

February News Highlights

FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN

As I state elsewhere in this newsletter, to most of us February 14th is the traditional day on which lovers express their devotion for each other by giving cards, flowers or candy. I like to think of it also as a day that gives an opportunity to express oneself kindly to someone who has favored you with a kind deed. Many of you responded, which always pleases me; it makes this newsletter task so much easier. Please continue to respond that way.

Even I received a “thank you” valentine. It was sent to me anonymously. “Joanne, love and kindness are exemplified in your willingness to organize and edit *Smoke Signals* for us who look forward to it and enjoy it.” Let’s always remember that words of encouragement lift one’s spirit. Be generous in encouraging others.

I recently had hip replacement surgery. My sister in Denver sent me a card: *20 Fun Things to Do While You’re Recovering From Your Operation*. Below are listed some of the suggestions:

- Practice to become the world’s fastest remote control user.
- See how long you can go without blinking.
- Practice exotic bird calls.
- Make puppets out of empty pill bottles.
- Draw happy faces on your toes.
- Make a macaroni sculpture.
- Try to sell your sculpture on eBay.
- Gargle “The Star-Spangled Banner.”
- Build a fort out of tissues and toilet paper rolls
- **CONCENTRATE ON FEELING BETTER SOON!**



“Only love can be divided endlessly, and still not diminish.”

–Anne Morrow Lindbergh

To most of us, February 14th is the traditional day on which lovers express their devotion for each other by sending Valentine cards and giving gifts of flowers or candy. I like to think of it also as a day that gives an opportunity to express oneself kindly to someone else, a chance to make someone feel appreciated. Residents were asked to express thankfulness or appreciation to that “someone” who has generously impacted their lives for good.

(JH)



Hazel– I want to send a thank you valentine to Sharon and Mark (#409) who helped me so much when I sold my home and moved here. And they buy my groceries and do many things to help me. Thank you, Sharon and Mark.



Alice – Dear Joel, I remember when you were ten or eleven years old; it was Mother’s Day, dinner was over, Dad had to go back to the pharmacy to work, and Paul and Barbara went off with their friends. You and I were home alone. You said, “Come on, Mom, let’s go for a bike ride.” We enjoyed the ride, and ended up at Nokomis Park, where you said, “I’ll buy you an ice cream cone.” That gesture of love and kindness made me feel so special, Joel. I will never forget that day and the special time you and I had together. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Love, Mom.



Ardelle – Dear Mom, You were such a wonderful seamstress. Did I ever properly thank you for all the garments you made for me? It began with the little white dress I wore for my baptism. Since girls did not wear slacks or jeans in those days, you continued to make dresses for me. When it was time for me to start school, there was a new dress to wear on the first day and then another one for Christmas.

As a senior in high school, I had looked forward to wearing a formal for the senior prom, but the class voted against it. You made a dress for me from dotted Swiss material (white with blue dots) with a matching ribbon belt. For graduation, I had a rose-colored lace dress with short sleeves and a flared skirt. Seven years later, you made me another lace dress, my white wedding gown, which had a sweetheart neckline, long sleeves and a short train. The last dress you made for me was the tea-length blue gown I wore as an attendant at my “little sister’s” wedding. By then I had a little girl of my own, and she served as the flower girl. You made her dress from the same material as mine. Mom, I still have three of those dresses. Somehow, they just seem too precious to throw away. Perhaps someone else will have to decide what should happen to them.



A million thanks for all the stitching and fitting you did for me. Each garment was hemmed with love. You were incredible. Much love, your “oldest” daughter. (*My mother lived to be ninety-nine. The last summer of her life, she could not always remember my name, but she knew I was her “oldest” daughter.*)

Marge – (*This is a thank you to my niece, Elaine, and her husband Jim, living in Arizona, for a kindness I will always remember.*)

Thank you, thank you, Elaine and Jim, for the love and kindness you showed to my sister, Bessie, and me in the summer of 2009, when you arranged to accompany our sister, Ordale (who also lived in Arizona), on the plane so she could come and visit us. You were so loving and thoughtful to handle her walker, luggage and other personal needs, just so we three sisters could have that enjoyable time together once more. This is a cherished memory that I am keeping in my heart, especially since it was to be our last visit together before her death.

Gratefully, Aunt Marjorie

Mary Ann – As I ate lunch in the staff “break room” at Folwell Junior High, I observed the social worker sitting across from me drinking from a clear glass coffee cup that had her name etched in frosted white. “Beautiful etching,” I said. “It’s my hobby,” she responded. Several days later, she brought a glass cup to the classroom where I worked. On one side was my name *Mary Ann*; on the other side, against a background of mountains, an eagle soared, wings widespread. Beneath the eagle was engraved the Scripture reference *Isaiah 40:31*, one of my favorite Bible verses. This happened about twenty years ago, but I still recall the unexpected gift and the generous giver each time I see the cup that was crafted just for me.



Alice– In 1993, my husband and I volunteered to go to Papua, New Guinea, where Tom managed a publishing/printing operation for the Lutheran Church (ELCA). Towards the end of our second year, Tom went to the interior highlands to interview a national to take his place as manager. I was alone at the station in Nagada (outside of Madang), when, late at night, I heard footsteps coming up the front stairs, as well as the breaking of the louvered glass windows near the entrance to our house. The intruder entered, calling out, “Where is Tom? I’m going to kill him!” I had gone to our bedroom at the other end of the house, closing the doors at both ends of a hallway. I heard furniture being crashed to the floor, as the intruder continued to call out for Tom. Then he called my name: “Allis, whey yu?” I said nothing but braced myself against the door. He kept shouting; then I heard him coming down the hallway, and he moved the knob on the door opposite me. I heard a voice calling from outside – apparently someone was calling to the intruder, because I heard him walking away.

I waited for awhile before venturing down the hallway.

As I approached the living room, I heard voices calling out, “Allis, yu aw rite?” “Yes, I am,” I replied. They were workers who had seen what happened and wanted to help me. I applauded them with thankfulness, whenever I think of this experience.



I also want to acknowledge a neighbor who assisted me in 1975. We were living in Minnetonka at that time. I went out to the mailbox on the side of our driveway to pick up our mail. I didn’t realize that there was a covering of ice; I fell, landing on my ankle. I managed to crawl into the house. I called my neighbor who, thankfully, was home and was able to drive me to the ER at Methodist Hospital. I am forever grateful! (X-rays showed that I had five ankle fractures. Following surgery, I spent most of six months with a walker and crutches.)



Ellen– To the buyer of our house: Thank you for overlooking the defects of our 55-year-old split-level house and buying it after it was on the market for twenty-two months. (If it had been sold after 24 months without our living in it, I would have had to pay capital gains tax!). Gratefully, Ellen Lohff



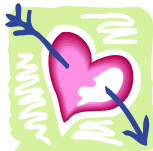
Marge– I am thankful to the Metropolitan Airport Commission for the wonderful things they did to my home in the summer of 2002. They deserve a valentine!

Three men arrived early in the morning on that memorable day and began the task of replacing all the windows in my large, two-story house. They knew what they were doing and wasted no time. It was a noisy, chaotic time, but all I had to do was stay out of the way. One morning they arrived before I was dressed, and I had to get dressed in a closet. Believe me, I was happy to do all I could to accommodate them.



They installed thirty-four new windows and new storms. My front porch had nine windows that qualified for replacement. There were three oversized outside doors, which were special order, and needed to be wood. A vent was installed in the bathroom, and they put insulation in the attic and the other vents. I already had central air and a new furnace. They spent almost \$50,000 on my house! Believe me, I am thankful, oh, so thankful.

Marion— When I sold my home in Missouri, I had one month to get rid of furniture in seven rooms. And my basement, shed and the garage were full of “stuff.” My dear neighbors helped me hauling loads of things to Goodwill, the dump and elsewhere. Mary and Mike did most of the work for me; they were a true blessing. Many of my neighbors bought a lot of the furniture, and when moving day came, Mary and Mike were right there helping again. They even opened their home for me and my family to stay overnight before leaving the next morning. I will always be thankful for my good neighbors.



Ruth— A valentine should go to a neighbor who was so kind when our first child was born. Her name was Marcia. She had three young children, but she came and helped bathe the new baby. She also brought a hot dish for our first meal when I got home from the hospital. She was a dear friend. She is in heaven now, but I will always remember her.



Rose— There are so many episodes in my past where people stepped in with their support and encouragement. Hopefully, at the time I gave my heartfelt thanks. I am fortunate to have a supportive family and many loyal friends. Through many illnesses and near-death experiences, you have been there for me. I am so thank-ful for your unfailing love and support.

Mary— I cannot send a “thank you” valentine to just one person! On January 7, 2003, my daughter and I walked down the steps in the atrium to the garage (the glass elevator wasn’t working). To this day, I don’t remember walking down those steps. I fell and cracked my head open. The ambulance took me to HCMC, where I remained in a coma for three weeks. I spent



another week there before going to the Richfield Health Center for a month of therapy. I need to thank the hospital staff, the care-givers at Richfield Care Center, my church family, and the residents of Nokomis Square. I guess my Heavenly Father wasn’t ready for me yet.



FOUNTAIN VIEW DINING ROOM

*Marge Holmberg
Food Service Committee*

After the winter we had last year, we were all dreading the beginning of winter this year. Haven’t we been pleasantly surprised? It has been a “piece of cake” so far. Things can change in a flash, of course, but the days are getting longer in February, and spring is not far behind.

Somehow, the older I get, the more I feel the cold. Growing up, we spent a lot of time outdoors, which made us kind of tough. I recall all the skating, sledding, snowball fights and snow forts. Now I am content to do my “remembering” from the comfort of my warm apartment.

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE



Join us on Monday, February 20th, at 7 p.m. in the Community Room for an evening of entertainment by *Brothers 2*.

Brothers 2 grew up in a family of Norwegians who loved to sing and play. They do a lot of music from the 50s and 60s, as well as some from the 30s right up to the present time. They favor ballads and love songs but also sing sacred and gospel music.

Brothers 2 use a bass guitar, an acoustic guitar and two voices. They have a great time singing and playing, and they love to get an audience engaged and laughing. Please come to hear them, and then join your friends and neighbors for refreshments in the dining room.

Most people think of Abraham Lincoln as an iconic president and the Great Emancipator, but many don’t realize that he also was an inventor. He was issued patent #6469 for an inflatable device he designed to help buoy river-going vessels over shoals.



PENNED BY PAM
Director of Marketing

One of my fond memories from Sunday School days was the object lesson. You may also remember them. Superintendents or teachers would choose an ordinary subject and weave a message around it – a fountain pen that needs a supply of ink to be useful, a sponge that absorbs the liquids it touches or, perhaps, a flashlight that provides light for your path.

Consider the Lund's brown grocery bag. If I were to hold one up, you would see THANK YOU printed in many languages. What a great marketing tool for the grocery chain!



Dhanyarwaad to Joanne, editor of our newsletter, and to the Smoke Signals committee for choosing "Thank You" as a theme for the month of February. You will read wonderful stories of *Hvalas* elsewhere in this issue.



I hope I never forget to express my thanks to all of you who make my role at Nokomis Square so special. Many of your suggestions have changed the way we do some things. Your positive comments to people I am touring really make a difference. And, on a personal level (I have said this before), you hold me up when I am down and provide constant encouragement. *Takk*, and I will say it again, *Toda Raba*.

A few words of *Tacks* go to all of our committees. I need you to know that I brag about you when I tell our Nokomis story. YOU are what make this place very special. I believe that your efforts on behalf of all members set us apart from any other 55+ building.

Danke to staff members who keep this place running smoothly. I know about your efficiencies, your plumbing successes, your cooking skills, your cleanup challenges, and more. I *wado* you for your efforts. I also brag about all of you.

The Board of Directors has a sometimes thankless job, but *Merci Beaucoup* for your diligence. Prospective buyers are always grateful to hear that our board is made up of members who live here and have a vested interest in the decisions that are made. *Grazi* to our management company for their expertise that keeps us on the right track.



Let's remember to use "thank you" liberally in our conversations and contacts with each other. *Tusen Takk* to all!



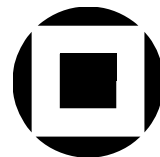
GIVE BLOOD

*The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.*

Everyone who can is urged to participate in the Red Cross blood drive to be held here on Saturday, February 25th, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Member Bonnie writes: "All of my adult life, whenever possible, I donated blood. Now I am a recipient and so very grateful for the blood bank. If you are unable to donate, perhaps some of your family would be willing to give some of their blood. The Saturday date should be a more convenient time for most people."

For appointments, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or go online at www.redcrossblood.org. (You may also drop by without having registered ahead of time.)



AROUND THE SQUARE

**Medical, Mechanical, Melody,
Mystery, Marriage**

Ben Franklin wrote: Cheese and salt meat should be sparingly eat.

Beware of the young doctor and the old barber. He's the best physician that knows the worthlessness of the most medicines.

Most work is more complex than you think. The self-opening security doors to the garage make it easier to pass when encumbered with baggage or a cart. Garden workers and others have found the door between the community room and patio to be heavy and awkward in the wind. Some weeks after learning that it was to be made operable by our security key fobs, I discovered that had not yet been done, even though the "Press Here" plate was in place. A nearby coffee drinker said, "...not in winter because too much cold air would enter." Maintenance staff said that is just another rumor. Completion of the installation required three technical trades: the equipment supplier, the security system provider and an electrician. The nine-second opening is too much in cold weather, so it is turned off for now. Perhaps by spring?



An advantage of getting older is that you can sing in the bathtub while brushing your teeth.

History and Mystery. In the second floor large elevator lobby is a glassed cabinet displaying some mementos of Nokomis Junior High School which once stood here and are well known to some current residents or their children. Most displays are of the earlier years of Nokomis Square. Why are wood toys included?

Recently added is a framed letter from former Star-Tribune writer and WCCO radio and KTCA-TV personality George Grim. He died on January 8th at age 99 at his home in Florida. The appreciation letter, plus two others, and a Grim obituary feature are among 17 pages of pictures and news clippings about Santa Anonymous and participation by Nokomis Square residents. You may see this in NOKOMIS SQUARE BEGINNINGS 1983 on a shelf above the desk in our media center.

By 1986, the newspapers and Grim had been promoting the Santa program for 38 years. With help of \$500 from the newspaper for materials, the Nokomis men and women made 250 wood trucks and other wood toys and 30 stuffed dolls and dogs.

(Continued in next column)

Who knows...? Also in the history cabinet is a brick on a wood tray. On the brick is a small plaque:

Nokomis Junior High
GRAHAM FORD
1946 – 1948

What does this represent? Who is Graham? If you know, please tell.

An optimistic senior citizen is one who marries at age 75 and begins to look for a house near a school.

MUSINGS



According to my favorite young phi-losopher, Charlie Brown of Peanuts fame, “Happiness is a warm blanket.” I couldn’t agree more.

I hit a speed bump on the road of life this past week and had to have a blood transfusion. I reported at the appointed time and was shown to a seat and tensed up for the dreaded needle probe. Instead, the skilled technician gently wrapped my arm in a warmed blanket! I have never felt more relaxed or pampered! It was lovely. When she did go on wit the procedure, I didn’t feel any pain.

She got me settled back in the reclining chair and asked again, “Would you like a warm blanket?” I couldn’t answer, “Yes, please” fast enough. This time I was draped from neck to toes with a “just out of the oven” warmed blanket. I was again completely relaxed and at ease.

I examined the blanket as I reclined there – cheap, thin, white and really quite rough, a homespun texture. I think if it were put on the “give-away-bench,” it would stay there for a long time. Yet, the pleasure and comfort it gave me was immeasurable.

I was surrounded by every high tech, high dollar gadget and gadget available, and drugs for every ailment were just down the hall. But my comfort was coming from the simplest of home remedies, a warmed blanket. From what I could learn about the “warmed blanket,” hospitals have been using this simple anxiety reducer for the last fifty years or so.

I wish they could pinpoint the first person to use it in this context, so that they could have a statue outside every hospital with the name praised in song and poetry and medals given.

You’re right, Charlie Brown, “Happiness is a warm blanket” and also soothing comfort and love.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Bill Prentiss, Committee Member



BOOK REPORT

Carol Burnett was born on April 26, 1933. She has written two autobio-graphical books. The first was *One More Time*, publish-ed in 1986. It was a memoir written for her daughters, which told mostly of her family life as a child up to the time Burnett reached the age of twenty-six. She has written a kind of sequel entitled *This Time Together*, which was published in 2010. The two books overlap somewhat, but *This Time Together* is basically the story of Burnett’s adult life. It is, however, presented in the form of 73 vignettes that cover a broad range of people and events.

In addition to her family, some of the people mentioned include James Stewart, Jack Paar, Ed Sullivan, Garry Moore, Julie Andrews, Lucille Ball, and Cary Grant. Also mentioned are all of the regular cast members from her television show. Some of the topics she has written about include the challenges for a young girl trying to get started in show business in New York in 1954, living with some of her pets, happy as well as sad times with her family and relatives, and behind the scenes of her professional life

I think she has done a fine job presenting her life in this fashion. If you are interested in her life, you will almost certainly be glad to have read *This Time Together*. We have the book in our library, in large print and with several good black and white pictures.



Library-sponsored Program
Presented by the
AUDUBON SOCIETY
Tuesday, February 14, 2:00 p.m.



LEARNING AT THE SQUARE

An educational opportunity in partnership with
Nokomis Healthy Seniors
Wednesday, February 8th, 1:30 p.m.

Topic: *Legal Definitions from the Experts*

You will learn about the differences between Power of Attorney, Conservatorship and Guardianship. Attorneys from Legal Aid will discuss the options, including when and how to use each.

Two-thousand-twelve is a leap year; it has 366 days, one more day than an ordinary day. The extra day is added to the end of February and occurs as February 29 once every four years.

NOKOMIS SQUARE, A WONDERFUL PLACE TO CALL “HOME”

Dear New Friends at Nokomis Square:

Whenever my husband Dale and I return and walk into our house, we say almost simultaneously, “We’re home”! *Home* – what a welcoming word, what a warm word, what a favorite word of ours!

For me, this Lake Nokomis area became my first American home. I was born of missionary parents in a far country – the “footprint at the end of the earth,” as the National Geographic called it, Madagascar by name.

After the Second World War, my parents, sisters and I returned to the States. Housing was impossible to find, so we lived for awhile with my uncle, Con Nestande, pastor of Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church. Now, sixty-four years later, I am returning to this area, expecting to make Nokomis Square my last home on this earth.

Home is a matter of relationships, and already Dale and I are experiencing this aspect of home at Nokomis Square. Thank you for the way you have welcomed us.

From: **Louise**

Editor’s note:

Louise and Dale moved to Nokomis Square just prior to the New Year. They will be interviewed by a member of the newsletter committee, for inclusion in the March issue of

Smoke Signals. We have, in fact, other new members to introduce. Watch for articles in the next edition

Following through with the “this is home” theme, a thank you posted by Susan is fitting to include here. Susan has been absent from us, caring for some health concerns.

Dear friends and family:

Adequate words fail me to express my heartfelt appreciation to each of you for your cards, prayers, well wishes and gentle thoughts while I have been away from home. Forgive me if I’ve failed to include any of you. Thank you for assuming my responsibilities at NSC. Special appreciation to Judy Saima (#601) for watching over my Kitty twice daily and being so loving about it. I am awestruck by each of you – you are amazing! This is the first time in my life I’ve had so many dear people in “my world.” Thank you, one and all.

Editor’s Note:

Nokomis Square is a cooperative, which means that each member participates – cooperates – in activities, committees, information meetings, and, yes, eats in the dining room at least occasionally. This “cooperation” is what makes Nokomis Square a desirable place to live, a place we proudly call home.

I cite Don one of our newer members, as a good example of cooperative living. He’s a friendly guy with a positive attitude who participates, encourages and, yes, he even eats in the dining room. I mention the dining room, because his daughter, dines with him here nearly every Sunday. Linda has written a story that Don passed along to me; I think you will enjoy it, as did I.

The New Girl

“Crossing her ankles under the linen-covered table, Mildred fiddled with the nametag pinned to her cardigan. They’d suggested she wear it to help other residents recognize her when she was in a common area. She put on her glasses so she could spot her son behind the cluster of gray heads milling in the dining room doorway, in line to check off their names in the dinner book. That’s how meals got billed here at the independent living apartments that Bob Jr. had found for her after Senior went to meet his Maker. Most of the diners smiled at her as they made their way to their tables. She tried to smile back, wringing her fingers in her lap to stop them from shaking. It wasn’t like Bob Jr. to be late, and the serving girls were approaching with salads.



“She couldn’t bear eating alone in this big room full of people. Everybody was so comfortable with each other, laughing and pouring coffee. And here she was, the new girl, 81 years old and trembling like a ninny. Bob Jr. had insisted she start mingling. He’d said he would join her today because they were serving lasagna, her favorite. She pressed her palm to her belly. The hearty aroma of garlic floating from the kitchen was making her queasy.

“Mildred plucked the napkin from her lap and pushed her chair back. She’d phone Bob Jr. and tell him he could help her mingle another night. And then she’d eat a can of chicken noodle soup and unpack a few more boxes, try to make her apartment feel more familiar. Mildred stood and glanced at the courtyard windows. Blowing snow almost obscured the holiday-lit patio. A plump woman, whose glitzy gold sweater matched the drapes, waved stubby fingers in the air. Must be signaling the waitress. Mildred nodded her head in the woman’s direction. Just in case. Keeping her eyes downcast, she edged past a man in the doorway joshing with the little red-headed lady who’d helped her check off her name in the dinner book.

“Mildred paused by the glass elevator in the lobby, steadying herself with her hand on the back of a Queen Anne chair. Her apartment was to the...left, past the brocade chair that the bearded man seemed to favor, and then down the hallway. Or was it to the right? Past the mailroom? Warm fingers tapped the back of her hand. She blinked against the tears welling up in her eyes and turned, lowering her gaze to look into a pair of blue rhinestone glasses. Out of breath, the woman standing next to her smiled up at her, short fingers still resting on Mildred’s wrist. “You didn’t see me wave at you to come sit with us. We noticed your company didn’t show up.” Mildred squinted at the name tag fastened crookedly above an ample bosom. “Doris. Th-thank you, but...” She clutched the Jitterbug vibrating at her waist, “Excuse me just a” She pulled off her earring and held the phone to her ear. “Bob? You’re waiting for a tow truck? Yes, the snow. I can eat...” Doris patted her arm and pointed into the dining room. Mildred smiled. A real smile. “Don’t worry, dear, I’ll be just fine tonight. Doris has asked me to join her table of friends.”



Who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this special day? One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who lived during the third century in Rome. When Roman Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men (his potential soldiers). Valentine continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret, since he thought the decree was an injustice, defying Claudius. When Valentine’s actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Another legend has it that Valentine sent the first “valentine” greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl (some say it may have been the jailer’s daughter) who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed “From your Valentine,” an expression that is still in use today.

Valentine’s Day is celebrated to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine’s death or burial which probably occurred around 270 A.D.

Special Dinner
VALENTINE’S DAY
February 14th at 5:00
(Add \$1.00 to the price)

Salad with Chef’s Dressing
Beef Tenderloin w/Béarnaise Sauce
Twice-Baked Potato
Oven Roasted Vegetables
Dinner Roll
Tiramisu

Monthly Birthday Lunch
Monday, February 27th, at Noon

Chicken with Rice
Cream Sauce and Red Peppers
Vegetable Medley
Red Velvet Cake w/Cream Frosting
Ice Cream