

“IF WE CANNOT RECONCILE ALL OPINIONS, LET US ENDEAVOR TO UNITE ALL HEARTS.”

NEW-HARMONY, (IND.) December 19, 2017

CHRISTMAS IS A COMING

Story by: Ann Rains - Vintage 2010

“Christmas is a coming and the geese are getting fat. Please to put a penny in an old man’s hat. If you haven’t got a penny then a ha’ penny will do. If you haven’t got a ha’penny, then God bless you!”

This little jingle starts lilting through my mind about this time every year. I’ve been singing it since I was a child. Undoubtedly it was a part of my elementary education at the old brick elementary country school, Jeffries, southwest of Mt. Vernon.

A goose was standard culinary fare for the English and was often fed extra grain before Christmas to fatten them for the Christmas feast. A ha’penny is a half penny—a very, very old coin dating back to the Saxons and the 13th century.

The jingle has been called “the charitable lyrics nursery rhyme.” The credit for the music to this poem goes to Edith Nesbit. No one knows for sure who, when or where the poem was written. Edith Nesbit lived 159 years ago, born August 15, 1858, in Kennington, Surrey, England. Her occupation: poet and writer of children’s books.

Apparently Edith Nesbit felt that children’s books of the day were not addressing the needs of the the child—something most of us can understand. The Alice in Wonderland fantasy did not hold many real—world truths. Although some of Nesbit’s books did include magic and fantastical world travel, the children were identifiably real. She published a prodigious number of children’s books, some of which have been made into movies. The Railway

Children, The Story of the Treasure Seekers and the Wouldbegoods are three titles you may recognize.

Nesbit married Hubert Bland in 1877. Their marriage was an unusual one with Nesbit raising two of Hubert’s illegitimate children. Apparently, their ideals were matched for they helped found the Fabian Society, “a precursor of the Labour Party.” She saw much good in socialism and wrote and lectured to that end.

Nesbit remarried, after the death of Bland, Thomas Tucker. He was called “the skipper” being a ferry boatman engineer. Throughout her life, from childhood on, Nesbit lived in a variety of places, including numerous communities in France. She died in Kent, England on May 4, 1924.

The nursery rhyme’s message is real and imperative anytime and especially now during the Christmas season. “If you haven’t got a penny then a ha’penny will do...” We may not have the old coin a half penny, but we have more. Helping the poor and needy is a call the Bible requests often of us. Deuteronomy 15:11 “For the poor will never cease out of the land: therefore I command you saying, You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and to your poor, in your land.”

Although the economic times may make it tight for us, thinking of a good deed you can bestow upon another this Christmas will gloriously brighten your holidays and that of another. Remember, “Christmas is a coming.”

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TRUE CONFESSION!

by: Dan Barton, Publisher

By the way! Here’s an update on “The Ol’ Political Sidestep” article I wrote in November. I had mentioned that I’d sent letters to both Commissioners Flanders and Buckland requesting a copy of the phantom “Main Street Study” and did not receive a reply from Commissioner Buckland. The supposed Study had been referenced by both Buckland and New Harmony Business Associates president, Lynn Clark, as pertinent to their support for Flanders’ idea to curtail Chapter 17 Commercial Property owners rights in the Business Historic District. As I noted, the request letter I had sent to Buckland on October 19th was not acknowledged or responded to by her. I didn’t know if she just hadn’t received it or was too busy to answer. At the November meeting she confessed that she had received my letter. She went on to say that she had been advised by the Town’s Attorney, Erin Bauer, that she should not acknowledge or answer it. Bauer, according to Buckland, told her that since Commissioner David Flanders had answered a similar letter he had gotten from me, she shouldn’t respond.

Both Flanders and Buckland did receive letters from me on behalf of the Gazette. Flanders indicated in his response that he did not have the Main Street Study, nor did the Commission. Because Commissioner Buckland had specifically made a statement in support of the Study, I decided to send her a letter also, just to be sure that Flanders’ general comment about the Commission not having a copy didn’t overlook Buckland in error. A courtesy by me, and an opportunity for her.

She finally answered anyway at the November Plan Commission meeting, nearly two weeks later. Her answer was no national secret, she simply said that she didn't have the Study. Answering more timely would have better prepared the community and the press before the November meeting, instead of the dog and pony show that I witnessed at the Commission meeting. As it turned out, no one had the Study. Not Flanders, not Buckland and not Clark!

In my opinion the advice by Town Attorney Bauer was not good advice and Commissioner Buckland should not have taken it. Interference by the Town Attorney between a public official and the press seemed to be unjustified. It can cause disruptions in the right to Freedom of The Press, First Amendment rights and open access to information. Information held by the town government should be openly accessible to the people and the press. It should not be the exclusive property of elected and appointed officials and not of the town attorney, who work for us. What we learned from Commissioner Buckland's confession is that she has never seen nor does she have a copy of the Main Street Study, which she believes, for unfounded reasons, establishes a basis for reducing the rights of Business Historic District property owners.

THE MAGIC OF THE HOLIDAYS!

by: Ann Rains

"Magic" is a word brandished this time of year. I believe it to be true. Thanksgiving and Christmas are a time to be with family and dearest friends—those for whom you care deeply. These holidays build the durability and occasions of love. That in itself creates magic.

Sometimes it is not possible to be together on the holidays. The reasons range from military service, distance, health or other inexplicable reasons. Whatever the cause for the absence, not being with someone who holds great

meaning in your life can leave a hollow feeling..a loss.

When a grandparent looks into the loving, trusting, sparkling eyes of his/her grandchild, that is magic. When a parent feels great pride to be sharing a holiday meal in the home of their adult child, that is magic. When one cooks for a sweetheart and it actually turns out well, that is magic. Magic makes memories.

With Thanksgiving past and our waistlines a wee bit larger, it is full speed ahead into the Christmas season. There is one constant in the hustle of present purchasing and decor decorating. It is the magic of the Christmas story, the one told each and every year of the Christ child born in a manger.

What would Christmas be like without the resounding, joyous hymns? Who does not love and know the words to "Silent Night?" "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" rings of "peace on Earth, good will to men". Without the magic of the Christ child in our lives, the magic of His total love and life for us, how would life have evolved? No hymns of "We Three Kings of Orient Are" or "Angels We Have Heard on High" to tell the Christmas story. Would thievery, debauchery and constant combat be accepted norms? A disconsolate and harrowing thought!

One of the greatest gifts that we are given by Christ is that of forgiveness. When you know you have been wronged (no magic here!) how does one arrive at forgiveness? Sometimes the hurt is so deep that forgiveness is improbable. Perhaps the best that one can do is forgive but never place oneself back into a situation where the wrong can be repeated in other disguises. There is magic when the burden is lightened and the heart can grow gentle again.

When we read about the peacemakers of the Earth—Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, and a multitude whose names will be remembered more in heaven than on Earth—perhaps yours, we can understand that the answer to

injustice may not always be justice, but compassion.

Let the magic of Christmas imbue you with the spirit of love and compassion. As Christ said, "Love one another as I have loved you." If you cannot hold someone on your shoulders or in your arms, the magic is, you can hold them in your heart and prayers during and beyond Christmas.

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DENISE RAPP'S - MOVEABLE FEAST!

by: Dan Barton, Publisher

They say it's hard to keep a good man down! Well you can add "a good woman" to that phrase also. When I got the text from Denise Rapp a few weeks ago saying that she had hit the big time with a special article in "Evansville Living" magazine, I was almost as proud as she was. I think I even popped a button off my shirt. Denise has been my favorite chef and recipe writer for a long, long time. This was just (pardon the pun) icing on the cake. Not only has she been struggling in this small town of New Harmony to make a success of her business, "Movable Feast," but she has been steadily writing for this newspaper without fail, every month, for over three years. Her kind of talent can't be kept under a basket, it has to get out and bloom sometime. And so it has!

"Evansville Living" is that very flashy, very impressive, PR magazine that comes out every month. It highlights all sorts of businesses and events around our neck of the woods, not just Evansville. It's from the Tucker Publishing Group, published and edited by Kristen and Todd Tucker. They have a ton of talented people working for them. Three of those talented folks, writers Trista Lutgring and Elisa Gross, along with top notch photographer Zack Straw, put together the November/December "Evansville

Living” piece starring Denise and her artful catering presentation at the A.C. Thomas House in October.

Nearly every page of the article, starting with the cover, has beautiful photographs and insightful food comments by Denise, giving away many of her trade secrets and helpful hints. Of course there are other talented chefs and caterers also featured in the write up, which you will also find interesting. You can all indulge yourselves in the whole story by stopping at Schnuck’s or Barnes and Noble in Evansville and picking up a copy of the magazine.

As I mentioned, the cover of the magazine carries an absolutely over the top photograph of a part of Denise’s dinner table presentation. I was flabbergasted when I first saw the photo! It looks like some kind of Rembrandt still life. Really! An all golden baked brie salad with bacon tomato, white cheddar and brie; covered with fig jam, whole figs and blackberries. You really have to see it to believe it, all the colors of fall. Also featured in the article is Denise’s Pumpkin Bundt Cake Penuche with caramel sauce. Too much! I don’t know where she comes up with this stuff. Must have been one heck of a party. The whole table presentation was a work of art, brought to life by Photographer Zack Straw.

Some of Denise’s twelve little tips quoted in the magazine are classic Denise. She says that,

1) “Presentation goes hand in hand with the dishes served at my party.” 2) “People eat with their eyes! As soon as they see the food, if it is beautiful, they already know they are going to have a good time.” 3) “Preparing for a party should be fun. Be sure to take your time. Enjoy baking your dishes and serving your food.” 4) “Don’t tell yourself you hate to cook. Think about your friends who are coming, and if you need a glass of wine to help you accomplish your task, then do it!” (She laughs) 5) “If you’re looking for a way to spruce up napkin holders or garnishes, use natural elements to bring uniqueness to your table.” 6)

“Fresh Sage and Rosemary are great garnishes or you can wrap them around your napkins.” 7) “You can even make a name tag out of a bay leaf.” 8) “Don’t be afraid of having a little food left over after your dinner meal.” 9) “Keeping adequate portions in mind for your guest is good but if you have a little food left over it’s nothing to worry about.” 10) “Allow at least five bites for hors d’oeuvres and four to six ounces of meat per person.” 11) “The most important thing to remember is you don’t want to overstuff your diners too soon.” 12) “A satisfying appetizer and fulfilling meal leaves room for the star of the show - dessert!”

The “Evansville Living” article is entitled, “Eat, Drink & Be Merry!” and describes 35 ways to upgrade your gatherings this year. I hope you pick up their magazine when you’re shopping at Schuncks or Barnes and Noble. I know you’ll enjoy it. And if you want to really have a fun, successful and hands-free work of art gathering, just call Denise at Moveable Feast - 812-306-8290.

GAVEL GAMUT

By Jim Redwine

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(From the Week of 16 October 2017)

CONNECTIONS

Father George Rapp of Pennsylvania and Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland each hoped their visions for Mankind would manifest in New Harmony, Indiana. Rapp’s vision involving Christ’s Second Coming and Owen’s involving a world without any traditional religions look different but have similar dreams at their base. A world without private property ownership was one of the major goals for both.

I will leave an analysis of Rapp’s grand plans to the theologians. As to Owen’s, I defer to the philosophers but will refer to Robert Owen, *A View of Society and Other Writings* edited by

Gregory Glaeys who is a Professor of History at Royal University of London and a recognized authority on Robert Owen.

According to Glaeys, Robert Owen (1771-1858) was one of the greatest British social reformers and was a pioneer in schemes for humane factory management, the eight-hour workday and the education of the poor. Owen even now remains respected as a pioneer socialist, feminist and advocate of an ecological approach to industry and urban life.

One of the most interesting ironies of the connections between the philosophers of Rapp and Owen and New Lanark and New Harmony is that the clergy was one of Owen’s fiercest opponents. Yet elements of Rapp’s Christian thought and Owen’s abhorrence of Christianity and all other organized religions intertwine, especially their mutual calls for a new world order and disdain for economic competition and individualism. Perhaps that was why and how Owen and Rapp knew of one another and what led to Owen in New Lanark, Scotland buying Rapp’s town of New Harmony, Indiana.

Glaeys describes that transaction as follows:

“In 1825 he (Owen) purchased a ready-made community set on 20,000 acres in southern Indiana from a pietistic German sect, the Rapites. At New Harmony he spent about 40,000 pounds (about \$240,000) or four fifths of his New Lanark fortune in a fruitless effort to organize a disparate group of about 800 radicals, freethinkers, backwoodsmen and scientists.”

Unfortunately, too many of the 800 thought Owen’s utopian concept simply meant they could do nothing and Owen would support them. These ingrates had ample reason for this attitude based on Owen’s own creed as set forth in his Manifesto :

“Individual and national competition

and contest are the best modes (under the then existing circumstances) by which wealth can be created and distributed.

....

But it is obtained by creating and calling into full action, the most inferior feelings, the meanest faculties, the worst passions, and the most injurious vices which can be cultivated in human nature.”

p.358

Owen sought a system of production and distribution that called for “[T]he least labour to all members of a society, and especially with the least amount of unhealthy and disagreeable employment.”

Well, Gentle Reader, you can probably see how such an experiment might turn out. You are right. In about two years Owen’s heaven on earth was more akin to Purgatory. And Owen’s insistence on a strict compliance to his principles on his terms did not engender enthusiastic compliance. Or as the ancient Greeks might have observed, hubris is a mortal flaw.

There is so much more to Robert Owen and the symbiotic relationship between New Lanark, Scotland and New Harmony, Indiana than can be crammed within a few newspaper columns. However if you care to hang around awhile I plan to cram some

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stuff into my next few epistles.

But before the following weeks’ offerings, I must address last week’s column thanks to our friend and Robert Owen authority, Linda Warrum from New Harmony. Linda read last week’s column and offered some advice. First, Linda, thanks for reading, Gavel Gamut ; you have doubled my audience. Secondly, thanks for pointing out not all of Robert Owen’s children were given the middle name of Dale and Father Rapp’s group were not German Lutherans but Pietists who, “[E]mphasized personal piety over religious formality and the orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church.” It was nice of Linda to both read Gavel Gamut and respond.

DECEMBER GAZETTE RECIPE 2017

It’s Holiday Season! Ready or not, we need to start planning our Christmas Parties. You take care of the presents and I’ll help you with the menu. One of my favorite desserts of been making lately is a pumpkin Bundt Cake with Penuche Frosting. This beautiful Bundt was actually featured in Evansville Living magazine this Fall. This pumpkin spice cake is moist and delicious. Then once you pour on the hard caramel icing and sprinkle it with toasted pecans...BAM... you have a winner!

Why not switch it up this season with this striking Bundt.

Pumpkin Bundt Cake

3/4 c. granulated sugar
1/2 c. brown sugar
2 eggs
1 (15oz) can pumpkin purée

1/2 c. melted coconut oil
1 Tbs. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1 3/4 c. flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg

Preheat oven to 375

Mix sugars and wet ingredients until well incorporated

Mix in dry ingredients

Spray Bundt pan with nonstick spray

Evenly spread out batter

Bake 45 minutes or until inserted pick is clean

Let your Bundt set for 30 minutes before popping it out of the pan

Penuche Frosting

1/2 c. butter
1 c. brown sugar
1/4c. milk
2 c. Powdered sugar

In a sauce pan, melt butter and add brown sugar and milk.

Whisk until it is blended well.

Boil and stir constantly for 2 minutes

Add powdered sugar and whisk until it is completely smooth.

Have your nuts ready to sprinkle because this icing sets fast.

Drizzle the icing over the Bundt in a back and forth motion, making sure icing sets between layers. The last layer of icing gets the nuts on top.

Enjoy!

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