

Independent Evangelist

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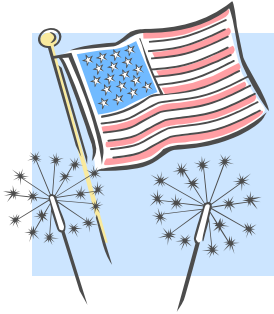


Follow the Leader

Phil Conybear – Writer

July 2007

Vol. 2 Issue 5 Mary Conybear – Editor



AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain
America! America!
God shed your grace on thee,
And crown thy good with
brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.
- (Author Unknown)

Welcome to the July issue of the Independent Evangelist. I believe God has “Shed His Grace on Thee”, as the song says. We live in a country, founded on Christianity and we are still going strong. Enjoy the celebrations!

Choices

I heard a line in a movie that said, “The choices we make determine the life that we live”. I’m inclined to believe that is true or at least partly true. As a Christian, we believe that God has our lives planned out but perhaps that line from the movie is part of His plan.

We are tempted at every turn and given choices. Our decisions really can dictate our future. I’m reminded of an article I read about in the Tribune some time ago. It was about a 17 year old honor student. She was the most popular girl in a Chicago high school; cheerleader, prom queen and straight A’s in advanced courses.

She wasn’t sure which college she wanted to attend but it didn’t matter. She didn’t want to look that far ahead. There were parties to attend and that mattered more.

Now I don’t want to sound like my parents, but parties aren’t the same as they were years ago. A party today means drinking and possibly drugs and little else. “Let’s Party” means get drunk or high and have sex. The charm of dancing close to slow music and romancing a girl is lost to drinking until you vomit. Oh yeah, that’s fun.

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Proverbs 4:26-27

Now this straight “A” honor student had to be picked

up by her parents at the police station because one of the boys at the party kept goading her into drinking more to show she was cool. Little did she know that “cool” guy had slipped the date rape drug into her beer. She had been gang raped and she found out later that she was pregnant and had no idea who the father was. At least the AIDS test was negative.

It really doesn’t matter whether or not those cool guys went to jail; she wasn’t going to college. She chose to be “cool” and her path was changed forever. Next stop; Jerry Springer.

Those path changing choices can happen at any age. Take for instance the father who prefers crack cocaine over his family and friends. He figures **nobody knows** because he sneaks out to the garage to use his drug of choice. **God knows and when you know, shout it out; it may save a life.**

His drug of choice has altered his appearance, thinking, habits and his personality. He has become sullen and is prone to violence and paranoia has set in. He has to have pit bulls to protect him; yeah, protect him from the police and the eyes of prying neighbors who aren’t really there. Now that’s a fun choice.

I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts.

John Locke

English empiricist philosopher (1632 - 1704)

I started this page with a verse from *America The Beautiful* because this country was founded by Christians and God has indeed “Shed His Grace on Thee”. As citizens we have many rights that many brave men died for. Among them is freedom of religion. So why do we stray so far from God?

The choices we should make are outlined in the Bible and the Constitution. To think that the choices we make are ours alone is a very selfish thought. Many of us make disgusting and destructive choices that can alter not only the lives of those making the choice, but the lives of those around them.

In this country, a girl can go to college and a father can raise a family in peace, but only with the right choices. Only by choosing to follow God’s plan for our lives and by His grace is it possible.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:1

Behind The Scenes

I've wanted to do a series of the people behind the scenes of a church that we either don't realize exist or take for granted. I've been in churches of many sizes though I've never been in a mega church and it's easy to overlook those behind the scenes.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church has given me my first glimpse of the inner workings of a good sized church (estimated 3500 members) and there is a *lot* going on that I never knew about. Since the music program is the part that really stands out, I'll start there.

Last year, I wrote a story for my newsletter about contemporary services today becoming the traditional services of tomorrow. I can't imagine what went through the minds of Bach and his contemporaries when his music was included in church services but in that issue I wrote, **"When music stirs something in our heart and focuses our attention to God, it has done more than the writer bargained for."**

Well, the music program at Good Shepherd stirs the soul more than the authors of the songs bargained for. So, let's look at the **Director of Worship, Pete Leo.**

Pete was called to come on to the staff at Good Shepherd in September of 2004. He was blessed to be surrounded by great musicians and singers and he told me that contemporary music was part of the worship before he arrived.

Saturday 5:30 PM and Sunday 11:00 AM services, held in the sanctuary, follow a similar order of worship as traditional services but feature music inspired by Christian contemporary music similar to what you might hear on 94.3 FM, a Christian station.



Pete Leo

The musicians and singers called the Eighth Day singers, offer a highly energetic and an upbeat atmosphere during services which is very inviting. They are all very talented and I've seen the rehearsals; they work hard.

About the many talented people, Pete had this to say, *"I believe the size of the church helps to increase the pool of gifted artists. However, I believe the primary reason artists are attracted to Good Shepherd, is because of the other artists already involved and their commitment to excellence. Paul Wood (Associate Director of Contemporary Music & Worship) is a remarkable servant for God. He is significantly responsible for inviting and connecting many of our contemporary musicians."*

One only has to hear them one time to realize their commitment to excellence.

When Pete arrived, they wanted a powerful alternative worship service and they had ideas but put them in his hands and the "11:11" service was formed; *"which simply defined would have to be our most "contemporary" worship venue"*. It is a multi-media venue which utilizes contemporary Christian and secular music that relates to Christian themes. Some may think it's just for the youth, but hey,



11:11 Service

I'm old and I like it. It's very moving and relates well with today's issues. It may be what Jesus would use instead of a parable, if He were here today.

Pete has been responsible for some very special events to either enhance your faith experience or just bring people together. I asked him if any one of those events stuck out in his mind. This was his reply; *"The very day the 120+ high schoolers came and sang "From This House" with us. Included in the same was the "parade of witnesses". This day will forever be in my heart because we created in a moment of worship for those young guests the opportunity to connect to the witnesses of the transforming power of Christ. You can call it a "show" if you like, especially if the result is God "showing" us who He really is"*.

I remember that day as do many members. I watched the rehearsals as Pete and the Eighth Day singers practiced Swahili, which was an arduous task in itself. The 120+ high school singers circled the sanctuary during each service and performed with Eighth Day, accompanied only by tribal style drums.

The parade of witnesses was simple in concept but powerful in effect. Volunteers carried signs in front of the sanctuary with proclamations of their faith journey written on each sign. The sights and sounds that day left an indelible mark on the souls of those that were there. Well done, Pete and the worship team!

When I asked him if he ever struggles or has doubts in his work he had this to say, *"Creating, programming, discerning moments of beauty and wonder, praise and confession, prophetic and familiar, sacred and secular that lead to transformation of hearts, minds and lives is a constant struggle. The ever-evolving nature of this ministry contributes greatly to my passion for the job."* There are hard times in every job but when you are guided by passion the end result will speak for itself quite well.

I wondered at a time if this was "just a job" to Pete. After all, many of us have a time in our lives when our faith seems dormant. His reply was, *"I have felt a spiritual connection to God as long as I can remember. Surely there have been times my spiritual life has fallen dormant, but reconnecting with God has always felt like a homecoming to me."*

I've seen him working behind the scenes and I can honestly say, Pete is the genuine article. I really believe he is guided by God.

I focused on the contemporary worship services only because they are new to me. Good Shepherd has very moving traditional services as well. The Sunday 8:00 am service provides an early morning traditional worship service with a more intimate feel. This service includes time honored hymns led by the organ; sacred vocal solos are often featured as well. The Sunday 9:30 am service is rich in tradition as well. Music is typically led by the organ and includes the Festival Choir during much of the year, as well as other soloists. Pete is very much a part of those services as well.

***That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered,
Here [am] I.
1 Samuel 3:4***

Much like in the pursuit of "understanding God" this ministry will always fall short of the mark, but can only come close with considerable "help" from primary sources such as those around us as the Body of Christ, God's word as the Bible, and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

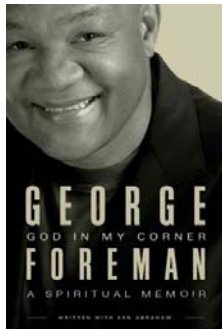
-Pete Leo-

Book Corner

I recently had the pleasure of reading, **George Foreman, God in my Corner**. This book was indeed a pleasure and quite a surprise.

Usually, if a book is about a sport personality it is rather one dimensional. In the case of a boxer, one might expect a recounting of his “glory days” with a lot of action scenes that would be hard to follow unless you followed boxing. Well, it speaks of his glory days but for George, that’s every day. To George every day is a gift from God and when you give your life to Jesus what more glory do you need.

On the back cover, he tells the readers that he died after one fight. I’ve read books that tell of people dying and coming back to life as in *90 minutes in Heaven*. Brace yourself, because the experience George had was overwhelming, to say the very least. That’s less than what the back cover had to say. To be honest though, the cover doesn’t even start to tell about his profound life. It simply can’t.



If you read celebrity news stories about George Foreman, you remember that he won the gold medal in the Olympics and had a stellar career as a boxer. He became an entrepreneur; we’ve all seen the TV ads for the George Foreman grill. You may have seen the muffler ads and TV spots over the years.

The book touches on those subjects but just enough to set up his journey in life, and what a journey. He grew up extremely poor and used his physical strength to get what he wanted. He was the consummate tough guy and his life was ruled by anger and aggression and nobody dared cross his path.

However, he passes on that which he has learned from the most profound moment of his life; dying. Mostly he tells the true pitfalls of life and how to avoid them and he does it in a way that psychology books written by PhD’s simply couldn’t do. He tells it with love and honesty and **he pours his heart out; and what a big heart that man has.**

His journey had extreme poverty, extreme wealth and bankruptcy; just like a rollercoaster ride. His life was ruled by the devil within until his death. Since giving his life to Christ, the rollercoaster stopped. He tells you, in no uncertain terms that life is a gift from God and how amazing it is with God in control.

God in my Corner is a great surprise and pleasure to read. He travels a journey that starts out with a man to be feared to a place in his life where he has become the “beloved uncle” type of man we all would like to know.

George holds faithfulness and sincerity as first principles. He learned that to be loved is better than being feared.

The Value of Reading

I was working in the church library recently and having never done that before, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I guess I expected to see a few adults checking out a book or movie, but to my surprise, once the service was over, kids started pouring through the doors, flying on their feet.

Also, they were accompanied mostly by their Dads. In the world of “Soccer Moms” ushering children through every step of their existence and all the negative press about “Absent Dads” it was a pleasant surprise.

I knew some of the children because I recognized the parents but rather than scan the bar codes on the books and look up the names myself, I put the kids through the paces just to see how they handled themselves talking to a scary looking old man. I was surprised again by their poise as well as the books they were checking out.

They were checking out books I thought were too old for them and too few “picture books” as well. They were also checking out CD’s with contemporary Christian music and only one checked out a movie.

One little girl, around 7 years old maybe, was with her older brother. I knew their last names and as they were browsing I brought up their names on the computer and had everything ready to scan the books.

When she put her books on the counter that she could barely see over, I asked her name and made her spell it. Her big brother saw that I already had the information and was just “messin’ with her” and he smiled and stood back and watched.

I questioned her about the books she returned and said, “You couldn’t possibly have read that”. She stood straight and looked me in the eye and proceeded to tell me a rundown on the whole book. She let me know in no uncertain terms that *she* reads. My laughter turned to pride and it not only made my day but gave me hope for the kids of today.

As a kid, I always said, “**the covers of this book are too far apart**”. However, I have learned that **books are the quietest and most constant of friends, the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.**

It appears to me that in the days of jaded children with thumbs text messaging inane thoughts while watching TV and mindlessly eating junk food, **there are some with good values instilled by caring parents.** How refreshing! I must work in the library again. Besides, where else can I witness a young lady standing up to a scary looking old man.

How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book.

*Henry David Thoreau, Walden,, 1854
US Transcendentalist author (1817 - 1862)
US educator (1834 - 1926)*

Here's come more frivolous lawsuit by the ACLU.

US News

Jesus Mural Attacked by ACLU

CBNNews.com
June 22, 2007



CBNNews.com - The American Civil Liberties Union is threatening to sue the city of Slidell, Louisiana, because of a painting of Jesus.

The painting sits in the lobby of the city court.

Underneath it are the words "to know peace, obey these laws."

The ACLU says people have complained about the painting, and they want it taken down.

"Well, nothing of course is offensive about a picture of Jesus innately," Katie Schwartzmann from the ACLU said.

"The problem in this situation is that you have a government building that has erected a picture of Jesus and put lettering under there that indicates that unless you adhere to the laws of Jesus Christ, you're not going to actually receive fair and impartial justice in that courthouse. And that's really problematic," she added.

One judge said that the painting had been up for a decade, with no complaints.

He says that the ACLU is acting like a "legal bully."

And he has no plans to remove it.

They really are legal bullies. Now they're going after kids.

PRAYER

Students Defy Judge's Order Not to Pray

CWNews



CWNews.com -- A senior class of U.S. high school students, who are moving on to college, showed the courage and faith they'll need to tackle the future.

The Senior Class at a southern Kentucky high school went against a federal judge's order banning prayer at their commencement ceremony this weekend.

About 200 seniors at Russell County High School stood up during the Principal's opening remarks and recited/prayed The Lord's Prayer.

Applause drowned out the last part of the prayer, and the audience continued to cheer-on the Senior Class Chaplain as she urged her classmates to trust in God.

A federal judge had ruled that prayer could not be part of the graduation ceremony after the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) filed a lawsuit on behalf of one student.

The School Superintendent says he's proud of the students.

My hat's off to those kids.

World

Gaza Children Learn Hamas Terror Doctrine

CBN News
June 20, 2007

CBNNews.com - Children under Hamas rule grow up learning to carry on the war for jihad.

The Middle East Media Research Institute recently captured footage from a kindergarten graduation ceremony at a school run by Hamas in Gaza.

Hear what the young children said as they celebrated the ABC's of terror:

"What is your path? Jihad! What is your path? Jihad! What is your most lofty aspiration? Death for the sake of Allah! What is your most lofty aspiration? Death for the sake of Allah!"

This isn't the first time that Hamas has gained attention for indoctrinating children into jihad.

Last month, Hamas television featured a Palestinian Mickey Mouse character who encouraged suicide bombing.

Source: Associated Press

Teach your children well. I always say.



World

Gaza Catholic School 'Desecrated'

CBN News
June 21, 2007



CBNNews.com - A Roman Catholic school and convent in the Gaza Strip was ransacked and burned amid fighting at a nearby security headquarters, said the head of the Catholic community.

Rev. Manuel Musallem, head of Gaza's Latin church, said that a statue of Jesus was damaged, crosses were broken, and prayer books burned at the Rosary Sisters School and convent.

The convent doors were also knocked open with mortars and furniture was damaged.

Gunmen used the roof of the school during the fighting, and the convent was "desecrated," Mussallem said.

Seven computers were removed, but three were returned after the vandalism was reported to the deposed prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza.

Haniyeh condemned the attack on the compound. President Mahmoud Abbas of the rival Fatah movement said late Sunday that the "barbaric" attack was perpetrated by Hamas militia.

But Hamas lawmaker Salah Bardawil denied that Hamas caused the vandalism.

According to Musallem, the damage took place Thursday, but wasn't reported until days later because of the chaos that has prevailed since Islamic Hamas militants wrested power in Gaza.

Source: Associated Press

Has it been two years since Israel left Gaza? What was gained?

Gaza: Islamic Hotbed

By John Waage, Salam Eid

CBN News

June 14, 2007



CBNNews.com - MA'ALE

ADUMIM, Israel - Nearly two

years ago, the Israeli government uprooted its own people living in the Gaza Strip and turned the land over to the Palestinians.

The hope was that it would give Palestinians a chance to develop their own state and bring greater security to Israel. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Israelis mourned their departure from Gaza in 2005, and some thought the mourning would be over after the withdrawal.

But Gaza today reveals a frightening picture: Islamic Jihad troops marching and chanting, "Israel will not exist. Certainly, certainly it will not exist."

Rather than bringing renewed security to Israel, Gaza is a boiling pot of Islamic terror, focused on Israel.

CBN News has closely followed Islamic Jihad, one of the leading terror groups, and learned that Islamic radicals now have greater, more powerful tools of terror than ever before.

Gaza-made rockets are being fired at Israeli targets just over the border.

Added to the arsenal are Zilzal cordless roadside bombs, which are activated by cell phones.

And now, since the Israelis are gone, the terrorists fearlessly train in the open.

They learn how to fight, how to patrol, and how to crawl long distances and reach Israeli targets.

The militants endure pain to build their stamina for what lies ahead of them.

Now, women are used more than ever. Many are given terror assignments. One woman demonstrated how to carry the explosive suicide belt around her waist.

She said, "We'll be sure to disguise ourselves so we will not be recognized as suicide bombers."

Nafez Azam is one of the main leaders of Islamic Jihad. Israel

recently added him to its list of targeted terrorists.

And with good reason. Azam says that his total focus is not politics, but **Israel's destruction**. And he says that he will never disarm.

"This is impossible. Whatever it takes, Islamic Jihad won't put down its weapons," Azam vowed. "The Islamic jihad weapon is legitimate and sacred to defend the Palestinian people, a compromise over it won't ever be possible."

Here, and everywhere in Israel, authorities are standing guard against terrorist attacks. But while some terror groups try to politicize their moves, members of Islamic Jihad remain focused on the war against Israel from their central training ground in Gaza.

A quote from a related story said, "many in Israel are calling Gaza by a new name: Hamastan".

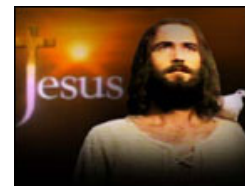
I watch the news that pertains to Christians but it's overwhelming. Iraq is foremost on our minds but there isn't a country in the world that couldn't command our full attention.

Here's an odd bit of news the media missed or just didn't think was important enough to pass along. Just when Jihad dominates the news, this happens.

'Jesus' Film on Verge of 1,000 Translations

CBNNews.com

June 22, 2007



CBNNews.com - The "Jesus" film is now on the verge of reaching its 1,000th translation.

After its release in 1979, the movie soon received requests from all over the world to be translated into people's native languages.

It's already the most widely distributed film.

It's been seen by more than **6 billion viewers worldwide**.

More than 200 million say they accepted Jesus as their Savior because of the film.

I find it refreshing that in a world with such distressing news, an old movie (1979) of an old "story" can have such an effect. The producer and director planted more seeds than they bargained for.

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

Luke 13:19

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.

Albert Einstein

US (German-born) physicist (1879 - 1955)

How Much, How Far?

While watching the movie, **Luther**, my wife and editor, Mary marveled when all the princes of Germany knelt and bowed their heads for beheading, saying something like, “You’ll have to kill me because I will not renounce my faith”. She asked how much an average person today would endure or how far would they go to keep their faith in the Lord, especially with the threat of torture or death.

I realize her question was rhetorical but it made me think of a few comparisons. As a combat vet, I saw soldiers sacrifice themselves for a buddy. It’s not a cheap theatrical stunt used in old war movies where a guy would jump on a grenade to save someone. I know, because a guy I barely knew pushed me to the ground in an ambush and took a bullet for me.

I also remember watching the news during 9-11 and hearing the stories of sacrifice people made for total strangers. It wasn’t just the police and firemen giving their lives for others; it was office workers and people just walking by.

Seeing another person in harm’s way is something tangible and if there is a chance to save that person, I think probably anyone would step up to save them. I think it’s a reflex action to help another.

A parent driving the car will instinctively reach out to keep the passenger from banging into the window if they stop real hard; especially if the passenger is their child. That reflex action even filters down to pets and inanimate objects. How many times have you heard stories about a person rushing into a burning building to save a pet or photo albums or whatever? Reflexes will make us do a lot as will love for another.

However, faith is not a tangible object that we can hold or protect by closing it in a safe. It’s something you either have or you don’t. You can stand under a “Bus Stop” sign and have faith in public transportation to show up in a reasonable amount of time. You can have faith that the Cubs will always be a long shot for the playoffs.

But when you are asked to say Grace in a restaurant before eating, will you cringe because someone might be watching you? Appearances are everything in this world and someone might think you’re a religious freak if you pray.

In this world made sterile by the ACLU and fear of not being accepted, too many people are afraid to put their faith in the Lord. There is no Inquisition to fear anymore; just lawsuits and people calling you a Bible thumper.

***My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go:
my heart shall not reproach [me] so long as I live.
Job 27:6***

Nobody in this country will be beheaded or burned at the stake for their belief that I know of. Lawsuits and name-calling is the worst anyone will endure today for being a Christian. So

the question remains; **How much** would you endure for your faith and **how far** would you go for Christ?

Pain and torture are intimidating ways to break a person into submission but in this world it isn’t necessary. People avoid you like the plague if you proclaim your faith or they belittle you to make themselves feel better. Threatening to take away cell phones may make someone renounce their faith. That would work and it would take a lot less effort.

And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Mark 13:13

It does take courage in this world to be a Christian. There is evil everywhere trying to undermine all Christianity in this country. Liberal courts and the ACLU have taken many shots at Christians but if lawsuits are the worst that we have to endure, bring it on. **All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.**

Courage is being scared to death - but saddling up anyway.

John Wayne

US movie actor & director (1907 - 1979)

All I know is that Jesus died for us but He doesn’t expect us to die for Him. There are no grenades to jump on and nobody so far is trying to behead any one. He just doesn’t want you to go back on your word; the first few words we say in the Nicene Creed and the Apostle’s Creed. **“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”** What else needs to be said? I may be crippled but I dare anyone to try stopping me from saying those words.

Still, these are trying times for all Christians. There is a **Peace Prayer, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi** and I hope it helps.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and

it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



No, Jesus doesn’t expect us to die for Him but I would. There is no fear of any harm when you have the Lord in your heart. Keep Him in your heart; the rest is easy.

The Lighter Side

Marriage Defined

Marriage is a relationship in which one person is always right, and the other is a husband.

Marriage is the process of finding out what kind of man your wife would have preferred.

Marriage is an institution where two people come together to jointly solve the problems they never had before they got married.

Comedians On Marriage

"I think men who have a pierced ear are better prepared for marriage. They've experienced pain and bought jewelry." (Rita Rudner)

"My wife and I were happy for 20 years. Then we met." (Rodney Dangerfield)

"Basically, my wife was immature. I'd be at home in the bath, and she'd come in and sink my boats." (Woody Allen)

"The secret of a happy marriage remains a secret." (Henny Youngman)

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story.

From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?" "Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago."

"Oh," she paused, "grandpa, did God make me too?"

"Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago."

Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

At a 50th wedding anniversary party, Father O'Malley asked Patrick to take a few minutes and share some insight into how he managed to live with the same woman for so long.

"Well," said Patrick, "I treated her with respect, spent money on her, but mostly I took her traveling on special occasions."

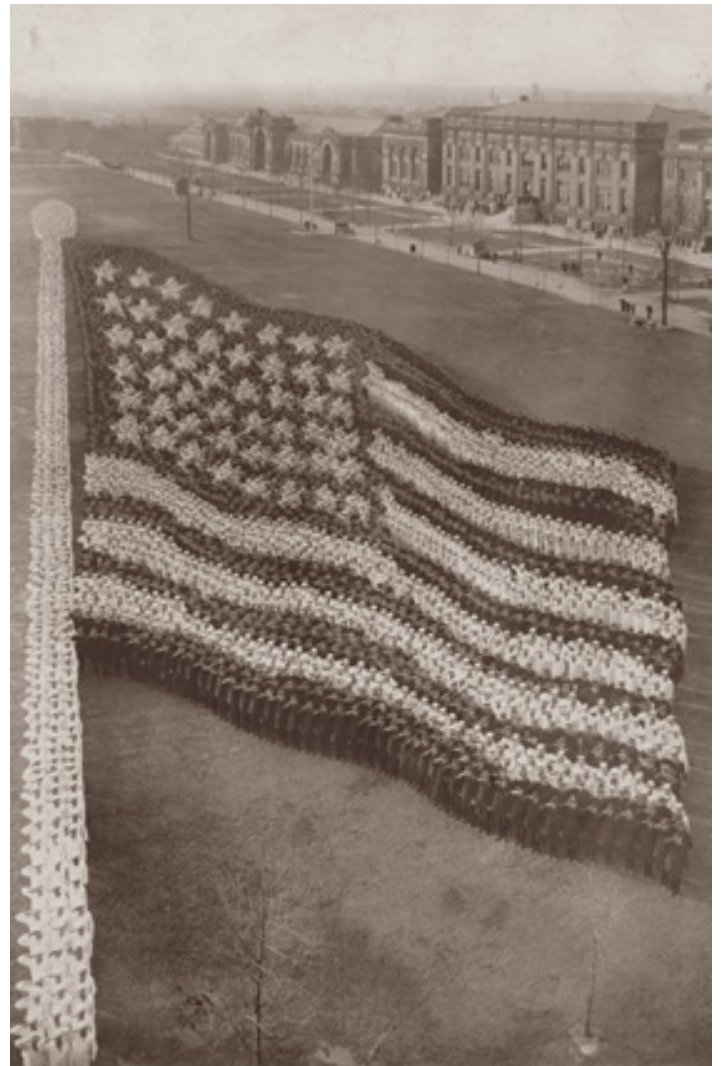
"Trips? To where? Father O'Malley asked.

"For our 25th anniversary, I took her to Dublin," Patrick said.

"What a terrific example you are to all husbands,

Patrick," Father O'Malley said. "Please tell the audience what you plan to do for your wife on your 50th anniversary?"

"Well," answered Patrick, "I'm going back to Ireland to get her."



FLAG WAVERS

Far from the ocean, 10,000 sailors-to-be took the form of a flag at Illinois's Great Lakes Naval Training Station. The photo ran in March 1918 with a story by former President William Howard Taft, who emphasized the importance of the salute in his lectures to young World War I draftees. "The freedom and independence that an American youth enjoys make it necessary to have the reason for such a ceremony explained to him," Taft wrote. "His self-confidence and his self-conceit make it irksome to him, at first, thus to register his subordinate position or to obey implicitly, as he must, if he would be a good soldier."

—Margaret G. Zackowitz

(Courtesy of July 2007 National Geographic)

Have a happy 4th of July!