



Brooks-Howell Home
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Thanks in Summer

*When summer comes our thoughts are turned
To You who cradle all our earth
With food for all, abundant life,
And gracious gifts beyond all worth.*

*Forgive us now for careless ease
With which we waste the gifts you give.
Grant us a care for friend and foe
That in Your love, we all may live.*

–Helene R. Hill



From Our Administrator - -



This time I promise I am not crying Wolf! The contractors have a permit from the city of Asheville and are two weeks into the construction and wiring project. They plan to be completed by June 15, at which time the people from Alabama will arrive to train all of us on the software programs. These programs are going to do much more than allow any medical office to gather information on a patient; it will also allow all of Brooks-Howell personnel to gain access to certain parts of our residents' information. The data will be entered into the computer only one time

instead of each department having to enter the information which applies to them, and each department will be allowed to access only to the information that applies to their department.

With spring and summer approaching we will be welcoming many out of town guests and groups. This is a great time to visit our lovely mountains, wild flowers and ,of course, our beautiful grounds here at Brooks-Howell. And we have many interesting sites nearby. I hope many of you will join us this year for a visit with these great people that you sent to other areas in the United States and to faraway lands.

Joining us recently at Brooks-Howell were Shirley Cagle and Jeanne Cosner, local health care residents. Deaths included local resident Hortense Gunter, and missionary Leon Strunk (see the memorial on p. 3).

Until next time,
Nancy Garrison
Executive Director



Have you discovered that the *Serendipitor* may be seen on line—in color? Find the Western North Carolina Conference UMW e-Newsletter @ www.wnccumw.org . Find “Recent Conference and District News/Events” then find “Brooks-Howell Serendipitor” and click to open. To sign up to receive it regularly, find “Conference News/Posts,” and click where indicated to sign up for the email list. Choose the “Brooks-Howell Home Serendipitor” list, and any other list that you would like to join. (The file requires the free Adobe Acrobat Reader Version 7.0 or higher.) Or, find the Brooks-Howell website at <http://www.brooks-howell.org>. You will find it every two months, usually by the beginning of the second week, starting in January. If you decide to stop the paper subscription, please inform the editor (Esther Megill) at esthermegill453@gmail.com and your name will be removed from the mailing list. You will help save the trees, and the cost of printing and postage—and the color edition is much prettier!

In Memory –

Leon Everett Strunk

June 20, 1925

May 4, 2015



Leon Strunk was born in Vancouver, Washington, to Lester and Hilda Strunk, followed by two younger sisters. They lived on a small farm, but his father worked as a carpenter. This meant that when he was old enough, much of the farm work fell to Leon.

For the rest of his life he took pleasure in working with plants, and contributed much beauty to Brooks-Howell Home.

During his first year in high school he fell ill with poliomyelitis. He was unable to swallow and developed double pneumonia. At a crisis point in his illness the little rural Methodist Church which his family attended prayed all night for his healing. He did recover and during the war worked in a shipyard. At a youth camp he felt the call to missionary service.

In 1949 he graduated from Seattle Pacific College. During college his call to mission work was confirmed in various ways, and in 1950 he went to Brazil as one of the LA-3s (the short-term mission program for Latin America). He taught in a rural school and also was appointed a circuit riding pastor when the Brazilian bishop learned that he possessed a local preacher's license.

During that time he met Martha Johnson, a missionary teacher with the Women's Division. They were married in December of 1953 and moved to Atlanta, where he attended the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Martha worked to enable him to study. Leon took elder's orders in 1957 in Holston Conference under Bishop Roy Short. At that same conference he baptized their infant daughter, Alycia. Their second daughter, Joanna, was born in July of 1958. That fall he and Martha attended Scarritt College and sailed for Brazil on December 27, 1958. After

several months of refresher language study they were appointed to Salvador, Bahia, in Northeast Brazil, to start a new church in a slum area. They started two churches and a primary school.

It was in Salvador that their son, Nathaniel, was born. Then for a while they served churches in Bel Horizonte. Later Leon was appointed to Muriae with four churches, a building program and seventeen preaching points. From there they were moved to one of Brazil's largest Methodist Churches in Juiz de Fora, and from there went to be a director of the seminary in Belo Horizonte as well as pastor of two churches.

In 1977 Martha also became a pastor. They always had separate appointments, except for two years as chaplains at Granbery Institute, a Methodist school. Later they served churches in Belo Horizonte for eight years, during which time they each put up new buildings.

Retirement came in December of 1991, but they returned to Brazil and served as volunteers for another six years, during which time they built another church. They left Brazil on April 6, 1998, and spent some time visiting children and grandchildren, then arrived at Brooks-Howell on May 12, 1998.

They became associate members of Biltmore United Methodist Church, and were faithful and active members as long as health permitted. Leon spent a great deal of time making pottery and growing plants.



April Was Earth Month--

Caring for the earth is what we do at BHH! We intensify our efforts in April in celebration of Earth Day.

We decided to “shed our burdens” by: 1) saving plastic tops to be turned into a bench for a new senior center for blind and deaf older adults in Morganton; 2) clearing out those items we really don’t need and giving them to the White Elephant Sale, the proceeds of which are designated to be spent to enhance our “community” landscaping; 3) giving books, we thought we’d read sometime and never got around to it, to our library for the shelves or for the semiannual book sale that helps provide UMW reading program books; and 4) sorting and collecting private and personal papers to be destroyed in a green way.

We are a clever and creative “community.” As part of a unique and inspiring chapel service we became an animal, plant or mineral to tell humans what they need to be doing to protect the earth. For instance, among many others one became a monarch butterfly and asked us to plant milkweed for their protection and procreation. (Some seeds have been given to our gardeners for this purpose). Another was a squirrel that asked us to plant more nut trees so she could be kind to her feathered friends and not have to rob their feeders.

The Call to Worship for the service was the lighting of six candles in containers of different colors as we shared in the “Colorful Thankfulness Litany”:

Leader: For each of us, there are those cloudy and dull days of gray;

People: We are glad that our faith can convert them to moments of YELLOW sunshine!

Leader: For each of us, there are experiences which restrict and limit, keeping us imprisoned!

People: We are glad for our faith that opens to horizons where the GREEN of hope grows!

Leader: For each of us, some people and events contribute to a building of constant doubt:

People: We are glad for the theological assurance of God with us, creating the BLUE sky of trust!

Leader: For each of us, there is the possible world of silence and untruth which shut off life:

People: We are glad for the ROYAL PURPLE of truth which comes to us through God’s word, friends, and the potential future!

Leader: For each of us, the atmosphere of war is reality through our submission to hate and anger:

People: We are glad for the peaceful BROWNS which calmly enable us to remember God’s world of peace and good will!

Leader: For each of us, there are examples of unfairness, indecision and prejudice:

People: We are glad for the vivid REDS of equality and justice which call us to righteous indignation!

Leader: For each of us, there is the pain of absence, or the alienation of separation.

People: We are glad for the bright ORANGE of God’s love, that surrounds and supports us all like the water that supplies for the plant the miracle of the flower.*

Many scriptures and hymns spoke of the wonders of God’s creation.

–June Fischer



(Photo: Alycia Johnson)

*Source Unknown

The following was given by Bev Reddick as part of the Creation Week service on April 23:

Relational Creation: One Earthly Body

Our Christian interpretation of the Genesis creation story, in my view, has been detrimental to the created world. We have misconstrued "to have dominion over" to mean take control and dominate, doing whatever we want to Mother Earth and creation. Through centuries of acting with superiority, we Christians have been guilty of raping the earth's resources, contributing to animal extinction, causing the earth's warming at an alarming rate, and supporting environmental destruction and disasters.

Twenty years ago, I had the privilege of working with the Lakota Indians in South Dakota. Gerald One-Feather, one of the elders, greatly influenced me as he lived and taught the traditional native language and culture. Gerald's actions and decisions were formed, keeping in mind their effect on the next seven generations. Further, Gerald referred to "all my relations" when speaking of the animal and natural world. After every meal he took some food outside for animals and thanked them for being. Reverence, honor, and respect for all creation seeped from his being. In knowing Gerald, I came to realize that the Native Peoples understanding of "all my relations" was closer to God's intention than the Christian understanding of "dominion over." I wonder how different our nation and creation would be if the early settlers had learned and followed this Native People's way.

I'm a spiritual eclectic. From Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist, I have learned and valued the teaching of "inter-being." It is the understanding that everything is interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. When we look at a rose, do we see only a rose, or do we also see the sun, rain, soil, and worms . . . all that are closely intertwined in creating the rose? When we sit down to eat, do we pause and see the soil, rain and sun, birds and bees, and the farmers, all that is a part of the food? Do we remember truckers, grocers, and cooks who played a role in the meal's manifestation? Creation would benefit greatly if we lived consciously and deeply from the reality of our "inter-being" with all creation.

We are all familiar with 1 Corinthians 12, the scripture regarding "One Body With Many Members." The imagery of a human body is used to talk about the need and the value of all the different parts of the body of Christ. I am taking liberties and rewriting selected verses to image "all creation as one body."

The Creator's realm has many parts—animals, birds, minerals, plants, water, sun, stars, and microscopic cells—but no matter how many parts there are, God's Creation is One Body.

This Earthly Body is all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If snakes said, "We're not able to fly like birds; we don't belong to this earthly body," would that make it so? If insects said, "We're not large like reptiles, thus don't deserve a place in the body" should they be removed from the body? If the earthly body was all mammals, would we continue to exist? If all were fish, how would the world survive? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each living part of the earthly body right where God wanted it.

An earth with only plants would be a monster. What we have is one earthly body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important by itself. Can you imagine animals telling plants, "Get lost; we don't need you?" Or, oceans, telling the fish "You're fired; your job has been phased out?" As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—every part of creation needs every other part of creation. It makes *no* difference whether the part is large or tiny, whether it flies or creeps, functions with brains or uses innate sense. Give every part of creation dignity, honor and respect just as it exists, without comparisons. The way God designed all creation to be in relationship and to inter-be is a model for us

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Helene Hill & Friends Celebrate Helene's 95th Birthday

We ate ice cream cake, paid tribute, and stood in awe of a legend in her own time. Marilia Trevisani provided background music of Celtic music with her violin and helped us sing "Happy Birthday."

Tracey Owens recounted Helene's service career as a community center director & social worker, Deaconess and Diaconal Minister. Tracey also told of Helene's favorite things. Topping the list, Helene enjoys shopping, especially at the Asheville Mall. Helene also loves cats, teddy bears, her house mate Barbara, her sister & nieces. Tracey enjoys her laugh, her twinkling eyes, and her habit of blowing kisses.



Pat Polansky, a member of Jubilee church, told of Helene's leadership of the Gandhi group for peace and justice. Pat had participated on that team and valued Helene's leadership and friendship.

Debbie Pittman gave Helene the title of "Holy Harasser." Debbie first heard this title given to Pauline Precise at Pauline's memorial service. Pauline's minister called her the Holy Harasser. Deaconesses tend to stir up the status quo and these two were and are no exception.



Barbara Crouse read an "Ode to Helene" written by a friend regarding Helene's leadership through a difficult time of demanding change.

Thank you, Helene, for your service, your Holy Harassment, and your friendship to all of us at Brooks-Howell. Thanks also for advocating that Brooks-Howell have a swimming pool, and making the first contribution toward it.

--Marcia Knight

(Photos Debbie Pittman)



One could always recognize Helene's car!
(Photo: Barbara Crouse)

Relational Creation (Continued from p. 5)

humans to follow. Know that if one part of creation hurts or is endangered, every other part is involved in the hurting, and in the healing. If one part of creation flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance

Humans are but one part of God's earthly body—we are not a superior, or the main show, but just one part. We must never forget this. As the only creatures with consciousness, it is up to us to accept our role in this earthly body; we are responsible for protecting, conserving, honoring and treating all creation as "our relations" and for inter-being with all creation. We are responsible for seeing that God's earthly body prospers and thrives. Friends, we must never forget this. We must act accordingly.

--Bev Reddick

Book Review--

John Krummel (now deceased) wrote *Letters from Japan 1956-1997*, a history of the Japan of the time. He kept writing the quarterly letters, not annually, let alone on the occasional basis, but every single quarter for 42 years during his years of service. He was addressing his church friends in the home country who supported and enabled him to live and work in Japan in His name. It may give new insight into Japan to the reader. --Fusako Krummel

(The book may be purchased in the Gift Shop for \$4.00, plus postage if ordered.)

Jorie Ruegger's Mission Trip to Panama



On Saturday, February 28 at about 9:00 a.m. a group of United Methodists from Central United Methodist Church in Asheville and others, left Charlotte, NC at about 9:00 a.m. They had

planned to be at Faithful Servant Mission in time for supper. However, due to weather problems in Miami, they missed their flight to Panama City, so they had to spend a night in Miami. On Sunday they flew to Panama City, but had problems getting all twelve of them on a flight to David. So, they spent another night in Panama City before flying to David on Monday. There they were met by Audi, the Director. Finally, they arrived at the mission at about 4:00-5:00 p.m., only two days late.

Jorie writes: "We were located in Chirqui, a province in northwestern Panama, and were working with Ngobe-Bugle Indians, a very poor, isolated Indian tribe. Most of them do not speak Spanish and live in very poor conditions. The Ngobe-Bugle have the worst poverty rate among the seven indigenous tribes in Panama, and the highest incidence of malnutrition in the country.

"Faithful Servant Mission is a very interesting place. We stayed in a lovely mission house, with a large dining area, a women's bunk room with seven bunk beds (I assume the men's was the same), a bathroom with two showers, two sinks and two toilets. It was very comfortable, but having been in a remote mission station in Mexico, I found this a little overdone. We had a cook who prepared very good food. There was LOTS of fresh fruit: bananas, mangos, pineapple, etc. I was in 'seventh heaven' with that.

"The plan for the mission is to have 12-18 orphans, housed in two buildings. Due to politics in Panama the babies who were to arrive in April of last year were to arrive this April. (I have now heard that they are to arrive in May.) The couple who manage the facility basically do not speak Spanish, but fortunately there is a lovely Panamanian girl who had three years in college and speaks excellent English. She has done all the

work in getting the papers required by the government.

"We split up our twelve-member team. Two of us worked on sewing, making bed sheets for the cribs and aprons for the workers. Some went to work putting tiles on the church floor (a Pentecostal Church), and others to digging a drainage ditch behind the parsonage. In spite of having lost two working days, we completed all but just a little of the drainage ditch. That will be easy for men in the church to finish.

"A friend of mine had given some money which we used to buy rice, beans, sugar and oil that we distributed to those in need, along with lots of candy for the children. I also took some stuffed animals that were donated, and the children were enthralled with them. Most had never had anything like that.

"We had a wonderful team. I was blessed to have this as my last mission trip. (I know I cannot physically go on another) and God brought us all home safely."

—Jorie Ruegger



Marjorie (Jorie) Ruegger sewing



Children with their first stuffed animals-- see their delight at this gift!

(Photos provided by Jorie Ruegger)

MS Awareness Day

We first became really aware of the day that we recognize persons in our BHH family who have MS when we noticed on our in-house TV channel that we should wear orange on April 17. This was an opportunity for us to honor these friends for their display of courage as they live with the disease.

When we spread the word about wearing orange, we found that many of us don't wear orange; so some of us went to the neighborhood fabric shop and bought them out of orange ribbon to tie orange bracelets around our wrists. Greg, Irma, Debbie and Kathy were introduced at lunch as very special people, and cards for each of them were signed (many with notes) by the BHH family.

On Sunday afternoon Debbie and Marilyn participated in the annual Walk for MS which raises money for research. More than \$1000 has been raised from within our Home (at this printing). Our family continues its outreach to these incredible people.

--Ann Janzen



Irma and June enjoy the lunch

(Photo: Debbie Pittman)

Stony Point Reunion

Brooks-Howell Home hosted the reunion of the missionaries who trained together at the Missionary Orientation Center in Stony Point, NY, in the winter/spring of 1967. The group that gathered May 7-10 consisted of 14 of the original 35 adults and three of the 36 children who shared the Stony Point experience 48 years ago. Reunions are held every two years, usually near the homes of group members.

Those attending were Darr and Carol Briggs (Iran), Mona Bomgaars (Nepal), Warren and Jo Harbert (Indonesia, Cambodia), Ward Murray (Cameroon), Helen Nash-Alder (Korea), Don and Ramona Turman (Indonesia), Punch and Casey Woods (Mexico). The "kids" who attended were Carol Murray MacAdam, Morna Murray, Keith Turman and his son Ross. Norma Kehrberg, former director of UMCOR, also attended.

In addition to a lot of time spent reminiscing and catching up, the group explored Asheville and spent a day on the Cherokee Reservation and in Dillsboro. A Circle of Remembrance was held for those who have died.

In the 1960's and 1970's the Stony Point Missionary Orientation Center was an interdenominational center providing intensive training to missionaries going into service around the world.

Our thanks to the staff and residents of Brooks-Howell Home for being such gracious hosts.

--Don Turman

