known

either. Happily, the unfolded mystery brought two women together in a phone call. After that call, I couldn't help but think what is so obvious and yet so eerie: if Dottie had married Vinny, Victoria and I

would not be here!

What's even more eerie, and even symbolic, is how closely together my mother and Vinny died. On October 9, 1993, Mom, along with my stepfather Bob, were murdered by a yard-man in their home. Besides being a major story here in St. Louis, it really shook up the fine community in which they lived as there hadn't been a murder there in forty years. Vincent was contacted by friends here, and I was told that he was absolutely devastated. Sixteen days later, Vincent Price died from cancer.

All those years and all those horror movies later, Vincent's first true love and forever friend, Dottie, was tragically killed in a real life horror story, and Vinny died soon after. They now rest always in peace.

It was my utmost pleasure to

meet Victoria Price in April 2011 when she came to St. Louis for the big "Vincentennial" ten-day celebration marking her father's birthday one hundred years earlier. There were many memorable events at various venues including showings of famous Vincent Price movies, performances, speeches, and exhibits. I was happy that my story, "The Mysterious Dottie," was published in the Globe-Democrat special issue about Vincent Price! And I was thrilled that during Victoria's remarkable verbal/video presentation at the History Museum she talked about her dad's engagement to my mother, showed a photo that he made for Dottie that ended up being on a commercial billboard in London, and was kind enough to mention that I was in the audience.

My Story About Life During the Great Depression

By Ann Horton Coleman



My name is Ann Horton Coleman. I live in the north Venice area near Madison Il.

My parents lived in a house about four houses down, behind the church. My daddy worked for Brewer Motor Company in Granite City, Il.. He worked on cars there. My mother was home bound. She stayed at home because she had four children and I was the youngest of the four. Dad lived with his mother and father and we all stayed in

this one house. The house is still standing, on Morgan Street. We had a store there. My grandfather and grandmother lived across the street and he worked at Riley Tire Company. He used to get burned quite a bit from the hot tar. When he came home from the hospital we had to put lard on him up and down. I used to take care of him. We all lived in the same house but we were young. My grandfather worked all the time and helped support my father and his four children. He would buy food to help feed us. He set my father with a truck repair shop and a store. When all of the other stores would be closed our little store was still open until 9:00 at night and if business was real good, we'd stay open til 10:00. And my

daddy always had chickens and we raised them from chicks.

Like I said, my grandfather worked at the tire company. Him and some of the guys got into it at work. They used to kind of scold him and taunt him. He was making too much money for a black man. I would rub him down all the time with lard. I was the nurse of the family. I would get him back on his feet. He would always take me shopping and he did good things for people.

We were real happy, so were my father and mother. The house is still standing. Both of them are deceased now. My father put a little store out front. My mother would take care of the store and when the older kids come home from school they would work in the store. When I was about 12 or 14 years old, I started working in the store. The store was called

Horton's. People would come and get bread and canned goods from us. My father would take us over to the market every Saturday morning if the food ran out. He sold eggs and everybody used to tease me. They liked to see me kill a chicken. To be a young person they couldn't believe I could do that. I was about 9 or 10 years old. Kids today sure wouldn't do that.

My daddy would work on, and wash, cars so he built a garage across the alley in the back of the house we were. He would work on cars on weekends to make money. I would go out there and help him wax cars. My brothers would be out on the street working in stores so I would help my dad at home. I'd start the car up and he would do whatever he had to do to the car. I lived there until I got married and my husband bought me a home. I never did care to

Finding Ellie: Legacy in the Making

Written by: Pam Bellchamber



Warning: this story has a happy ending! It started out like any ordinary trip to New Orleans; I was looking forward to excitement, relaxation, and a chance to take ten steps back and just watch the world go by. The drive was always a bear, but the reward made it worth it. I always took my trusty Yorkie and sidekick, Ellie, with me to enjoy the time and visit my son Travis, but this trip was a bit different. It was Thanksgiving weekend, and while we usually spent Thanksgiving weekend in New Orleans with my son, this year we were moving him back to St Louis.

Ellie always seems to know when I am taking a trip. If I am leaving for work and I have a small overnight bag, she mopes and lies on the bed next to the bag with huge, sad eyes. If I am taking the larger bag AND food supplies, she knows something is up and that she will get to tag along! Thursday morning it started...the packing, the pacing, the jumping on the bed, the running from the bedroom to the front door. Finally the Jeep was loaded, the dog blanket was packed, and the new leash and collar, with matching harness, were in tow. You have to be stylin' to walk the streets of New Orleans! Ahead of me was nine hours of driving with an eleven pound fur scarf with a heartbeat; Ellie rides on my shoulders everywhere I take her, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Friday was spent loading the U-Haul with all of Travis' 'worldly possessions.' At the time, Travis was managing the Magazine Perks coffee shop and living in the apartment above, which was convenient for him and convenient for our short visit. It was such an unusually warm day that I decided we should prop the shop door open to feel the breeze. I spent Saturday leisurely drinking coffee on a pew in the shop with

Ellie by my side. Saturday I walked along Magazine Street, visiting the shops and enjoying the mild temperatures of November in the south. Then off I went, walking down Magazine Street into all the quaint little shops with Ellie walking proudly down the sidewalk. After lunching at a sidewalk café and buying antiques at the local shop, it was time to rest before taking Travis out for dinner with a couple of friends. Then I would say goodbye to New Orleans until likely the next year; with Travis moving back, there was nothing but the city itself to pull me there the usual four times a year.

We headed out, and I said goodbye to Ellie, explaining that I would be 'right back' like I always do. I pulled the apartment door closed (I thought) and headed down the stairs. Travis and I went through the coffee shop and said goodbye to the young man behind the counter as we walked through the shop to the front door. We headed out for a late dinner at a local Mexican restaurant which was about two miles away. It was probably 9:30 p.m. when Travis' phone rang. It was the nice young man from the coffee shop explaining something that upset Travis: Ellie had just run out the front door of the shop! The same front door I had left propped open earlier that day. My heart sank. I was a mess. We immediately drove back to Magazine Street, and I set out on foot at 10:00 p.m. looking for my little girl. If you have never been to New Orleans, one street is as good as another. I walked alone along the streets until 3:00 a.m., a light drizzle falling and tears running down my face. At that time, I walked back, lay down, and cried on the same pew where, less than twenty-four hours earlier, I had sipped my morning coffee with Ellie at my side. I just knew that she would find her way back to the shop and would scratch on the door, but she didn't.

I couldn't leave New Orleans without her, so I stayed. My husband drove the Jeep and the U-Haul back to St Louis. Travis still had several more weeks of school; we would find her. I walked the streets, and I went to the library and read all the online local papers. I posted on Craigslist, PetFinder.com, and other sites. I hired a company to

make five thousand marketing calls with information about Ellie along with my phone number. They called every land-line within a three mile radius of Magazine Street. I went to PetCo and posted her picture on the bulletin board. I went to the Humane Society to look for her myself, and I called every veterinarian around. I posted pictures in every shop window that would let me, which were most of them. Who would turn away a 40-something-year-old woman with tears running down her face? When I stopped at a local Verizon store to buy a charger for my phone, the nice young men gave it to me at no cost and hung my poster in their window. When I went to the local Pak Mail store to make copies, the nice woman who owned the shop saw my poster and insisted there was no charge for my three hundred copies and to come back when those were gone. I did, and I posted five hundred copies up and down Magazine Street and St Charles Avenue. Magazine Street runs all the way to the Quarter; I walked and biked the distance

for three days until Travis told me he had to go to pick up my oldest daughter, Casey, from the airport. Although I didn't know this at the time, he had called her and told her to come to New Orleans as he didn't know what to do with me.

My friends told me that someone must have picked Ellie up; I knew better. I knew in my heart she was looking for me. The good and the bad was that she wouldn't go to anyone. I was getting calls from people who saw the posters and then saw Ellie in the area; they said she wouldn't come to them – she just ran away. After another two days of looking, Casey convinced me to come home. We rented a car and drove back; I cried for the entire six hundred and ninety-four miles. After I left, there was a freak snow storm and four inches of snow dropped in New Orleans. I couldn't stop crying, and I lost ten pounds in two weeks. I was grief stricken. It was impossible to work or to eat; I sat on the couch and cried. Occasionally my phone

Continued on back page

The Young'uns

My Dad in the military

by Aja T., Age 13

Back when Czechoslovakia was a Communist country, my dad was required to go to military service once a week. When he was there, he trained in military exercises. When my dad was going there, he was supposed to be a tank engineer, but there was a slight problem. The 1989 revolution. This was when the Czechoslovakian people decided that Communism was enough and began strikes and protests. After the protests, the Czechoslovakian government ended Communism and turned to a Parliamentary Constitutional republic government.

However, even though Communism ended in the country, military training was still mandatory. My dad thought it wasn't too bad to be forced into military training, because it was a short period of time, and he didn't really have a choice anyway. (However he wasn't too excited about it either.) At age twenty-five, my dad went to military boot camp for a month. He had just graduated from the Czech Technical

University in Prague with a masters degree in mechanical engineering. He had already started a job in engineering air liquefiers. The military drafting, however, forced him to quit his job. This military boot camp was intense. It included military exercises, training, and firing guns. My dad thought this was the most annoying part because of all the screaming during the drills. At this camp, he said there were only about seven people his age, and the rest were eighteen-year-olds. Normally, at age twenty-six my dad would have been an officer, but because of the revolution, the age groups were mixed up. My dad recalls even having an eighteen-year-old as his officer, which for him, wasn't a good

experience.

Thankfully, my dad didn't go to any front line. He was



positioned at a huge underground bunker complex that was built for the Cold War. At the complex, he was assigned as a facility engineer, which included managing the water, power, and heating and cooling systems. He did many things in the bunker complex, such as guarding the barracks for a little, and even servicing the potato peeling crew! But facility engineer was his main job, which was his favorite.

He remembers one event from his time there. In the bunker, only certain people got hot showers, including the higher ranks such as officers. My dad was not one of them. He and the engineers he worked with figured out

that turning down the air conditioning produced more heat waste, which they could use to warm up their showers. One day when he and his friends decided they wanted warm showers, they decided to turn down the AC in a large room below to produce heat waste. Little did he know, the room was filled with officers who were currently painting planes! The temperature

in the room became so low the officers started to complain about it, confused why it was so cold in the room.

"It's too cold down here!"

"Why is it so cold?" The officers were calling the people managing the AC, including my dad. They were right to complain. It got to forty-five degrees down there!

My dad and his friends responded. "Something must be broken." After convincing the officers, my dad and the rest of the facility engineers in working the AC took their hot showers, and then slowly turned the temperature back up.

Thankfully, my dad got out of that bit of trouble. He resumed normal life as a facility engineer, spending a lot of time playing old 2d war and Simpsons games when he was bored. He slept from six pm to twelve pm and worked shifts the remaining hours. He also worked in twenty-four hour shifts as well. One year after starting, my dad ended his time as a facility engineer around 1994, which would mark an end to his days in the military.



"I should have done it sooner."

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Cantelope

Kwan, Age 13

One time in the fifth grade, I stumbled across a food pun poem. I just looked it up now; it's called Do You Carrot All For Me? The author is unknown, but the poem goes like this:

*Do you carrot all for me?
My heart beats for you.
With your turnip nose
And your radish face
You are a peach
If we cantaloupe
Lettuce marry
Weed make a swell pear.*

I thought it was absolutely brilliant, but I didn't understand a certain line. What's the pun in cantaloupe? I went home and asked my mom what it meant.

She explained that the word 'cantaloupe' was a mix of the words 'can't elope.'

"What does elope mean?"

"It means to run away and get married," my mom explained.

"You know who eloped?"

"Who?"

"Gaga and Papa."

"Really?"

"Yeah. I don't know all the details, but he told me this long ago."

~ ~ ~

I'm outside shoveling snow on a frigid winter night when a car comes rolling to a stop in front of me. A person leans their head out the window to shout, "Hey John, wanna go visit the girls?"

I drop my shovel and run to climb inside the car.

As I slide into the passenger seat and close the door, I reply, "Of course I do."

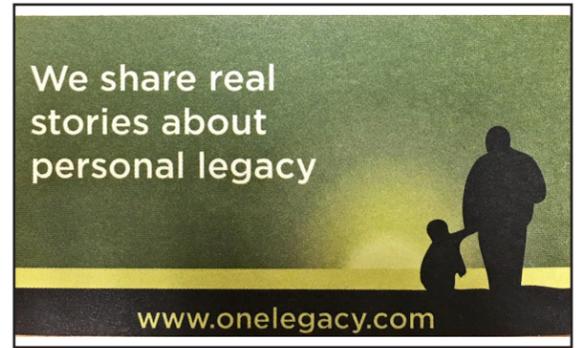
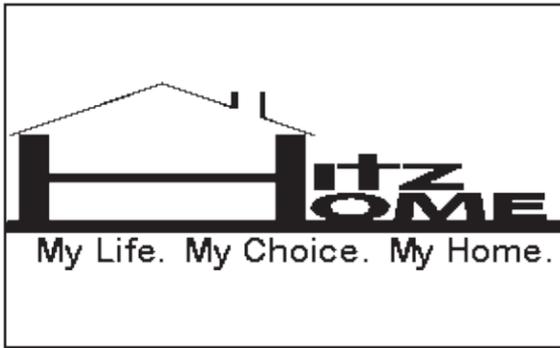
My friend Charlie and I are both in college with girlfriends who live in the same dorm. It's normal for us to go and visit them, so of course I immediately agree, even if it's late at night.

"Cool, let's go."

He presses his foot on the pedal and we're cruising down the road.

It's silence for a little while

Connections And Contacts



drive a car. I got so tired of cars when I was young. I didn't want to see another car. I don't drive today.



What would you tell kids today about the Great Depression?

The first thing I would tell them is there were some teachers, back in the day, in St. Louis who didn't make enough money, they'd always come to IL to find better jobs. People who owned homes here would rent rooms to the teachers. They would leave and go back to St. Louis on Friday afternoon and come back Sunday night or early Monday morning.

My grandmother worked for the state, and used to teach people how to sew. A lot of times they

didn't know how to thread the needles and I'd thread the needles for them. I'd cut the pattern out, a paper pattern, and then I'd pin it on the material. They'd just lay them down on the floor and I'd take a crayon and make a paper pattern out of it. And then they could take the pins out and sew. My grandmother taught me how to knit and crochet. I can do all that. And my sister and even my brothers can do that kind of work.

Whatever money I took in, I put to the side and when payday came my grandfather would always give me more than my brothers, or sister, because I helped him. We were real close.

When I finished school I worked at Dow Chemical. They have another name for it now. I bought stock there. I've still got my stock. A lot of people call me the rich lady. My grandfather taught me how to save my money.

I attend Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. I was practically raised in it. When we were like six weeks old, our parents had us baptized. I love my friends in the neighborhood and the church!

Ann's story was collected by Mike Stith and transcribed by Stephanie Gavin.

The Burner Covers

Continued from page 3

weren't suppose to tell me! WHAT???

Apparently Grandma's stove was configured differently than mine and instead of looking closely at what knob went for what burner, she would just turn on the knob she thought was right. Not removing all the covers from the stovetop, she would ultimately burn up the covers. The kids told me that Grandma used tongs and took the flaming covers one by one and hurled them out the door into the snow. Before she left she picked them up and threw them away so I didn't see them.

Need I say, after this episode, I didn't allow burner covers in my house any more. Funny, I never smelled burnt popcorn anymore either!

This story was from an episode that happened many years ago. My Mom is now 89 years old and in an assisted living facility. She is very active walking, dancing, and up to the first of February bowling on a senior league. My Mom bowled for years and she was quite good. Her memory is fading quickly. In January, she was having problems remembering where to place her fingers in the ball. Her teammates would help her out and she would turn to throw the ball and bowl a strike! Believe me she was good. It was nothing for her to throw nothing but strikes. She loved to show her

scores to everyone she met, her kids, the grandkids, neighbors, doctors, butchers at the grocery store....everyone!

Well the first of February, her bowling days ended when she placed her fingers into the holes and went to throw the ball and forgot to release her fingers! She and the ball went flying down the alley! To the surprise of all her teammates, and the owner of the alley, she started laughing and laughing more. "Wasn't that funny? What a riot!" Need I say the owner didn't think it was so funny and now she can't bowl at that alley any more. I guess all good things have to come to an end sometime.

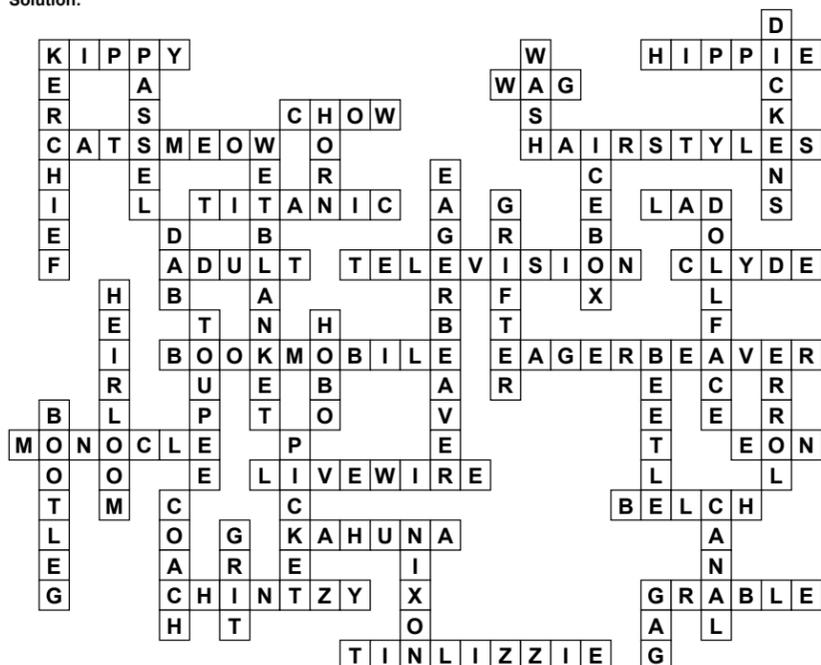
Knowing how much my Mom loves bowling, my brother and I have taken her out to eat for a few weeks after we quit taking her to bowling. Luckily she doesn't seem to miss it much, she doesn't even remember bowling. That's the plus and minus of dementia. She is very happy in her world and that is all that counts.

My Mom was quite the character. My kids were truly blessed to have her as a babysitter every day they were growing up. She kept them laughing and taught them so many wonderful things about life.

But in all honesty, sometimes I really miss the smell of burnt popcorn.

It's All About Legacy

Solution:



Finding Ellie

Continued from cover

would ring with someone telling me they had seen her. I even had one lady named Ginny call to tell me that she had changed her trolley and work schedule so that she could look for Ellie while the sun was up.

Many wonderful people including Bayou Billy, a local musician, called to tell me they were looking for Ellie and praying for me. The local community couldn't have been more supportive. Still, thirteen days later there was no sign of Ellie.

On a Saturday morning two weeks later, I resolved that I needed to fill the hole in my heart. I went to the Animal Protective Association (APA) to adopt another pet. However, I left without one. There was no way the hole in my heart could be filled with another animal. I tried to continue my life as normal, but the grief was overwhelming. I told my kids to be sure to take good care of each other; they saw what a wreck I was over Ellie, imagine if something awful ever happened to one of them!

I pulled myself together enough to go to the grocery store one day. I will never forget that day as long as I live. At 4:00 p.m. I got my cart and started to shop

for produce. I was leaning on the handle of the cart for support when my cell phone rang; it was another 504 New Orleans area code. I almost didn't answer the phone; I couldn't bear to talk to



one more person asking if I had found her yet. However, I did answer, and the young female voice on the other end said, "This is Jennifer from Marigney Animal Hospital. Is this Ellie's mom? We have her here at our hospital. When might you be able to pick her up?" I almost collapsed in the middle of the produce aisle. All alone, I grabbed the arm of a young woman walking by me, and, through my tears, I told her, "They found my Ellie!" She, of course, quickly moved along! I asked Jennifer how late they were open and explained it would take me nine hours to get there. Jennifer seemed confused at first,

but after I explained, she told me that they were a twenty-four hour emergency animal hospital. I abandoned my cart, and rushed home to pack my toothbrush, (no toothpaste, mind you), and clean underwear; I arrived at the hospital at 3:00 a.m.

Ellie was found in the 17th Street Canal, the famous one that flooded during Hurricane Katrina. With the water level down, the sides were slick and slimy. A local resident named Wendy saw Ellie running through the canal with no way out and took it upon herself to gather rope, wading shoes for the mud, and a sheet. Along with a friend and some local kids playing in the street, she lowered herself into the canal and cornered Ellie. She threw the fitted sheet over Ellie, who got tangled in the elastic, and captured her. Wendy later told me that she never grabs a fitted sheet to rescue the many babies who find themselves in the canal; she always grabs a flat sheet. This time was an accident that paid off because Ellie got her little nose caught in the corner of that elastic sheet.

When I first saw Ellie again, she had lost twenty percent of her body weight, but she was freshly bathed and trimmed free of matted hair. She squirmed and struggled to get out of the

vet tech's arms to get to me; I have never had so many kisses bestowed upon my face! The tech said there was no question as to whether or not I was Ellie's true owner. When asked how much I owed, the tech said there was no charge.

Pets are amazing. They curl up inside of our hearts and take over our lives. I believe they make a nest right there near the left chamber and become one with our hearts, so much so that it becomes nearly impossible to live without them. People really are amazing too. We go about our lives every day without much thought to our neighbors and coworkers and what they may be struggling with and trying to cope with. Or at least most of us do. Then there are the people like Bayou Billy, who found out Ellie had been found and called ahead to get me a reservation at a local hotel that night; people like Wendy, who will lower themselves into a canal to rescue a dog; people like Ginny, who changed her life to help a total stranger; and people like the Pak Mail shop owners who will make five hundred color copies for total blithering, crying, insane dog lovers. They're out there: the good people. They are waiting to be needed. Who needs you?

Cantelope

Continued from page 6

until he speaks.

"John, you and Elaine should get married."

I can't tell if he was joking or not, but I decide to make sure.

"You know that she's 19, right?"

He briefly looks over at me before looking back at the road. "So? You know the Arkansas rule, yes?"

"What?"

"She can get married at 19 in Arkansas."

"... Really?"

He nods. "Yep. You gonna go for it?"

I pause and think for a second. "Yeah. I think I will."

We pull up in front of the girls' dorm and get out of the car.

We run up the stairs and I knock rapidly on their door. The door opens and Elaine is standing there.

"Hey, John," she greets. "How are you doing?"

Instead of answering, I just blurt out, "Do you want to get married?"

She stares blankly back at me. "What?"

"Um, uh," I stammer.

"It's legal to get married at your age in Arkansas," Charlie saves.

"Ah. Are you asking if I want to... elope?" Elaine asks.

I scratch the back of my neck. "I mean, I guess?"

"Oh," she says. "Well, then sure."

"Really?"

She smiles. "Why not?"

"Ok wait," Charlie interrupts. "Where's Judy?"

"Oh, she's not here right now," Elaine answers. "Sorry."

Charlie grumbles something but gets over it pretty quickly.

"Are we going?" he prompts.

"Right, yes, let's go!" I declare.

I move aside and extend my arm for Elaine as she steps out of her room.

"Ladies first," I say, grinning.

When Charlie drops me back at my house after the wedding, I immediately rush into my parent's room. My mom is sleeping on the left side of the bed, dad on the right. I dart over to the right side and start shaking his arm.

"Mom, Dad," I whisper-shout.

"What, John?" he groans, his back facing me.

"Elaine and I got married."

He goes still for a second before turning over and facing me.

"Is that so?"

I nod, unsure of where he was taking this.

"Good. If you're married, you can move out."

So I did. Elaine dropped out of college and we lived at her parent's house until we got a place of our own. And that was the night of February 2nd, 1956.

~ ~ ~

I've asked about this story quite a few times, especially with their 60th anniversary coming up in less than a month. I've also thought about eloping and getting married in college. Well, not thinking about like considering it. Just thinking about it. And here is a small "thought" on eloping.

Canteloping might not be the best idea, but I prefer it over an orange marriage.

Submitted by Kwan, Age 13

Our Own Irish Legend

Continued from page 3

other's idiosyncrasies. What is really beautiful to see is how much his grandchildren, great-grandchildren cherish him. My dad is not a "mushy" person but his love shines through in his examples of hard work, honesty,

loyalty, commitment to family values. He and my mother celebrated 71 years of marriage February 2014. Our family wonders, "How have we been so lucky to have them for so long, and how will we get by without them when that time comes?"