

The Back Page



Gus's Fusses

I throw away many kinds of food that are perfectly good to eat; the dried end of half a banana, for example, and banana strings. Then there's wrinkled blueberries. I cut off a slice of apple that has turned a little brown. A tendency to toss food after its "best by" date is irresistible.

Then there are those people who peel everything, not just bananas, but also fuzzy peaches, soft pears and crisp apples. "They" say that the most nourishment in fruit is in the skins. Yet I and many others throw away what is perfectly good to eat. Except a brown avocado is not.

It's a Small World

By JoAnn Mullen

Residents moving to LCG often meet friends from their childhood, persons from their hometowns, even first cousins.

Two men were moving into LCG the same day. One had become an Admiral and the other, a Bishop of his church. They had been very competitive best friends from grade school but hadn't seen each other for years.

In the lobby, they recognized each other but didn't let on. Instead the Bishop tapped the Admiral on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, doorman, but would you hail me a cab?"

The Admiral looked the Bishop up and down and answered graciously, "Madame, in your condition, do you think you should be traveling?"

Outside Activities—fun and safe!

We are taking it all outside! As of this moment, we have all of our outdoor activities open, including some outdoor gym equipment!



Hal Sprogis becomes a member of the 90+ Club!

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A Closed Case

Contributed by Rhoda Walsh



After graduating from Loyola Law School in 1959, I called every law firm in the phone book for an interview for a solid three months. I heard rejections like, "Our secretaries would quit if we hired a female attorney," or, "My wife would divorce me if I even interviewed you," or simply, "You've got to be kidding!"

Finally, I got my interview

with a general practice firm. The receptionist at the firm was making \$450 a month. They offered me \$400 a month. I grabbed it, and my legal career began!

My first case in court, the judge looked at me and said, "Are you a lawyer? You don't look like a lawyer!" And I didn't. I was 25 years old and looked like a little girl. Apparently I was not like any lawyer the judge had ever seen.

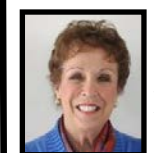
From the Editor — We are exploring the theme of First Jobs in this issue and received many great contributions from residents. We hope you enjoy these wonderful memories.



Starting My Career

Off With a Bang

Contributed by Jean Davis



After graduating from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics and a major in Textile Chemistry, I applied to Canadian Industries Limited (the Dupont of Canada) for a position in their Textile Plant. I was told there were no openings at that time, but if I would accept a chemist's position in their Explosives Plant in Nobel, Ontario, I could have the next opening in the Textile Plant at Kingston, Ontario. I did.

Every morning as I came to work, my purse and lunch were checked for matches, cigarette lighter etc. Then I walked down a narrow-gauge train track to the lab. I worked with five young guys who treated me with respect—even remembering to put down the toilet seat on my behalf!



What fun we had on the 4th of July! We all enjoyed the performances of "Billy and the Band" as they played off the back of a flatbed truck. They stopped at eight locations around campus and gave mini concerts! The day was beautiful and many residents followed the truck to watch three or four (or all eight) shows! In the photo above, the band is playing in front of the Gardenview building. (More photos on page 3.)

Boats, Banks and Books

By Robin Friedheim

A 19-year-old Dutchman boarded a ship to Singapore—and a distinguished career in international banking was begun.

Born in The Hague, The Netherlands in 1929, **Willem Fleurbaaij** attended Tymstra College there. World War II had devastated his homeland; in 1948 there was still rationing, and it was hard to find a job. “But the Nationale Handelsbank in Amsterdam was looking for people to go into banking in Asia,” Willem, now 91, recalls. “Soon I was boarding a boat bound for Singapore. I was assigned to banks in Manila, then Bangkok, where I lived on a boat for the next six years.”

Then, three years in Hong Kong, “I enjoyed my job—and the life. We were well-paid and housed, and no taxes,” he said. “Still, by 1958, I’d had enough of Asia. It was hot, no AC, and management controlled our lives; for example, we weren’t allowed to marry.”



Willem Fleurbaaij

Willem moved to Montreal, then New York and San Francisco, Asia Division, where he managed nine offices. He married **Fran**; they had two children (he now has two grandchildren). He became a US citizen in 1960 and retired in 1986.

Willem and Fran moved to LCG in 2008. He has served on Resident Council, and enjoys swimming, walking—and reading.

You can catch his “Bookshelves” and “Year in Books” online in “Goodreads.com.” His 2019 favorite book (and shortest at 482 pages) is Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. The longest (920 pages) and worst is Stalin in Power. “Right now, I’m reading Pan Am at War,” he said. “It reminds me of the millions of miles I flew on that airline.”



Gwen Parker and Kay Birk try our new, weatherproof table tennis table

Thanks F&B Team

By Les Besser



Candyze Harris

Since the introduction of the COVID-19 restrictions, our Food and Beverage department has faced tremendous challenges. Switching

from the long-established routines to home-delivered meals for approx. 830 residents, living in 641 residences, spread throughout 55 acres of our community, has been a monumental task. Thanks to our F&B Director, **Tommy DiMella**, and his team’s determined effort, the change has been relatively painless to the residents.

By training employees and reassigning jobs, meals have been delivered to everyone. Yes, we have experienced hiccups and delays, but considering the amount of work required for the planning and execution, we residents should consider ourselves fortunate.

The main F&B goal moving forward, without over-extending is to be realistic in what it can do. Don’t put the cart ahead of the horse; have proactive plans in place when problems arise.

The team is happy to work; they understand it is safer at work here than outside of LCG. They appreciate what LCG offers them and want to continue getting through this together!

And we residents appreciate them.



YouTube Horses

By Dave Dana

Henry and Daisy liked to watch YouTube while they were alone in their apartment and not able to dine with friends or new acquaintances. This evening they came across a program about horses.

“Let’s watch that one. I don’t know much about horses,” said Daisy.

“I rode a little,” said Henry, “but never had one, or took care of one—tried to feed one an apple once.”

They watched a mixed herd—black, brown, a variety of shades—all standing in a field. Soon they all ran to the barn and stood there.

“A horse is a stable animal,” said the voice on the program.

Then the horses lined up near the barn eating hay in feeder bins spread out in front of them. They munched away, chomped and chewed and swallowed mouthfuls, standing side by side. At one point, two horses seemed to fight over the same mouthful. One flattened his ears and turned quickly with a nasty look to his neighbor.

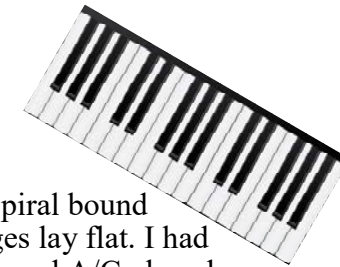
“That one certainly has a baleful look about him,” said Henry.

Then the nasty fellow made a few very disagreeable noises.

“My!” commented Daisy. “When you hear it from the horse’s mouth, you really are listening to a neigh-sayer.”

Piano Roll Blues

By JoAnn Mullen



When I was 6, piano-playing became my religion. I loved arpeggios, staccato, boogie beats and the blues. I’d torment the ivories and my family morning and night. I didn’t know an Amen from a what-when back then; I just knew that at the piano was where I belonged. My grandmother, being a concert pianist in her glory days, gave me the extra lead on my rope to follow my 88-key dream.

As a sophomore I was chosen for our high school’s “Select Choir,” traveling around North Dakota and Minnesota to sing for special events. I sang soprano but was asked to warm up the choir on the piano and often to accompany our group. Sounds simple but let me tell you, the pianos were often out of tune and missing keys. We’d memorize a song in one key and were asked to transpose on the spot to another key with 5 flats. Piano books

were seldom spiral bound so that the pages lay flat. I had no page-turner and A/C played havoc with sheet music.

Inevitably someone would be celebrating a birthday or an anniversary so I would be asked to play “Happy Birthday” or “Anniversary Waltz” or, my favorite, someone would request a favorite song from the early 1900s of which I’d never heard.

The temperature of the venues ran from so cold in winter that I’d play on stiff fingers, to so hot in summer that they’d be dripping wet. My knees always knocked from nervousness. Inevitably the principal or a teacher would want to strike up a conversation while we were getting ready to perform.

Afterwards we were besieged by students asking questions. My favorite: “Do piano keys still only come in black and white or do they come in colors now?”

Surveying

By Dave Dana

The summer after high school, my hometown’s only surveyor, Mr. Pease, hired me as an assistant for the summer. The job was to confirm boundary lines he sighted through a transit, to measure the angles and distances. I held the measuring stick that he sighted for his records. I chopped brush and tree branches if he needed to see the line. Once I had to drive a corner stake into a hornet’s nest.

Not an easy job to keep the measuring tape taut and clear and accurate. We also measured

elevations in hilly ground, recording the height at spots along each border.

Indoors on rainy days, Mr. Pease taught me how to translate the field records into a map. I learned how to connect the elevation measurements by drawing contour lines to make a picture of the landscape. We’d also examine the town records to see how our work fit into the existing maps and records. This could not have been a better summer job—outdoors, active, interesting and paying.

I then went off to college. The first classes I had signed up for required a preliminary lesson for two weeks—in surveying!

Do You Know?

By Dave Dana

Do you know about Chinese Dragons—those mystical, mythical beings?

Some cultures have fire-breathing, fierce dragons that need to be slayed. Chinese dragons, however, are benevolent spiritual symbols that represent prosperity, good luck and harmony. They are ancient creatures. Carvings of them are found on clay pots, mosaics and jade.

Dragons have long bodies with horned heads and feet with two to four claws per foot. Later Emperors reserved five-clawed dragons for themselves and a prince's dragon could have four. They do not have wings, because flying is mystical, not physical.

The Chinese believe that dragons are the rulers of water and weather, able to dispense rain and control waterfalls, rivers, and seas. Religious rites may appease the dragons in case of storms, floods, and droughts.

Dragon symbols are used to represent imperial majesty and are embroidered head-up on robes (head-down is bad luck, because the dragon cannot fly).

There are four dragon kings of four seas, and nine dragon sons, each with its own responsibility. Often a dragon gets shown clutching a flaming pearl, exuding energy, wisdom, power, prosperity, or immortality.



Small World

Contributed By John Marshall

In 1993 my wife, **Geri** and I moved to Durango, Colorado. We could run our business from any town in the U.S. that had enough phone lines and facilities plus a commercial airport. We could easily get to our manufacturers, our customers, to trade shows and work with our reps. Durango is a small, charming mountain town founded in 1881 and it ticked off all the boxes. Some of you may have ridden the famous Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

We worked our butts off and the business continued to grow. By 1997 we needed a larger space. The Moose Lodge in Durango had been empty and for sale for quite a while, so we bought it.

The 7,300 sq. ft. building had a small reception area and maybe one office, the rest was open space. It was equipped with a 9' wine cooler and beer bar, including taps for kegs. We gave it to a local craft brewer. The beer guys awarded us beer for life.

Geri, laid out the plans for 14 offices, a full kitchen, a conference room and workspace for assembling promotional stuff.

Our real estate agent had a list of local contractors to do the remodeling and we picked a fellow named **Ron Nation**. Imagine our surprise when we read his article in the Glen Tidings about his adventure remodeling an old school house in Durango (March 2020 issue). I called Ron; we met and reminisced about life in a small mountain town. Small world!

August Display Cases

By Michele Chaffee

This month we are keeping the displays in place, so continue to enjoy the collection of resident WWII memorabilia and photos of our WWII veterans in both club-houses.

Here are some additional displays in the cases:

-Bill McDade is contributing just a tiny part of his enormous military collection. There are models of aircraft and vehicles and even a Sherman tank. He curated for us two wonderful mini-displays: D-Day and the Battle of Britain. Bill and Carole visited the D-Day landing site at Normandy France and participated in the

50th Anniversary ceremony. He brought back some sand from Omaha Beach to forever remember the thousands who died there. Bill's items also include photographs, medals, patches, and so much more. You can even find a tiny Winton Churchill!

-Peggy Wing, from Great Britain, has a WWII vintage stuffed dog—looking quite patriotic. She had many toys like this as a child.

-Mort Block, a WWII veteran who fought at both D-Day in France and Iwo Jima in the Pacific (what are the odds?), is displaying some framed photos from his personal collection, which document much of his extraordinary experiences.



Sue Rosen



Billy and the Band all loaded on the truck!



Barbara Anne & Charles Ahlfeld



Larry & Chris Spicer



Marian Schrader & Renée Klepesch



Claude Chan



Dave Nelson



Marian Aylmer & Nancy Culp



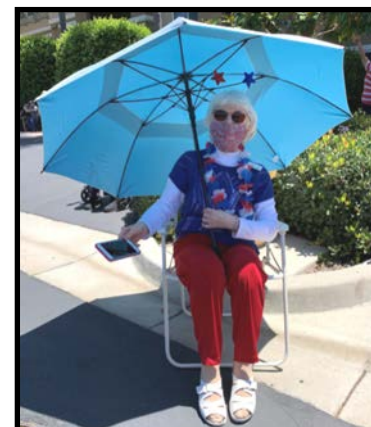
Dorothy & John Mark



Pat & Emory Brazell



Liz Farwell & Betty Chay



Tordis Busskohl



Ginni Davis



Larry McCleary & Carol Smith



Howard Kern & Barbara Bosley



Behind the Wall

By Dick Vandervoort



Barney, at the home-made ice cream store, paid me 70-cents an hour. So, the beginning of my illustrious ice-cream career began. I'd been there about six months and having lunch with one of my co-workers, Vince. We started talking local ice cream history and I got the ol'...

"Didja-hear-about-the...rat?"

Uh, no.

"When Barney expanded the place last fall, it was open to the outside for a couple days, 'n there was this really cool night."

Ok.

"Well, this darned rat must've wandered inside to get warm, I guess."

Yikes.

"The next day, they closed up that outside wall and built that new wall in here...y'know the one over there."

Didn't know that was a new wall.

"Well, that rat got scared or something and hid inside that new wall."

Oh NO!

"Bout eight weeks later in January, I opened the store early that day. P-U! Kid, it was bad."

What happened?

"We looked all over for spoiled ice cream, milk, everything."

THE RAT?

"Took us a long time to find out, the smell's comin' from that wall. And, it's gettin' worse every day."

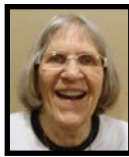
Were people buying ice cream then?

"Yeah, it was freezin' outside and there we were with all the windows and doors open, so ya' couldn't hardly smell it. Plus, we



The Sweet Side

Contributed by Carol Polacek



Our family moved to Lyndhurst, Ohio, seeking a new life. I wanted a career.

When my high school teacher advised a door-to-door job approach, my Dad and I took to the streets by foot. We passed a bakery with a Help Wanted sign. As Dad was a dashing Bohemian and looked like movie star Clark Gable, he was welcomed by Germans Herman and Dan, in white aprons. I excitedly told them I just entered high school and was seeking a career. After a quick interview for the job of sales clerk I was hired. Jelly donuts, bear claws, Vienna bread and strudel were bakery favorites. A soda bar was also popular and served hot fudge sundaes, phosphates and milkshakes. My career was formed in this happy place.

After two years, Herman and Dan called me to come to the baker's kitchen. The problem

were cleanin' all the time with bleach and stuff. JANUARY! Inside the store had to be like 40 -degrees or something."

Holy cow!

"Barney, he took this axe and busted up that wall. The smell was God-awful! Put that slimy critter in a bag and made it disappear!"



was I gave too much to the customers. If a customer wanted three bagels, I gave them four. Of course, this "give more" attitude made the business flourish. Herman and Dan felt they would go broke if too much hot fudge topped the vanilla ice cream. After this "bad mark" I watched portions. Surprisingly, frugality did not have an effect. People bought more and all the bakery sold.

I graduated and again met with Herman and Dan who wanted to show me how to knead, roll and twist dough for poppy seed kuchens. I expressed my desire to leave the bakery for college. Business Education was beckoning and no longer would the aroma of honey, butterscotch and malt surround me. Instead Fenn College was calling with a school-work program and, of course, a chlorine swimming pool. Who says we can't all work together for a better, sweeter world?

Where?

"Don't know. Closed the store. Sign said: 'On Vacation.' Don't that new wall look good now?"



Houseplants & Clean Air?

By Evelyn Weidner

Do you need plants in your unit to clean the air? The NASA Clean Air Study was a 1987 trial to research ways to clean the air in Space Stations. Its results suggested that, in addition to absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen through photosynthesis, certain common indoor plants may also provide a natural way of removing volatile organic pollutants.

So, what is truth and how much is just plant marketing? I found dozens of internet sites offering to sell you air purifying plants. According to the study, plants do help clean the air and Pothos vine does the best job. However, those tests were done in a sealed tube and although Pothos did win, the truth is that the amount of air purifying that plants do is very small. Your apartment's air is not filled with formaldehyde or benzene. It's easy to clean your air by opening your balcony slider.

I suggest you buy house plants because they are beautiful and give you a sense of peace. Enjoy the lovely Golden Pothos, Philodendron vine, the interesting Hoya vines, or any of the larger leaf plants like rubber plants, Peace Lilies, Kalanchoes, Orchids, or Scheffleras.

Anything in the Dracaena family is easy to care for or go for the stunning Fiddle Leaf Fig (Ficus lyrata). A tropical Anthurium will remind you of Hawaii and is a lot cheaper than a trip. These will all do something to clean your air.

And, just remembering to water them will improve your memory!



Adult Education

By Les Besser

Shortly after finishing fourth grade in Budapest, I overheard mom's conversation with a neighbor—a Holocaust survivor who was a grandmother. "Having lost my entire family, I don't have much to live for, but I want to learn to read and write before passing away," the lady said.

Building up my confidence for a couple of days, I finally told her that I could teach her. She was elated and offered to pay for my time. I felt somewhat guilty about taking her money but did not refuse the offer. We began our sessions the next day, using my first-grade textbook.

Naively, I thought that a grownup would learn faster than a child. After all, if I could learn to read as a kid, an adult should have no problem. As it turned out, teaching a 70-year-old lady to read was much harder than I had expected.

At first, we met daily to learn the lengthy Hungarian alphabet, and in a few weeks, she could sound out most of it. Putting together letters and reading their combinations, however, did not go well at all. To make matters worse, most of the time she could not do her homework alone. Writing was even harder because her hands had strong tremors.

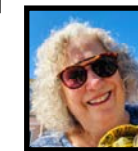
By the end of the summer, we both realized that our mission would never be completed and gave up the effort. I was terribly disappointed, but she remained nice to me for the rest of her life. She paid me generously, and I gave the money to my mother, feeling proud for contributing to our expenses.

Note: As I write this, now that I am even older than she was then, I have great empathy for what she tried to do. I am finding out that at this age, it's hard to learn new things.



Going Undercover

Contributed by Dianne Deitch



My father was in the Air Force and we were stationed at Vandenberg AFB about 60 miles north of Santa Barbara. It was 1962 and I was 16-years old—old enough to get my first job. I was so excited to make some money during summer vacation. I qualified for a job at the Base Exchange (for those not in the know, it is like

Walmart on military bases, with a bunch of everything). I got to meet a lot of young military men and had lots of crushes. But it would be very embarrassing when I was assigned to work in the men's underwear department. That was the first time I had ever heard of a "jock strap!"



When the War Became A Reality

Contributed by Marian Alymer



I was 14 years old and living in an agricultural community of 10,000 mostly Germans in southern Minnesota as WWII raged.

My parent's friends owned a grocery store in the thriving town when the husband was drafted and his wife, the mother of three, was left to manage the store. HELP! I jumped at the chance to start my 2 -1/2-year career in the food industry. I worked week-ends when the farmers did their shopping. My ability to understand and to speak German was a great advantage.

All foods had to be weighed and packaged. Orders had to be balanced with food ration stamps. We waited on customers (there was no self-service in those days). Fruits, chocolate, candy and coffee were precious commodities. It was beneficial to be a "steady customer."

Talk about a learning experience! The war became a reality and people's sacrifices on the homefront made me realize what being an American was all about.

Fast forward—we were living in Camarillo and I was a docent at the Ronald Reagan Library when the WWII traveling exhibit arrived. Young students were delighted to meet someone who lived in "trying times." Sharing my experiences made a time in history come alive for them. It was all because of my first job at 14 years of age. What an experience it was!



Girl Gas Jockey

Contributed by Joyce Carlson



I first worked at E-Z Self-Serve in Glendale, during my junior and senior years of high school and my first year of community college (1956-58). E-Z was among the first self-serve gas stations. My shifts were Wednesday evenings, and all day Saturdays during the school year. I worked full time in the summer.

I wore a uniform and money belt, and stayed outside by the 16 pumps making change and pumping gas for people needing assistance.

There was no roof to protect from weather and it could be really hot/cold and even windy too. If it was raining, I could go in the office when there were no customers. Gas was only 19-24 cents per gallon.

I still can ID almost all cars and pick-ups in that vintage and tell you where the gas caps are too. I bought my first car with my earnings. It was a 1942 Chevy coupe, although it had been nosed and decked, but never repainted or finished. It cost \$75.



Soda Jerk

Contributed by Jack Nelson



Soda fountains, now quaint antiques, were social centers. Their long counters had stool-seats close together on one side and a row of flavor concentrate handles and taller carbonated water spigots on the other.

My first hourly employment was as a soda jerk. In my case, the modifier, soda, may be considered superfluous. But it fits the work—jerking handles of flavor and soda water in proper proportions for a requested drink: root beer, orange fizz, lime rickey and others. (Adding ice cream, a more sophisticated work, deserves a separate *Glen Tidings* article.)

I jerked sodas at Doc Good's Drugstore, by the University of Denver. Faculty came to argue and pontificate. Bud, my neighbor, worked there and had gotten

me the job when I was in junior high. He liked and later married my older sister.

Doc's soda jerks had some privileges; we could invent new drinks. Mine was the Cheyenne Slop—a short spurt of every flavor in the fountain with a dash of soda. It was sweet and not very popular. We could also decide the flavor of fresh ice cream we made in large quantities in a freezer tank. My preference was chocolate chip, so I sat with a knife and giant bar of chocolate, cutting chips into the ice cream as it flowed into containers.

Nearly all customers were happy and friendly, and the fountain was a fine setting for social conversation or individual enjoyment. As I think about it, LCG could use a good soda fountain.



A Scare on the Job

Contributed by Ron Nation



When I was 5 in 1942, my dad began a business hauling "green feed" or freshly mown alfalfa, to local dairies. Green feed was mown late each day, windrowed into long rows, ready to be picked up at 1:00am. Dad would hook the hay loader machine to the rear of his flatbed truck, lined up at the end of a row. He would slip into low gear ("grandma gear") and slide off the seat onto the running board. I would slide into his place and drive/steer the truck down the long rows. Dad had to turn the truck around at the end of each row as I hadn't the strength.

We would drive the truck to Bellflower from the Olivero's farm in North Long Beach to the dairy. Dad would line the truck up alongside the long mangers then do the slide off as I slid on, so I could steer the truck close to the mangers. The raw milk would be running off of coolers at the end of milking buildings and Dad and I would always get coffee cups of milk to drink on the way back to the fields.

One early morning an exciting event took place. P-38 fighter planes were built in Long Beach and it was normal to see them flying over. This day, one was flying over us towards the Huntington Beach area when it exploded right over us. The plane kept heading toward the ocean and the pilot parachuted out landing in the field near us. Dad unhooked the hay loader and drove to the pilot, who was a bloody mess, crying and scaring the heck out of me. Dad loaded him in the truck and drove him to a hospital.



Paper Route

Contributed Bill Julian



My first regular job was a paper route which I took on when I was about 11 1/2. It consisted of delivering 100 copies of the Miami Daily News, an afternoon paper, every day between 3:30-5:30pm (Sunday papers were delivered between 4:00-6:00am). We would pick up the papers at a fixed location near our routes and go from there.

I had a large wooden basket fixed to my bicycle's handlebars and a saddlebag over the rear wheel which enabled me to carry all 100 papers at the same time. I would fold the papers into "biscuits" which I could sail through the air from my bicycle and generally hit the steps of a house. Hence the ability to deliver 100 papers in under two hours.



Psych Ward

Contributed Sylvia Hewitt



I had neither an interest nor the opportunity for a job until during graduate school when I was able to earn three units towards graduation while working as a psych aide in the psychiatric ward of a hospital.

After witnessing the administration of electric shock, resulting in patients losing all memory, including their own name, I was able a number of times to obstruct this so-called "treatment" which causes permanent and

Every Friday evening, I would ring the doorbell of each of my customers and collect \$0.30. Most people were home in that day and age, 1942 and 1943. Those who were not home I would try to catch Saturday morning. By Saturday noon you had to make your "book" which you would deliver to your district manager at the spot where you picked up the papers. Your "book" was the cost of the papers which was \$0.20 each. Thus, my book was \$20.00 You kept the balance. If I could collect from everyone, which was not always the case, I could make \$10 a week which was good money in those days.

My customers were the families of "The Greatest Generation" and they were uniformly nice to me. The only problem I had was with the dogs that would chase me but I managed to sweet talk them out of biting me.

irreversible brain damage. Also, whenever possible, I snuck patient's pets into their rooms which was actually therapeutic for them. Sadly, that ended when one day a German Shepherd somehow managed to run down the hall and into an operating room.

There was far more harm than good done in psychiatric facilities from early times and it is a blessing that the tide has turned and treatment today is, for the most part, beneficial.



With a Clear Conscience

Contributed by Roy Mosteller

World War II was a particularly major part of my life. Turning 18, I had no doubt I would be in the military so I twice tried to enlist in the Navy but was rejected because of bad eyesight. Thus, when Selective Service called, I was overwhelmed with delight to be drafted into the Navy, which began my path to later being an NCIS federal law enforcement officer.

I was assigned duty as an enlisted yeoman with the Chief Cable Censor in Washington, D.C., a wartime organization administered by Naval Intelligence censoring telephone and cable messages crossing U.S. borders. As the war approached an end, rampant rumors persisted that the president would make an announcement from the White House.

On the afternoon of August 15, 1945, I was with people across the street and watched President Truman announce

WWII Ending in Budapest

By Les Besser

During the last two months of the war, my mom, eight-year-old “Laszlo” (my Hungarian name), and two elderly Jewish men were hiding from the Nazis. We had lived in an 8x10-foot rat-infested, dirt-floor coal-cellar. The winter of 1945 brought record cold weather to Hungary. Snow piled up on the streets, and the Danube froze solid. Without having adequate heat, clean water, basic sanitation and food, I really wondered how we had survived.

from the White House steps that Japan had agreed to unconditional surrender.

Following the war, I was sent to Osaka, Japan, continuing work with Naval Intelligence. Being close to Kyoto where the Imperial Summer Palace was located, I often visited the city. One day with a group, I entered the Palace and roamed unaccompanied for several hours. Desiring a souvenir of my Palace visit I removed a door key pin which I prized for many years.

Being a federal law enforcement officer the thought of possessing stolen property from the Japanese Imperial Palace bothered me, so I decided to return the pin. The opportunity came in 2019 when my daughter visited Kyoto and returned the key for me. The Palace employee receiving the key said, “Tell your father he did a good thing.” Now my conscience is clear as the door pin is back in the Emperor’s Palace.

Our food supply had dwindled to a sack of dry corn and a sack of potatoes. Our daily menu offered two options: potatoes or dry corn, either boiled or mashed.

One day news arrived that an army horse had been killed on our street. Mother immediately took off with a large knife and a basket. She brought back a chunk of meat, and the corn-mush tasted much better that evening.

Finally, the Soviet Army occupied our district after pushing the Nazis toward the Danube. We heard that their soldiers were not hostile to children. A resident who spoke some Russian, taught me the sentence, “Comrade, give me a little bread.” Armed with my new knowledge, I bravely walked out of our building and headed toward a Soviet Army truck.

A soldier in a strange uniform stood in the open back end of the vehicle. After approaching him carefully, my knowledge of Russian caught him by surprise. He stared at me for a few seconds, then reached into a burlap sack and threw a loaf of bread to me. Not knowing how to say “thank you” in Russian, I just waved at him and rushed back to our building. We celebrated by eating bread for dinner.

After a few more weeks of fighting, our severely damaged city was finally controlled by the Red Army, ending the war for us. Hallelujah!



Kitchen Help

Contributed By John Marshall



In 1962-64, I was a student at Riverside City College. I made the ten-mile round trip from home on my

Sears three-speed bicycle, rain or shine. Encouraged by my parents to have a job, I became a last-shift kitchen helper at an early iteration of senior living, the Rose Garden Village. This also gave me the afternoon to do homework at school, with access to the library.

The job came with an attractive benefit, a free meal. My shift was timed so that the dining room was usually empty and the dishes, silverware, pots and pans were piled in the back...waiting for me.



Residents were probably getting ready to watch Bonanza, Beverly Hillbillies, Dick Van Dyke or Petticoat Junction.

I was allowed a trip through the buffet, with steam tables, one soup choice, some salad fixings and a slice of bread (usually the heel), desserts were always gone. I ate a lot of meatloaf, mashed potatoes and green beans.

After eating, I got to work. The cook left me a note each night, telling which leftovers to put in containers and store in the refrigerator. Then I put the first of several loads in the dishwasher (called a Clipper) and got to work on the pans from the steam table. I swept the small dining room, cleaned off the chairs, topped up the salt and pepper shakers and did whatever else was in my note. It usually took 2-1/2 to 3 hours and I was trusted to mark my own time card.

Several years later, I had the privilege to dine again at a buffet, this time in a mess hall on Fort Ord.

Fifty-three years later, I have a plated five-course meal, sometimes in a bag.



Joan Ades, Tony Hamma, Sudie Schumacher and Lori Olander enjoy shuffleboard.



Give Me a What?

Contributed By Susan Besser



The summer before my senior year in High School, in 1958, I found a job at the Base Exchange of Castle Air

Force Base near Merced, home of the B-52s. For the first few weeks I worked in the infant and children’s wear department. Helping expectant dads and overjoyed grandparents select gifts was very enjoyable. Soon, however, I was placed on the front check-out registers, a far more hectic and demanding task.

The afternoon of my first day up front, a “Bird Colonel” approached my register. I can still see the thunderbolts on the visor of his Air Force cap and the rows of colorful medals on his uniform. He was smoking a fat cigar.

“Honey,” he puffed, “gimme a couple of Sheiks.” Thinking he wanted razors I reached behind me, took several packages off the shelf, and laid them down on the counter.

“Honey, I want to cover it up, not cut it off!” he boomed.

A hush fell, followed by giggles and heads shaking. I felt my cheeks burning in embarrassment, not completely sure what I had done wrong. Later I learned the difference between Schicks and Sheiks.