

My Typewriter Talks

BY Rev. Charles H. Gilbert

How does one measure a birthday party?

How can I measure the sheer joy of an 80th birthday? I suppose the years at least should be counted. Eighty is a pile of years: But don't begin telling me that from Psalm 90:10 I am only living on borrowed time, that "three score years and ten" are the divinely allotted number. That is only 70 years! Read Genesis 6:3 for another slant on the divine gift of years: "man is flesh . . . but his days shall be 120 years!"

If you drive a car at any age, you are living on borrowed time. Better take care of it! Or if you are crossing a street—

How about the years of that man's life which ended at 33? Well now, about how to measure the joy of an 80th birthday. First of all, count the devotion plus the ingenuity of the covert preparation and friendly conspiracy that contrived a superb birthday celebration with cakes, speeches from district superintendent and the local pastor, and the lusty hymn-singing of many friends; and I say no one can estimate the value of the love of such a daughter as did all that for me!

Other than by numbering the years of life, there is the matter of numbering and weighing the greeting cards that came in the past week. By April 28 there had come 149. "Little daughter" had much to do with many of the senders knowing about this epochal date of April 22. Just for the fun of it, I not only kept count of the number but I even weighed the stack! Every trying weighing love? Anyway these cards came to four and a quarter pounds! So!

There were also gifts, all of which had some commercial value. I'm just not mercenary-minded enough to try estimating the packages from which price tags had been removed from such blessings as shirts, ties, socks, Irish linen, writing paper, and how much devotion goes into the gift of a sword in a lovely leather scabbard from which it can be drawn when a letter needs opening.

It will be some time before I can dispose of this stack of cards. For first I will have to go through them again and again and visualize—with love—the writers whom I call to mind in tenderness for having known them and been remembered by them.

Some greetings came from churches I served over 40 years ago, some more recently. In 1965 I completed 10 months of service as interim pastor in the United Church of Christ (Congregational) in West Pittston. Then there were four and a half years at First United Methodist Church in Pittston. Still going backward, the calendar there was Oak Street Methodist in Binghamton, and the Great Bend and Halstead churches in Pennsylvania, and the Kirkwood Methodist in New York state, and Flemingville and then the Lisle church. The pastors of these churches had been alerted by Catherine at some time I was unaware of.

The greetings of course are something more than a stack of cards. One especially touched me because the man does not know me from Adam or Abraham! But it touched me perhaps all the more. It was from the president of Wesleyan University who would know names from files of former students, even college drop-outs of whom I was one. Dated April 20 he wrote "Dear Rev. Gilbert: This is just a note to express warm good wishes from all of us at Wesleyan as you celebrate your 80th birthday. Sincerely, Colin G. Campbell, president." It was mailed to Maine N.Y., but of course, forwarded to me.

This letter was of value to me for the memories it called up. My diary records in September 1915 (that was 56 years ago!) in my Vol. I of my 41 volumes I have kept, that I was not having a good time in my freshman year. I was quite depressed, but I did enter a comment that I liked my Greek class best. Prof. Heidel was my teacher and I loved that man, and my diary has some expressions of what he was doing to my mental and spiritual life. I had almost forgotten some of those things, but now as I think of it, perhaps it is no wonder that my retirement hobby has come to be an attempt, enjoyably so, at working through the Greek New Testament. But after I had dropped out of college, (I just couldn't beat enough carpets to make any headway with the finances!) I went back to the farm and brooded over what a wonderful man I had left behind, Prof. Heidel. Why should I not tell him how much he meant to me? I am sure glad I did, for he has now long since gone to Heaven and I am sure is having a wonderful time with Plato and Socrates and Christ!

But the letter I wrote brought a warm reply in the most beautiful and tiny handwriting in which he disclaimed any worthiness of my "encomium" I had written. Until then I did not even know what an "encomium" was. But I did and do know Prof. Heidel was worthy of what I had written. I have used that word "encomium" very seldom but I cherish it, for it means according to the dictionary "high praise; eulogy."

This official letter from Wesleyan University contributed greater warmth to my 80 years of memories than probably was ever expected. How would you evaluate such a letter? Not by its weight of one ounce!

Right here I want to say that this present group of churches I once served for 10 years over 30 years ago and still live among in Mt. Zion in gladness and health has contributed unnumbered and unweighable blessings to many of my 80 years.

My feelings were deeply stirred by a letter with a wish for a happy birthday which came from a parishoner of 40 years ago who apologized for being a little late with greetings and enclosed a newspaper clipping showing why. It was an obituary of her husband who had died five days before my birthday! She used to be the organist in that church and her

husband sang bass in the choir and sometimes played his flute on occasion. Hers was the first card I replied to, and it was with a letter of deepest sympathy. She is a woman of sufficiently deep spiritual faith that she is not utterly cast down.

A letter from a couple from the Lisle parish brought, the news that the first two couples I had married were now gone, and this couple is the third in my ministry. The lady of this couple gave us a chocolate cake recipe which Ruth always said was the best one she had. Cathy made a cake from it and contributed it to the collection of birthday cakes at our party! This couple can celebrate June 16 of this year, their 51st anniversary.

A letter from another of that same town wrote, "I will be 85 years old my next birthday. I still live in Lisle. I still go to church." I remember that lady very well. She lived up the other end of our street. She had a little boy. All I remember about him was that he was very little and his name was Bruce. He also wrote me a letter saying he'd like to see me sometime. To him I must have been a kind of mythological person! Anyway he wrote me that he was married and that he and his wife had one child. Wait a minute! Yes, that means that little Bruce is a grandfather! Just see what happens in 80 years! Some letters were from people whose names I knew but from whom I have had no word in over 50 years! I still can not estimate the worth of such letters—or any—by the ounce!

Nor shall I overlook one of the latest birthday wishes to come in. This familiar blue air-letter from 7500 miles across from mid-Congo mailed April 17, arrived here April 27. "The plane is coming unexpectedly so will dash off a note . . . I am putting my midwifery text into the pilot's hands to carry tenderly to the printer . . . Happy birthday! Lots of love, Dottie."

And what of that crowd of friendly faces I saw in a blur when I opened the choir door to step into church that night! My love for the whole gathering—I could have hugged all of them at once if—only I didn't have arms long enough!

Misericordia Holds Events for Parents

The dinner-dance at Hotel Sterling in Wilkes-Barre last week was the first of a series of events held for College Misericordia parents last weekend. The affair, held in the Blue Room, was attended by 25 couples. The Herbie Green Orchestra provided the music. Cochairmen of the dance were Mr. and Mrs. George C. Arzente Jr., Kingston; and Mr. and Mrs. John McDermott, Kingston.

On Sunday morning, a special Mass was held at the college for parents and students and was followed by a Parent-Daughter Communion Breakfast in Merrick Hall on campus. Mr. and Mrs. McFadden, Dallas, were cochairmen.



Chuck Hann, Kevin Harter, Ronny Vanderhook, Wayne Goode, Jack Thompson, Dave Thompson, Bret Hunter, participating in the recent Troop 132 camp-out.

SHAVERTOWN

by C. Denmon 675-0419

King's Daughters of Shavertown United Methodist Church will meet May 10, at 8 p.m., in the social rooms of the church. Girl Scouts will present a program for the members. Members of the hostess committee are Fred Troup, Jean Linker, Alice Borthwick, and Leona Watkins.

Deborah Circle of the Shavertown United Methodist Church will meet May 10, 8 p.m., at the home of Mrs. Ross Williams, 96 N. Leigh St., Shavertown. Mrs. James Thomas is hostess. Mrs. Jack Porter is program chairman.

Junior High group of the Shavertown United Methodist Church will hold their Spring Planning Retreat at Sky Lake, May 8 and 9. Allayne and Steve Hayes, Gerry and Carl Warmouth will spend the weekend with the group.

Mrs. Charles Riegel, Mrs. John Eisenhower, Mrs. David Zimmerman, Joan Meyers, and Glenda Wagner were among the local bowlers who attended the Pennsylvania Women's State Bowling Tournament in Pittsburgh this past weekend.

Mrs. Fred Anderson Sr., 116 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown, is still a patient in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

Charles Sieber, major of the guards at Chase Correctional Institute, is convalescing at his home after returning from Nesbitt Memorial Hospital.

Mrs. Fred Dodson, East Demunds Road, has returned home from Polyclinic Hospital, Harrisburg, where she was a medical patient.

Fred Anderson Sr. has returned to his home at 116 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown, after being a patient in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital.

May Fellowship Day of Church Women United will be held May 7 at Shavertown United Methodist Church.

Members of the Dorcas Society of St. Paul's Lutheran Church met recently to discuss plans for the coming months. Mrs. Leonard Andes, president, presided at the meeting.

The society will conduct a hoagie sale, May 12. Mrs. Robert Voelker is chairman of the sale. Orders will be accepted until May 8.

Members will publish a birthday calendar for 1971 and during the summer months, they will contact all congregational members and friends.

Youth of Saint Paul's Enjoy Washington Trip

Thirty four young people and adults left last Thursday from St. Paul's Lutheran Church by Martz Trailway bus to spend the weekend in Washington, D. C.

The trip was planned to be both educational and recreational, and designed to meet the varied interests of the group.

Friday the tourists took a walking tour of the city, visiting the White House, Corcoran Art Gallery, Museum of History and Technology the Washington Monument, Reflection Pool, and Lincoln Memorial.

They boarded the bus at 2:30 p.m. and toured the Capitol area until 5 p.m. when they traveled to St. Luke's Church where they had dinner and spent the evening. St. Luke's is the largest Lutheran Church in the Maryland Synod. It is known for its 'hot line', a telephone service which any youth may use to discuss their problems with someone at the other end. The problem may

relate to any subject including home, school, drugs, emotional disturbance, etc.

Later, the group returned to Luther Place where they stayed while in Washington. Luther Place Church sponsors a hostel for youth groups coming to visit Washington. The groups may stay there for the nominal fee of 50 cents each per night. Luther Place also sponsors a coffee house where the young people may gather and discuss subjects of interest and exchange ideas.

On Saturday, the group visited Lincoln Museum, Ford Theatre, National Collection of Fine Arts, F.B.I., and the Museum of Natural History. In the afternoon they visited Arlington and Mt. Vernon.

They had supper with the Paulist Fathers that evening. The Paulist Fathers initiated the idea of communicating the Gospel through films and mass media to those not reached by

the church. That evening members of the group had an opportunity to swim at the YMCA.

Following Sunday morning worship at Luther Place, the group left Washington for home.

Members of the Luther League, other youth of the church, and advisors who went on the trip were Roseann Scutt, Bill Dierolf, Wayne Long, Karen Long, John Kitchen, Susan Woodling, Cindy Duncan, Andrea Coyle, Danny Williams, Rick McCarty, Rick Amershaw, Carl Rother, Billy Bispels, Judian Bispels, Harry B. Davenport, Chrisan Pyle, Topsy Warden, Andy Chacko, Nancy Fink, Barbara Pichert, Bonnie Baird, Ruth Owens, Tom Swain, Brenda Gelschleicher, Megan Delaney, Mary Ellen Berlozan, Debbie Bulford, Karen Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Davenport, Gail Hochhalter, Lorraine Wolvertson, and the Rev. William C. Bispels.

Worthy Matron Hostess To Eastern Star Members

Mrs. Stephen L. DeBarry Sr. recently entertained her officers, substitutes and choir members at a dinner at the Franklin House, Shavertown. Mrs. DeBarry is Worthy Matron of Dallas Chapter 396, Order of the Eastern Star.

Tables were decorated in red and white, the matron's colors. Each guest received a paper weight containing red and white flowers. The choir presented Mrs. DeBarry with a ceramic plate on which was inscribed the Eastern Star with the names of her officers and substitutes surrounded by "Singing Stars".

Attending were: Thelma Lamoreux, Ruth Coburn, Irene Cook, Marie McCoy, Margaret Johnson, Elizabeth Layaou, Ruth Bennett, Layiah Martin, Dorothy Dodson, Elma Price, Helen Traver, Lois Owens,

Elizabeth Davies, Alice Scott, Bronwen Kaminski, Lana Birnstock, Mae Rome, Gertrude Davies, Elsie Jolley, Gloria Bronson, Anna Shaver, Laura Dymond, Bethia King, Jean Holcomb, Mildred Bronson, Eva Ray, Elizabeth Ide, Madeline LaBarre, Irene Transue, Betty Meeker, Eva Allen, Mildred Garinger, Virginia Swanson, Marion Harvey, Adelta Mahler, Mae Ash, Margaret Morgan, Pearl Gosart, Wilma

Williams, Myrtle Philo, Esther Gray, Ida Allen, Robin De Barry, and the hostess.

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