

COLUMN

Reader adds ideas for hospital help

I love it when I hear from readers, so here's a little something from my e-mail box.

CATHY KRAFVE



Checklist Charlie

Dear Checklist Charlie, I appreciated reading your recent article about hospital visits.

I volunteer at Huguley Hospital in Rort Worth and am always interested in a subject that relates to my work.

I enjoyed your many ideas of what to bring when you visit someone in the hospital.

I really had never thought of the photograph idea, but thought that was a wonderful way to bring joy to someone by having familiar pictures to comfort them.

I also thought of a few other good ideas that I would like to share with your readers.

■ If someone has been unable to attend church service, they would probably enjoy a bulletin from the services they've missed.

■ We have some friends who bring songbooks from the church and sing in the room. I've always thought that I would like fellow Christians to sing with me if I were in the hospital.

Thank you so very much for all of your thoughts. I look forward to your next article.

Sincerely,
Leslie Jones,
Fort Worth

Okay, this is me again. I am so happy Leslie took the time to write me and share her ideas.

I thought they were great.

However, this a truth in journalism moment because it is only fair that I report that Leslie is one of my beloved cousins.

Yes, we were raised by brothers who were both medical doctors, so that explains why we tend to get opinionated when it comes to hospitals.

In fact, it probably explains why we tend to be opinionated in general.

Having opinions is a family trait.

When Leslie read my hospital columns, she asked me why I didn't include more about how comforting prayer is.

Probably because I don't usually view miracles the way other people do.

And that subject deserves its own column.

But, she has a point about

prayer, doesn't she?

So here are a few thoughts I can express briefly about prayer.

■ I've noticed that when I offer to pray for people, they always say yes.

Whether they are in the hospital or not.

I'm talking about complete strangers.

Does that surprise you as much as it does me?

■ I've also noticed that certain people are very effective when they pray.

When I finally get desperate enough to remember to ask them for prayer I am amazed at how quickly I see change developing.

Now, why should that be a surprise?

■ Last time I had a close friend in the hospital, we had so many people praying that we lost track of them all.

We felt like it was effective.

I take that to mean that we were praying toward the very thing that God was intending to do.

It is the holidays and we don't like to think about being in the hospital this time of year, so what a weird subject for a column, right?

I have noticed that illnesses don't seem to care what day of the year it is.

If you are reading this as you wait for the doctor to stop by your room, I hope there is comfort for you somewhere in between the lines.

If you are one of the hard-working men and women that keep our hospitals staffed 365 days a year, thank you.

May the Lord return your goodness and kindness back to you by blessing you and your family.

Soon, I will be writing with ideas for simply enjoying the holidays.

Write me with your ideas. I love to hear from readers.

■ **Cathy Primer Krafve, aka Checklist Charlie, is spending this holiday with her family in her very favorite vacation spot in the whole world, beautiful East Texas. She welcomes all lists and comments at CaeKrafve2@aol.com.**

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CARTOON



COLUMN

North on Pulaski, East on Chicago

To Taddeo Cousins We Go. It happens every year at Christmastime. While listening to Karen Carpenter sing "I'll be home for Christmas," I drift off into a kaleidoscope of past holiday memories.

By the time she sings "Christmas Eve will find me . . ."

I'm 11 years old looking out the living room window while my father prepares the car for our family trip to the North Side.

There we'll celebrate the Feast of Seven Fishes with Uncle Pete and Aunt Antoinette and their family.

I watch as the white smoke curls out of the exhaust pipe from our 1947 Plymouth parked at the curb.

While the heater warms up the inside of the vehicle, Daddy scrapes the snow off the windshield.

Then with a wave of his hand, he signals that our four-door sedan is ready to go.

I call out to the rest of the family that Daddy says it's time to put on our coats.

By the third week in December, my brother John and I were used to bundling up for sub-freezing temperatures.

On special occasions, like this Christmas Eve, Nonna Providenza and Mom preferred to wrap themselves in their warm fur coats.

Daddy locked the front door while my brother and I and walked down the newly shoveled front steps.

"Get in quick before you let all the heat out," Daddy said as Johnny climbed into the back seat next to Grandma and I scooted in up front next to my mother.

Though less than 10 miles from our house on the South Side to the Taddeo's house on the Chicago Avenue, the falling snow and freezing slush on the roads could make driving treacherous.

Daddy made his way cautiously along

ANTOINETTE JACKSON



Mangia! Mangia!

Pulaski Road, with windshield wipers moving in sync with the falling snow and defrosters blowing a steady stream of warm air against the cold windshield.

"Turn on the radio, Mary" my father said. "It'll take your mind off the road."

Mom tuned the radio up and down the dial until she reached WMAQ.

Gene Autry was singing "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." "Stop there, Mom," I said.

Rudolph, one of our favorite Christmas characters, was the promotional mascot of Montgomery Ward where our cousin Angie Taddeo worked part time during the holidays.

Next "Silent night, holy night" played through the chrome grill of our car radio. Mom started singing along in her beautiful soprano voice.

Johnny joined her in his yet-unchanged seven-year-old tenor and I harmonized the alto part.

Singing along with the Christmas carols on the radio took my mind off getting carsick and made time pass quickly.

Just as the garland-wrapped streetlights went on, Daddy turned from the busy commercial traffic of Pulaski Road to the attractively decorated small business storefronts along Chicago Avenue.

Like panels in a movie, the hustle and bustle of Christmas Eve was playing out before us.

Men and women who had to work all day stood at the corners watching impatiently for the next streetcar to take them home.

Last minute shoppers sat on benches holding onto bags bulging with gifts.

As we passed tree lots, families searched for just the right Christmas tree. And, stationed at the corner of busy intersections, Salvation Army volunteers shook their bells vigorously to keep their hands warm and encourage passerby's to put donations into their red pails just one more time.

In less than an hour, Daddy pulled our car in front of the Church and Chapel Works and parked.

Upstairs in their second floor apartment where they lived over their manufacturing business, Uncle Pete, Aunt Antoinette, cousins Angie, Annie, Olga and Charlie were waiting for our family to help them celebrate yet another Christmas Eve together.

None of us knew it at the time, but this would be the last time both families would share the Italian custom of the Feast of the Seven Fishes.

Look for more in the next column.

Cousin Annie's Pesto and Fettuccini

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cup basil, tightly packed
- 1 / 4 cup grated Parmesan
- 1 / 4 cup salt free vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 / 8 teaspoon chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1 pound fettuccine
- Blend garlic in blender to chopped consistency. Add basil, cheese, broth, oil, salt, walnuts and mix. Blend for ten minutes and set aside.
- Prepare pasta to al dente.
- Combine pesto with cooked pasta in a large bowl and toss well.

■ **Antoinette Jackson is a Bullard-area resident. You may reach her at Antojxn@aol.com.**



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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.) Letters should focus on issues and not personalities. Letters from anyone on local issues are welcome; mass generated letters are not. Local writers may write on any issues as long as it's not libelous or in poor taste.

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