

ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Elda Eldridge

Editor (Curly Marsh): We are inclined for good reason to deride the statement that we are in our "golden years". Elda Eldridge, widow of our classmate, Jim, who died two years ago after an extended illness, chooses to look at her advancing years as a "second childhood" for reasons she explains below. As a resident of the same life care community as she, I see her gracefully filling her time with helpful activities and generating her own ideas for lightening the lives of those around her. Most of us can gild as she does the years of our second childhood.

"It's never too late to have a happy childhood!" I saw this bumper sticker and realized that that is what I am doing. Living in a life-care community has become, for me, happiness. It takes care of my physical security and all the chores of owning and running a traditional household. The monthly maintenance charge even pays most of the bills. There are no more worries about lawn care, housekeeping, meal planning (if that is bothersome) or making new friends. It is not necessary to "close up" the house when traveling. Health care and transportation are available when needed. Activities abound. What more could you ask?



On the road to happiness

There are some drawbacks of course. One can easily become insular and lose touch with the real world. Care should be taken to keep in touch with outside friends and activities. This is easy if the life-care place you have chosen is in the area where you presently live. But if it is in a new location, joining a church, a country club, volunteering, and entering into civic affairs will help. Being among only senior citizens can be depressing but is partially relieved by visiting families. Those being visited will gladly share grandchildren. Volunteering to help in the nursing section aids in overcoming fear of physical disabilities. It also made me feel confident when my husband had to enter the nursing section. Having it nearby not only facilitated my visiting him but also my being able to take him to our apartment and on outings. He considered the nursing section just the place where his bedroom was.

All in all, my life has not changed very much. I have made a zillion new friends. I've joined daily exercise and aquacise classes to keep fit. And I have much more time to pursue my hobbies and activities both inside and out. I am a mature person in a happy childhood.

A LIFE OF GLORIOUS SERVICE

John Glasser

Editor: No one can help but be inspired by Johnny Glasser's account of a life spent ministering in the field of medicine. I am sure he has made the world a better place.

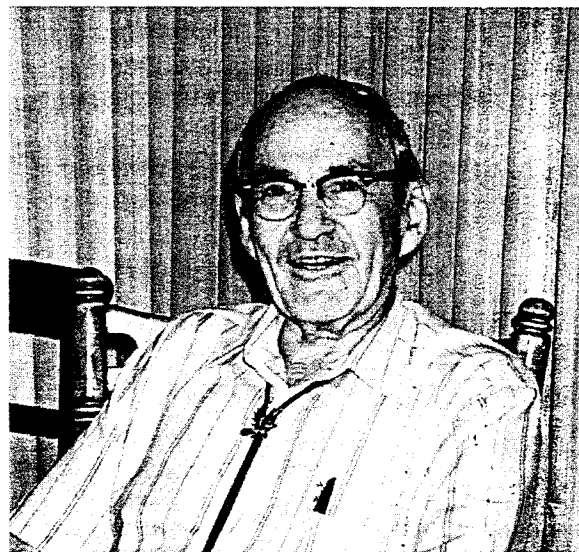
Home Delivery, Special First Class

Inspired by classmate and fellow physician Josh Billings' outlandish tale of a most unusual "house call" in summer newsletter of a few years back, I have some unusual stories to tell. Because I am no football hero like

Josh, I couldn't carry a limp, full-grown man as he did, but as an Obs with many exciting and challenging experiences, a few highly trained muscles here and there did help, as you will see.

To back-track, there were nine other "33'ers" who went to Johns Hopkins—Osler Abbott, Tom Ballantine, Josh Billings, Walter Buck, Nelson Cover, Sib Hoobler, John Luetscher and Jim Whedbee. Those were the gory glory days! No longer do med students have to spend four hours each morning, five days a week for four

months, dissecting the same fondly beloved "stiff". But that exercise provided an essential insight into the working of this beautiful machine which only God could have designed and brought to life. (Yes, I believe that). To learn how to care for and protect the precious lives of those men and women who would trust their lives to a doctor was indeed a happy privilege. I have never been bored in 50+ years as a specialist in Obs-Gyn. In fact, since retiring in 1990 at age 78, I have missed the joy, challenge and satisfaction of it all.



*Retired MD—Elderhostel teacher—Lake
Winnepesaukee—1995*

But that is getting ahead of the story. After three years at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, a family doctor in a sleepy little town in North Carolina needed a fill-in because he had been called to duty in the National Guard. I was "broke", so jumped at the chance to earn a little money (\$1.00 per office visit, \$2.00 for house call, \$3 if after midnight). My father bought me a cute little car and off I went—down south.

At the ESSO station in Graham, N. C. a kindly gentleman asked, "so you're the new northern doctor? We're glad to have you. Now I want to tell you something. Most of us folks down here are good folks, but some of us are right sorry". During two hectic years before Uncle Sam tapped me on the shoulder, I learned what he meant. Graham was a cotton mill town with two traffic lights—not synchronized—so you had to stop at one or the other while going through town. The people were generally lovely. I bungled through an epidemic of diphtheria, polio and flu—such as I had never imagined. Four patients died in one week and I was soon ready to quit. Country practise in 1940 was tough. I saw a lot of good people hurting and dying in spite of everything we could do. Some sulphur drugs were available, but people had all kinds of strange complications from the new "wonder drugs". (They still have side-effects!)

A flood of memories arises as I sit back and think of those exciting days as "the northern doctor". Black patients were uniformly grateful for whatever I could do. They had a separate little room off to one side of the office and patiently waited their turn. In the county VD clinic I would give I.V. arsenicals one week and I.M. Bismuth the next. The steps up to the second floor in Alamance County Court House were littered with cotton sponges dripping with alcohol and tell-tale

smudges on each one. Business at V. D. clinic was good. As the war heated up, one by one the four doctors in town were aware that they would be called. One began to drink heavily and needed coverage. I'll never forget the big farmer who reported for his bismuth shot in the buttocks (series of 8 weekly, to be followed by 8 I.V. arsenicals. I told him to drop his overalls, lean over. I wiped the target area, drove in the "spear" and gave him his shot. I rubbed it well with the alcohol swab and told him to get dressed. "That was a powerful good shot, Dr. G.", he said. "What do you mean?" I said, "that's the

way it's supposed to be". "But really powerful good", he said. "Last week Dr. ___ was in a powerful hurry. He stuck me right through my pants!". (Powerful hurry!)

Home deliveries were quite different from the fine facilities at Hopkins and Union Memorial. One such delivery I shall never forget because the patient assisted me in delivering her 10 pound baby by forceps! You'll probably say that's not proper technique—certainly not for a specialist trained at New York Lying In and St. Luke's Hospitals, but that high class training came "apres la guerre W. W. II".

It was a beastly hot day in July, 1941. A huge muscular farmer's wife lay on a low double bed laboring mightily. She could not be moved the 15 miles to the hospital. I needed help and so commandeered two equally muscular women to support each thigh. She needed ether because the pains were hard. I found a can in my Obs bag, drove a safety-pin through the cap and dripped the ether on the old fashioned mask and put her into a light sleep. All was going well! The baby was clearing the "Curve of Clarus" and was about to enter this world's brilliant light. My hands were needed down below where my sterilized tools were spread out on a single white towel between her knees. "Come here", I said to her farmer husband. "Do you see this can of ether? Hold it so a drop falls on the mask every few seconds and be sure your wife keeps on breathing." "But, Doc, I don't like the smell of that stuff. It makes me dizzy". "Come on, now, you're the husband and you've got to help her". Scared and shaky he held the ether can and let a few drops fall, while I put on my only pair of sterile, surgical gloves and got ready down below. Mama was breathing nicely, and the baby was advancing and I was ready for action—whatever might be necessary—hoping for a natural childbirth (which is

always better for all concerned). But then, "the roof caved in!"

The husband said, "this stuff is making me dizzy, Doc. I can't do it anymore". "But you've got to! Come on, give her some more because she's beginning to stir". "I can't Doc", and then he ran out of the room. The baby's head was visible, but could not clear the pubic arch, so I slipped the low forceps on and began to lift the baby out. Suddenly, the ether wore off and out stretched two mighty legs and my two stalwart farmers' wives ran screaming out of the bedroom. In a moment two strong hands reached down and grabbed the shank of the forceps. I pulled down while she pulled up! (Never had a baby been delivered by four hands on one pair of forceps!) (I didn't publish this masterpiece of obstetrical skill). It was quite an epic struggle. We rolled over together, once or twice, struggling to preserve life and limb of the mother, baby and doctor!

This was a tour de force never before recorded in the annals of this ancient specialty. But God was good. The natural episiotomy went up instead of down and the baby was soon screaming. Back in came the two farmer's wives and the dizzy etherized husband, and everyone was happy. I repaired the damage with a local and after cleaning up a bit, prepared to weigh the baby. He was a bruiser! (Probably a local football hero-to-be). In that ancient Obs bag there was a fish scale. A sling was made by piercing the four corners of a tea towel and the baby was weighed—10 lbs! Then, to top off this comedy of errors, the fish hook tore through the oft-sterilized tea towel and the baby fell; but thank God only a short distance to the soft bed and it yelled lustily. I pulled myself together. My necktie had been yanked over to one side, my nice shirt was soaked through. (It was hot!) My back ached as I drove slowly back to Graham. The fee for all of this was \$25 and I'm not at all sure that I was paid. The joy of being a rural family doctor—there's nothing like it.

I was called into the army in May 1942 and taught corpsmen battlefield first aid at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta. While in the European Theatre for two years I was grateful to learn how well these tough good-hearted G.I.'s served the wounded on the field and in the army hospitals. It was worth the effort of seven classes each day.

A moment of great pleasure is worth recalling. In my orthopedic ward at Eaubonne, near Paris, I had eight wounded men ready to be sent home. These eight lads shared 16 major amputation stumps and they were naturally depressed, but glad to be going home. One Sunday morning we had a surprise visitor—Fred Astaire! With him were two highly decorated RAF pilots. They danced many fancy steps and even jumped over chairs. My boys watched, little knowing why so

fine an entertainer would come all the way to France to dance for them. After dancing, the RAF pilots dropped their trousers and showed that they, too, were bilateral amputees, at the hip level, heroes of the battle of Britain. You should have seen the wonderful expressions on my lads' faces. Fred Astaire was most kind and gracious, giving time and encouragement to each one. He shook everyone's hands, including mine. The group went on to another hospital for more good will. It was a warm experience for us all.

Demands of family took precedence over cherished plans to serve my Lord as a medical missionary, so I settled down to get the best training possible in New York. (Woman's Hospital, St. Luke's). A new hospital in the fine town of Ridgewood, New Jersey was opening and welcomed me. For 38 years the good women of northern New Jersey trusted me with their care and I soon found ample opportunity to serve my Lord right at home, doing the best Obs-Gyn I could for him. (Brad Green of our class was a Valley Hospital trustee).

My only moment of glory occurred when Mel Allen, Yankee sportscaster, interrupted his chatter during an important game to announce the birth of Bobby Richardson's fine second son at the Valley Hospital and said "How about that!" I was catapulted into local notoriety and continued to deliver a dozen or more Yankee wives during those great years when they were winning the world series. Baseballs with famous names now sit on my shelf. I enjoyed caring for them.

Life is no longer as challenging as during those great Obs-Gyn years, but still almost as busy. My early love of nature, nourished by Dr. Rogers course in ornithology in Guyot (not for credit) was revived by a call to teach Elderhostel nature study in New Hampshire, at an ancient Inn on Lake Winnepesaukee. This has become a major activity, coupled with frequent slide shows of Skylands (New Jersey's Botanical Garden at Ringwood) and the South Jersey Pinelands to local organizations and churches.

Elderhostel activity has been stimulating and rewarding. I've met a lot of fine new friends from all over the country, including fellow Princetonians. Is there room for a typical Elderhostel story? I teach on an amateur level about birds, flowers, insects, snakes and frogs—nature in general. Frogs are a lot of fun, but sadly are disappearing rapidly all over the world, possibly due to excess UV light getting through the hole in the ozone layer. My golfing story was corny compared to this one contributed by an Elderhostel guest.

"Grandpa, can you squat down and croak like a frog?" Billy asked his old arthritic grandfather. "Well, I'll try. It will take time, but I'll certainly do it for such a nice grandson." So, down he squatted, groaning and

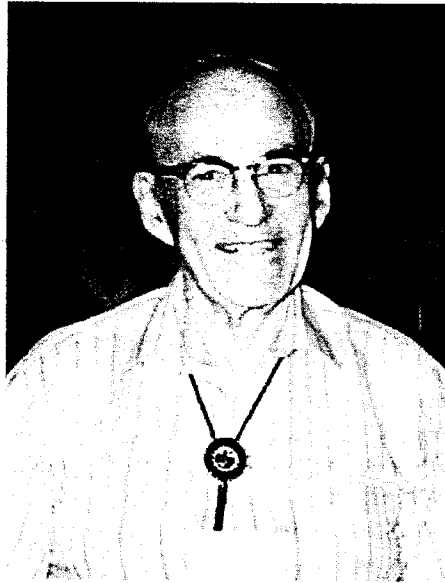
croaking as well as any real frog might. (Actually, toads are the ones who croak, but that's not the story.). Billy was delighted, danced and happily cheered. "Do it again, Grandpa!" It wasn't easy, but he gave another good squat and a few hoarse croaks. Billy's ecstasy knew no bounds! Suspicious, Grandpa asked, "Why does this make you so happy Billy?" "Well", said Billy, "One night I heard Daddy say to Mommy—when Grandpa croaks we'll all be able to go to Disneyland!"

Another major activity in which I am involved is teaching adult Bible classes at two local churches, where I share the rich truths of God's Word concerning healthful living, joy in appreciation of His glory in nature, and His love expressed in the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These activities have kept me from the assaults of aging! God has been very good to me—Princeton, Johns Hopkins, the finest of specialty training, 52 years of rewarding practise, the privilege of caring for many fine women of northern New Jersey in this most personal area of human need. You couldn't beat it anywhere. I am grateful to my Lord Jesus Christ for it all. "DEI SUB NUMINE VIGET" (under God it flourishes). My deep love and appreciation and prayers for all Princetonians—may they never forget the real meaning of this honored motto. "There is an emptiness in the human heart which only Jesus Christ can fill!" Don't miss getting to know HIM, personally, my friends. "This is the true God, and eternal life". I John 5:20.

Family notes. Louise Weakley and I were married in October 1942, five months after I was called into the army. We had met in the late thirties when she was a nurse at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, my first assignment after medical school.

Arriving home in February 1946 after two years in the ETO, I greeted a 16 month old son I had never seen, John Weakley, P '66. He is now a PhD employed in medical research by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. His brother, James Goodwin, P'70, arrived in April 1948. He is now a successful pediatric surgeon in Columbia, S. C. Before settling down he did several stints in Ceylon, India, Niger (Africa) in mission Hospitals under Samaritani Purse. Our third son, David McCulloh, didn't make the cut for Princeton, but he did finish with a Masters in Economics at Duke, and is currently busy in New York. .

Following Louise Weakley's untimely cardiac death in 1972, I managed for 3 1/2 years but it was no fun. My practise continued to keep me occupied.



Johnny Glasser—Nature Studies teacher

in my office! She has been wonderful handling the massive paper work associated with my retirement.

Eva and I are currently in New Hampshire teaching Elderhostel Nature and will then be off to the south to see five "lovely" grandchildren. All grandfathers dote on their grandchildren. My first didn't arrive until I was 70, they live too far away, but our visits are "quality time".

Last August after a week at Montreat, N. C., Rachel (age five) and grandpa had become good friends. Her older sister is equally lovely, of sweet personality. But Rachel is quiet, thoughtful, ponders everything and wants to be a "science" when she grows up. After a week of walking up and down trails hand in hand, stopping to look at every toadstool, bug, rock, etc., we had a violent thunderstorm one evening. The trees writhed like serpents. It was a beaut! Next morning there were clouds on the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"Grandpa" Rachel asked, "what's that white stuff up on the mountains?"

"That's fog, Rachel".

Her face was furrowed in deep thought. "fog, fog, fog" she repeated (a new word for her). Then silence. Suddenly she brightened up with a grin. "Grandpa, you know almost everything!"

Smart grandchild!

Then a gift from Heaven changed everything. Eva Bethune, Guidance Counselor at Ridgewood Senior High became my wife. Her good common sense, wisdom and happy outlook brought just what the family needed. She retired and I immediately put her to work

In the lost and found column: LOST: Brown dog; blind in left eye; right ear torn; no tail; walks with a limp; answers to the name of "Lucky."