

Steel Magnolias

Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

The Chronicles of Life

July 17, 2006

Signposts

Even as children, we become aware that there are dates and events that are significant and require recording or observing. As we get older, those events multiply and leave a chronicle of the life we've lived.

Anniversary

July 3 is significant for me in that it is the date in 1963 that I made Calhoun County my home. It is also significant because it is the date, in 1968, that I married.

Each of us has, in our minds, a chronicle that tells our story from our childhood to the present time. My daughter-in-law, Michelle, on the 4th, repeated a funny remark, made by our granddaughter, Olivia. This set me to thinking about the passing of time.

Michelle said that she and our son, Van, recently told Olivia to do something and Olivia replied, "I don't know how." Michelle replied, "You've been doing this all your life." To which 6 year old, Olivia said, "I don't

remember my childhood."

This funny story, caused me to think of a beautifully poignant song, that was so very popular in July 1968:

Sunrise-Sunset

Is this the little girl I carried?

Is this the little boy at play?

I don't remember growing older

When-did-they?

When did she get to be a beauty?

When did he grow so tall?

Wasn't it yesterday when they-were-small?

Sunrise, sunset, Sunrise, sunset

Swiftly flow the days
Seedlings turn overnight
to sunflowers

Blossoming even as we gaze.

Sunrise, sunset, Sunrise, sunset

Swiftly fly the years
One season following
another

Laden with happiness and tears.

Now is the little boy a bride groom?

Now is the little girl a

bride?

Under the canopy I see them

Side-by-side

Bless the gold ring
around her finger

Share the sweet wine and
bread per glass

Soon the whole circle
will have come -to-pass.

Sunrise, sunset, Sunrise,
sunset

Swiftly flow the days
Seedlings turn overnight
to Sunflowers

Blossoming even as we gaze

Sunrise, sunset, Sunrise,
sunset

Swiftly fly the years
One season following
another

Laden with happiness-
and-tears.....
by Jim Nabors

Future Blessings

We are expecting, in a few months to have yet another granddaughter. Years ago, while Greg, the father of our future blessing, was a little boy, Prentiss went for a two-weeks National Guard camp in California. Soon after Prentiss left for the Armory, I separated clothes for laundry. Greg



Sharing love through support

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.....
picked up his dad's shirt and
said, "I can smell my daddy in
this shirt."

Inspiration

Chimneys standing alone, where obviously a family once lived have always been a source of inspiration and intrigue. I think it was the Christmas of 1981, that my brother approached me about us collaborating on the first verse of a poem about "The Chimney Lonely On a Hill. Then each one of us would finish it in our own way.

The Chimney Lonely on a Hill

The chimney standing lonely on a hill
Is the lone memorial to the family who once there lived.
The hearth, now cool, once radiated its heat;
And the old brick and mortar the past does entreat.

“Till death do us part,” pledged Ben and Louise;
Standing on their homestead among Fall’s golden leaves.
Their home would be humble, their rooms but a few;
Peacefully they lived, and their children numbered two.

How rousing the chill on that crisp October morn;
When the first of their two babies was born.
The fire that flickered in the red brick fireplace
Rejoiced at this time of tenderness and grace.

Radiant were the faces of Ben and Louise,
As their child sowed the seeds of tomorrow’s memories.
Playing in the fields of their Alabama farm,
Little Ben beamed with joy because of Nature’s casual charm.

Years hastened onward for this gracious family;
Soon life was enriched with the birth of Emily.
How sweet was the fragrance of Spring’s daffodils:
Celebrating the home where the tiny girl would live.

Struggles, there were many, as with any man and wife.
Yet, love remained the victor after every time of strife..
Little Ben grew into manhood and went to seek his way;
These parents knew that Emily would wed and leave one day.

The years so quickly passed, as youth slipped away.
Ben’s raven hair matured unto wispiness and gray.
Age lines soon wrinkled Lou’s once flawless face.
Now they sat, reminiscent, before the red brick fireplace.

Called by their Maker; Ben and Louise
Crossed Jordan with Jesus, together received!
Missed by their children; mourned by their friends;
The house seemed lonely, no one sheltered therein.

Sometimes as the wind blows Fall’s golden leaves;
The chimney is heard whispering, “Ben and Louise.”
Now the chimney, standing lonely on a hill,
Is a lone memorial to the family who once there lived.
By Lenora Washington Johnson

Experiences in Common

There are more life experiences, from our childhood through adulthood, that are similar than we often realize. We all were born basically the same way, we all have a birthday, we all attended school, some more than others, we all have good days and bad, most of us marry and have children, we all have friends and family, and we all, sooner or later are broken hearted over the loss of a friend or relative. As Steel Magnolias, we know the devastation of being told we have cancer. Yet, we are as unique as are our names, our hair coloring, our genealogy, and our beliefs. Because we

are meant to edify those around us, we, as a group are equipped to do God's work. Far too many people don't share the gift, with which they were equipped because they think no one would be interested. So very much is lost when we are denied the contribution of even one person.

Happy Birthday

Dr. James Daniel is known to his patients, as well as to most everybody in our area, as the "Singing Doctor." Dr. Daniel sings *Happy Birthday* to every baby he delivers. Being a man of faith, Dr. Daniel recognizes that every baby is a gift from God. Steel Magnolias and every breast cancer survivor who attends Ladies' Night Out, have been privileged to have Happy Birthday sung to us as we received, in our honor, from Dr. Daniel, a beautiful pink rose. Dr. Daniel's generosity, in sharing his gift with breast cancer patients, has given each of us, beautiful memories that become part of the chronicle of our lives.

Gift Revealed

Our New Beginnings Banquet is going to be, to date, the most special because of the efforts of gifted people. Dr. Dave Roberts will provide special music. Janet Bebee, 23 years experience, working with Bosom Buddies, is equipped with many stories, some serious and some side splitting funny. The sensitivity of Jo Ann Taylor, to the gift that was previously hidden from Steel Magnolias, will be the inspiration for a very special part of the evening. When Jo Ann called and read her poem. I said, "Jo Ann, this is really good." I think when everyone hears, *I Say Your Name*, like me, everyone will be awaiting Jo Ann's next inspired writing.

An Eight Year Hug Attack

Happy Birthday, Tuesday Bear Huggers! The Tuesday Bear Huggers, a group of dedicated women nestled in the mountains north of Piedmont, have faithfully worked every Tuesday for eight years, sewing comfort items for recovering cancer patients.

Chaplain Wilson called me in November 2001, and asked if I thought the group, Tuesday Bear Huggers and Steel Magnolias could work together. He went on to tell me that Gerri Smith had been a guest speaker for the Pastor's Luncheon and he had their phone number. I called and asked for a description of the group's mission. It was obvious, from that conversation, that our two ministries would compliment each other. I asked when I could visit their Borden Springs shop. The next week, Bonny McGee and I met in Piedmont. I asked Bonny, "How far is it to Borden Springs?" Bonny said, "We just drive 'til we see daylight!"

If you've never made the drive from Piedmont into the Borden Springs area, the beautiful mountainous drive is a must see! The Bear Hugger's shop was an old house whose rooms were designated as, a cutting room, sewing rooms, storage rooms, and a kitchen. These dear ladies went all out to make me feel welcome. They prepared a treasure trove of great snacks and were absolutely gracious. I was blown away with the organized manner of their little factory. They each had their jobs and they each were faithful to their tasks and ready to fill the gap for one who might not be able to do her job. Mel Smith, affectionately known as "MR Bear Hugger," who wears many hats, depending on the current need, is a vital part of the work of the Tuesday Bear Huggers.

A date was set for a second visit. Steel Magnolias was still in its infancy and we were few in number, so on November 20, 2001, my birthday, Brenda Austin, and my long time friend, Gudrun King and I made a second visit to the Bear Hugger Workshop. The fragrance of wonderful homemade delights and steaming coffee led us directly to the Bear Hugger Kitchen. The picture, of Brenda Austin, that we Steel Magnolias carried around the track at the 2004 Relay for Life, was made that November day in the Bear Hugger's kitchen.

The Tuesday Bear Huggers supply Steel Magnolias with prepackaged comfort items: drain bottle holders, pillows, head coverings, etc., that is then mailed by Steel Magnolias to newly diagnosed women. The Bear Huggers name and address is a part of every package. The combined work of Steel Magnolias and the Tuesday Bear Huggers is then completed with the addition of body lotion, etc., courtesy of the Quintard Mall Avon Store.

Every woman who makes up the organization, Tuesday Bear Huggers, has lost loved ones to cancer. They therefore are driven by the intimate knowledge of how painful and isolating is the diagnosis of cancer. Happy Birthday Bear Huggers! Thank you for 416 uninterrupted weeks of faithful work and countless Hug Attacks!

Every newly diagnosed cancer patient who has been blessed to receive a Tuesday Bear Hugger package, without doubt, will list this gift among the bright spots in the chronicle of their journey with cancer.

After learning of a newly diagnosed patient, Judy Lyle takes care of correspondence for the Bear Huggers and is faithful to make sure follow-up cards are sent on a regular basis. Gerri Smith, spokeswoman for the group, is a multi-faceted person. She draws the bears that are on the cards, etc. She also writes beautiful poetry. The following was featured in an earlier letter but I think it is too good not to repeat.

I Am Woman

I'm not short	I know how to share
I'm not tall	When I am down
I'm not large	And feel I cannot mend
And I'm not small	I call on someone
I am smart	I call on my friend
But I don't know it all	She is a woman
I have feelings	Strong and true blue
Tender as a breeze	She is tender and true
But can stand strong	She is someone special
Whenever I please	She could be you
I am a friend	Although bad times
A daughter, a sister	May come my way
And a wife	I can have strength
There are trials	Every day.....
There are tragedies	As long as I
In my life	Don't forget to pray.....
I am a woman	Thanking those special ladies
Full of love and care	Who touch my life.....
I know how to give	I call them my friends

By Gerri Smith.....2004

The Greatest Ability is Dependability...Bob Jones, Sr.

When all is said and done, much of what makes up the chronicle of our life, is directly affected by our behavior. In the early part of June, I received this E-mail from Pokey Warren and I am so very pleased to be able to share it with our readers. This little story carries a huge message!

Can You Sleep While the Wind Blows

Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and the crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get Up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!" The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No Sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by his response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coop, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to sleep while the wind blew.

When you're prepared spiritually, mentally, and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life? The hired hand in this story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm. We secure ourselves against the storms of life by grounding ourselves in the Word of God. **We don't need to understand, we just need to hold His Hand to have peace in the middle of storms.**

“Stand”

You feel just like a candle in a hurricane	Wipe your hands, shake it off
Just like a picture with a broken frame	Then you Stand, Then you stand
Alone and helpless	Life's like a novel
Like you've lost your fight	With the end ripped out
But you'll be alright	The edge of a canyon
Cause when push comes to shove	With only one way down
You taste what you're made of	Take what you're given before it's gone
You might bend, till you break	Start holding on, keep holding on
Cause its all you can take	Every time you get up
On your knees you look up	And get back in the race
Decide you've had enough	One more small piece of you

Starts to fall into place.....And then you STAND....

By Rascal Flatts

My friend, Gudrun, sent a CD of Rascal Flatts new song, *Stand*, that she recorded from her radio, and a note: Hi Lenora, This is a new song out by Rascal Flatts. I made a copy of the song for you. It is a really a good song, fits all of you Steel Magnolias.....Love, Gudrun

Thank you Gudrun

Hispanic Health Fair

Gladys Denizard, Organizer for the Calhoun County Hispanic American Association, Rosa Reed and Sigrith Berth, represented Steel Magnolias on Saturday June 17, at a health fair geared especially towards the Hispanic population. Gladys reported that participation and support was outstanding. Ingrid working along with other association members, talked to over one hundred people and supplied them with information about Steel Magnolias and encouraged them to get their mammograms and do self breast exams. Rosa Reed, AKA Bubbles the Clown, with her dancing, balloon figures and jokes, placed a smile on the faces of children and adults who attended the health fair. Steel Magnolias contributed: cookies, ink pens, note pads, as well as brochures in Spanish and English. Gladys said, "It was a great day and a good time was had by all who attended.

Steel Magnolias Cancel Meeting

Because of a scheduling conflict with the 14th Annual RMC Cancer Survivor Day, Steel Magnolias cancelled the much awaited program that was to feature Dr. Wesley Smith's power point presentation on Sentinel Node Biopsy. Dr. Smith said that he understood the conflict and would be happy to reschedule at a future time.

Financial Report

May financial report was incomplete. We are reporting, in its entirety, the May financial report.

May 2006	Beginning Balance:	\$4,569.82
5-03 - Lenora Johnson-Monthly expense (100)		4,469.82
5-03 + Guy Bonds-Contribution (40)		4,509.82
5-03 + Sell of Poetry Books (10)		4,519.82

5-13 -Brogdon & Owens	63.75	4,456.07
5-23- Lenora Johnson- Closet shelving	35	4,421.07
5-31+ Jewelry & Pins	30	4,451.07
5-31+ Poetry Books	30	4,481.07
5-31+ Heflin Episcopal Ch. Of / Messiah Women	100.	4,581.07
5-31+ Dean Ashley	50.	4,631.07
5-31+ Larry Baker/ Memorial for Del Baker	100.	4,731.07
5-31+ Cheryl Noyes	10	4,741.07
5-31+ Brenda Keown/ Memorial for Eddy Dryden	15	4,756.07
5-31+M. Flanders Jr./ Memorial/ for Eddy Dryden	15	4,771.07
5-31- Steel Magnolias' Shirts	737	4,034.07
5-31- Pokey Warren for Plastic Covers for Crocheted Picture	9.80	4,024.27

June 2006	Beginning Balance	4,024.27
6-01- Lenora Johnson-monthly expenses	100	3,924.27
6-15+ Contribution from National Healing	500	4,424.27
6-16- Sigrit Berth/ Cookies for airport Rd. Health Fair	15	4,409.27
6-27- Stamps/ Marti Warren	54	4,355.27
6-27- Lenora Johnson/ Bud Vases & Plastic Tubs	28.83	4,326.44
6-27- Jo Ann Taylor/ Decorating supplies/ New Beginnings Banquet	84.02	4,242.42

RMC Cancer Survivor Day

The 14th annual RMC Cancer Survivor Day, was attended by a record crowd. A count was not made of Steel Magnolias and their guests, but an estimate of 60 to 80 people would not be far from correct. Wal-Mart provided shirts and door prizes and was a key contributor to the 2006 event that was held at the Anniston Meeting Center.

Some of us were a little late getting to the meeting center because of a prearranged connection at the Tyler Center to make tickets to the New Beginnings Banquet and Steel Magnolias shirts available. We were grateful that seats were saved, for us, by other Steel Magnolias.

The food was very good: chicken tenderloin, potatoes, corn, cinnamon rolls, etc. Following dinner, we all played bingo. Some of our Steel Magnolias won prizes. Some win something at every event. I'm not doing something right! Following the distribution of gifts, we sung "Blossoms of Hope," and called it an evening.

Mark Your Calendars

7-25: New Beginnings Banquet at Monet's Tea Room 6:00 p.m. Catered Meal and Special Program
Some Tickets are still available Call office: (256) 231-8827 Please leave your name and phone #

8-05: Swinging Stars Square Dance Club Benefit for Steel Magnolias Oxford Civic Center
7:00 p.m. Entry for Dancers \$6.00....Non-Dancers \$3.00
Silent Auction and Cake walk Food and lots of fun!!!
Steel Magnolias who volunteer to work, be at Civic Center no later than 6:00

8-19: Celebration of Life Picnic, 59 Mohawk Trail Ohatchee 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
(Prentiss & Lenora Johnson's Lake house) For more information call: (256) 447-9822
or our office (256) 231-8827 and leave a message and phone number
Hot Dogs and Barbecue Sandwiches....Bring chips, side dish, etc. and join the fun. If you plan to play in the lake—Bring water shoes and life preserver.

8-22: 5:00 p.m. Steel Magnolias meet in Classroom #1 at the Tyler Center—Snacks after meeting

Jo Ann, Here Goes!

The Criterion

During a visit to a hospital for the mentally infirm, a visitor asked the Director what the criterion was that defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized. "Well," said the Director, "We fill up a bathtub; then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub." "Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup." "No," said the Director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed by the wall or near the window?"

Ain't It The Truth!!!

A woman goes to the doctor for her yearly physical. The nurse starts with certain basic items. "How much do you weigh?" she asks. "115," she says. The nurse put her on the scale. It turns out her weight is 140. The nurse asks, "Your height?" "5 foot 8," she says. The nurse checks and sees that she only measures 5' 5". She then takes her blood pressure and tells the woman it is very high. "Of course it's high!" she screams, "When I came in here I was tall and slender! Now I'm short and fat!"

Midlife Crisis

Married 39 years, took a look at my wife one day and said, "Honey, 39 years ago, we had a cheap apartment, a cheap car, slept on a sofa bed and watched a 10 inch black and white TV, but I got to sleep every night with a hot 19 year old brunette. Now we have a nice house, a nice car, big bed and plasma screen TV, but I'm sleeping with a 58 year old woman. It seems to me you are not holding up your side of things." My wife is a very reasonable woman. She told me to go out and find a hot 19 year old brunette and she would make sure that I would once again be living in a cheap apartment, driving a cheap car, sleeping on a sofa bed.....

Circle Flies

A cowboy gets pulled over by the State Trooper for speeding. The trooper started to lecture the cowboy about his speeding, and in general began to throw his weight around to try to make the cowboy feel uncomfortable. Finally, the trooper got around to writing out the ticket. As he was doing that, he kept swatting at some flies that were buzzing around his head. The cowboy sez, "Y'all havin' some problems with circle flies?" The trooper stopped writing the ticket and said, "Well yeah, if that's what they're called. But I never heard of no circle flies." "Well sir," the cowboy replies, "Circle flies hang around ranches. They're called circle flies because they're almost always found circling around the back end of a horse." The trooper says, "Oh," and goes back to writing the ticket. But, a moment later he stops and says, "Are you calling me a horse's back end?" "No Sir," the cowboy replies. "I have too much respect for law enforcement to call y'all a horse's back end!" "That's a good thing," the trooper says and goes back to writing the ticket. After a long pause, the cowboy, in his best Texas drawl says, "Hard to fool them flies though"!!!

Navajo Woman

Sally was driving home from one of her business trips in Northern Arizona when she saw an elderly Navajo woman walking on the side of the road. As the trip was a long and quiet one, she stopped the car and asked the Navajo woman if she would like a ride. With a silent nod of thanks, the woman got into the car. Resuming the journey, Sally tried in vain to make a bit of small talk with the Navajo woman. The old woman just sat silently, looking intently at everything she saw, studying every little detail, until she noticed a brown bag on the seat next to Sally. "What in bag?" asked the old woman. Sally looked down at the brown bag and said, "It's a bottle of wine. I got it for my husband." The Navajo woman was silent for another moment or two. Then speaking with the quiet wisdom of an elder, she said, "Good trade."

The Brothers

Lost on a rainy night, a nun stumbles across a monestary and requests shelter there. Fortunately, she's just in time for dinner and was treated to the best fish and chips she had ever tasted. After dinner, she went into the kitchen to thank the chefs. She was met by two of the Brothers. The first one says, "Hello, I am Brother Michael and this is Brother John." "I'm very pleased to meet you," replies the nun. "I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful dinner. The fish and chips were the best I've ever had. Out of courtesy who cooked what?" Brother John replied, "Well, I'm the fish friar." She turned to the other brother and said, "Then you must be....." "Yes, I'm afraid so—I am the chip monk."

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

