

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kudos to Bullard Elementary schools, staff, Michelle Hurst

Here it is the last week of school and the last time I'll be driving to the elementary school.

The last of my two daughters is heading to fourth grade. Both our girls began their school careers at Bullard Elementary, and they have been blessed with great teachers.

I have worked at the Fall Festivals, enjoyed the field days and the award ceremonies.

I'd like to thank Mrs. Hurst who works so hard to make the children's time they spend at school both fun and educational.

Mrs. Hurst has that school running like a well oiled machine.

She is there mornings and afternoons on car duty.

I think it's wonderful that the principal of the school is there to welcome them.

We moved to Bullard because of the school and so far it has lived up to its reputation.

So, again a big thank you to Mrs. Hurst and her staff for all their hard work and though I won't miss the drive down Schoolhouse Road I will miss them.

Jennifer MacWhirter
Bullard

Bullard library to fete a longtime volunteer

Bullard Community Library Board of Directors announces the recent retirement of Board President, Pat Martin, a library advocate, supporter and Board member since 1980.

Mrs. Martin has served the library in a variety of capacities, beginning in the early days of the library, when the Re-Blast events were under way, and when library supporters compiled and published the two-volume set of "Bullard : Its History and People."

As a former teacher, Mrs. Martin has always had an intense interest in reading, for children and adults.

She has seen her students grow to adulthood, and is overjoyed to see many of them still regularly using the library and bringing their own children.

In recent years, in cooperation with the Literacy Council of Tyler, Mrs. Martin faithfully coordinated adult literacy and GED tutoring at Bullard Community Library, discontinuing only when current crowding and high traffic at the library made it nearly



impossible to schedule private tutoring sessions.

In her years of service for the library, Mrs. Martin has witnessed the "new" log building, seen community-wide support and involvement for the library through the Re-Blast fund-raising years, and taken part in a number of annual Tours of Homes.

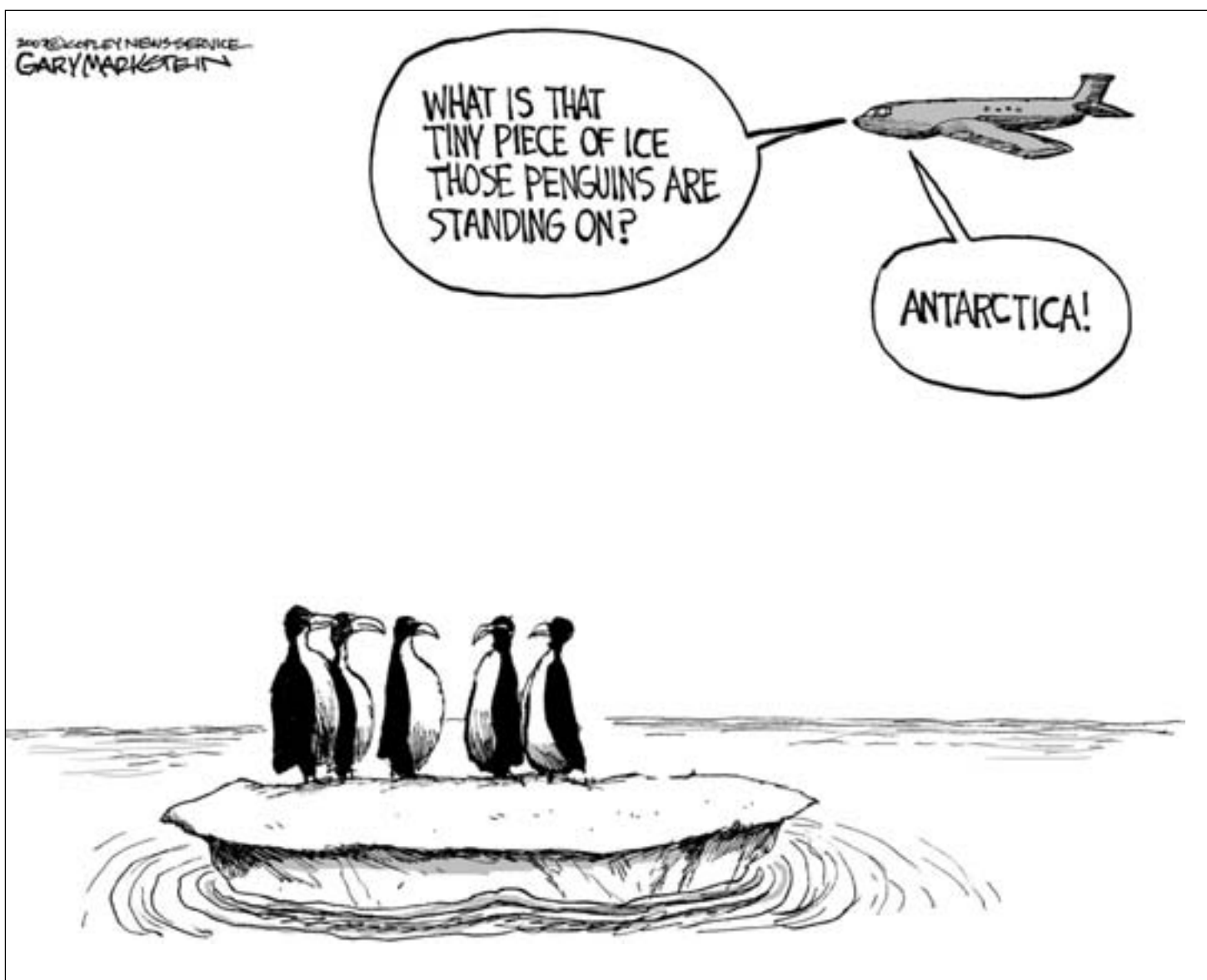
She has seen the transition from "stamping books" to computer-based circulation has been instrumental in the current campaign to raise funds for a new library building and has been a tireless advocate and public voice for the library.

The library board and staff wish to show their appreciation of Mrs. Martin's years of service, her expertise and faithful assistance.

There will be a brief presentation on Saturday, June 2, at the library, at 10:30 a.m.

The public -- former students, community members, and other library supporters -- are invited to share this time with Mrs. Martin.

CARTOON



COLUMN

Holidays evolve, memories remain

I remember when it was still called "Decoration Day": a somber holiday dedicated to honoring the soldiers and sailors who gave their lives for our country.

Back in the 1940's before it was a three-day holiday, it was common to remember deceased military and family members on the last weekend in May.

For us, the weekend unofficially began when my father came home from work Friday wearing a "Buddy Poppy."

Daddy got it for a donation to the Veterans of Foreign Wars who were stationed at the major corners throughout Chicago.

My little brother and I always fought over who would get the red gauze flower from Daddy's lapel.

Mom wisely let Johnny have it first; knowing he would soon grow tired of it and then give it to me to keep.

Though spring had begun months ago, by the end of May daytime temperatures were in the 70's and evenings averaged in the 50's.

It was the ideal time to go to the cemetery and tend to the plants on the family plots.

More like an expedition than a family outing, it was a major project that started on Saturday after lunch.

My father took our black 1937 Plymouth from the garage where it was stored all week long.

Daddy drove to the Standard Oil Service Station at 63rd and Homan where the attendant checked the oil and water and filled the tank with high-test gas priced at 24 cents a gallon.

When he got back home, Daddy washed and polished our black four-door sedan until it shined like a billiard ball.

Then he parked it in the garage for the next day's journey.

Sunday afternoon, he drove our family chariot around to the front of the house.

Johnny and I got into the back seat, Mom got into the front seat next to Daddy, and we all waited for Grandma Providenza.

Always the last one to get ready, Grandma finally appeared at the front steps.

Italian women in the 1940's wore black for a year when a close relative died. Still mourning the loss of her son Laurence, Grandma had on a black crepe dress, black shoes, carried a matching black leather pocketbook and wore black gloves.

A black hat with shiny black feathers jetting out from the band topped off her cemetery-appropriate outfit.

With Grandma in the back seat, we were ready for the hour and a half drive to Mount Carmel Cemetery in the suburb of Hillside.

We usually got about two miles from the house, when my stomach started getting queasy.

"Mommy, I don't feel good," I whined.

My parents were used to hearing those

ANTOINETTE JACKSON



Mangia!
Mangia!



Flanked by potted red geraniums, a large granite headstone in Mount Carmel Cemetery marks the final resting place of Giovanni and Providenza Falchetta, their 10-year-old daughter Iolanda, and 31-year-old son Lorenzo.

words from me. Daddy stopped at the next gas station so I could sit up front with them and look out the front window to steady my nausea.

He turned on the radio just in time for us to hear, "Who knows? The Shadow knows."

It was the start of one of our favorite radio mysteries.

Even though there was no picture, in these pre-television days, we had no trouble envisioning the scenes of the unfolding drama.

As we listened to the radio stories, the trip seemed shorter, and soon we were at the Falchetta family plot.

Daddy worked around the area with a spade and gardening tools brought from home.

He pulled up weeds, trimmed back the cypress bushes and aerated the grass.

Mom cleaned the headstone, all the while keeping two restless youngsters from disrespectfully running around the sacred grounds.

My father purchased plants from the greenhouse located outside the gates.

He placed pots of scarlet red geraniums in the urns on either side of the headstone.

Grandma sat pensively on the bench, staring at the names and cameos on the stones: husband Giovanni 1879-1924, daughter Iolanda 1917-1927, and son Lorenzo 1914-1945.

My grandmother and mother shared memories, shed tears and said prayers for the repose of the souls.

As an 8-year-old, I didn't quite understand, but knew it was a sad time for them.

When Daddy was finished, we all stood back and admired the little plot of ground brightened by the red geraniums.

The dead now properly honored, it was time for the drive home.

Decades have passed since those Sunday drives to Mount Carmel. All the old timers are gone and buried in their own family plots.

My cousins and I have moved away from the area and visits to the cemetery are rare.

Decoration Day is now called Memorial Day, and during the three-day weekend in May most of us head for the beach instead of the cemetery.

But most years, even if only for a few moments, I travel back to the time when families drove to Mount Carmel and paid respect to the departed by marking their graves with bright red geraniums.

I think of my grandmother, my parents, my aunts and uncles who have now joined them.

And, with tears in my eyes I say a little prayer, "May their souls and all the souls of the faithfully departed rest in peace. Amen."

Italian Sausage and Peppers

Sausage and Peppers were our favorite Saturday afternoon lunch.

Flavors of spicy sausages blended with mild green peppers and served on French bread create the perfect sandwich.

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 medium bell peppers, sliced 1/2 inch wide

2 medium onions, sliced
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 pound mild Italian sausage
Water to cover
2 tablespoons red wine
1 loaf French bread

In a large heavy skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add peppers, onions, salt and pepper and sauté until just wilted, about 5 minutes.

Remove from pan and set aside. Add sausage to frying pan, and carefully add enough water to cover.

Poke each sausage three or four times with the tines of a fork. Bring to a boil and simmer for about five minutes.

Drain off water and return sausage to pan.

Continue cooking over medium heat until all sides are just brown.

Add peppers, onions and wine and cook about five more minutes until peppers are soft and sausage is no longer pink inside.

Slice French bread into 6-inch lengths and again in half for sandwiches.

Serves about 5.

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To be considered for publication, letters should be original, bear the signature of the author and include an address and telephone number for verification. (Address and telephone number will not be printed.)

Short letters are most likely to be chosen.

Deadlines: Articles, Classified and Display ads: Thursday noon.

Errors: Errors will be corrected upon being brought to the editor's attention before the deadline of the next issue.