

pages



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E-mail: marp-soop@juno.com
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Looking Around Me...

Sweet Revenge: Seventy Times Seven

-Joe Hertzler

The savage adage of eye for eye
of tooth for tooth is
the recipe for a sightless society
a toothless mouthful
begging to give, to receive mutilation

an entire population eating grits
a diet of water and cornbread crusts
unable to gum their way through prime rib
or read statements of justice without squinting

like military brass and prison wardens
the self-righteous claim twenty-twenty vision
the ability to eat beef-jerky without swallowing

who then is left to incarcerate
who left to count
three times you're out



throw away the keys

This little poem speaks loudly as our country
exchanges blows to win a point. This goes on as bitter
losses from a human-made war divert energy and resources
needed during an onslaught of cosmic pain from the
tsunami and mudslides.

Billions and billions spent by our own privileged
nation for the violent containment of violence.

Our country's leaders offer sunny scenarios of a
world conquered for democracy, when we know full well
the sightless and toothless survivors will not see or savor it.
These billions are needed for building, planting, serving,
feeding, clothing, teaching - "binding up of wounds."

A sermon I heard during a holiday Sunday
worship urged us to celebrate a "defiant Christmas" - what
a concept! It seems especially challenging in the midst of
celebrating family, friends, dearly loved colleagues - and
"the birth."

The God of Light and Peace loved us enough to
offer forgiveness and grace "to the whole world" in Jesus.
Do we believe it? Let us choose to live this way!

It will mean dividing our resources, demonstrating
healing and hope, defying fear and "sweet revenge."

- Helen L. Lapp

Mark your calendar,
date book, palm pilot!

The sixth Aging with Spirit retreat (Sunday evening to
Tuesday noon, October 2-4, 2005) will feature health and
fitness (physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, relational -
all part of the package!). At this retreat MARP glances
ahead to June 2006 for a fifth biannual Mennonite
Senior Sports Classic. This annual Fall event will again
include lots of singing, sharing, learning, laughing,
connecting. Don't miss this one!

J. Nelson Kraybill will join us as
"coach" (or fitness trainer) for this
Aging with Spirit event - speaking out
of his own interest in health and
fitness and drawing from the story of
a 12-day walk across England, ON
THE PILGRIM'S WAY "Conversations
on Christian discipleship." Nelson is
president of Associated Mennonite
Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.



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BOOK REVIEWS

SPEAKING MY MIND by **Tony Campolo (2004)**. The "tough issues Christians are afraid to face" will keep you reading and challenge you to rethink. Campolo takes the Bible seriously and sincerely seeks to "speak the truth in love."

LAND OF REVELATION: A Reconciling Presence in Israel by **Roy H. Kreider (2004)**. This book shares the life story of Roy and Florence serving with Mennonite missions in the Middle East. Quoting from the brief review on the book's back cover: "This is a side of Israel that goes beyond the political tragedies and religious hatreds, and sees the possibility of God's unifying spirit and presence in the Holy Land."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HARRY POTTER: Spirituality in the Stories of the World's Most Famous Seeker by **Connie Neal (2002)**. I discovered this book at the bookstore next door to my office and was curious. I have enjoyed the stories so far and have wondered when others want them deleted from the planet. Mark I. Pinsky, author of another similar search for understanding (about the Simpsons) describes Neal's work as "an eloquent example of how the intersection of religion and popular culture can also form a crossroad of enlightenment and happiness."

LIVING IN THE LABYRINTH: A Personal Journey Through the Maze of Alzheimer's by **Diana Friel McGowin**. This book has been in print since 1993 and is an honest and intimate account of "early onset" of this illness. It is a hopeful book carried by an unusual self-awareness and Diane's sense of humor - unusual given the subject. *(The "appendices" offer additional medical insights.)*

From one SOOP'er ...

We did our SOOP before retirement ...

During World War II, I served at CPS Camp 57 in the Black Hills of South Dakota, where we fought forest fires and built a large reservoir dam. I was transferred to the Alexian Brothers General Hospital in Chicago, hoping to go overseas with MCC. At this hospital I learned the basics of nursing (equivalent to LPN skills). Then I was transferred to work as an orderly at the La Plata Mennonite Hospital in Puerto Rico.

After a total of four years in alternative service, I returned home and studied two years at Goshen College. I felt God leading me into the nursing profession so I returned to Alexian Brothers Hospital to train as an RN. I returned to Indiana and became the first male registered nurse on the staff of Elkhart General Hospital. It was here I met Florence Goodman, RN, a graduate of La Junta Mennonite School of Nursing in Colorado. I finished college receiving the B.S.R.N. degree. We married and moved to Chicago - both working at the same hospital for six months before we accepted a Voluntary Service assignment in Puerto Rico to serve at La Plata Mennonite Hospital. This step led to what became our life's work. After the VS term we continued our service under Mennonite Board of Missions in Puerto Rico for 25 more years.

We moved back to Goshen in 1980 and began work at Goshen General Hospital where I continued in the emergency department until retirement. Several years after we returned, Florence took a nursing position at Greencroft Nursing Center. After retirement I continued as an interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients in the hospital and at diabetes instruction classes. Eventually I needed to quit because of respiratory difficulties.

We did our "SOOP" before retirement! We thank and congratulate those who can do it now. We are grateful that MARP gives assistance to short-term volunteers later in life. And Florence continues her "service" by caring for me.

- *Royal J. Hower, lifelong servant of Christ and MARP member living in Goshen, Indiana*

RED SKELTON'S MARRIAGE TIPS

(all politically incorrect but good for a belly laugh!)

1. I take my wife everywhere ... but she keeps finding her way back.
2. We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.
3. She ran after the garbage truck yelling, "Am I too late for the garbage?" The driver said, "No, jump in!"
4. I haven't spoken to my wife in 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her.
5. That last fight was my fault. My wife asked, "What's on the TV?" I said, "Dust!"
6. I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was Always.

Visit MARP and SOOP online!

<http://marp.mennonite.net>

Service Sites/Opportunities
Reflections
Book Reviews
Related Web Links
Membership Details
Announcements
News
Reviews
MSSC Recap!

Five of us - the MARP Chat Group - have been exchanging e-mail for this past while.



The others are from Bluffton, Ohio, Graymont, Illinois, Goshen and South Bend, Indiana. It is an engaging exchange! Anyone ready to join? You will be allowed to challenge the status quo!

E-mail marp-soop@juno.com

... to Another

Our SOOP Adventure with Morris Fork Crafts in Booneville, Kentucky ...

In the spring of 2004 my wife Geneva and I read of the availability of service opportunities for older retired people. We thought that might add some spice to our older years so we contacted MCC to find out more. MCC put us in touch with Mennonite Association of Retired People and on request received lots of information about SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People). We looked over the long list of interesting places to serve all over the United States and Canada. Since I am an amateur artist and like arts and crafts, we picked the Morris Fork Craft Center near Booneville in the Appalachian Mountains of eastern Kentucky as our first choice. When we informed Helen Lapp of our choice, she put us in touch with Elaine Stamper, executive director of Morris Fork Crafts. We arranged to serve for a term of two months starting the first week of September.

Morris Fork Craft Center was started in 1978 by a teacher from the Buckhorn Children's Center about five miles away. When the Morris Fork Presbyterian Church was without a pastor for a few months, this man stayed at the parsonage and while there, saw a need for employment for low-income families in the area. His first idea of opening a chair factory expanded into a craft center to help the residents supplement their income by making and marketing crafts. Since there is not much opportunity for local sales, the work of the volunteers consists mostly of taking vanloads of crafts to churches and shows in other states. *(For those who travel on the computer, visit Google and type "Morris Fork" to learn more.)*

We left home in Maryland on Labor Day weekend and spent a few days sightseeing in Kentucky before reporting for duty on Tuesday. We spent the next few weeks setting

up displays and craft arrangements and general cleaning to get ready for their Annual Craft Show on the last weekend of September. The second week we were there we were joined by another SOOP volunteer, Esther Guengrich, from Iowa. Esther was very artistic and had a good eye for setting up displays. Unfortunately, she had to go home before the craft show and missed all the festivities! The day before the show we were blessed with a busload of volunteers from a Presbyterian church in Pennsylvania who combined a week of sightseeing with some service - assisting with carpentry, tile laying, and hanging of awnings, etc. The day of the festival was a busy one! There was a bake sale, donkey cart rides, fiddlers playing and cloggers dancing, crafters demonstrating their skills (doll making, broom making, carving, etc.).

The next day we left to hold a show in McVeytown, Pennsylvania. Since the craft center was started by the Presbyterian Church as a mission project, most of their craft sales are held in Presbyterian churches. The next week we took a vanload of stuff to Dearborn, Michigan. A week later we were in Valparaiso, Indiana. Volunteers from the local church helped with loading and unloading, setting up displays and selling. These churches treat Morris Fork Crafts as a mission project similar to Ten Thousand Villages in the Mennonite Church.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time in Kentucky and would not hesitate to do it again. We worshipped with a local Mennonite church a few of the times we were not on trips and enjoyed making new friends. I would highly recommend older people getting involved in service projects like this. It sure beats a rocking chair!

- Joseph P. Sauder

I recalled from an anonymous wise person: "The work will wait while you show the child the rainbow, but the rainbow won't wait while you do the work."

- Jim Bishop, columnist

From a prayer by Jim Lapp at the ordination service for the pastor at Plains Mennonite:

"Protect ... from impulsiveness when good ideas come faster than the processes of the church can accommodate them, from cynicism when things move too slowly or contrary to her best judgment, from shallowness when she faces too much to do in too little time, from fear when others challenge her or don't receive her ministry as she intends, from self-doubt when she receives criticism. Grant her the physical, emotional and spiritual health she needs for a long and fruitful ministry"

"Use of fair trade coffee not only channels money directly to desperately poor coffee farmers, it also acts to stabilize local communities and the coffee export industry itself."

- Delmar King on "stewardship investing" in MMA Investors' News

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Here Come the Boomers!

The boomers are coming in large numbers, we are being reminded. But where are they going? They're not rushing into the arms of traditional older adult organizations.

At the Shepherd's Centers of America Annual Conference held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, in late October, several speakers spoke about this growing demographic group. Among them were Tom Andres of the National Council on Aging; Ron Manheimer, CEO of the Center for Creative Retirement, University of North Carolina at Asheville and Rabbi Mark Kraus-Cohn of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

I had been asked to speak on "Learning to Value Your Age as You Age" and to lead a related workshop. The possible and probable gap between boomers and older adults was one of the foci of the conference. Here are a few of my gleanings significant for church groups.

One speaker mentioned we are moving into an ageless society without clear divisions between age groups. Chronological age is not the determining factor in how a person ages. Some 90-year-olds are hale and hearty; others are frail. Sixty-five is no longer a starting point for entering the "older adult" group. It is often considered the upper cap for middle age.

"Aging" vocabulary is an impediment to boomers because a dominant image of older adult is "a cohort of people in need." Boomers do not feel needy. Therefore, they do not identify with anything that has "old" language in its organizational title. Groups that cater to older adults are not the boomers' affinity group.

The Shepherd's Centers of America is a nonprofit, interfaith organization that provides opportunities and services for adults throughout their mature years. The East Wichita Center enrolls more than 400 people in each three eight-week session of Adventures in Learning.

After they finish their working life, boomers often have big plans because of their large variety of interests and concerns. Many have been professionals and are looking for something that will give them a vital involvement in meaningful pursuits. They have numerous opportunities to keep learning and doing. Retirement in the traditional sense is not in their thinking.

The result may be a generation gap in church and society between the young-old and the "near elderly." One speaker recommended reinventing organizations to bridge this gap. The same model doesn't work all over.

The secret is to offer growth opportunities to members, to move to a higher level, to find ways to help boomers "act on their faith," not just to offer activity to keep the hours filled. One lay minister bemoaned the way congregations "dumbed down" older adult programming to a social a month and a few other gentle activities.

Another speaker recommended working hard at changing the public image of aging to something stronger and more vibrant, and especially to finding a corporate public voice. But we need to know what we want to say. *

A strong emphasis at the conference was that the human resources of the aging population are underutilized. They are not respected for what they have to offer - wisdom, experience, stability, resourcefulness, and courage.

- Reported by Katie Funk Wiebe, Wichita, Kansas

* What is the voice of MARP membership? See enclosed letter and please reply.

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