

Tapestries of Tuscarawas County



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Editor's Note

As a graduate of Dover High School, I have grown up and lived the majority of my life in Tuscarawas County. This county is in my blood, and a part of it will always be.

Majoring in Creative Writing and Digital Media Production at Ashland University, I have decided to center my life around stories. So given the opportunity to collect local stories and help create a wonderful book of the different sides to Tuscarawas County, I jumped at the chance. These real stories and poems from our neighbors and friends are the brushstrokes on this great canvas, the cells in our blood, the patches on our colorful local tapestry.

I am so proud to present this incredible book of the lives of people in this county. Emotional, funny, interesting, and unique, each story gives its own flavor to this collection. All of them display this unique friendliness and homegrown kindness we are proud to show here in our county.

In helping to create this book, I learned a lot, not only about writing, marketing, and publishing, but also about the **amazing culture right here where we're from.** And thus, I present to you our second edition of *Tapestries of Tuscarawas County*! Thank you to everyone who participated and helped on this great journey, and please enjoy the second piece of our great story!

The Heart of Tuscarawas County

By Lola Mowrey

The year was 1965. Macedonia was rapidly changing from rural small town to urban sprawl, and we hoped that Paul could secure a similar position in a more rural and stable setting—an area of good schools and friendly people. He had taught and coached wrestling at Nordonia for eight years while I finished my education, and we were eager to relocate. With Tuscarawas County being midway between relatives, it seemed a good place to start looking. Fortunately, the Dover School District had an opening for someone with his qualifications.

Dover was a busy town. There were so many diverse **establishments that a person could easily make one's home** downtown and obtain anything needed. There was so much tradition and stability, but with an aura of optimism toward **growth and modernization. We felt as though we'd come home.**

Paul started his new position teaching social studies at Dover High and took the jobs of wrestling coach and football equipment manager. He sold his Model A so that we could put a down payment on a starter home on Tabor Ridge. The total price was \$8,600. We enrolled Paul and Stephanie in New Cumberland Elementary. I found a part-time teaching position in New Philadelphia, and the mother who lived next door

babysat three-year-old Chris.

On Tabor Ridge, the neighbors welcomed us by bringing baked goods and offering to show us around. When our basement filled with black smoke, the elderly man next door came over and gave us a lesson in operating a coal furnace. Help was never far away when we needed it.

In Northern Summit County, where I had grown up, the only snake one was likely to come across was the common **garter snake**. **We hadn't lived in the house on Tabor Ridge but** a few days before one of the children spotted a huge black snake lazily stretched out along the fence which divided our large **backyard from a neighbor's horse pasture**. **It must have been at** least twelve or fourteen feet long, far larger than any we had ever imagined seeing in the wild. The snake was asleep enjoying the warm sun, oblivious to us as we ran our hands along his shiny, dry scales. Within the next few years, we saw even longer ones, but that first encounter was so exciting.

One cold winter evening, I drove to the Quaker Theater with the children. When we came out of the movie, it was late. The streets were relatively clear of traffic, and there was nobody around when I attempted to start the car for our ride home. The engine refused to turn over, however, and cell phones were not in yet in use. When I was a child, my father had drummed into me, **“If you are ever lost or in trouble, look for a policeman.”**

I was sure the old car just needed a jump, so I told the children, **“The police station is close by. We'll just walk there, and tell them our situation.”**

One of our boys piped up, **“They won't help us,”** to

which I replied with conviction, “Oh, yes they will!”

It was a cold windy walk through the snow, but when we reached the station and approached the desk, we were welcomed warmly. As soon as I explained our plight, the officer behind the desk said, “An officer is going off-duty soon. Just sit down and wait. He’ll help you as soon as he’s done with his shift.”

Within a few minutes, a friend in blue bundled us into his car and with the help of jumper cables, got us fixed and on our way. I thought it was a wonderful lesson for the children to see firsthand that the police are indeed our friends and are ready to help a citizen in need.

Our older son went through a bird phase in which he watched them, read about them, wrote and illustrated a little book about them, and sometimes neglected his third grade assignments to focus on them. During that period, a playmate threw a rock at a black bird with a brown head and broke its wing. Little Paul put it in a cage and diligently nursed it back to health while he studied all he could find about cowbirds. He learned that their name comes from the fact that they are often seen among a herd of cows, feeding on the insects in the pasture. Cowbirds have a habit of laying eggs in other unsuspecting birds’ nests and then abandoning them. The babies that hatch soon grow larger than the adoptive mother, and after pushing the rightful offspring out of the nest, the interlopers demanded constant attention from the exhausted mother bird. Paul enjoyed caring for his rescued bird, and when he was sure it could fly, he turned it loose, happy that he had done a good deed and learned something in the process.

When Chris started first grade, I began to teach at New Cumberland. It was a wonderful little school, reminiscent of the one I had attended as a child. We all became good friends—the principal and the teachers, the janitor and his wife, the cook and the bus driver who often stopped in for short chats in the kitchen. We were a team. With fewer than one hundred fifty students in six grades, each child was known and greeted by name.

One year, as a hands-on science lesson in fermentation, the cook and I helped my class make sauerkraut, layering it with salt and weighing it down in a crock. Every few days a few curious students would conduct a taste test and report to their classmates.

Another year, a neighboring farmer butchered a steer and gave me the heart. I accepted it, grateful for his generosity, but not sure what to do with it. Always up for an adventure, culinary or otherwise, I consulted a very old cookbook inherited from my grandmother and proceeded to skin it, cut it up and pickle it. Surprisingly, it was delicious! I skewered the cubes with toothpicks and offered some to my fifth graders. The children brave enough to try it agreed that it made a very nice snack.

The room mothers at New Cumberland Schools were **eager volunteers during the 60's and 70's. Many women still held the traditional role of the at-home mother, directly involved in their children's activities, cooking, sewing, and doing crafts.** They supervised birthday parties in the classroom, and each Christmas season, they held a craft sale in the gym. The PTA was abandoned to become the locally-controlled PTO

and eliminated the loss of funds to the national association. Attendance at their meetings filled the cafeteria one evening per month, and their fund-raising programs provided much of our classroom and playground equipment.

In 1970, we built a home in the Dover Shool District and transferred our children. I secured a position in the junior high where I made new friends and enjoyed the older students.

However, I missed New Cumberland's small classes and the familiar camaraderie among the staff and opted to return to my old job the following year.

One afternoon, I was driving home from school when my car broke down. Fortunately, a father of some of my students was on his way home from work and stopped to help. **Looking under the hood, he discovered a broken belt. I don't** recall what he used, but he devised a temporary fix that got me home. It was not the only time I was rescued by a good citizen of this county.

The first winter we lived in our new home, I lost control on an S-shaped icy hill on my way to school. My Chevy Bellaire was impaled on one of those old concrete culverts. The tie rod came through the floor, and my foot was pinned. A stranger on **his way to work freed me, and I didn't realize that I couldn't use** my foot until I attempted to walk. Someone had called for an ambulance, but the **Good Samaritan didn't wait. He put me in** his car, drove me to the hospital, and called my husband. Before the day was out, neighbors were at our door with food and offers to help in any way they could. When I resumed teaching, I was still on crutches. With a lot of snow on the ground in the winter, we had to leave our cars at the end of our

lane because they wouldn't make it up our hill. The neighbor across the street would watch for me to come home and then would get his Jeep and drive me up to the house.

Because our children had a rather long walk to the road to catch the school bus, Paul built a small shelter for them at the end of the driveway. It was an enticing target for vandals, but because he had used crossties for corner posts in anticipation of such activity, more damage was done to the perpetrators than the shelter. Sometimes we would see evidence, such as bootprints on the side of it, but still the structure survived.

One day, Paul was working with a pitchfork in hand when a car lost control and slammed into the shelter. Supported as it was, damage to it was minor, but the car was in pieces and steaming. The driver saw Paul running toward him down the lane, pitchfork in hand. Apparently thinking he was in for bigger trouble, he roared the engine and slowly lurched up the road, steam spewing out, pieces of metal and glass falling off, making a huge racket as he managed to hiccup his way over the hill and **out of sight. Maybe it was comic relief, believing he wasn't** injured enough to need our help, but it struck us as funny, and we still laugh at the memory.

Teenagers are fun, but you can never be sure what is around the next corner. One particularly cold winter, the kids enjoyed skating on the old strip mine pond above the house. I **knew that our older son had invited a few friends but didn't** realize that he had organized a skating party until two girls knocked on the door asking how to get there! I was a little concerned about their trekking through the snow into the woods on the hill in the dark, but I told them to stay close to the

barbed wire fence and follow it until they reached their friends at the pond. Now alerted, I was ready with hot chocolate when the gang of teenagers arrived at the back of the house, tired and cold, but chattering happily.

Years later, after the children were all grown, Paul and I lost control of our car on another icy hill, destroying a utility pole and my Dodge Daytona. We sustained injuries that kept us home recovering for weeks. Neighbors came out of the woodwork—even those we had never met. They brought food **and drove us to doctors' appointments. The goodness and** caring of those people is so typical of this area.

Paul had great success as a wrestling coach, and after retiring from teaching, he spent a few years coaching at Central Catholic. Then, after I retired, we opened a B&B in our home and made new friends. It was fun introducing others to the many interesting sites we so enjoy.

We love these rolling hills, the preservation of history, the stability and pride and the optimism for the future. We have symphony, theater, outstanding educational systems and medical resources, but the very best thing about this area is the people. We have lived in this area for fifty-two years. Half a century sees many changes, but there is one constant, and that is heart. The people are the heart of Tuscarawas County. May it always be so.

Cornsong

By Kristin S. Pinelli

The county road twists and turns, rises and falls
As neat rows of corn glisten with the morning dew
The tall stalks standing shoulder to shoulder
An army marching in formation
Following the plowed furrows
As far, as the eye can see.

Strong winds from the west, push the army eastward
As graceful dancers follow, bending, swaying, twirling
The dried stalks chaffing, cracking, singing
Echoing beyond the next hill
The browned tassels with golden silk
Foretelling, of a bountiful harvest.



Tidal Change
By Ginny Stocker

Library Raccoon

By Tamara Lynn Benson

I lived in Dover from before kindergarten until I left for the Army in 1989, and there wasn't a week that went by that I wasn't in the library at some point. When I visited my grandmother in Beach City, I could always be found up in one of her trees with a book. The only other thing I loved as much as reading was animals. Thankfully, my mother was always willing to take in one more stray or help nurse one more hurt animal back to health.

My mother worked as a bartender at Joe's Cloverleaf when I was growing up. Times were tough for her as a single widowed mother of two, but we never felt like we were missing out on anything. The people she worked with were wonderful and so were her customers. My childhood taught me to look beyond the stereotypes and find the good in everyone.

One night, while she was working, one of her customers, a big, burly biker, came in near to tears. Inside his leather jacket were two baby raccoons who had been orphaned. He had been riding home and found them alongside the road with their mother who had been recently hit. Being the big-hearted man that he was, he scooped them off and came to find my mom who, of course, offered to help. That night she brought home

Bambi, and my brother and I were thrilled.

Raising a raccoon takes a lot of work (and a permit, FYI). He grew fast and learned how to do things like open the refrigerator to help himself to eggs. This meant putting a **padlock on it so he couldn't get in. He loved to be outside of** course, so it was up to us to take him for walks. Generally, we stayed in the yard but occasionally we would take him for walks on his leash around town. The high school front lawn was one of his favorite spots, as well as was the tree in front of the library.

On one particular occasion, he managed to slip his leash and head up the tree. I had no way to get him to come back down, so I did what came naturally to me and climbed up after him. Not long after, the photographer from the *Times Reporter* showed up and the next day I was on the front page. I was, as they say, T-County famous! My husband recently found this clipping and we had a good laugh about it. My kids never believed me, but now I have proof!



Image of newspaper provided by Tamara Lynn Benson

My Mom and the President

By Jeannie Manini Michel

“Your kind prayers are requested for the repose of the souls of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Anna Vesco Manini,” the priest intoned, and we all knelt. It was Sunday, November 24th, 1963, two days after the president was killed and one day after my 39-year-old mother, Anna, died.

On Friday, November 22nd, my brother and I were staying at our aunt and uncle’s home in the Maple Grove neighborhood of Uhrichsville. We’d been there since my mother’s “minor” elective surgery on Tuesday the 18th, from which she never regained consciousness.

It was warm for November, so I walked down a lane lined with mostly leafless trees to a mom & pop gas station whose main attractions were several cages of squirrels. As I stood mindlessly watching their antics, the owner came out and said to me, “You poor thing—first your mom, and now this.”

Before I could ask what she meant, I saw my aunt running down the lane. I had never seen her move that fast, so when she reached me, I asked, “Did Mom die?”

She, usually undemonstrative, put her arm around me and said through tears, “Come back to the house. They’ve shot the president.”

The rest of that day was pretty much a blur, just like the **black and white television coverage**. I'd had a cold and cough and having been liberally dosed with cough medicine was in kind of a fog. I remember a feeling of unreality and that everyone was absolutely horrified such a thing could have happened. The oft-repeated remark was: **"What's this country coming to?"** I also remember **Walter Cronkite's** flat tone and expression as he announced the president's death and the sadness in his eyes when he removed his glasses.

Early Saturday morning, my aunt woke me from a sound, cough-syrup-induced sleep. Again, I asked, **"Did Mom die?"**

She answered, **"You need to get up and get dressed. Your Dad is coming to talk to you and your brother."**

An affirmative, if evasive, answer. Dad confirmed our worst fear—Mom had indeed died earlier that morning, just two weeks before her 40th birthday.

The rest of the weekend and the next week were filled with funeral arrangements—making and attending them for **Mom and watching the President's**. Fifty-plus years later, I still cannot keep those two tragic deaths separate in my mind.

Fourth Period English

By Katlyn Lawver

Fourth period English begins every day at 12:00 pm sharp. I sit behind my desk, desperately trying to prepare for the eleven varied personalities that will walk into my room, demanding a type of attention that is impossible for one person to give. The desks are always scattered in rows from the last class, and each desk surface is always marked with a new piece of artwork, a set of answers from a previous test, or a new curse word that just happened to strike a student as funny enough to scribble on the desk. In the silent hallway outside, my class is heard from the floor above returning from lunch chattering, giggling, and often running to the three stairs that lead down into my classroom.

As I look up from my computer screen, always the first face to greet me is the half-annoyed but mostly exhausted Felipe. **With a weak smile, Felipe mumbles the words, “Hi, Miss,” followed by a limp hand wave. As he scans the room for** his classmates, Felipe closes his eyes for a brief moment to signal his tiredness to me. He strolls to his seat next to the windows where the sun is still shining on his desk. He sinks into his seat and digs out his cellphone from his pocket. His cellphone has no phone number or line to it, but he must check his Facebook messages before class starts. He has worn

the same hoodie for the last three days due to the fact that that one is one of the only he has, and the cute girl that sits next to him in Physical Science complimented him on it. Felipe and I always exchange a few words before everyone decides to meander into class; the topic is normally about Justin Beiber and what the lyrics in his songs really mean.

With his head propped up on his desk, Felipe responds in groans and slang that is hard for me to understand, but it is hard to ask for much more from a sixteen-year-old kid that moved brick and construction materials from 3 pm-11 pm the previous evening. Not working is not an option for him, though, as he must help his aunt, sisters, and cousins pay rent in their **tiny apartment near the fair grounds. He also can't risk missing** school for fear of being detected, caught, or having a target placed on his back to remind him that he does not belong in this town, state, or county. Even with unimaginable responsibilities for a student his age, Felipe speaks with a softness that comes with wisdom and experience about his lost family and the times he still sheds tears for leaving them.

Not long into my conversation with Felipe, I hear the ever so flat but lovable singing voice of Rolando descending the stairs into the room. Music and words flow from Rolando wherever he goes; it is his way of communicating, expressing great emotion, and impressing his classmates. Being the oldest and smartest student in the class, Rolando carries a bit more confidence than the other students do. It could be from his two jobs where he is forced to practice English with his coworkers. It could be the fact that he is two years older than the graduating seniors that walk down the hall, or, at times, it could be that his

act is actually working on me today. When Rolando leaves school, he goes home to a house full of strangers and is renting a small room from his boss. After leaving his dear mother behind, he speaks often of the hopeless possibility to one day return to her.

“I ran from my enemies, from bad men,” he explains but never goes into detail as his eyes always wander to a place I am not invited to. Most days, Rolando and I are friends, but some days Roland places a distance between us to remind me that I am just another person who will never understand the life he has to live every day. It hurts, but I understand his hesitation to trust a white woman. Beyond that, Rolando is growing weary as the year progresses and is caught sleeping almost every other day in class now.

The singing always gets louder as the time nears the beginning of class, as my sweet little Ana hops into the room with a smile and giggle that has been melting our hearts since she joined our class mid-semester. Every boy wants her attention, and every girl wants to be her best friends, and with Ana, everyone gets what they want. She knows just whose hand to hold or whose shoulder needs a friendly squeeze. At the age of **seventeen, her compassion and empathy isn’t always used for good**, particularly when she begins flirting with the wrong boy or allowing her friends to copy her exam. Ana is my fastest learner and always wants more. While many students are too distracted or exhausted to learn, Ana interrupts my class often to teach me more of how to speak and connect in the language and dialects her classmates speak. Ana was transformed when she moved to Dover from a dedicated, honoring daughter to a fully

responsible woman that was suddenly in charge of every bill due, every decision made, and every desire pursued. Her not-much-older sister gives her guidance and permission where she can, but she is raising her own small children. As an aunt, Ana is now innately responsible to care for these children as well. Even though she cannot reach the top of the Smartboard, this four foot, six inch student continues to have more good days than bad.

Another voice joins our little classroom performance, as Lesly struts into the room. She is not the most beautiful amongst her friends, but she never stops trying to be. I can always hear her high heels click and clomp down the hall before she emerges into the room with hair perfectly in style and a hair bow to top off the look. Lesly has been in the United States the longest, and she can understand and speak English the best in her class. She understands how school works, she understands how homework is always due, and she understands the deep difference her and her friends possess opposed to the rest of the students that attend Dover High. She notices that they have a different color, language, dress, and she sees that they eat different food, smell differently, get different grades, and receive different attention. Most days she does not know if those differences are good or bad. As a member of the high school **choir, Lesly's charming voice can be heard on many occasions,** but here she is often unrecognizable.

A mild-mannered, solemn-looking girl who usually proves confused as she follows the actions of her classmates, Lesly relaxes herself into an overly chatty, know-it-all that leads the class through new material when she arrives. Ana and Lesly

not-so-subtly try to get Rolando to sing a song they all may know, preferably one that they both know from church. Lesly lives in a constant state of trying to please others: her teachers, her father, her aunt, her friends, and her God. If Lesly misses church, she lives in this somber guilt for a period of time knowing that she needs to be with God because He is her ultimate deliverer and protector. Her biggest distraction remains to be boys as she turns her head to see the infamous Victor slides into the room.

Victor is months away from turning eighteen-years-old and daily reminds me the remaining amount of days he has left in this school. He cannot wait to be able to get more sleep, so he can feel better at his night job. Victor is a heartbreaker with very few hearts to break; his smooth talking and never-failing smolder creates an air of mystery but also distrust. His deepest desire is to love and be loved by someone, but he struggles to find a nice girl who will commit. To ease his loneliness, he turns to drinking and smoking weed with his friends, co-workers, and distant family members.

Victor and I never speak a sentence in Spanish to one another because his English is so progressed. He hears it all the time where he lives from his younger cousins who were born here and have learned English better than the Spanish and Ixil their own mother speaks to them. Victor likes his cousins; he met them for the first time a year and a half ago along with his aunt, but he sees a contrast between the American life they are living and the one he will probably live for the rest of his life. He is jealous of the increased comfort and courage they have from growing up knowing Dover to be their home, and he

knows it is something he won't receive for a long time.

There is one minute left before the bell rings to begin class, and I ask the ten students sitting among me to find their seats, pick up their notebooks, and send off the last messages on their cellphones. All the students remain where they are, not acknowledging me, the young nagging teacher, for the moment. The bell rings and the Smartboard turns on as I walk around the room passing out the notebooks nobody picked up and collecting the cellphones no one put away. The door is closed now, and everyone begins copying down the spelling/vocabulary words that are introduced at the start of each week. It is now two minutes after class has begun, and I act like it is a surprise to me every day when I jump at the knock on the door. I know exactly who it is; it is the same person stuck in her habits.

Everyone knows that class doesn't actually start until Marta shows up. There is never a real reason for her tardiness, but she floats through the school day from class to class appearing when it suits her. No amount of detentions have fixed this problem, so I have let it go as I open the door with an angry expression that too quickly shifts into a smile.

Marta is the most attractive, sought-after girl in the class, and before she takes her seat, she is already teased and made fun of by at least three boys. It is because Marta is not a girl; she is a woman. She lives in the next town over with her boyfriend, who she is approved to live with from her aunt. Marta loves attaching herself to this man because it shows success amongst her classmates, especially the other girls. Every girl is longing and searching for that man to take care of them because they have been taught that they could never do that for themselves.

Even in her determination, Marta knows deep down that she is not the only woman that her boyfriend loves, but that she must be content and thankful she has someone at all.

As she sits down, scatter-brained and trying to figure out what the class is doing, Marta tries to ignore and not lose her temper with the continuing passing comments made at her. The one she always gives into is the assumption that she is pregnant; she will stand in front of the class and fight to know who made that rumor up. Marta is in fact having a baby, but that is no **one's business until she wants it to be or until she can no longer** hide it. As Marta settles into class, the rest of the students heed **the third warning from me to start working because 'we are wasting time.'**

After the spelling words have been copied, eleven overworked and fatigued eyes rest upon me to receive as much new knowledge as their brains will accept through their sleepy, distracted, and confused minds.

With that, I proceed to ask, **"Does anyone remember what a pronoun is?"**

Tuscarawas

By Patricia Osborne

The tree outside the window
 broken by the sun
is home to small sparrows
 who dart up and down
its branches like fireflies
 running to the light.

 This is a county
 where the people
 have always lived
 cradled in the
natural order of things.

 Children worshipped
the sky, the birds, the trees
 as day followed night
 and the stars

with their steady light.
but the world turned,
and the old tracks
became roads,
the hunting lodges
parking lots.

On a quiet night
when the earth is still
and only a breath away
I can hear
a movement,
a whisper on the breeze,
a feather shooting up to the stars.

And the tree that once was a forest
digs down into the earth
and sends its branches
up to the sky,
and the small sparrow
flits up and down its
wide arms,
drunk on its

glory—and the moment is
fixed in the heart
forever.



Merry-Go-Round

By Bryan Hadley

Dirty Money?

By Janet Ladrach

After my husband sold the dairy herd for the second time, he raised Holstein steers. Dick had a good eye for breeding and was a conscientious herdsman. The steers were in good shape.

One day a man from West Virginia drove by on the way to or from the Sugarcreek sale barn. He happened to spot the Holsteins from the road and came up the driveway to get a better look. Dick happened to be around, and the two men got to talking. A verbal agreement was made to buy all of the steers that were ready. He gave Dick \$2,000 (and his business card) to seal the deal until he could return with a semi and the rest of the money.

On the day of the transfer, Dick went to Sugarcreek to meet the semi and direct him to the farm. I was home when a pick-up truck with a livestock trailer pulled up. I heard pounding and clattering, and when I looked out, I saw Mr. P smiled broadly and his hired hand pushing a sheep up into the overhead compartment of the livestock trailer to make more room for steers.

About that time, Dick called me to take care of the check so that no steers left home without being paid for. Okay. I

could do that. I went out, introduced myself, and explained that I was to handle the money part of the deal. Mr. P smiled broadly and said we would do that right away.

He had on dark green, light-weight coveralls smelling of manure, so we stayed outside. He took off his cap and proceeded to pull a huge wad of hundred dollar bills out of his pocket. We squatted on the cement walk outside the side door of the house, and he slowly counted out the total amount. I counted with him, but I was so struck by the whole thing, I was **afraid I'd lose track.**

"Now, you can go ahead and count that again if you want to," he said.

About that time, Dick came back with the semi driver, and the men all started loading up the steers.

I went into the house, with the smelly pile of money and proceeded to hold each one up to the light to see that it was real and recounted it. Oh my gosh! All legit, and smelling pretty good after all.

Last Look at the Carousel

By Patricia M. Albrecht

We put a baseball cap on Mom to shield her face from the sun and wheeled her down the hill to Tuscora Park. Because it was difficult to get her in and out of the car now, there were less and less days of bringing her to our home for the day. We decided to take a walk through the park, and, looking back, I am so glad we did that day. As we paused by the carousel, Mom looked up at us with a smile that came from deep within. I will never forget her smile that day. It would be one of the last times I saw my mother really smile.

In 2010, my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Looking back, I believe she suffered from the terrible illness some years before that. She lived 973 miles away from me, and, although I visited her as often as I could, I wasn't there to see the obvious signs. It all makes sense now, but when I received calls of, "My phone isn't working," or "I had to get a new television—mine just quit on me," or "My car got scratched. I think someone hit it," I thought it was my mother's particular ways. However, when she became lost for four days, I knew something was terribly wrong. After emergency personnel finally located her in a random motel very disorientated and angry, she was seen by several doctors and diagnosed with Alzheimer's.



Image Provided By Patricia M. Albrecht

Alzheimer's Disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association, affects one in ten people age sixty-five and older. Unfortunately, my mother was a part of those statistics. It is a very, very ugly disease that leaves people like my mother simply filling up their days by laying immobile, not speaking, barely eating, and unable to smile.

My husband and I brought her to Ohio while she was still somewhat mobile. We struggled with the decision to have her at our home. We wanted to, but I had been told about wandering and was afraid she would either fall down the steps or walk out and get lost while we were sleeping. She also had more and more trouble with movement, and lifting her and taking care of her basic needs had become more difficult.

She spent her remaining days at Hennis Care Centre in Dover. They did a great job caring for her, but I always felt guilty about leaving her each time I came to see her. Although her mind was in another place, I still wanted her to be happy.

So, the day we were able to take her to the park was monumental. She was able to feel the breeze on her face, be out in the open, and see a familiar sight. When she would come to visit years earlier, she enjoyed Tuscora Park and visiting New Philadelphia. I can see Mom as if it were yesterday. She had her pink sweatpants and sweatshirt on. She loved the color pink. My husband, Kenny, put his baseball cap on her head. She was happy. I was thrilled.

I will forever be thankful for that day at Tuscora Park and seeing the smile I hold to my heart. Mom ended her battle **with Alzheimer's approximately eight years after things began** becoming strange for her. I prayed many, many times that the **Lord would take her so she wouldn't have to live in that state** any longer.

In November of last year, I was called. I sang to her, played music for her, prayed with her, loved on her. And, I told her to let go. After staying the night, I went home quickly to

shower and change, and while I was at home, she passed away.

At a very small cemetery in Northern Minnesota, a bird flew next to the car and sat in the snow as we stopped. Everything was silent except that little meadowlark. People may differ with me, but I think it was Mom letting me know everything was all right now.

Tuscora Park in Tuscarawas County is a place of memories. It is a place for holding on to old memories and reminiscing, and a place to make new memories that can be carried to future generations. I have a memory and a photo of the day at Tuscora Park by the carousel of Mom that will always be a good memory when she could still smile and enjoy the day.

Mulberry Tree

By Kristin S. Pinelli

The mulberry tree stands near the sandy lane
Heavy laden with ripening purple gems
Sweet, oozing purple juice
Berries that stain my hands, my apron

The cedar waxwings line up along the branches
Sitting like ducks in a row, at the county fair
They pluck the darkest and ripest, one by one
Savoring and sharing the bounty equally

Crows perch atop the tree, undetected, what to do
While making raucous noises, eyeing waxwings below
Bluebirds watch timidly from afar
While I just stand there, with an empty jar

Checking the nest under the eave, three eggs hatched
Mama Phoebe is wearing herself out

Papa Phoebe works all day bringing insects

These three hatchlings, little flycatchers will learn too

The mulberry tree is about picked clean

Not enough berries for another pie

I savor a few, picked off the ground

While wondering, are my pear, peach, and plum trees next?

Playground of My Youth

By Becky Soehnlen

I drive past a playground every day, on my way to and from work. It is one of those modern ones, with lots of colorful plastic turrets, tunnels, ramps, and playthings. There are swings with protected chains, slides with high sides, and all manner of things to climb on, under and through, all on a base of soft shredded rubber. It is functional, yet seems sterile. Kids play and never get dirty. They have safe adventures, where they unconsciously know that nothing will happen to them. Do they ever learn life lessons from running around smooth-edged holes and safety chains? I shake my head and laugh, glad that my childhood playground was much different; my playtime was a learning experience. For unlike the state-of-the-art playscapes of the present, my playground was rough and sharp, dangerous and unyielding. My playground in youth was a barn.

Before I was born, my dad purchased our farm, eighty acres of good draining land in northern Tuscarawas County. But the barn was there well before he bought it. There is a cut sandstone cornerstone on the barn that says it was built by Wm Axe in 1879. Back then, this barn was the backbone of the farm and probably the source of income for the family that lived there. Barns had a use back then, and down through the years, this one remained so. Dad worked hard in this barn, and my

siblings and I did also. But it was also a great place to play, and many happy memories are contained in it.

This barn is huge. It is a bank barn made to store hay, grain, and equipment in the upper level and to house livestock down below. The upper part is spacious and open, like a large gymnasium. On the south side is a sizeable loft, big enough to hold a thousand bales of hay by the end of the summer. On the north side are two smaller lofts separated by the grainery within which there are six storage bins for grain. The center floor would hold wagons, tractors, the harvester, and other equipment. In this world, my siblings and I had our first work experience. We unloaded hay, moving it from wagon to elevator to loft. We shoveled grain into the grainery, usually by hand. Down below in the lower level, we fed cattle, sheep, and pigs, bedded animals down, and shoveled manure. It was hard work, smelly, dusty, and sweaty at times. But we being kids, we also turned that barn into our own personal playground.

Modern playgrounds have lots of swings. We had something better. In our younger years, the barn had four huge swinging doors. Each door was large enough to allow a tractor and full load of hay through. What fun it was to hitch a ride on one of these doors as it was being closed. We would cling to it like tree frogs. And on a windy day, a gust of wind would catch the door and slam it shut, throwing us off. Monkey bars? Ha! We had rafters and beams that stretched from one side of the barn to the other. We climbed a ladder with round rungs to reach these beams, and then we'd walk across them, the floor twenty feet below. And we didn't need sandboxes. When the oats or wheat or barley was drying on the barn floor, we jumped

from these beams into the pile. Dad would yell at us for scattering the grain, but we would just sweep it back into the pile for the next time.

We used our imaginations and what was at hand and came up with great ways to spend our play time. My inventive brother rigged up a rope and pulley system, and we had a zipline before it ever became popular. No safety harnesses for us! We just hung on to a baling twine handle and flew down from the top of the haystack in the loft out over the scary edge to the floor below.

When hay and straw filled the lofts, we would build elaborate forts and hideaways, with tunnels and booby traps to discourage trespassers and annoying siblings. Our city cousins always envied us for having the barn. When they came down, we would play hide-and-seek for hours. I remember many times hiding under loose straw, completely covered, and staying **still so there wasn't a rustle. That barn also became a bonding** place for my sisters and I, as we held picnics on top of the hay, **with an old quilt spread out so we wouldn't get poked by the** stubble.

The animals down below offered fun times as well. Have you ever tried riding a pig? It is like riding greased lightning. And you would have to watch your knees as you were hurdled through a narrow doorway. The cows were worse, with bony backs and low necks that were easy to fall forward off of. I remember sitting on a gentle Jersey cow and trying to get it to move forward with an ear of corn tied with twine to a stick and dangling it in front of the cow. Cows were never meant to be ridden. Among the cattle, the flocks of chickens scratched and

pecked, producing eggs to hunt and baby chicks to catch. Petting a newborn calf or holding a young lamb was always special. And following a feral cat to her secret hiding place and finding a nest of newborn kittens was like unearthing pirate treasure.

The barn was a discovery zone of the highest caliber. Who needs manmade exhibits when the barn was loaded with learning experiences. Here was where I acquired knowledge about animal care and husbandry; here I saw animals born and animals die. I learned the value of hard work, getting a job done, and responsibility. Crawling around on the beams and the lofts, I learned my own limitations and found that I do have a bit of courage and can walk across a beam to get the thrill of jumping into a pile of oats. And it took lots of pluck for me to walk into the grainery, that mysterious dark place where the grain was stored and that pattered with the footsteps of scurrying mice. But I also had times of daydreaming amid the scent of new hay, of sitting in the straw and reading a good book, surrounded by purring barn cats, of letting my imagination fly and turning cows into horses to be ridden across the fields.

These days, playgrounds are so safe. Children are not allowed to learn that they could get hurt. They do not learn their limitations. They do not learn common sense. Yes, the barn could be a hazardous place. There was heavy equipment with hard edges and animals that could be dangerous. Yes, we had our mishaps and have some scars as proof. Once my sisters and I tumbled off the back of a full load of hay when the wagon **backboard broke. There were trips to the doctor's office** because of punctured feet. My sister lost a front tooth when a

board fell from the rafters and hit her in the head. There were fat lips and bee stings and cuts and bruises.

But we learned from these incidents. We learned to pay attention, to avoid sharp edges, and to watch where we put our feet so we would never step on a rusty nail or a pitchfork. We learned to pick up the pitchfork! I learned to never get between a dog and a cow with a new calf and to never turn my back on a strutting rooster. We learned to think things through, to know when it was in our own best interest not to proceed. And we learned to look out for each other.

Looking back, our playground wasn't pretty and colorful. Yet that old barn shaped and molded us like no modern playground ever could. We came away with dirt dapples on our skin, dusty rings around our neck, and sometimes manure between our toes. Yet our play was imaginative and fulfilling, adventurous and filled with discovery. I realize how fortunate we were. Oh, that children now could be lucky enough to grow up with a barn to play in!

Grandma's Ring

By Cheryl Feutz

Grandpa Jim was a hardworking man. He embodied the spirit of the Swiss work ethic. Like others from his native land, he was a banker. Payday meant more money to add to the savings, his highest priority. They mattered more than living **'high on the hog' because the measure of a man was in what he left behind.**

Grandma Flossie was a hardworking woman. Unlike Grandpa, she liked some of the niceties in life.

Several months before their 50th anniversary, Grandma decided she wanted a diamond engagement ring. She had a gold band, but she wanted that diamond. I would drive her and Grandpa to town at least twice a week. Every time, she bee-lined **directly to Grill's Jewelry store window where she stood, staring at the ring of her dreams.**

Grandpa was there, too, but he was obviously oblivious to what was going on. He stared at the passing cars and the walkers, hoping to see a familiar face. Since talking was his favorite pastime, he was focused on finding anyone willing to gab.

When it was evident that Grandpa was not going to take her looking hints, Grandma began talking **'diamond.'** While she

never said it, the word ‘diamond’ came up more times in conversation than anything else for the next couple of weeks. Grandpa may have been a poor observer, but he was an even poorer listener. I doubt he ever heard the word once.

Knowing Grandpa for the hard case he was, Grandma decided to crack into her savings, which wasn’t a paltry sum. She had worked during World War II at the enameling plant and had banked most of her money in her name. When the war and her job ended, she continued to squirrel away small sums of her household money. She could well afford the diamond, but it just wasn’t quite the same as receiving it as a gift after fifty years of marriage. Since she could see no other way, she asked me to take her to Grill’s where she picked out her ring.

We picked it up that next week, and she decided to wear it home. Face beaming, she slipped it on her finger. She was extremely pleased with her \$125 purchase. As we drove home, I’d notice her adjusting it on her finger and admiring its sparkle.

The sparkle caught Grandpa’s eye, too.

“Where’d you get that ring, Floss?” He inquired as she entered the house. “How much did it cost?”

“It’s the same ring I’ve been looking at all these months in Grill’s window. You know, the one I’ve been talking about.”

Grandpa looked at it closely. “I don’t remember any ring. Why didn’t you tell me you wanted one?”

He was truly taken aback, and although he didn’t voice the words, you could tell he was shocked by the boldness of her

actions.

“I’ll give you the money for it as soon as I get it out of the bank,” he offered.

Even though the offer carried a tone of command, Grandma declined. She smiled, admired her prize, and walked away.



The Candy Shop
By Bryan Hadley

Digging in the Dirt

By Kristin S. Pinelli

Today I dug in the dirt again, because I must
Dirt is real...dirt is soul food
Last night it misted, drizzled, then poured
This morning the sodden earth is boldly fragrant

This particular patch hasn't been worked in years

Layers of Ohio clay, leaves, and twigs, sprinkled with stones
All meshed together into a compacted soil
The earth welcomed my spade, hoe, and shovel

Resisting at first, then relaxing into acceptance
I could almost hear the earth sigh and breathe
The sour scent lessened with each turning of the soil
Large clumps entangled with multiple roots.

Yielded to the loping shears and my prying hands
The overgrown shrubs, choked on their own growth

Pruning yielded up the dead branches and brambles
Freeing the plants from self-imposed bondage.

High winds rustled and whistled through the trees
The large oak sentinels bowed their heads in homage
My labors, suspended prematurely
As torrents of rain pelted the ridge, agitating the earth

Seeking shelter on my open porch, I observed the scene
Mother Nature never disappoints with her drama
The rain calmed to a mist as the sun broke through the clouds
A double rainbow took my breath away.

Gentle winds pushed the storm westward
A freshness permeated the air, the soil, as I begin anew
This is the closest I can experience the company of God
Digging in the dirt rejuvenates my Soul while freeing my Spirit

Where It Belongs

By Dick Ladrach

I must have been about ten or eleven years old when I was sent to mow the back fields on a neighboring farm that my father rented. Despite having been all over the ground that my family farmed, by that age I had not yet seen these fields.

They were tucked back in, over a ridge and seemingly totally, at least to me at that age, isolated from all civilization. As I went around one of the fields for the first time, I saw it. Evidence that people had indeed been here before me. There **stood a cabin, the windows gone but the roof still good. I didn't** stop to take a closer look. I was too intent on finishing the task at hand.

Over the years, I examined the cabin and the area around it. Behind the cabin, there was a spring, with good water, lined with cut sandstone. A sandstone cistern fed by the spring was beside the cabin, and the stone back wall of a small barn was a short distance away. What had been a road passed right behind the cabin. It came from what is now Boltz Orchard Road, behind another small farmstead to this one, and then it turned toward a third set of buildings and came out on what now is Stucky Valley Road. What really caught my attention, though, was that despite how hard life must have been for the people

who built and lived in this cabin, they made the effort to add some simple beauty and color to their existence by planting flowers. Most notably, the daffodils. Not the ever present yellow ones seen around all abandoned farmsteads, but white ones. Alongside the daffodils, though, is something a bit more unusual. A large bleeding heart grew, which has thrived in the woods despite having to compete with all of the native plants in the woods which now cover this old farmstead.

The cabin is gone now, although the foundation is still intact, and a few years ago, my wife and I decided to build our house on top of a hill not far from the remnants of the old barn and cabin. When we (meaning my wife, mostly) planted flowers, there were the ubiquitous daffodils, and we thought we should have a bleeding heart. My first thought was the one from the cabin.

I went one day, shovel in hand, to move it to our house. Before I started to dig, I looked around at the foundation, the spring, the road, and I wondered how long that bleeding heart had been there. A hundred years, almost certainly. Possibly two hundred? Its roots have been in that soil a long time. This is where it belongs.

We found another bleeding heart for our house.



Red Shed
By Ginny Stocker

Southern Girl Moves North

By Linda M. Lasley

I grew up in the south. Stafford County Virginia, to be exact. One day, my husband and I decided to check out New Philadelphia, OH, in Tuscarawas County. I already had a brother living in Ohio, and some friends were moving to Tuscarawas County, so I wanted to see if I would like living there. **When we came for our “checking things out” visit, we stayed at a bed and breakfast in Sugarcreek. We loved it there. So far, so good.**

That visit was in September. It wasn’t winter yet, but it was cold! When we went to Walmart, I saw people wearing heavy jackets, and some even had on coats. I don’t like cold weather, so the thought ran through my mind, “What am I getting myself into?”

After spending a few days visiting the area, we decided we would go ahead and make the move. We moved in the late fall. When winter came, I was constantly shaking my head. **I couldn’t believe how cold it was. I remember waking up one morning, and the temperature was in the single digits! I can also remember when I left a friend’s house, I would be home before my car heated up. Some friends told me later that that year was the coldest they’d had here in a long time. I said, “Of course, it’s**

because I moved here.” I guess that was my Ohio welcoming gift.

Needless to say, I started to really appreciate the value of a good winter coat. Another thing I had to get used to, which I actually liked, was that I didn’t have to leave home a half-hour early or more to get somewhere. In VA, I lived in the country, so whether I was going to a doctor’s appointment or to the grocery store, I had to allow at least 30 minutes to get there. I also liked that I didn’t have to put gas in my car as often. I remember teasing my family back in VA by telling them, “I put 5 dollars worth of gas in my car over a week ago.” They were putting 10 to 15 dollars a week in theirs. It only took me about 3 minutes to get to work, less than 10 minutes to get to Walmart, about 10 minutes to go to medical appointments or to Union Hospital. I was loving it.

When I first moved here, a friend lived on the south side of town. Now, granted that wasn’t very far from where I lived on the east side, but I would always ask her, “Are you coming into town today?” That was what I was used to asking people where I had lived in VA. Years later, she still teases me about that.

I enjoyed so much in Tuscarawas County. I went to events at the Performing Arts Center, plays at the Little Theatre, mystery dinners at the Reeves Carriage House, street festivals like the Italian Festival, and to Art on the Square. I spent a lot of time at both the Tuscarawas Co. Public Library and the Dover Public Library. Sometimes I would drive to Tuscora Park and watch the ducks at the pond while I was relaxing.

At one point, I worked as an interpreter for a local

company. Then, I started working for the New Philadelphia City Schools for their ESL (English As A Second Language) program. Occasionally, I would get asked to hold a language course for employees of some local businesses. One way I benefited from these jobs was that I got to meet a lot of nice people and learn more about life in Tuscarawas County.

I never really got homesick, as they say. I think a part of **the reason for that was I never got bored here. And I don't** have to live in VA to see historic sites and enjoy picturesque views. I can enjoy some right here in Tuscarawas County.

A few years ago, I had to move back to VA, But, as you can see, I came back. It was a December day when I returned, and two days later, it snowed. I took a picture and shared it **with friends and family back in VA. I put as a caption, "I moved back to Ohio, and this is what I was greeted with."** They all got a big laugh out of that.

The way I see it, if this girl from the south has to endure cold weather, I'm glad it's here in Tuscarawas County.

A Dog of a Time

By Karen Slough

Being a dog warden in Tuscarawas County for many years, I had the opportunity to meet a lot of interesting characters along the way.

Most days were a combination of phones ringing, complaints needing to be handled, and both people and dogs barking for attention.

One of the oddest situations and one that left a lasting impression involved a beautiful black and tan German Shepherd named Sarge. Sarge had recently been adopted from the pound by Mrs. Clara Raber, a widow lady who lived on Pleasant Hill Road just outside of New Philadelphia. Mrs. Raber lived alone and wanted a large dog for protection. One day, after she had gone to town, Sarge broke his chain and **attacked the mailman's postal vehicle. The dog had bit one of the tires, flattening it.** After the incident, a call was made by the **postmaster to the sheriff's department, who, in turn, called me** for assistance,

I drove quickly to the address in hopes of securing Sarge before he got himself into any more mischief. As I pulled up to the driveway, Sarge came bounding over to my truck.

As I was rolling down the window and tossing him a

biscuit, I yelled, “Hey Sarge, remember me?”

He barked loudly and jumped up against my door. I tossed him another biscuit, but he was ‘on-duty’ and not about to be bribed.

As I sat there, wondering what to do, all of a sudden, I heard a hissing noise. It took me just a minute to realize that Sarge had bitten my tire, and it was quickly going flat! Well, at this point, I had no choice but to call dispatch and explain my predicament. After a few snickers, the operator advised me that she would send out a tow truck.

In the meantime, I spotted a car turning into the driveway behind me. I frantically tried to motion them away, but, sure enough, Sarge was already racing over to the car and went straight for the tires. Boom! Another disabled vehicle. She hollered out the window that she was the Avon lady. I told her help was on the way.

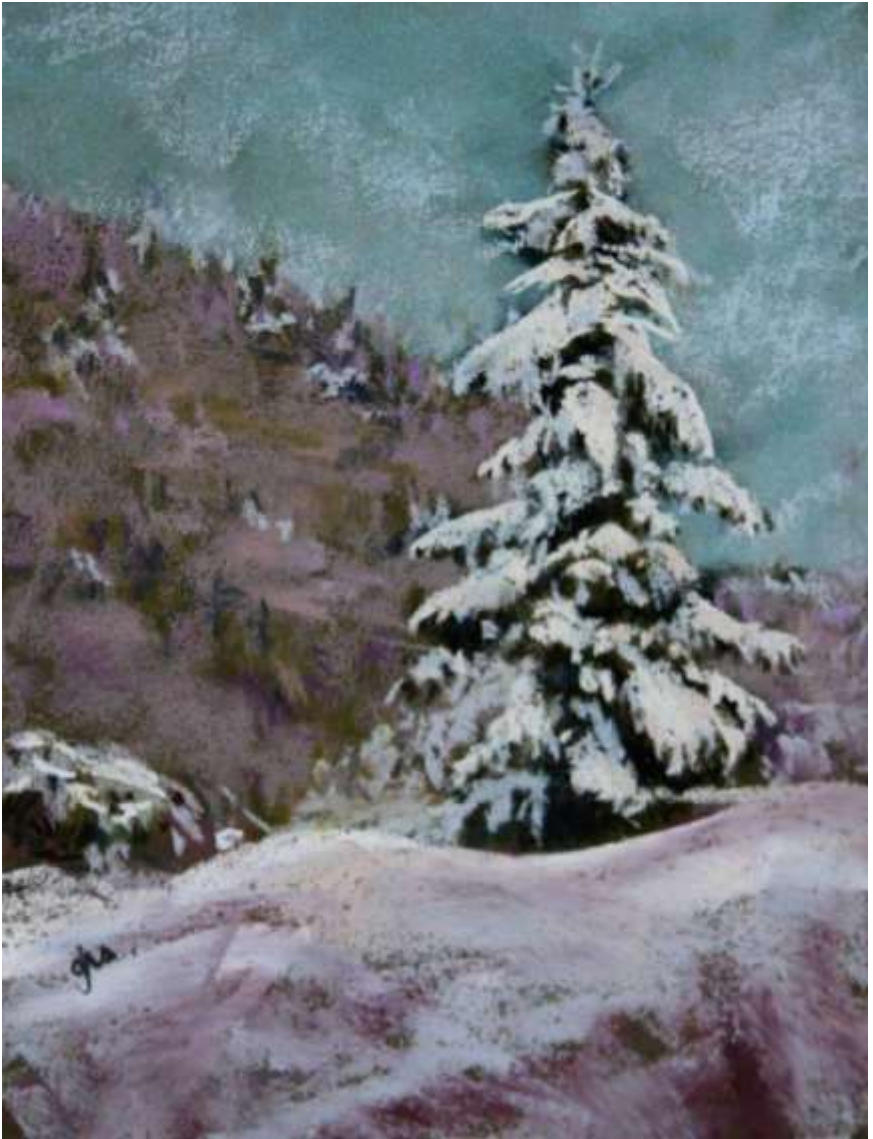
I thought, “Well, I guess I’ll have to call the dispatcher back, and tell her we now need two tow trucks.”

I radioed again, and, after explaining what happened, I realized that if the tow truck came, Sarge would probably go after their tires, too! So I instructed the dispatcher to tell the tow truck driver to come only halfway up the hill, and I would meet him there. As I was hobbling down the road on a tire rim, I saw Sarge standing proudly at the end of his property, wagging his tail. **He looked very please that I was leaving his “turf.”**

I rode with the tow truck driver over to Flynn’s Tires in Dover. After I told the man behind the counter what had happened, he just laughed. Suppose he thought I was joking,

until he went outside and saw the bite marks on my tire.

Later that day, after my truck was repaired and I was back at the pound, Lee Morrison called from the *Times Reporter*, asking to do a story in the paper on this interesting day.



Downfall
By Ginny Stocker

Crossing Paths

By Maria Dillon

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Not long after we had started attending church in our quaint little town we became familiar with a man named John. John could always be counted on for a warm smile so wide that his almond eyes would nearly squint shut. He could often be found offering a warm greeting and a bulletin on Sunday mornings aside his mother, that is, if he wasn't an altar server, a position you could tell he took very seriously. My favorite memory of John was when the deacon of the church called him to the front to show off the gold medal he had won at a recent Special Olympics event. He was so proud of his medal and would have been content to hold that medal above his head and fist pump the crowd for hours. His enthusiasm was truly contagious because the more he smiled and reached his medal into the air, the more enthusiastically the congregation beamed and cheered along with him.

In the days after learning about Lucie's down syndrome, I spent many hours daydreaming and actually googling pictures of babies with down syndrome. I tried so hard to imagine what she was going to look like. I was using Google as a crystal ball. I needed to see the future. Lucie's future. My future as her mother. Then, that Sunday, I saw John's white-haired, demure

mother guiding John back to his seat despite his friendly attempts to chat with familiar faces as he passed by. I watched, smiled, and wept because this was the image I was searching for. I was watching my future unfold before my eyes. I was stepping onto the same path this woman had already been walking for 50 years. You could see her fatigue, but even more prominent was the love of a mother; a mother loving her adult son.

As my belly grew larger and larger, I was growing more and more eager to meet Lucie. Each weekend, as I watched John and his mother tiptoe past our row, my tears were more frequently replaced by smiles. Perhaps my eyes would well up, but it was because I was eager to meet my daughter who would walk next to me every weekend for the next 50 years. My admiration for John's mother grew every week as well. She was so peaceful and graceful as her healthy, yet aging arms would guide John lovingly back to his seat week after week.

Then one Sunday, I looked up from my prayer to see John's mother walking John back from communion. This time they weren't side by side or her behind him redirecting him to stop chatting and keep walking. This time she was walking behind him with her arms outstretched, under John's arms. He was balancing his weight between his careful steps and his mother's strength. He, at the age of 50, needed his mother's strength to walk. It was so heartbreaking and beautiful that I was soaked with tears.

In all of those weeks and months, I never found the courage to speak to John or his mother about our impending arrival. I had thought about it more times than I could count,

but struggled to find the right words. I worried that I would cry and since I had never actually spoken to John's mother before, I felt it odd to march right up to her and shed bittersweet tears in our first interaction. I always thought to myself, "Next week. I'll talk to her next week." Then, after several weeks of missed opportunities, I went into labor in the early morning hours of a Sunday.

By noon on the 29th of November, I was holding Lucie in my arms and looking into my daughter's almond shaped eyes. The flood of congratulatory messages and texts were rolling in and I was trying to keep up with everyone when amidst the Facebook posts, I read a status update from a fellow church goer. They had gone to say a rosary with John in his final days. I was so overwhelmed with happiness that Lucie was here and healthy, but suddenly feeling such an overwhelming loss. I wasn't sure if he had already passed or not, but I couldn't get the image out of my head of John, in the moments before Lucie was born, whispering words of wisdom to her in a language only the two of them would understand. The timing of their paths "crossing" in this way felt special, though I felt some guilt that I was on the happy side of the exchange. Outside of my hospital walls while my family was welcoming our daughter, there was a family mourning a loss of a wonderful man with an amazing soul; a mother who was kissing her baby goodbye as I was kissing mine hello.

After Lucie's heart surgery and her need to be quarantined had passed, our trips to church resumed. After mass, people gather around Lucie to take turns holding her, asking about her, or just share a smile or a kind word. On

several occasions, I would see John's mother's face appear, look at Lucie with a wistful smile, and she would sneak away before I could find a break in conversation to talk to her. Last week, as mass was ending, I had decided that if she came to see Lucie, I was going to make sure she didn't disappear on me. Lucie was being passed around so people could get their Lucie fix for the week when her face appeared in the sea of eager arms. I interrupted the conversation and asked John's mother if she would like to hold her. Before I had finished the offer, John's mother quickly said that she wasn't strong enough to hold her. Standing before me was a woman who had nearly carried her 50 year old son's weight in her motherly arms six months earlier. She was so much stronger than she knew. I reassured her that she was plenty strong enough. As she sat down and Lucie was handed to her, it was like everyone else in the room ceased to exist. It was just her and Lucie. I watched this amazing woman gaze into Lucie's new, yet familiar eyes, and just as I had wept looking at her baby, she now wept looking at mine.

Mothers will often say that when their baby seems to smile at nothing, that they can see angels. I think Lucie is smiling at John.

Day of the Dragonflies

By Kristin S. Pinelli

As I approach each new day, my mood reflects the appearance of nature. I cannot take for granted Mother Nature nor ignore the impact she has on my life. My outlook and energy levels are directly entwined with her dressing for the day. When it is clear and sunny with low humidity, my step is light, my mood is cheerful, as all seems right with the world. My day is productive, drinking in all the beauty of nature, right in my own backyard.

The flowers are generous, sharing their sweet and sometimes spicy fragrance. The scent of night blooming jasmine and fruit tree blossoms intoxicate me with their perfume.

The birds twitter at the bird bath, washing off yesterday's dust. Meanwhile, my cat patiently watches from a hidden vantage point under the porch. She thinks she is invisible under the cover of ferns and caladiums. Time ceases, as I observe the observer. She is adept at playing an old childhood game, **"statues," never moving or flexing a muscle. Yet, I see her nose** twitch and her whiskers vibrate with excitement. Until she is ready to pounce. Nothing ever comes of it.

At her first approach, the birds fly to the safety of the tulip poplar and seem to scold her. After several attempts, she is

content to laze in a cool spot for the remainder of the day.

The garden is abundant with graceful gliding butterflies. They resemble brightly colored petals drifting on the wind. Within minutes, their snaps of color are gone, and I see them **fluttering in my neighbor's garden.**

This hazy morning, the air still lingers with the moisture of a predawn rain, as I am presented with a surprising visual threat: a spontaneous appearance of hundreds of dragonflies, seemingly materialized out of nowhere, like magic.

I fondly recall my Grandmother Marjorie calling them **“darners.”** As a child, I would quickly cover my mouth, afraid they would sew it closed, as was the folk belief. I envisioned the large darning stitches she used on our socks or the blanket stitches she lovingly sewed on each new baby blanket.

As the sun beams squeeze through the haze, it highlights the intricate, lazy wings of the dragonflies and brings to mind the delicate totting and crocket stitches my grandmother excelled at.

The “darners’ continue to keep me company for the afternoon, never pausing or resting. I never see any gnats, their favorite meal, but feel they must be in abundance, for they never move to another feeding spot. Toward evening, they blend in with the encroaching darkness and then are gone.

Had I not been outside on this particular morning, surely this spectacle would have escaped me.

I am thankful for the opportunity to witness the ‘Day of the Dragonflies,’ for it evokes many fond memories of my

grandmother.

As the day draws to a close, night shadows appear in the garden. I am comforted by the familiarity, feeling peace and serenity within my being and in my corner of the world.



Dover Railroad Bridge

By Bryan Hadley

Appalachian Aria

by Gabriel Riggle

Growing up in what I now know as “rural Appalachia,” I was unaware of how hard or easy I had it. I just knew life as I saw it, on my family’s farm, shared between my divorced parents and their separate families. I did not know how rich or poor we were because I did not see much difference between myself and my classmates. I had a Nintendo Entertainment System and an extensive G. I. Joe collection, after all.

I knew things were a little different elsewhere, since we occasionally had a subscription to cable television. One of the biggest differences I noticed between my life and others was that **that other kids’ divorced parents spoke to each other.**

I do not think I realized how fortunate I was to have such a generous and engaged extended family. My Aunt Alyssa and Grandma Judy were both school teachers and instilled in me the importance of academics from a young age. My mother Michele was no slouch, either, the school valedictorian who eschewed university to marry and move on to the family farm. **The foundation for this whole side of my mother’s family was my Great Grandma Gray. Grandma Gray’s position as respected matriarch was solidified in my mind by my father’s visits to her kitchen table, even though she was from my mother’s side of the family.**

Grandma Gray lived in historic Gnadenhutten, founded by Moravians and famous for a massacre of Native American Christians. At the time of my childhood, the village was like that featured in a Norman Rockwell painting, the best of traditional pre-Eisenhower community design and architecture.

Wide two-way streets were paralleled by grass buffers holding enormous shade trees. Next were wide sidewalks, welcoming people to stroll through the community. Just off the sidewalks were small lawns, bordered by expansive front porches. All of these homes were connected to the commercial district. To this day it appears like a Hollywood movie set, complete with hardware store, banks, post office, Masonic lodge, churches, and the public library. My Grandpa Don, Judy's ex-husband, built several of these beautiful buildings.

Grandma Gray's house was two stories tall with white aluminum siding. Her front porch was covered by an integrated roof and constructed of dark red brick and dark gray mortar. The porch was raised, accessible by six or seven stone stairs. It provided plenty of room for family gatherings, watching **parades, or creating bubble displays with Grandma's extensive** collection of bubble-making apparatus. The idyllic scene was completed by a massive verdant tree, towering over the house and cooling those beneath its canopy.

The wide sidewalks were our pedal car superhighway. Whatever children were around would scream up and down these pedestrian paths, mostly vestigial by this time. I would lead in my red sports car, followed closely by a green tractor and a pink "big wheel" tricycle.

Grandma owned the lot behind her home, as well. Everyone, regardless of age, would participate in whiffle ball or **“Indian Ball,”** both variations on baseball played with fewer people and hollow plastic equipment. The frequency of these games dwindled as family moved away and others aged. The lot now contains a massive garage, taking up almost the lot’s entirety.

Grandma Gray had a garage at the time, but it was detached, to the west of the house, and offset from the street. This indicates that the garage likely was constructed after the house, and was placed in such a way so as not to dominate the front entrance to the home. This treasure trove held her 1970s era mud- 2 colored Dodge Dart, which she would dutifully drive to retrieve me from pre-school four blocks away. The bench seat in the back came equipped with state of the art safety equipment for its time- lap belts.

The garage was where I discovered my first real baseball glove, which resembled something more appropriate for Honus Wagner or Mickey Mantle. I used that glove loyally, even having it re-laced, until I saved up enough money for my own Rawlings Ken Griffey, Jr. model. Thirty dollars took quite a bit of time to accumulate for me. Hoola hoops and various yard games from the preceding decades rounded out the loot.

Grandma Gray’s home came complete with air conditioning, something normally experienced only at shopping centers. What stands out even more than the respite from the heat, however, was the alchemy Grandma performed in her kitchen. Hand-mashed potatoes, noodles, chicken, roast beef and vegetables, and myriad desserts were a Sunday night

tradition.

After dinner, we would remain in the dining room to play rummy, Uno, or Scattergories. There was a television around, but it was barely a part of the house. The adjacent living room was instead dominated at one end by an ornate fireplace mantle of dark stones of various shades surrounding a stone engraving of a mule-driven wagon. The other end held the piano. Natural light spilled in through the long, tall windows looking out over **the front porch, set above the “davenport.”**

The second story of the house contained three bedrooms and the **“commode.”** As Grandma lived alone, there was ample room for guests, especially necessary when my Uncle Tim from California would visit.

This house of warmth and respite would not last forever.

One visit from my California relatives was to plateau with my Estes model rocket launch at the nearby baseball diamond. As the family gathered to watch the narrow cardboard cylinder **with hard plastic nosecone shoot into the air, a family member’s** dog knocked Grandma Gray to the ground. My uncle immediately sprinted for help, as this pre-dated mobile phones. Memory beyond those details is a milieu of confusion and blame.

Grandma Gray would mostly recover. She could afford an accessible addition on to the rear of her home, having worked as a Standard Oil receptionist at a time when companies took care of their employees, top to bottom. My late Grandpa Gray’s **benefits from the Postal Service** certainly helped, as well.

Grandma’s presence and influence in our lives continued

for years afterwards, but physical limits now were obvious; her invincibility was no more. My Grandma Judy was needed to play a much more involved caretaker role. Tragically, Uncle Tim would pass away first, struck down rapidly by a brain tumor. **Grandma Gray's decline was much more gradual,** accelerated in the end by a nursing home stay from which she would never return. Looking back, the funeral services seem to have happened simultaneously, although I know they were years apart. The funerals took place at the Moravian Church, for which my Grandpa Don had built a chapel addition.

The community continued. Neighborhood baseball leagues, parades, Easter Egg hunts, library programs, Vacation Bible School- these activities shaped me, as well. Not until adulthood did I realize the effort required, often unremunerated, to keep the fabric of our communities together.

My gratitude extends also to my public school experiences. At undergraduate study and law school, I performed equally with my more privileged classmates. I was a product of my family, community leaders, 3 and school teachers. They never accepted public policies of managed decline, reflected in the minimal effort and investment in our beautiful historic communities.

Their perseverance has given us the county that we have today, on the cusp of revitalization. We have continued working hard, in spite of a half century of poor decision making by the powers-that-be, public and private. We have poured our time and energy into community improvements, in spite of J. D. Vance, de facto spokesman for rural America, and his evocation of a funeral for our region. In spite of economic and cultural

shifts, we have pivoted upwards. We do not need or deserve an elegy, but rather an aria, and from a solo voice of confidence and pride can arise an anthem.

Carrying Me Home

By Alyssa Unger

Peace settles upon dusk

Ripples of water form

For each paddle's push

Gliding forward in the hush

just before crickets rise

Their song a familiar lullaby

Their melody a sweet one

In harmony, the cicadas' love song joins
caressing the breeze and bringing me home,

Awakening from my gentle daydreams

I push my paddle more quickly,

Gnarly elbows of ancient oaks reflected

in the still waters

pass more frequently,

Disgruntled gnats rise upon the surface

To me, hardly more than specks of dust

As I seamlessly cut the waters of the Tusc.

I must paddle on
before dusk turns to dark
Kind and gentle, strong and ancient
The river
carries
me
home...



Sunset
by Ginny Stocker

Tapestries of Tuscarawas County

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seen through the Eyes of Our Residents,
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