Janie Is Blind, But She Is An Expert Angler, And Collects Rare Bird Nests

Here is a child who has been blind from birth, but who translates the delicate sensations of her fingertips into living color, forming her own conception of green from the texture of a maple leaf, purple from the satiny petals of a petunia, pink from a cluster of wild roses, and white from the fragrant bell of a lily.

Jane Welliver, eleven years old, knows more about the wonders of nature than most children who have two eyes.

She has never seen the blue of the sky or the lift of a cloud, but with gentle fingers she explores the soft interior of an oriole's nest, finds a delicate feather in its depths, forms a mental image of the baby birds who have hatched in that secure and swaying woven basket, and sets in motion the Hi-Fi record which reproduces for her the song of the oriole.

Janie does not live in Dallas, but she visits here sometimes, coming with her parents from Allentown to Elmcrest. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Welliver, and niece of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Myers. Mr. and Mrs. George Bowen, also of Elmcrest, are firm friends.

And now Janie is dreaming of meeting Frank Jackson. Next time she comes, she will go to Harveys Lake to inspect Frank's bird feeders and birdhouses, and see the rest of his nest collection.

Frank, sharing with Mr. Bowen a love of birds, heard that Janie was interested in collecting birds nests. Frank sent Janie a treasured humming-bird nest, an extremely rare item, seldom seen except in museums, and a number of other nests.

Bill Brace, out in Kunkle, found her three barn swallow nests and climbed high into a maple tree for an oriole nest.

Janie exhibits her collection at the Science Fair, competing with exhibits prepared by children with two good eyes apiece, and wins prizes.

Mr. Bowen has something he is saving as a surprise for her, to add to her collection next time she exhibits it . . . a red-eyed vireo nest.

Frank brought into the Dallas Post a mate to a chimney swift's nest which he had sent Janie. Prodding it gently with his finger, he pointed out the drops of gum from peach trees which had been used to glue the tiny twigs together. This one came down the chimney after a heavy storm, landing in the fireplace of the Miller summer home just below Mr. Jackson's place at Harveys Lake.

The first nest brought with it a young cowbird, which Mrs. Miller caught in a towel and took outdoors. The second, which Frank kept after sending the first, carefully protected in a candy box, to Janie, was completely untenanted.

Since that time, the Miller chimney has been protected by fine wire screening. No more chimney swifts flutter their wings in its sooty depths.

Janie has a catbird nest; a nest built by a redwing blackbird; nests of cardinals, chipping sparrows, wrens, wood-thrush, phoebe. The catbird nest has an unusual feature . . . woven into it is a nylon leader, complete with fish-hook.

The fish-hook, though totally coincidental, is by way of being an advertisement for Janie.

Janie is an expert angler, casting a trout fly with skill and precision.

The first day of trout season in one of the streams around Allentown, a certain section of the trout stream is reserved for Janie and other anglers who see with their fingers and their ears instead of their eyes.

Last year she caught four large trout the first day, and made news in an Allentown newspaper.

Janie wrote a letter in braille to Mr. Jackson, to thank him for his ten bird nests.

August 13, 1960

"Dear Mr. Jackson;

Thank you for the nice nests you have added to my collection.

The chimney swift nest is very strange.

The humming bird must lay tiny eggs for such a small nest.

I enjoy my nest and egg collection, and spend many hours looking at it.

Your friend,
Jane Welliver."

Because braille is difficult to read, except to an expert, Janie is learning how to type.

She enjoys the talking books issued by the Blind Association, and she follows the score of musical compositions in braille, learning the music first with the left hand, then with the right, and finally abandoning the score with its tiny dots as she memorizes it for the piano.

Janie's handicap proved the open door to many children in the Allentown area, for it was in her behalf that the first class for physically handicapped children was started.

There are some things that parents of blind children learn by experience.

Furniture must not be moved unless the child knows what changes are being contemplated, well in advance.

And people without eyesight, relying upon sound and touch for their directions, must wear shoes which will make the necessary echo. So sneakers are not for Janie, or for any other little girl who must gauge distance by echo, the way experienced pilots on Puget Sound navigate their boats by blowing the whistle and letting the sound bounce back from clustering islands in a dense fog.

A blind child moves in a limited orbit.

But the orbit embraces an entirely different world, with fascinating things to learn and to "see."

Dies Two Days After Moving To Shavertown

A mass of requiem in Sacred Heart Church is scheduled for 9:30 this morning, and burial in the parish Cemetery in Dallas, for Adam S. Harowicz, who died of a sudden heart attack Monday morning at the home in Shavertown which he and his family had occupied for only two days.

Mr. Harowicz, 42, resident of his native Wilkes-Barre until Saturday, had been helping to get the new home on Lehigh Street settled. Rising early to drive to Long Island City where he was employed by T. Frederick Jackson Inc. as an electrician, he suffered a fatal heart attack, dying at 5 a. m.

Surviving are his wife, the former Anna Benish; children Marguerite, Joan, Patricia and John all at home; sisters, Mrs. Victoria Kulak, Mrs. David Shemanski, both of Plains Township; Mrs. Stanley Wielga, Mrs. John Adamitis, Mrs. Lindo Diamanti, all of Wilkes-Barre; Mrs. Harold Fox, Pico Calif.; brothers, John and Joseph of Wilkes-Barre.

My Neighbors

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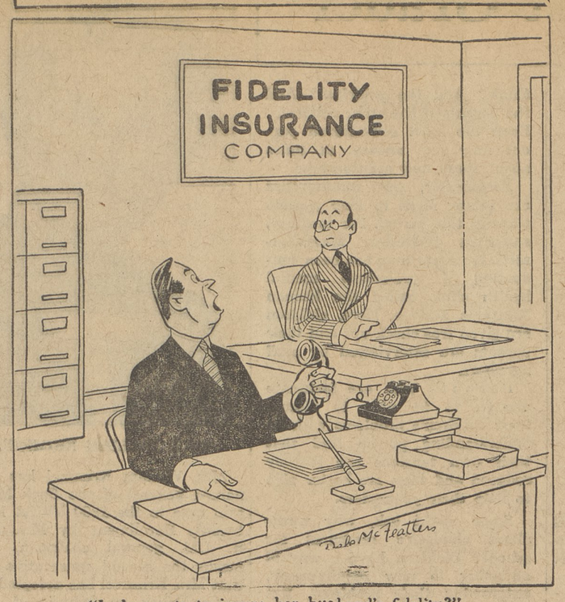

"Lady wants to insure her husband's fidelity?"

Got His Share

Just before the American forces hit the beach at Anzio, the boys, we were informed, were given a pep talk by their C. O.

"We're outnumbered four to one, men. We'll have to fight like hell to stay once we're in."

A hillbilly soldier listened carefully, and he was among the first to get ashore and into the fight. Later, however, the commanding officer came upon this same Ozarkian, lolling comfortably against a tree in his stocking feet, enjoying life and apparently resting in the manner of the hills. Up forward the cannon boomed and the men were battling furiously.

"What's the idea, Terwilliger?" the commanding officer barked. "What are you doing back here? Why aren't you fighting?"

"Ah got mah four," replied Terwilliger, and resumed his shuteye.

Swarm Of Bees In Stoner's Yard

Mrs. Paul Stoner, stepping out to burn some trash in her back yard on Park Street Tuesday at 1:30, stepped back in again in a hurry. She had a swarm of bees hanging five feet above the ground, their wings drenched by an afternoon shower, immobile except for a few scouts.

Mrs. Stoner, following time honored custom, called the Dallas Post. The Dallas Post advised her to call Bill Robbins. Bill said the swarm probably belonged to Stone Acres, but that if Mrs. Stoner could not raise anybody at Newberry's, the swarm would take off into the blue as soon as the bees dried their wings.

Archie Baker from Trucksville took a look, and said it was pretty late in the season to hive a new swarm. They wouldn't be able to make enough honey to carry them through the winter.

At publication time, with a night and day of rain keeping their wings wet, the swarm was still clustered on Mrs. Stoner's tree.

SIGN LANGUAGE

These signs with a smile were noted recently by the Reader's Digest—In a record shop: "Used records for sale for sale for sale." In a Tampa, Fla. doughnut shop: "Recommended by Dunkin' Hands." On a billboard ad for garden tools: "Take me to your weeder." At Warren Air Force Base under the picture of a missile launching: "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best."

Donald Anderson Is Home From Hospital

Donald Anderson, superintendent at Meadowcrest, returned Tuesday after six weeks as a patient at Allentown General Hospital where he underwent major surgery.

Mrs. Anderson who was with him during his hospitalization returned with him in Kingston Township ambulance driven by James Gordon and William Pugh.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Anderson wish to thank all of those who were so kind to them before, during, and after Mr. Anderson's hospitalization. "It really gave us courage when we needed it."

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