

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Don Ruthig

August 27th, 2013

FROM THE RECTOR

Great Uncle Tom: the most embarrassing of them all

THE PRIZE for the most embarrassing character I have ever met goes to my Great Uncle Tom. It didn't matter where we were – a cocktail party, a restaurant, the theater or a sports stadium – Great Uncle Tom could be relied upon to do something that would make us cringe, wishing that the ground would open and swallow us up.

A sad thing about it is that Great Uncle Tom had achieved so much in his life that we should really have been inordinately proud of him.

He was a gymnast of international renown. He had won several medals – including at least a couple of golds – at the first Olympic Games, as well as medals at subsequent Olympic meets.

What's more, he was a highly respected judge (or whatever they call them) at important athletic events well into his old age. And on top of all this he had been an enormously successful businessman, making a fortune in the health club industry.

But the trouble with Great Uncle Tom was that he was the most tight-fisted person I have ever encountered. He would, for example, travel from one side of London to the other to save a couple of bucks on a tweed overcoat – no matter that the darned thing didn't fit him.

Consequently, one could usually rely on the fact that, no matter the occasion, Great Uncle Tom would arrive looking like an up market hobo, dressed in a coat the sleeves of which hung down over his hands like those of a Chinese mandarin and the pockets of which were slung just below his knees.

Admittedly, on some folks antique clothing has a certain "je ne sais quoi" but not Great Uncle Tom. His dinner jacket was rather a memorial to the menus served at every formal event he had ever attended.

In the England of my youth it was an iron rule that "a chap never criticizes another chap's kit." Thus Great Uncle Tom's hideous wardrobe went largely unremarked by family, friends and the folks at the "posh do's" he regularly attended. But the horror of his outfits was not lost on the teenage eyes of my siblings and cousins.

The most embarrassing aspect of Great Uncle Tom's stinginess, however, was that he was absolutely shameless about it.

At a time when wealthy relatives were expected to tip their young relations a pound, or at least 10 shillings, at Christmas or birthdays, Great Uncle Tom would grudgingly hand over six pence – six cents in American money – a sum that didn't buy any more over there than it did over here.

But his private displays of stinginess paled in comparison with his public ones. His wife was no more open-handed than he. Thus a meal with them in a restaurant was invariably a nightmare that began with dishes being sent back to the kitchen as unsatisfactory and ended with a loud shouting match between the two over which of them would pay the check.

As we got older we noticed that our father or an uncle would try to settle the matter by discreetly picking up the tab. But discretion was a virtue entirely alien to Great Uncle Tom and Great Aunt Aida.

But for Great Uncle Tom's teenage relatives the most embarrassing item on the agenda was accompanying him to church.

He would sit between me and my cousin Janice dressed in an ancient, overly long tweed jacket, sprung at the seat and out at the elbows. His trousers were, if anything, even more bizarre – ancient corduroys, once navy but faded to a blotchy puce, worn bald at the seat and knees.

Capping it all was his hearing aid – a cockamamie contraption, apparently put together by Navy signalmen shortly after the First World War. It looked more like a public address system than a hearing aid.

Great Uncle Tom would fasten the earpieces over his head, looking for all the world like an old fashioned radio ham, and switch it on. It would then emit a cracking hum guaranteed to irritate the faithful for at least six pews around.

He would sing the hymns and canticles lustily and loudly – albeit so off key it was impossible to sing along side him. However immediately after the sermon hymn he would extravagantly switch off the hearing aid, nestle down in the pew and close his eyes.

Soon it became plain to all that he was soundly asleep. With each breath his ill-fitting false teeth would clatter like castanets, accompanied by curious sucking and gurgling noises. Often his head would slump onto my shoulder which was rather better padded than Janice's.

It was, however, the offertory that followed that was the most embarrassing part of the exercise. The pews in our parish church were extra long and the collection was taken in baskets on the end of long poles.

As the men with the baskets approached, Great Uncle Tom would affect still to be asleep. Janice and I would put our half crowns in the basket while Great Uncle Tom would gurgle and snore.

Undeterred, the sidesman would poke him hard with the basket. Looking outraged, Great Uncle Tom would shake himself back to consciousness, shove his hand in his pocket, haul out a handful of coins,

Calendar of Events

Weekly Activities at St Stephens

Tuesdays, 7.00 AM: Bible Study at the Nautilus Diner

Thursdays, 10.00 AM: Knitting Circle meets in Quimby Hall

Thursdays, 6.30 PM: Superior Summer Supper, Quimby Hall

Thursdays, 7.00 PM: Bridge Group meets in Quimby Hall

Fridays, 10.30 AM: Bible Study in the Cadwalader Room

Special Events

Sunday, September 1st: Monthly In-giving for At Jacob's Well

Tuesday, September 3rd, 3.00 PM: Ladies Tea, Quimby Hall

Sunday, September 8th, 1.00 PM: Parish Picnic at the home of Ellen Reather

examine them closely, blow on them as if to rid them of cobwebs and drop them regretfully into the basket.

If the sidesman reckoned the gift was too small for one of the more wealthy men in the community, he would poke him with the basket again. At this Great Uncle Tom would make a great show of searching his pockets before resentfully casting additional coins in the basket.

To this day, however, I can blush at the memory of Great Uncle Tom arriving at the Financial Times of London where I was a very young assistant night editor. With him, he bore a pair of brogues that he proposed to hawk around the newsroom.

"Try 'em on," he urged, unmoved by my orders to leave forthwith.

"There would be no point Uncle Tom," I replied, "My feet are size 11. Yours are size six." Great Uncle Tom was unfazed. "Never mind," he said, "They are like new and I'm only asking thirty bob. Somebody else is bound to want them."

Admittedly the shoes were hand-lasted by Lobb, England's most famous custom boot maker. But the sight of Great Uncle Tom, dressed in his customary oversized overcoat, hawking them around the newsroom was embarrassing beyond belief.

Gallingly, the shoes were ultimately purchased by the newspaper's chief executive, collared shamelessly by Great Uncle Tom as he passed through the newsroom.

After that, every time our paths crossed, the CEO – a man reputedly as careful with his cash my great uncle – would pat me on the shoulder and say: "What a wonderful buy! It's not often you come across a pair of Lobb's for only thirty shillings!" If only he had remembered me for my journalistic prowess!

A consequence of life with Great Uncle Tom is that I don't mind people sleeping during my sermons. I don't even mind the noisy rush for the toilet, or the conversations conducted in stage whispers.

And as for folks embarrassed by it, all I can say is don't worry about it. It's simply my penance for the enormities committed by Great Uncle Tom.

This doesn't mean to say I can't be embarrassed anymore. One of the things I find most embarrassing about St. Stephen's is the noisy and – to my mind, unseemly – dash for the exit during the Voluntary that follows the Dismissal.

We are privileged to have one of the most talented musicians on the East Coast here at St. Stephen's. He practices long and hard to give us some of the finest church music in Baltimore, and it seems to me that he deserves a better show of appreciation than a rush for the doors.

Spare my blushes by sitting quietly until the Voluntary is over. There is absolutely no need to applaud, but you will find yourself rewarded with music you'd pay a bundle to hear at the Meyerhof or the Lyric. "

If you simply can't stand the music or you have an urgent appointment, please leave as quietly as possible. You can always shake the preacher's hand – or give him a raspberry – during coffee hour. **GPH**

Join us for the Fall Picnic

ST. STEPHEN'S oldest tradition -- the Annual Fall Picnic -- will once again take place at the home of Ellen Reather on scenic Dulaney Valley Road in Glen Arm, on Sunday, September 8th, at 1.00 PM.

If great food and good company in a bucolic country setting appeal to you please plan to join us For those who tried walking on water last year, the pool will be uncovered and officially open, so bring a suit and take a dip. There's a changing room in the pool house

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE
FEAST OF FOURTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER TRINITY
September 1st, 2013
8.00 AM, 9.15 AM, & 11.15 AM HOLY
COMMUNION**

For the Epistle: Galatians 5:16-24
The Gospel: St. Luke 17:11-19
For your MORNING PRAYER
The Psalter: Psalm 92
The First Lesson: Deuteronomy 8:1-14, 17-20
The Second Lesson: St. Luke 17:11-19

Ellen's gracious home, at 13201 Dulaney Valley Road, Glen Arm, is the perfect place for a traditional family fall celebration. The house is set among rolling hills, and the mature trees and her pasture is home to a small flock of sheep, including Ryan, the bottle-fed, much pampered lamb. The Parish Life Committee will provide beverages, not to mention the hot dogs and hamburgers – all grilled under the personal supervision of our gourmet treasurer, Bill Hawkins.

It would, however, be much appreciated if folks whose family names begin with letters from A to M should bring desserts or cake, while those whose names start with letters N to Z should bring salads or casseroles.

FROM JUDY ELLIOT

Needed this month

NOTE: JUDY Elliot has volunteered to be our liaison with At Jacob's Well and will keep us informed of their immediate needs each month.

Happily the food cupboards of AJW are well stocked this month due in large measure to the ongoing generosity of St. Stephen's. Presently they have need of personal items and some cleaning supplies, specifically bar soap, shampoo, deodorant, tooth brushes, tooth paste, body lotion, Comet or Ajax, small buckets, brushes and brooms, and dust pans.

Please remember AJW on Sunday, September 1st, the date of our monthly in-giving.

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
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RECTOR: The Venerable Guy P. Hawtin
PREBENDARY: The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley

VICAR: The Rev. Michael Kerouac

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric
DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Happy Riley
(410-252-8674)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATORS: Happy Riley (410-252-8674)
Martha Miller (410-321-9038)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.15 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

Attention Ladies of the parish

WE WOULD like to invite you to a Ladies Fellowship Afternoon Tea which will be served in Quimby Hall at church on Tuesday, September 3rd at 3:00PM.

Please RSVP to Anne Hawkins either by calling her cell phone, 410-913-7405, or by leaving a message with Happy Riley at the parish office, 410-560-6776.

Transportation is available if necessary. We hope that you can join us, it should be a fun time!

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice & Dr. Bob's Place. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Fr. Guy✠, Susan, Brice, Reta, Kathleen, David, Evelyn, Ellen, Mimi, Val, Stacy, Dino, Michael, Finton, Morris, Charles, Dawn, Betty Jean, Elliot, Sharon, Paul, Andy, Michael, Rosina, Donna, Diane, John, David, Richard, Bill, Leo, Riley, Mary-Ann, Linda Lou, Cynthia, Nancy, Judith, Deborah, Dorothy, Thelma, Mary, Linda, Jan, Liz, Bob, Wyatt, Jim, Sara, Tammy Sophie, Paula, Blair, Heather, Laurie, Lynn, Katherine, Hindra, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Edithann, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erlene, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tom, Leliliah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Ray, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Suzanne, Steven, Tammy, Ellen, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, Bryan, Jason, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Gloria, Lee, Emily, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Linda, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Jody, Sheila, JoAnne, John, Thomas, Jeanne, Maxine, Ann, Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Joanne, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Doris, Fran, Carol, Jimmy, Felicia, Susan, Christina, Dawn, Shirley, Daniel and Suzie.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: JoAnn, Larry, Aaron, Hope, Bob, Paige, Tom, Rosa, June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Dean, Ned, Stephen, Rachel, Lydia; Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Bobby, Kay & Emma, Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Susan, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Carol, Sandra, John, Mary, Michael, Drake, Emily, Daniel, David, Steve, Cherry, Aida, and Ruth.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, USA; Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt. Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, Ian Cadwalader serving in Afghanistan.

FOR REPOSE OF THE SOUL: Helen

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: Nessa Klein

COLLECT FOR THE Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Book of Common Prayer, Page 207

Return Service Requested

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