

PERSPECTIVE

Eastern Echos

Rosa Mae's Path

BY GAIL L. ROBERSON

"Across the fields of yesterday she sometimes comes to me...a little child just back from play...the child I used to be." I don't remember where I heard those words, but they've been in my notes for over 20 years now.

I knew that some day I'd have a use for them, and today, through all the shuffling, they've somehow surfaced at the top of my file. And, they've made me want to go back home again, just for a little while.

They say you can't do that...go back home again, but I know differently. Oh, I know things will never be the same back there on that farm, but I'm also aware that if I want to hard enough, I can find myself a big old tree and sit myself down for a spell...and remember the way it was. It's the next best thing to going back.

But today, I'm remembering you, Rosa Mae. Do you still think of me after all this time? I've heard that you now live about halfway between where we grew up out there in the country and the city limits. I hope you're happy.

I returned the other day, bundled up against the cold, just so I could walk down that old rural road until I found our path again. Do you remember that path through the hedgerow, Rosa Mae?

It's still there, just the way we left it all those years ago. You and I climbed up and down that embankment so much that the underbrush refused to grow back. We even used it for a "sliding board" at times.

And now, in the cold of late winter, bordering on spring, the sight of that little path again has allowed me to cross over to that other side...the side I used to know. And today, I especially needed that luxury.

I walked passed the tobacco barn and stood beneath the tree whose limbs once held my tobacco string as I looped the big green leaves fresh up from the "primers" in the field. But, that was after you had already left.

The house you once occupied across the road from the barn was torn down years ago, and mama's annual vegetable garden has been thriving here for almost as long as I can recall.

But, that was after you had gone too.

The only evidence left now is an occasional marble or a fragment of broken china that is turned up in the newly plowed soil each year.

But, while you were here, it was just as for a while...and sometimes the younger one who tagged along and you called "little sister." When we weren't playing on the hedgerow we were usually sipping lemonade in the outhouse.

What a place to play. But we thought it was a mansion in those days. It was our hideaway, our cabin in the woods, our escape from chores and the real world.

As children, we didn't need a lot. We thought we already had it all. We didn't even realize that the color of our skin was different in those days. Come to think of it, I guess we did have everything, didn't we?

I remember how we collected bits of broken glass from the road and hid a quart jar of it on the farm.

We were playing pirates that day, and arguing about whether Blackbeard had really ever sailed up the Roanoke and hidden his treasure in the fields nearby.

And I told you about the novel I planned to write some day, and how I'd put the big house right along the river bank and call the pretty girl "Leighanna." I'm doing that, Rosa Mae. I wonder what you're doing now.

And finally, when late afternoon snuck up on us, old "Aunt Rose" would send for you or stand out on her porch and give a yell, and we'd part company under a pearl-gray sky picking up the pink rays of the setting sun.

Usually, by then, the evening air was filled with mosquitoes and the aroma of fish frying on the stove and stewed potatoes bubbling on the back burner at either your house or mine.

Though we were just children when you left that farm, I've never forgotten those days we played together or your devoted friendship.

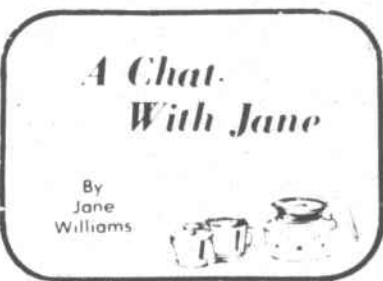
I named that little path along the hedgerow after you when you left. I thought it would help preserve those moments...freeze them in time, somehow. I guess it has. At least for me. But, do you remember, Rosa Mae?

Must be someone paying their light bill



Science projects are parental downfall

I don't know about the rest of you, but I sure am glad that science projects are only due once a year.



From the beginning of Christmas vacation all I heard was science projects. "Mama my project is due in March," "What am I going to do my project on?" "When are you going to help me with my project?" and so on.

After nearly four months of harrassment and constant questions the project finally made its way out of my den and into the library at Perquimans Central.

I can remember being in school, with science projects due, waiting for the day that I'd never have to even remotely think of doing a project again. I have recently discovered that that day will never come.

This was Michael's first year for a project and there are at least eight more that he'll have to complete prior to gaining his diploma. Jennifer hasn't even started yet.

If science projects don't accomplish anything else, they offer a continuing education process for parents. You have to use all of your resources to aid your child in coming up with an original idea (Michael's teacher, bless her soul, frowns on volcanoes.) Then you have to learn patience, a virtue which I apparently have never acquired.

Once a project has been picked out, a parent tends to get a perfected image of what the final works should look like. Children, on the other hand, don't always see that vision. They're more concerned with getting it done - fast. (I guess they lack patience too.)

Once the work on the project begins, they neither want or ask for your guidance or suggestions. If you have anything that you would like to see done on the project they'll quickly let you know that you're more than welcome to do it yourself. They don't want to do the project anyway...they just want to win the prize.

"Our" project this year was "The Heart." Michael was very interested in the subject until we suggested that he take the

initiative to do research and compile a report on the functions of the heart to accompany the diagrams. Cutting out pre-printed materials, painting and designing was one thing, but writing...you'd think we'd asked him to undertake a transplant. (He probably would have been more willing to do that.)

Eventually, the night before the project was due, the report that was to take a center spot on the project was completed.

There had been about 50 trips

to the hardware store to get all of the supplies needed to make the project, and when he was ready to mount all of the information on

the board only one item was missing, thumb tacks.

We dug in every drawer, nook and cranny of the house and office to accumulate enough tacks to get the job done, and finally the project was complete.

To the children that participated in the Science Fairs at school I salute you. I know that there was a lot of time and

energy put into the projects that I have had the opportunity to view.

To the parents that survived the science project dilemma I sympathize. Just remember, science projects cannot endure forever...the kids have to grow up sometime.

Now that it's all over I think I'll avoid anything of scientific nature for at least another year. But I guess, when I look at that Third Place Ribbon, dangling from my mantle, it was all worth it.

Expression of concern is vital

If it weren't for the children, it might not be that hard to forget.

Before this day is over, thousands more will have died. Of that number, many will be children. Children who could not understand what was happening to them, children that had never known a single day without the pain of hunger.

realize that these people are not beggars asking for a hand-out. I made myself realize they have had no control over the years of drought and government neglect that has made their situation so serious.

There is something you and I can do about this very serious situation, and it will only take a few pennies and a few minutes. The Ethiopians need food, blankets and medicine.

Of the items noted, the need for food is the greatest. And, America has plenty of excess grain on hand to feed those that need it most. We've got millions of tons of surplus grain stockpiled, grain that will mean the difference between life or death for thousands of children.

The names and addresses of your congressional representatives are listed inside your phone book. Take a few moments to write each a short note demanding immediate shipment of grain to Ethiopia. Tell them to give this need their immediate personal attention.

We simply can't sit by and watch thousands of our fellow humans starve when we have so much, especially when it will cause no hardship for us to do so.

Don't delay. Each day our storage bins are overflowing with millions of tons of train, thousands are starving.

How often can such a small price bring relief to thousands? The few moments you spend expressing your concern to our elected officials could be the most important moments in your life, and could very well mean the difference between living or a very painful death from starvation for thousands.

Point of View
by: **BILL NIXON**

It shows in their thin, naked bodies, and it shows in their eyes. They are listless, they show very little of the energy displayed by most children.

They are starving in Ethiopia. You know that and I know that. We've seen the stories outlining the plight of thousands of Ethiopians as they are able to do nothing except wait for death. Many have attempted to put the images of the starving children out of their minds, to forget their suffering while we sit back with our stuffed bodies.

I have been no different. While I have viewed the short news releases with a certain amount of concern, I've quickly forgotten. Except for a small donation at Christmas, I've not given them much thought. I haven't wanted to. Not until now.

I made myself watch a complete special on a CBN station this week. I made myself

300th Anniversary of Handel's of Handel's birth celebrated

This year the world celebrates the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Frideric Handel. The son of a barber-surgeon, Handel was born on February 23, 1685, in the Saxon city of Halle.



His father intended him to be a lawyer, but young Handel was born for music. According to an old tale, the boy smuggled a small keyboard instrument into his attic so he could freely develop his talent and inclination.

Before he was 20, Handel had already served as a cathedral organist in his home city and as a member of the opera orchestra in Hamburg. The first of his nearly 40 operas was produced in 1705.

After several years of study and composition in Italy, Handel received the important post of kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover in 1710. He took a leave of absence to visit England, which eventually became his permanent home.

Handel devoted much of his early career to the writing of operas in the Italian style and to music for court use. (His coronation anthems of 1727 have been sung at every subsequent English coronation.)

When popular taste lost interest in old-fashioned operas,

Handel turned more and more to the composition of oratorios, many of which dealt with religious and moral themes.

The greatest of Handel's oratorios, the work most closely linked to his name, is "Messiah," first produced in Dublin in 1742 and still a standard work universally performed.

Handel was an expert performer on the keyboard, especially the organ, and he continued to play after blindness limited his ability to compose. Bearing fame and honor, Handel died on April 14, 1759, in London; he was buried in no less a place than Westminster Abbey.

"Messiah" is given innumerable times every year, and other oratorios such as "Judas Maccabaeus" have

remained familiar.

Handel's early opera "Rinaldo" was presented last season by the Metropolitan Opera, which will perform the oratorio "Samson" next season. Much of Handel's other music is available on record, and many works have been recently revived for public performance.

While it is unlikely that Handel's music was performed in Perquimans County during his lifetime, it is certainly heard here today.

Many a piano student was weaned on his keyboard works, and no church organist is unfamiliar with the "largo." Even the non-music lover pays unknowing homage to George Frideric Handel whenever he sings "Joy to the World" and "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night."

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