

Writers Forum

By GEORGE B. RUSS

For better or for worst, a 1974 calendar has already been added to the clutter on my work-bench. First of all the shiny new orange and white "Success" calendar is a subtle reminder that I won't be able to catch up my work even if I burn the candle at both ends until New Year's Eve.

Winter vacations once were a solution to the eye-sore pile of clippings, letters to family and friends, but as time passed I learned how to be lazy and spent the winter interlude waiting around for the Spring harbinger to jolt me away from the hallowed aura around the television screen. Springtime is a time for being out-of-doors stirring up the smell of the good earth—a season to forget chores that bind a free spirit—and, so goes the circle of excuses.

A new calendar to remind one that it is much later than one thinks is an unpleasant morsel to digest. I dislike being prodded into doing what should be done, however, there is a joy in knowing that I can be shaken from the clutches of languor.

Soon the season of Homecoming Observances will be upon us, therefore, Writers Forum will hasten to bridge the gap between "Family Reunions and "Homecomings."

The best in dramatic presentations at Union Baptist Church during the summer was a colorful pageant called the "Twelve Tribes of Israel" narrated by the illustrious Reverend Mack, pastor of the Morehead Baptist Church along with the Church's Gospel Chorus who sing the praises, the hopes, the faiths, the aspirations of each tribe; sponsored by the Up-To-Date-Galeda Club. Mrs. Addie Mack handled the physical aspects; Miss Annie M. Dunigan served as Personal Relations Person.

The best in Anniversary celebrations was the Willing Workers Missionary Circle's 30th Anniversary Commemoration.

The best well-rounded 15 minute service of the season: A Recognition Service in honor of Mrs. Celestia Sanders, the recipient of the "Teacher of the Year" award from the John W. Neal Junior High School. Mrs. Sanders is teacher of the Dorcas Class who was in charge of the service. Aside from a shower of praises from the class president, Mrs. Sattie H. Russ and W. P. Edwards, the Founder of the Dorcas Class; she was given a "golden rose," a pin of appreciation and wishes for many happy returns of good will, good cheer for your good works.

A rising vote of thanks goes to the members of Union Baptist Church and the Russ-Sanders Singers who sang with the Billy Graham Crusade's 3000 voice choir—recently held in Carter Stadium in Raleigh; Mmes. Stattie H. Russ, Hattie P. Partin, Rosetta Cobb, Sarah Bruce, Irene Hall, Sadie L. Thompson.

The Union Baptist Sunday School won the coveted "Attendance Trophy" of the 5th District Sunday School Convention during the Thursday evening session; September 20th; at the West Durham Baptist Church, on Nixon Street; Dr. Harold J. Cobb pastor. Messrs. Charles and James Cameron are elated over winning the trophy, however, the feathers in their caps should have been awarded for the splendid job they did in recruiting 3 choirs: the Junior Male Chorus under the direction of Mrs. Mary Shaw; the Russ-Sanders Singers and The Grady Davis Choir.

"There Will Be Some Changes Made" was the subject of Rev. N. B. Sanders sermon when he spoke for Stewardess Board No. 2's Anniversary Program; Rev. L. H. Whelchel, pastor. The Russ-Sanders Singers was the guest choir.

Miss Phoebe is still "hanging in there" keeping up with the many activities at U.B.C. And this is no small challenge for man or bus.

The most aweinspiring program was executed by the Junior in concert for the Tiny-Tots choir. Mrs. Viola Thompson, directress of the Tots' Choir, was so well pleased with the results of the concert that she was willing, able and ready to take off on a much needed vacation. Strangely enough, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson did not seek a nice quiet resort to spend their vacation, they motored "up-the-road" to Philadelphia, Pa., Newark and Orange, N.J. where they visited friends and relations. The absence from routine was real tonic for Viola, she is much more relaxed and generous with the smiles.

Love and kisses to all those persons who are keeping up with the Jim Whittington Prayer Crusade; Mr. and Mrs. Alfonza Hamilton and others who punched in during the Raleigh and Greensboro Crusades.

Our Girl-Sunday, Mrs. Pauline Boxley is still ecstatically happy over her trip to Nassau. "I traveled with a trio of seasoned travelers; Mmes. Augusta Jones, Annie Nelson and Marie Taylor. Therefore I got a chance to enjoy the 'Goombay Summer Festivals' to the hilt. Thanks to my wonderful Washington, D. C. friends. Cloud 9 has become my constant companion."



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE HOSTS CCDF LONG RANGE PLANNING CONFERENCE—These are the participants in the Cooperative Colleges Development Program's Long Range Planning Conference. Key persons on the front row are, left to right: Dr. Prezell R. Robinson, president of Saint Augustine's College, host to the conference; George Stokes, deputy director, Washington Bureau; Phelps Stokes Fund; Thomas Katus, program coordinator, Washington Bureau; Dr. Marie Gadsden, director, Washington Bureau; Dr. Hortense Dixon, assistant vice president, academic affairs and director of the Urban Resource Center, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas; Dr. Satish Parekh, professor, business administration, Howard University, Washington, D.C.; Ms. Angela LeRe', administrative assistant, Washington Bureau, Phelps Stokes Fund; Ms. Thelma Wingard, secretary, Washington Bureau; Robert Griffin, associate program director, New York Office, Phelps Stokes Fund.

Life Begins At 62½

By George Russ

We need a good vocabulary, says the publisher, to understand more clearly what we read and hear, to think with greater clarity and logic, and to express ourselves more effectively when we speak or write. A command of words instills confidence in one's ability to speak convincingly and impress others with one's knowledge and understanding.

Miss Madie was aware that she was behaving the way "ah-helferish" woman carries on; she wasn't going from one bed to another like "an strumpet;" but, she was setting a new traffic record with males. Engaged to one and dating another within twenty four hours was too much honey for the sugar. She left "shorty-pants" grinning from ear to ear. And she chalked this achievement on her "good-deed-a-day" chart. However, she was more than a little disconcerted by her uninhibited behavior. It was one thing to be good looking and desirable, but it was another thing to make one's virtues available to every Tom, Dick and Harry. She had no excuse to offer in defense of her ingenious performances in handling her suitors. The joy of being courted by Will Deal and Jeff Boykins had caused her brain to jump time. Now, she felt like a silly-goose who has followed her goslings into a dead-fall. She had committed no scarlet sin; nevertheless, she was guilty of foolhardiness. A folly unbecoming to a person of her upbringing.

"Mister Ben" was fast asleep when Miss Madie arrived with his honeydew melon. One moment she wanted to drop the melon on his egg-head nestled on the snowy pillow; then, she was touched with pity for the withered little man whose expression was angelic as he lay sleeping. His bark was really worse than his bite and she wished, remorsefully, that she had not been so spiteful toward him for wanting a honeydew melon. And for the first time, she caressed the greenish-white melon with gentle fingers.

Miss Madie was eating breakfast when three neighborhood boys darkened the doorway of the kitchen; one spoke up sheepishly; "We been here once, Miss Madie."

Her first impression was to shoo the boys away, but upon second thought she called out cheerfully to them; "come in 'n have ah-bite of breakfast— your Miss Madie's day started before you little baboons had tuck your second nap to sleep."

The boys scampered into the clinically- clean kitchen. Children loved Miss Madie and, in truth, she was fond of the noisy, dirty, little brats who lived here at Bayborough Heights. Adults found her snappish 'n queer; children enjoyed the way she handed out affection 'n hot biscuits with butter 'n jelly, apples, oranges, doughnuts 'n milk.

While grown-ups of Bayborough Heights complained of "bad, half raised, wild younguns," Miss Madie clucked over and around them like a mother hen. For every age and size, she had a little job for them to do.

Wadell Square was one of the cleanest, best kept areas in the City. No scattered toys, automobile tires, bricks and sticks, paper and rags; no broken down trees and shrubs; no boxes, garden tools, discarded furniture to blight this sector of the Housing Project.

Madie Perkins had a way of getting things done with the least amount of fanfare. She believed with all her heart that there was a time for all things: a time to eat 'n a time to sleep; a time to play 'n a time to pick up plunder 'n put it in the right place; a time to slap sassy mouths; a time to say "no" 'n mean what you say.

While the boys bolted down grits 'n eggs, hot biscuits generously buttered, she implemented her time with serious thoughts. Jeff Boykins' proposal of marriage was tempting; but, she was reluctant to rush in where angels fear to tread. While marriage wasn't the farthest hope from her mind, getting adjusted to a husband is no basement bargain where she and Jeff were concerned; "he's old 'n I'm old; he's set in his ways 'n I'm nothing short of set in my ways; he's ailing 'n I'm ailing; he wanting to be waited on 'n I'm needing waiting on; him wanting his back scratched 'n I'm needing mah own back scratch— ain't going to be no you scratch my back 'n I'll scratch yours; a man, he marries-ah- woman to wait on him hand 'n foot and a woman is suppose to be grateful she's got him. There are exceptions to the rule, but they are few 'n far between. For some unknown reason, she couldn't bury the belief that Jeff wanted more than a cook 'n somebody to wait on him, "pot 'n spoon." She was hard to fool when 't comes to recognizing "ah-fly-in-ah-bowl of buttermilk. He was handsome, well-dressed, well-educated and the bearer of other good considerations. Aside from her dubious good looks 'n spotless reputation, she had very little to offer Jeff of any other man. Her social security was still a long way off and, if the Kaypots discontinued her meager allowance, she would not have a leg to stand on. If she were a young woman, her looks and natural endowments might put her in good stead; but, when a woman begins courting pains around the clock, she can forget her looks being a stepping stone to a happy marriage. Hardwork, epsom salts 'n cream-o-tartar, liniment 'n hot water bottles and brought her safe thus far, therefore she had no intention of destroying a way life that had served her so well.

The boys' noisy laughter suddenly broke through the wall of Miss Madie's muddled brain and she was about to scold them when Jethro, her favorite tongue-tied boy, came up to her and began stammering; "what is it, Jetty?" Miss Madie asked.

Elmer and Joe Louis were suddenly seized by uncontrollable laughter.

"Boys! what's funny?"

Elmer quickly quelled his laughter; "Jethro is trying to tell you about what Miss Bella McDougal did to a guy's car."

Miss Madie was disappointed because she hadn't heard anything to make her squall. "What was so funny?"

"You'd have to see what we saw, Miss Madie— the man cried like a baby."

"I reckon so, sonny-boy- I'd have to see what you seed to get the funny part of your joke." Miss Madie did her best to hide her great fear? -Continued.

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