

GUEST COLUMN

'The Prankster' is at it again, will visit Back Mountain area

By JEFF "PRANKSTER" THOMPSON
Special to The Dallas Post

This is the time of year when everybody could stand for a good laugh. I thought the following story may produce one.

Shortly after my brother, Barry Thompson, passed away, I returned to Aunt Beth's and Uncle Barry's in Mathews, Virginia. We agreed that I would stay around and fix up the property for a week. I did some painting and lots of yard work.

One evening, I noticed a picture on the fireplace mantle in the parlor and, lo and behold, it was a picture I had forgotten about. I asked Aunt Beth if I could take it back home to Naples, Fla. with me.

Here we are, years later and I recently found the picture in a box. I would like to share the following story with you.

We were living in Elmcrest in Dallas as a family - mom, dad, me and my brother who was living in Virginia with Uncle Ashby. It was the summer of 1957. My father suggested the three of us go to Atlantic City, New Jersey for a weekend. He also added that we would visit the Atlantic City race track each day during our. Mother elected not to go so Dad and I went off for the weekend to Atlan-

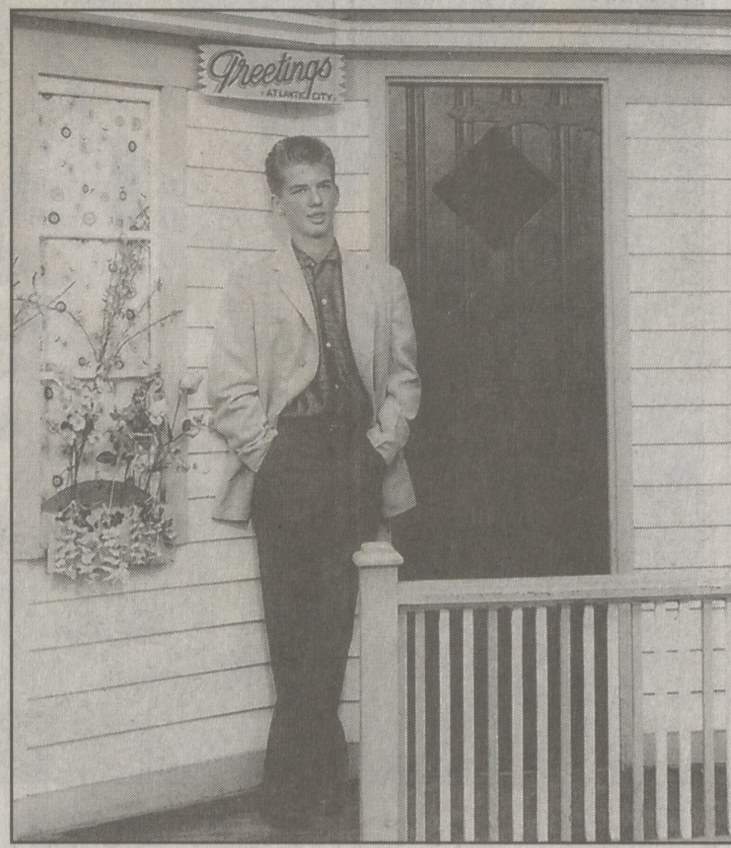
tic City. On the way there, our very first stop was the racetrack. Now, mind you, this is 1957 and I was only 16 years old. While at the track, we sat in the dining room overlooking the track. It was absolutely beautiful.

At one point, Dad got up and left the table to make a bet. I remember looking around and seeing this couple sitting at the table next to us. When my father got back to the table, I asked, "Hey, Dad, isn't that Mr. Pappas, the meat man at the grocery store in Baltimore?" My dad looked over and started laughing uncontrollably. He said, "Go over and introduce yourself and tell him you know him and all."

I walked over to the table and said, "Pardon me, don't I know you from Baltimore? Aren't you Mr. Pappas from the grocery store?" The man replied, "No, although I go to Baltimore quite a bit." I said, "That's where I know you from, Baltimore, but I can't place you."

And, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, it came to me as my face turned beet red. I said, "You are Joe DiMaggio!" He looked at me and said, "Yes. I play ball in Baltimore at the stadium and I want you to meet my wife, Marilyn."

I could hardly walk back to the table where my father was out of control with laughter. I sat down and tried to gather myself when



Jeff 'The Prankster' Thompson is Atlantic City in 1957.

my father suggested that I take the racing program over and ask Mr. DiMaggio to sign it. It was then that Marilyn Monroe said those immortal words to me: "What is your name?" As she spoke, she wrote on the program: "Jeff, good luck at the races" and

signed it, "Marilyn Monroe." She then passed the program to her husband who signed it under her name.

After dinner a few nights later, my father and I went out on the boardwalk for the evening and went into a photography shop.

Jeff "The Prankster" Thompson" will visit the area for a few days this month and invites anyone who grew up in and around the Back Mountain in the 1950s and 1960s to join him for a Dutch Treat luncheon at noon on Wednesday, Aug. 29 at Grotto Pizza, Harveys Lake, to share stories of old times. Anyone seeking more information may call Jeff at 239-591-0551.

Dad said mother wanted a picture so I chose to stand in between two cardboard burlesque ladies to have my picture taken. Dad said, "That's not a good idea. You better go over there and stand on the porch."

As the photo reflects, I wasn't too happy about that. Needless to say, we had a wonderful trip.

When I got back to Dallas, I put the picture in the Atlantic City dresser drawer where I kept a few

dollars. Months later, I went to retrieve the photo and autographed program from my drawer to show it to Mom and Dad and talk about the trip. The picture was there but the autographed program was gone.

After a few intense moments, my brother admitted he had taken the program to a pawn shop in Wilkes-Barre to get money to buy parts to hop up his car. (E-Bay says if I had that program today, it would be worth over \$50,000).

Friedman Family Walk/Run is today

Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley (PSAWV) will hold its fourth annual Pauly Friedman 5K Family Walk/Run today, Aug. 12 at Misericordia University in Dallas.

This year's event will begin at 8:30 a.m. with registration; race time is 9:30 a.m. All monies raised will benefit Help Line, a 24/7 information referral ser-

vice and first response point for crisis calls in Luzerne and Wyoming counties.

More than 160 runners/walkers are expected to participate.

The event is held in memory of Pauly Friedman, a well-known community leader and former PSAWV volunteer and board member, who dedicated her life to public service.

OBITUARIES

BALDO - Mary M., of Maple Lane, Tunkhannock, died Sunday, July 29, 2012, in Kindred Hospital Wyoming Valley.

She was born in West Wyoming on June 18, 1930, and was a 1947 graduate of West Wyoming High School. Prior to her retirement, she was employed as a cafeteria worker in the Tunkhannock Area School District.

She was a member of the Church of the Nativity BVM, Tunkhannock.

Surviving are sons, Salvatore "Sal," Tunkhannock; Ronald, Elizabeth, Colo.; Anthony, Laffin; daughters, Linda Porter, Harleysville; Catherine Voda, Falls; brother Sam Furner, Springfield, N.J.; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

CRISPELL - Ellen Gregory, 92, formerly of Dallas, died May 26, 2012, at Maine Medical Center, Portland, Maine.

She was born in Trucksville on March 2, 1920, graduated from Westmoreland High School and the Wyoming Seminary Dean School of Business. She was a longtime member of the Forty Fort United Methodist Church and an active Girl Scout Leader for many years.

She served as an officer of Morris Run Coal Company.

Surviving are her daughters, Judith Cons, Porter, Maine; Nancy Steeves, Standish, Maine; Anne Milicia, Bedford, Mass.; one grandson; one great-grandchild.

Memorial donations to Northeast Hearing and Speech Center, 75 W. Commercial St., Portland, ME 04101.

HINES - Mary Ellen, 88, a former resident of Hunlock Creek, died August 4, 2012, in the Meadows Nursing Center, Dallas.

She was born May 14, 1924, in Wilkes-Barre.

Surviving are daughters, Gloria Crane, Clara Buzinus, Carol Hunter, Robyn Martin and Patricia Keefe; sons, Joe, Howard, Bob Daubert, William Daubert; grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

JENKINS - Janice "Mrs. Jan" Jenkins, 75, of Shavertown, died Friday, July 27, 2012, at the Berwick Hospital Center.

She was a member of the Bethania Presbyterian Church, Scranton, and was the secretary for the church women's group for 40 years.

Surviving are her husband of almost 58 years, David Jenkins;

daughter, Cheryl Kanouse, Berwick; sons, David, Center Moreland; and Ken, Shavertown; seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; four sisters; a brother; nieces and nephews.

KLIAMOVICH - Mildred (Millie), 83, formerly of Harveys Lake, died Wednesday, August 1, 2012, in the Manor Care Health Services of Kingston, where she had been a resident for six years.

She was born in Stahl and educated in the Noxen schools. Prior to her retirement, she was employed at General Cigar, formerly of Kingston.

Surviving are her children, Albert, Noxen; Mildred (Sissy) Murdoch, Harding; Jacqueline Bescoter, Donald, Edinboro, S.C.; Michael, Harveys Lake; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations to the Shriners Hospital for Children, Office of Development, 2900 Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, FL 33607.

LANNING - Richard A., 51, of Harveys Lake, died on Wednesday, August 1, 2012.

A graduate of Northwest Area High School, he learned to drive truck at an early age and went on to make that his career.

Surviving are his parents, Connie Lanning, Tunkhannock; and Ronald Lanning, Hunlock Creek; a son, Tyler; a grandson; his companion, Tabitha, and her children; two brothers, Ronald and Rodney; sister, Donna; grandmother, Beatrice Wallace; aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

MASSAKER - Laurabelle, 64, of Tunkhannock, died on Monday, July 30, 2012.

She was born on August 13, 1947. She was a member of Vernon Baptist Church, Tunkhannock.

Surviving are her children, Mindy Andes, Shickshinny; Leonard Andes, Hanover Township; Ben Andes, Hunlock Creek; Jennifer Dubish, Tunkhannock; David, Wilkes-Barre; Susan, Tunk-

hannock; Mary, Tunkhannock; 18 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.

MERRICK - David L., of Meadowood Drive, Tunkhannock, died on Tuesday, July 31, 2012, in INOVA Fairfax Hospital, Falls Church, Va.

He was born in Scranton on July 4, 1952, was a 1970 graduate of South Catholic High School and attended Keystone Junior College.

He began his career in the electronic security industry in 1979 where he held various sales and marketing management positions, currently holding the position of director of marketing for Vector Securities National Accounts Division.

He was a member of the Tunkhannock United Methodist Church, and was currently serving as president of the Tyler Health Partnership in Tunkhannock.

Surviving are his wife, Nina Mowry Merrick; stepson, Benjamin Pierson, Litz; stepdaughter,

Ashley Pierson, Lancaster; brother, Richard, Harrisburg; one granddaughter.

Memorial donations to the Tyler Health Partnership, 5950 SR 6, Tunkhannock, PA 18657 or the Tunkhannock United Methodist Church, PO Box 447, Tunkhannock, PA 18657.

MIKOWSKI - Rudolph "Rudy" Jr., 64, of Trucksville, died on Friday, August 3, 2012, at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, Plains Township.

He was born on November 13, 1947 in Passaic, New Jersey, received his early education in New Jersey and later went on to study linguistics at Syracuse University.

A United States Air Force veteran, he honorably served his county during the Vietnam era.

Following his military years, he was employed by Verizon for more than 30 years.

Surviving are his wife, Denise, with whom he celebrated his 41st wedding anniversary on July 31; sons, Russell, of Atlantic High-

lands, New Jersey; and Andrew, of Littleton, Colorado; sisters, Helen Latrella, of Mine Hill, New Jersey; Diane Prelich, of Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey; and Theresa Van Wagenen, of Elmwood Park, New Jersey.

Memorial donations to a local volunteer ambulance corps or Paws For Vets (www.pawsforveterans.com).

NALBONE - Joseph Charles Sr., 85, of Noxen, died Friday, August 3, 2012, at his home.

He was born April 9, 1927 in Trenton, N.J. and was a supporting member of the First United Noxen Methodist Church.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946. He worked at Procter & Gamble in Mehoopany for over 25 years until he retired in 1994.

He was an active member of the Wyoming Valley RC Flyers Club, Wilkes-Barre.

Surviving are his wife, Grace French Nalbhone; daughters, Gayle, Noxen; Susan, Kingston; son, Joseph, Wilkes-Barre.

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