

COLUMN

Let's not forget to thank the teachers

CLEO NEWBURN

The auctioneer began in the usual way with, "What am I bid, and who'll start the bidding?"

I looked up to see what was being auctioned and like the rest of the people around me, I gasped in horror as an elderly, silver-haired woman was escorted to the auction platform.

"Who'll start the bidding?" the auctioneer asked again. "What am I bid? Come on ... someone ... give me a bid."

The room fell silent and people began to ask what this outrageous display was all about.

"Why, haven't you heard," he said. "This old school teacher is of no use anymore. She had the audacity to really believe that children should be disciplined, that they should respect the flag; and she was letting the children pray in her classroom."

"That can't be allowed. Now, again, who'll start the bidding?"

The crowd began to think, and to speak. We spoke about the children she taught and what she had taught and what those students had become.

The room was filled with doctors, lawyers, bankers, farmers, teachers, preachers, nurses, newspaper editors, homemakers, and computer programmers - and on and on the list grew. It was a list of people from every walk of life. For 40 years - a lifetime - she touched thousands of lives and thousands of hearts.

I thought back to the day I first heard her name: Mrs. Richards. I was about 10 years old when one of my older brothers came home from school announcing that she was his math teacher.

The following six years, she taught one of my sisters, myself and my younger brother, encouraging us all, stressing how important an education was, how blessed we were to live in a country where public schooling was available to all.

Mrs. Richards became a friend, counselor and confidante to me. Years later she taught my nephews and a niece. She became a fixture at the high school, a fixture that equaled security.

I admit we strayed from math sometimes to discuss current events, but we never left her class without learning something of value.

As I was thinking, "This can't be happening," several people began to speak.

A lady in a green hat stood up.

"Mrs. Richards is responsible for what my son made of his life," she said. "My husband and I felt that we had done all we

could for him and began to feel that we failed him. He was uninterested in anything we tried to encourage him to do.

"He changed the year he was placed in Mrs. Richards' class. He not only did well in math, but he began to take an interest in the different races, different cultures, government and the word "freedom" took on a new meaning for him.

He now serves as one of our state representatives."

"Why she taught my father about honesty and truth - which became an important part of his life and lives on through me and my children.

"He always quoted Mrs. Richards to us: 'always tell the truth and then you won't ever have to worry; but tell a lie and you'll find yourself telling more lies to cover the first lie,'" thus spoke our mayor.

As the assembly talked, the auctioneer kept asking, "who'll start the bidding? What am I bid?"

Finally one young man stood up and walked to the platform. He held his hand out to Mrs. Richards and while we watched, he helped her down, and we heard him say as he led her away, "I'm taking Mrs. Richards home now.

"No one here would have enough money to buy a priceless jewel like this person. Her price is far above rubies and her candle will never go out. It will shine on in the lives of all who know her and of those whose lives they influence."

I awoke and realized I was dreaming - a very bad dream.

I lay there and wondered how many Mrs. Richards there are in this world.

I would pray we don't let them go unnoticed and unthanked for playing perhaps one of the most important roles in life - molding the lives of children.

Texas Public Schools Week was started by the Masonic Lodges of Texas to recognize the contributions made by the state's free system of education.

This week, March 5-9, is Texas Public Schools Week.

Why not show your support by visiting your child's school and letting his teacher know that you appreciate the part he plays in your child's life.

A powerful partnership between parents and teachers can insure a strong education system and assure your child a happier and more productive future.

Cleo Newburn is a Bullard resident and formerly worked in the newspaper business.

CARTOON



COLUMN

Blessed with having two mothers

Some people have just one mother. I was blessed with two.

One was my real mother. One wasn't really my mother; she was my Uncle Gene's wife.

Aunt Evelyn and I started bonding Oct. 31, 1942, the night my brother was born.

I stayed with my aunt while Daddy brought Mom to the hospital so Johnny could come into this world.

Auntie Evelyn and I were in the living room of their second floor apartment looking out their large bay window.

From windowsills all around us, Jack-O-Lanterns with glowing orange eyes and features flickered through the darkness.

Harsh ringing sounds of a telephone interrupted our quiet view of the Halloween pumpkins.

Uncle Gene answered and announced to my aunt and me that I had a baby brother. It was the happiest day of my young 3-and-a-half-year-old life.

I stayed with Aunt Evelyn for several days while Mom was in the hospital. As the mother of two sons, Auntie was glad to have a little girl to pamper.

She read stories to me, colored and played paper dolls with me, and enjoyed dressing me up in feminine little pink dresses.

When it was finally time for me to go home, Auntie put my hair in ribbons just like a grown up little girl. Mom was very pleased she had taken such good care of me.

My mother too, had a special bond with Aunt Evelyn.

As teenagers, even before Uncle Gene met her, they worked together in the office at Wilson Jones Manufacturing and became friends. As sisters-in-law, they grew even closer.

When I was five, we left our small apartment for a house on the South Side. I liked my new home but missed my all my aunts, uncles and cousins on the North Side.

In 1947, Grandma Providenza came to live with us. Almost every weekend my mother's brothers and their families visited Grandma.

Now Sunday afternoon dinners around our dining room table included Uncle Gene, Aunt Evelyn, cousins Genie and Richard; and Uncle Frank, Aunt Dorothy and cousin Prudy.

They were some of the happiest times of my formative years.

Mom and Aunt Dorothy were stay-at-home mothers.

During the days when women were rarely employed outside the home, Aunt Evelyn worked as a salesclerk at Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company in bustling Downtown Chicago.

Prematurely gray since age 20, she was a striking figure and had a knack for dressing professionally.

Soon she was promoted to the Better Dress Department.

A woman ahead of her time, Auntie successfully balanced home and career. She managed to be a fine mother, tidy housekeeper and a good cook.

ANTOINETTE JACKSON



Mangia! Mangia!



Above, Antoinette in 1942; below, Prudy, Evelyn, Dorothy and Mom in 1957.



No one made a better rump roast or cheesecake than my Aunt Evelyn.

Her Calabrese style sausage and potatoes became a family classic.

A shrewd shopper, Auntie took advantage of sales at Carson's and wisely used her employee discount. On what Mom called a "shoestring," Auntie managed to buy nice clothes for her family and tastefully furnish their home.

For my junior and senior years, I transferred to Jones Commercial High School in Chicago's Downtown.

Just six blocks away from Carson's, I frequently stopped by to visit Auntie after school.

Always sophisticated and smartly dressed, she was the personification of the basic-black-dress-with-pearls axiom we studied in my grooming class.

I was so proud to go on break with her

and have her introduce me to all the other stylish ladies who worked there.

At graduation time, my mother was still recovering from several surgeries and not able to go downtown.

It was "my other mother," Aunt Evelyn who shopped Michigan Avenue with me for my prom dress and graduation outfit.

Whether clothes or household items, Auntie preached "Antoinette, don't buy something cheap that won't last."

"Wait until something better goes on sale or don't buy it at all," was her time-tested advice.

One afternoon, as a know-it-all 18-year-old DePaul University freshman, I met Aunt Evelyn for lunch.

When we finished eating, I said to her, "Auntie, I have something to tell you."

"What," she asked.

"I smoke," I answered.

"Do you have any cigarettes?" she questioned.

"Yes," I replied sheepishly.

"Well, give me one!" Auntie was a closet smoker, something not even her family knew about her.

When Mom, Dad, Johnny and I moved to California, saying goodbye to Aunt Evelyn was no easy task.

She was strong and stoic and, following her example, I was not to cry.

When we all embraced for the last time, Mom cried, but I was brave and fought back my tears.

Over 20 years later, I realized what my mother had known all along: that big girls cry too.

These two fine women had a great influence on me while I was growing up. Mom was an old fashioned, down-to-earth homemaker.

My Aunt Evelyn was a worldly, sophisticated businesswoman.

How blessed I was to have them both in my life as role models.

Sausage and Potatoes ala Calabrese

Calabria, where Aunt Evelyn's mother was born, was a barren region of Southern Italy.

Fresh vegetables were scarce and the local diet consisted mostly of dried legumes.

This favorite recipe combines potatoes with highly seasoned sausage to create a robust main dish.

8 ounces Italian sausage, preferably hot
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion chopped
4 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Diagonally cut the sausage into 2 inch pieces. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the meat, onion, potatoes and seasonings. Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes. Uncover, increase the heat, and sauté the potatoes until brown.

Serves four.

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



Texas Press Association member 2007

phone 903-894-9306 fax 903-894-9308
114 N. Houston Street, Suite 1, Bullard, Texas 75757

Bill Woodall
Publisher/Owner
Lori Mellinger
Editor

Dan Moore
General Manager
Dot West
Circulation

Kelly Griffith
Staff Writer

Bullard Banner News (USPS 015622) is published weekly Wednesdays at 114 N. Houston Street in Smith County, Bullard, Texas 75757. Postmaster, please send change of address to *Bullard Banner News*, 114 N. Houston Street, Bullard, Texas 75757.

Bullard Banner News is mailed to subscribers, sold at newsstands and delivered by home-route carriers in Bullard, Lake Palestine East and surrounding areas. Periodicals Postage is paid at Bullard, Texas 75757, and other area post offices.

Yearly Subscription Rates

To Zip Code 75757\$20
To all other Zip Codes\$24