



The FAMILY HISTORIAN Journal

Real Stories from Everyday People

Vol. I - Issue 2

April 2017

FREE JOURNAL

The Best Babysitter Ever

Submitted by: Karen S. Hoffman - St. Louis, MO



Pam; Jaime, one of Karen's three children; and Karen

Do you know someone whom you would love to reconnect with? Do you keep putting it off because you're too busy?

Well, years ago, while raising my three kids, I found The BestBabysitter Ever! Her name was Pam Iffrig, and she was our young neighbor. She was the happiest, funniest, kindest, and most loving babysitter you could ever imagine. She was a teenager with the maturity of an adult and the joy of an angel. And, she was always smiling!

She was the kind of

babysitter people didn't feel guilty leaving their kids with. In fact, they felt like they were doing everyone a favor by leaving her in charge! Pam was a "Lethal Combo." Our kids loved her. I loved her. Hubby loved her. Even our dogs loved

her.

I felt good just being around her, and when she was babysitting, my home always looked better when I came home than when I left. Yeah. It seemed too good to be true, but for several years, our family benefited from our contact with this lovely soul. I even enjoyed paying her more than the going rate; I confess that the extra money was a bit of a bribe! I didn't want her to ever leave us.

Well, recently I reached

out to her so that we could get together again. I hadn't seen Pam since 2000 when she came to an open house at our home. We exchange holiday cards each year, and I attended her father's funeral; however, I hadn't really seen her in too long. We had lunch yesterday on December 8, 2014. What a treat!



Pam is still an amazing, wonderful person. She still smiles a lot. She is still as funny and kind as she was as a teenager. Now she is the

mother of a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old. Where does the time go?

I had so much fun reconnecting with Pam yesterday. I love you, Pam! Thank you for being the world's best ever babysitter and for helping a stressed mom care for her much adored kids.

Is there anyone you want to reach out and share your love with? Do you ever say, "When I have time, I want to catch up with (fill in the name)?"

Don't wait. What if each month you reached out to one person on your "I love them, but I never see them" list?

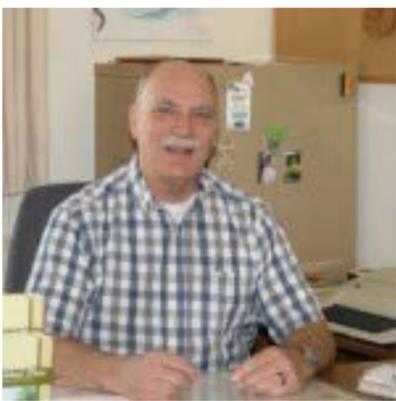
I promise you, doing this feels awesome.

Seeing Pam was an early Christmas gift.

I'm glad I quit waiting until I "found" the time and decided to "make" the time.

Preserving Local Legacy One Item/One Story at a Time

Submitted By: Rick Embry



Preserving Local Legacy One Item/One Story at a Time

Hi, my name is Rick Embry, Residential Manager at The Highland Home in Highland, Illinois. I'd like to share a special piece of history from our community and tell you some exciting news about what we're doing to preserve memories by opening a small museum in our historical building. The museum will display many items that have been donated and collected

from our residents and members of the community.

But first, I'll share a little about our history. At a time when little thought was given to caring for the aged, a group of Highland citizens led by some dedicated women began to make plans for a home for the elderly. On October 4, 1896, at a meeting of Frauenverein, now the Woman's Guild of the Highland Evangelical United Church of Christ, the idea of a home for the elderly was conceived.

After many fundraising activities such as bazaars, card parties, luncheons and dances at the Turner Hall, enough money was raised to purchase 10 acres of land for \$125 per acre from Charles and Clara Tuffil. The land was situated at the south end

of Walnut Street in Highland, and the year was 1900.

Often referred to as the "Altenheim", The Highland Home had received its charter from the State of Illinois on January 26, 1899. Many pledges of money and bequests in wills added to the fund



which led to the construction of the original building in 1912.

In the early days, the home raised some of its fruits and vegetables and residents aided in preparing for canning. Two or three cows were kept for

milk and a flock of hens for eggs and meat. Corn, beans, and hay were raised on the surplus



acreage around the home.

My, has time flown by! For several decades the Highland Home has grown and improved. The original building has been kept up to date and modernized. Over the past several years additional buildings have been added to the grounds. Our Board of Directors is extremely proud of the Highland Home facilities and staff, and it's our

Continued on page 3

First Issue In The Books

Written by: Mike Stith



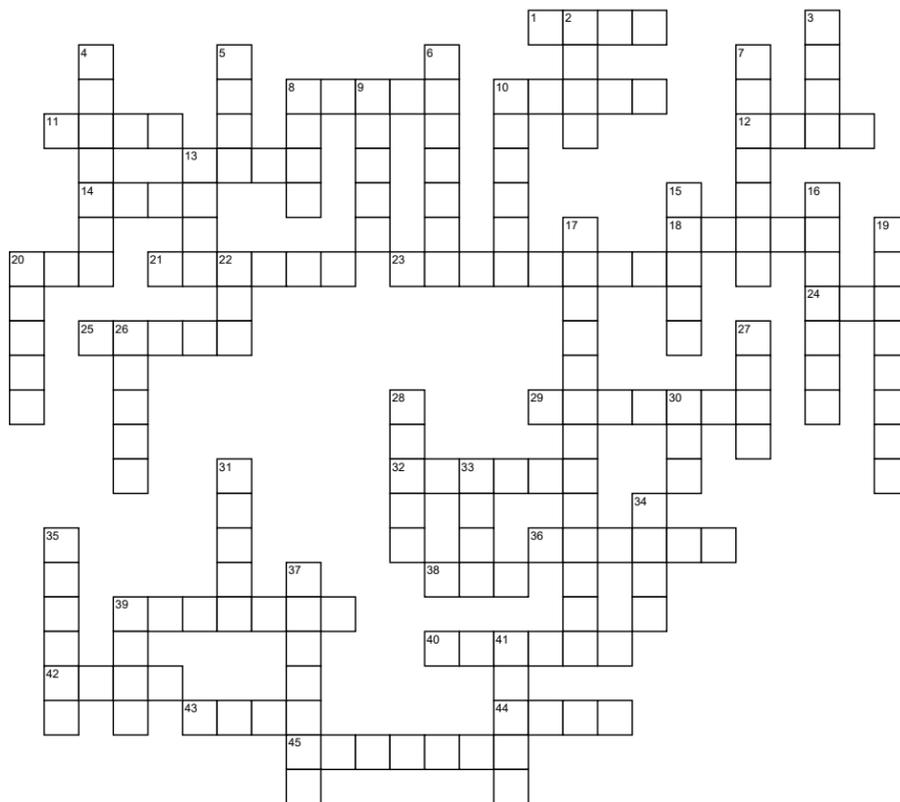
Well, we did it! Our first issue has come and gone. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback and comments. We'll learn and grow with every issue. I'm grateful to know our stories were appreciated by so many readers! What did you think? Did you enjoy the Legacy Crossword Puzzle? We'd love to hear from you. A special thank you goes out to Irene Leland, author of "The Mysterious Dottie" story which appeared in our first issue. When Irene found out her story was in print she was moved enough to compose and perform a song, called "The Ballad of One Legacy". Our team was pleasantly shocked ☐. We now have a theme song! You can hear the song by visiting our website at www.onelegacy.com or, for those with SmartPhones, text the word STORIES to 21777 and listen on your phone and watch our videos. Thanks again Irene!

I also would like to thank the advertisers and sponsors

who have joined us so far. We couldn't make this happen without you. We hope your gift to community caregivers is appreciated by the thousands of readers. For any business that would like to learn more, please contact me at **618-960-7252** or mstith@onelegacy.com. Any group interested in One Legacy visiting your site to host an evening of story sharing fun, we want to hear from you too!

The March issue promises to be just as special. We know how much it means to those who get to share. Once again, all of our stories are from everyday people. So, we hope you enjoy this issue. Please send comments, and share us with your friends on social media, ok? Enjoy, and keep sharing those stories that have influenced your life. One story equals one legacy. **THANK YOU!**

March Legacy Puzzle



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

- 1 swine
- 8 gladiator setting
- 10 enchanted creature, sprite
- 11 "milk's favorite cookie"
- 12 inquisitive
- 13 actor Mostel
- 14 "God's Little....."
- 18 Hibernian
- 20 born as, previously
- 21 City or a TV series
- 23 school punishment
- 24 Yankee's foe
- 25 photocopy

DOWN

- 2 Norse deity
- 3 ballpark figures
- 4 prom flowers
- 5 young male turkey
- 6 "corned beef and....."
- 7 in the beginning
- 8 molecule component
- 9 "swivel hips" singer
- 10 stringed instrument
- 13 Greek letter
- 15 official language of India
- 16 "Good grief.....Brown!"
- 17 abbreviation
- 19 baseball's "Sultan of Swat"
- 20 Watergate president

WORD BANK: Acre, ado, ahorse, amen, arena, atom, babe, baberuth, bootleg, cabbage, capes, charlie, corsage, dallas, detention, elvis, erode, eta/timetable, exclude, fairy, fiddle, gaelic, galaxy, genesis, gull, hindi, hogs, huron, iris, irish, jake, kildare, lox, nee, nixon, nosy, odin, ogle, oreo, puck, rain, reb, reunion, sacked, tiara, umps, vex, xerox, zero, zeta.

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Our Past

Perserving Local Legacy...

Continued from cover

desire to continue to provide the community with the finest of retirement centers for independent living residents.



We're very proud to announce that on April 22 and April 23, 2017 (1:30 to 3:30 both days) will be the grand opening of the Highland

Home Musuem. The musuem will contain over 3000 items; photos, art of many forms, farm photos and related items, plus genealogies, school

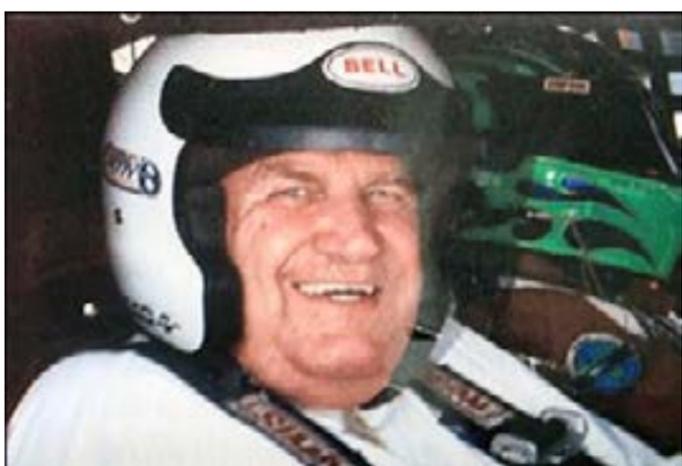
year books, locally written books, and history books of the Highland IL area. We'll also have merchant and business giveaways. We'd love to see you at the Grand Opening! Please visit our website at www.thehighlandhome.org

or call 618-654-2395 for more details about The Highland Home and the Highand History Museum.



They Did It His Way

Submitted by Joan Young



My brother-in-law, Jack, was a regular at Tri-City Speedway in Granite City, Illinois. He loved watching people race cars. He sponsored several young, enthusiastic drivers and had a prime seat high in the stands, next to the finish line.

When my brother-in-law became ill, his son drove him to the speedway and, in the car, they watched the races from a

special place alongside the track. When Jack was put on hospice care, he talked with my sister and requested that, before his burial, his body be driven around the racetrack three times.

This certainly seemed like an odd request, but here's how that request was carried out.

A special room at the speedway became the place where Jack's body was waked for one memorable evening. There were flowers and many pictures from his life. There was

Aunt Flora

Submitted by Elise, Age 14



I remember when I was smaller, when I'd be walking in the park with my grandmother or sitting in her living room, we'd talk about our family. I used to love hearing old family tales or looking through the black and white photo albums. I seemed to be related to so many interesting people. My favorite person to learn about, however, was Aunt Flora. Aunt Flora was not my aunt, in fact, she was my grandmother's great aunt. Though, even still, I thought she was the most interesting person in the world.

My grandma told me how Flora's husband had died in a car crash not long after their marriage. Aunt Flora was distraught, swearing then and there never to use a car ever again. That's how she'd taken up motorcycling. She looked intimidating with her thick studded belt, boots and trademark white scarf. Especially on her Harley

Davidson motorcycle. I remember flipping through photo albums just to find the old photographs of her, sunglass-clad, long brown hair blowing in the wind. She was practically my idol.

Before long, Flora herself had been hired to work for the Harley Davidson motorcycle company. There were models who posed with the motorcycles, though that sort of thing wasn't for Flora. Oh no. Aunt Flora became a demonstrator, showing off her tricks to interested customers and motorcycle fanatics. It was all very exciting. My grandmother told me that there were accidents, too, like the time she crashed near a family friend's house. Luckily, she was relatively uninjured, though her helmet was left on the site of the crash. I've been told it's still in the friend's possession today. Though I don't know much more about her life, I'll always look up to her as an idol figure, even if all I have are the photographs.

a room full of people — regulars at the speedway, friends and family. The speedway chaplain started the evening off by saying a few words about Jack, his relationship with him and Jack's love of car racing. Next, the microphone was passed around and people told funny stories and expressed their heartfelt feelings for Jack. This had family members and friends alike, in tears.

After everyone's kind words, Jack's body was loaded into a beautiful white hearse and driven on to the racetrack. Five vehicles were lined up in processional fashion — a lead truck, the hearse, a sports car (driven by one of Jack's sons), and two other racecars. The green flag signaled the start

of the race. The cars slowly proceeded around the track for two laps. At the beginning of the third lap, the white flag was raised to signal that being the final lap. The cars continued their pace around the track until about two thirds of the way through the final lap. At that time, the driver of the hearse veered to his right and punched up the speed of the vehicle. As they came around to the finish line, the hearse overtook the lead vehicle, the checkered flag came down, and Jack won the race! It was a spectacular sight.

And, yes, they did it his way!

"We'd love your feedback. Please send comments to info@onelegacy.com"

Born With a Baseball in Hand: Gertrude Hern

Written by: Angela Ridenour



Gertrude “Gert” Hern, 94, began playing baseball when she was 6 years old and likes to say she was born with a baseball in her hand. Her uncle, who was an avid baseball player, took her to the ball park with him as she was growing up and she remembers the day he bought her a glove. “That was it,” she says. “It made a new person out of me.”

Gert played baseball on grade school teams and was

thought so, and they signed her up as a catcher when she was 17 years old. She broke her fingers three times while playing professional baseball and will show you her crooked fingers to prove it. Once during a game, as she was squatting down in the catcher’s position, her equipment became tangled in her uniform. When she stood up, her uniform pants pulled off and she suddenly found herself standing near home plate in her underwear. The audience was amused and Gert says “That was a day I’ll never forget.”

Gert had a job in a grocery store during her time playing baseball. The store manager was very nice about letting her off work so she could play on the team. She says she and her teammates didn’t get paid much

to play for the Roth Rangers, but all of their travel and meal expenses were paid. She remembers what an adventure it was traveling with all her friends on the team.

The Roth Rangers played their home games in south St. Louis and would also travel to South Side Park in



pretty good as she recalls. The Roth Rangers of St. Louis

Chicago quite often, which was one of Gert’s favorite baseball

parks. The team traveled to small towns to play other teams as well.

Gert recalls, “The women on the team were like family to me. We practiced together, we went to church together on Sundays, and we never went to the bars to drink, and we never cursed. My mother knew all of their mothers and we always had chaperones when we traveled to away games.”

Gert points out that “Some of the teams we played would be drunk as they played, and we always beat them pretty easy.”

Gert was always happy she was not on a team that acted like that. Her motto, she says, was “to be honest with everyone and never fight in a game.”

Gertrude Hern was born in 1922 in St. Louis, Missouri and



lived there most of her life. As a child she went to a Catholic School. She had dreams of one day becoming a nun, but her family didn’t think she would be able to play baseball and be a nun. She stayed with her first love, baseball, and the rest is history.

To watch a short clip of Gert’s One Legacy video interview, visit www.onelegacy.com or from your SmartPhone text **STORIES** to 21777 to view Gert on the One Legacy EZ Digital Business Card.

Many thanks to Hitz Memorial Home for introducing us to Gert!



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Pet Memories

Baking for the Dogs

Submitted by: Sarah H.



We have two rats and a catfish (and if you're ever bored, my kids would love to tell you all about them), but we don't have a dog. So why did we spend last Sunday evening mixing up a batch of dog treats? Let me explain. Chloe is the sweet white lab that walks past our house every day. She is always ready to give a kiss and is extremely tolerant of hugs from my six-year-old and the many commands of my eight-year-old. We also used to know Chloe's friend and housemate, a chocolate lab named Chester, but he passed away unexpectedly.

Lucky is a short but stout little Morkie who has sadly outlived two of his owners – my grandfather and my father. He loves blueberries and cucumbers. He whines and talks to us until we give him a particular number of the kind of dog bone that he likes. Though he loves when the grandkids come and visit, he barks like crazy when people

hug each other. If you're a dog lover, you know dogs can be jealous!

Next door, we have Pepper, Charlie, and Daisy. Behind our home, you'll find Twinkie and Oreo. Altogether, I think I know the names of more dogs than people in my neighborhood. In our age of virtual communication, we can get very disconnected from the people who live around us. However, dogs play an interesting role as social lubricant. While out on a walk, I have met people walking their dogs whom I might never have met otherwise. And when the sadness gets too heavy at my mom's house, we can always talk about Lucky's latest haircut or his passion for eating carrots.

So bake a batch of dog treats, you might just meet some new friends or pass the time more gently with old ones. It's amazing the legacy a pet can create without ever saying a word!

Rudy the Therapy Dog

Submitted by Patty Caldera

Rudy, an Italian Greyhound, worked with me for five years. He was a former puppy mill dog with a gift for comforting people.



One of my most distinctive memories about Rudy is the time he helped me comfort a child in distress. As a social worker, I had to tell a 12-year-old child that her drug-addicted mother had relinquished her rights as a parent and was never coming back. I had to tell this child that

her mother had abandoned her and that she would now be placed in foster care.

Of course, her first response was anger and violence, but then there were heart-wrenching tears. Rudy patiently waited for the rage to pass, and then he ran to her and placed his front legs around her neck. He licked away her tears and comforted her in a way no else could. Though he was not a trained therapy dog, he instinctively knew how to do the job. Rudy was my companion, my dear friend, my hero.

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Music Memories

“Music begins where words end”

By Pastor Jim Vargo



My name is Jim Vargo. I was born in Perth Amboy NJ in 1938, and now live in Florissant MO. Perth Amboy was surrounded by oil refineries and smelting factories. It was toward the end of the depression and times were still tough. Mom and Dad worked the best the best they could and where they could. My mother was Polish decent and my father was of Hungarian decent. I have 3 brothers, Bob, Steve and Ronald. In 1945, after the war, we moved from New Jersey to New York City. I was called to the monastic life at a very young age, leading to priesthood when I was 26 years old with the Carmelite Order and my dream was to follow Jesus to share the good news....Many many years have gone by as I have traveled the world and experienced many blessings.

My wonderful wife Jean is also a Lutheran pastor. One year we were both called to pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Traverse City MI, a beautiful city with wonderful wineries and cherry orchards. This is where we met Jerry Wares (Master Craftsman), and his lovely wife Marilyn.

Jerry began making floor harps about 17 years ago. The reason he began making lap harps came about after he and Marilyn both came down with cancer. Hers was severe enough she needed to be hospitalized. While in the hospital a harpist would come around and play for patients.



Once at home Marilyn asked Jerry to buy her a lap harp so she could learn to play. He bought her one but began thinking he could make something better. He named these beautiful harps after their 5 year old granddaughter, “Gabrielle”.

While visiting the Wares one time I thought it would be nice to buy a harp for my wife as an anniversary gift. Marilyn asked Jerry to “put Gabrielle in Jim’s arms”. As soon as I felt it I knew I wanted it. I had never played any instrument before; Marilyn said “Anyone can play this harp”. I started playing and when I felt the vibrations in my heart and my soul there was no question I wanted it for Jean. Prior to our actual anniversary

date I stored the harp at our church. One Friday night at St Paul’s Lutheran Church, I was preparing for a wedding the next day for one of my parishioners. I was reading the Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians and decided to pick up Gabrielle and strum while reading this message of faith, hope and

Jim Vargo and Jerry Wares love. I’ve never done anything like this before but I took the harp from behind the pulpit. You could here a pin drop. It was such a beautiful experience. After the wedding I took the harp to a nursing facility where I saw a former parishioner. He had Alzheimer’s. After playing the harp for awhile I set it on his lap and he strummed. Later I was told how much he loved playing the beautiful harp. Since then I’ve taken it to many hospitals and homes to give presentations.

The harp can be played by complete beginners and speaks to anyone at different levels. It has been played at many Heart and Healing Ministries around the world. Jerry has made over 400 of these harps over the last 7 years. He also still makes floor model harps. I’m very proud to have Jerry as a friend and honored to tell the



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story of Gabrielle harps. Learn more about Jerry and the story of Gabrielle by visiting <http://gabrielleharp.com> or call 314-614-6039. Thank you!

God Bless.
Pastor Jim Vargo
Story transcribed

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It's All About Legacy

Solution:

Words in the crossword puzzle include: KIPPY, WAG, HIPPIE, CHOW, CATS, MEOW, HAIRSTYLES, TITANIC, ADULT, TELEVISION, CLYDE, BOOK, MOBILE, EAGER, BEAVER, MONOCLE, LIVEWIRE, BELCH, KAHUNA, CHINTZY, TINLIZZIE, GRABLE.

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Mom's Sweet Pickles

Submitted by Carrie Kholodov



A sure-fire way to inspire creativity in the kitchen is to provide a garden-er with a bumper

crop!

When I was growing up, I can remember these pickles sitting around on counters as they take a few days to crisp and spice. Now that I have my own kitchen, cucumber season means huge jars of brining half-sours fermenting from the wild yeast in the air. But mom's sweet pickles are still my favorite by far. I find sweet vs. dill to be a battle line that is drawn between many pickle lovers. Seems that many people only like one or the other.

I thought of this recipe recently while begging a jar of home made sweets from my mom. She said, "I'm going to have to pass that recipe on to you, no one else in the family seems to care about them". I hate to see a legacy recipe die,

so I share it here with you.

These are nothing like store bought sweet pickles. They are spiced like apple cider and deliciously crisped. I love to eat them on a tuna salad sandwich. I don't even bother to dice them up.

Mom's Sweet Pickles

Place whole cucumbers in large glass containers. Cover with boiling water. Allow to sit for 24 hours. Drain and cover with fresh boiling water for 4 days. On the 5th morning, slice the cucumbers.

Mix in a pan then bring to a boil:

- 8 cups of sugar
- 2 TB pickling spice
- 5 tsp salt
- 4 cups white vinegar

Pour over sliced pickles.

Let stand 2 days. Refrigerate or process in a canner.

**Note: as with many old recipes that depend on your spare produce, I cannot tell you how many cucumbers to use. It depends on the size and how many you have left!*

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