

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

Volume XIX, No. 37 *A parish in the classical Anglican tradition* September 25th, 2018

FROM THE RECTOR

Cool curmudgeons preserve traditions

Tradition is a vital ingredient in the cement that binds society together. And it is the casual shucking off of ancient traditions, for no better reason than they are ancient, that reflects that growing uncouthness that characterizes not only public debate, but so many aspects of society.

Folks who deplore the abandonment of time honored traditions are often disparaged as curmudgeons. But far from condemnation, curmudgeons should be hailed as heroes – latter day little Dutch boys for desperately trying to stem the flood of neo-barbarism.

I am proud to confess that I am a curmudgeon. I admit the discovery took me somewhat by surprise. I had always thought of myself as being in favor of progress, but I now realize the only way to be progressive is to be implacably opposed to progress.

America by no means has a monopoly on the abandonment of traditions. Britain is certainly not immune to the phenomenon, and coming out of the closet as a curmudgeon has put me in the position of defending activities I had previously considered utterly indefensible.

This might sound unpatriotic, but in the interest of accuracy, I must admit that I have always found Britain's national pastime, Cricket, an utter waste of time – not a patch on that marvelous game called Baseball.

My primary criticism was that Cricket has a very high boredom quotient. In fact, it makes a game of Lawn Bowls look like the Datona 500.

Indeed, cricket is so slow moving that, when forced to play it at school, I would always volunteer for the outfield. There I could read a book, safe in the knowledge that, in the unlikely event that a ball was to come my way, my team would have time to alert me to the fact.

Now I realize there's much to be said for tedium. The revelation came some years ago while watching British television with my brother-in-law Reg. It was the sportscast of a very strange looking game. I assumed it was a version of (pardon my French) *Jeu Sans Frontieres* (I think that's the way you spell it).

Jeu Sans Frontieres is an utterly pointless international competition in which teams from various European countries perform a series of unimaginably mindless tasks to win totally idiotic prizes.

The participants in this game on TV were clad in luridly colored garments resembling ill-designed sweat suits that were covered with advertisements. The field on which they were playing appeared to be made from Astroturf and was similarly covered with

advertisements. The spectators were a howling mob. All of this was most peculiar, especially as the game, itself, seemed vaguely reminiscent of Britain's decorous, gentlemanly and time-consuming pastime.

"What on earth are we watching, Reg?" I asked. "Cricket," Reg replied. Suddenly black spots clouded my vision. I felt light headed and faintly sick. "It can't be cricket, Reg," I cried. "Tell me it's not true!"

At this point I should explain that cricket was always played in white flannel trousers, white flannel shirts, white knitted sweaters and white canvas or buckskin boots. The only color players were allowed to display during the course of play was on a stripe around the necks of their sweaters and on their caps – silly little affairs that look like they have lost their propellers

Spectators at cricket matches (it would be quite

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office at (410) 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Gene, Priscilla, Peter, Charlotte, Bryan, Dorothy, Rodney, June, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Robert✘, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Cour Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, David, Adrian, Tom, Michell, Aida, Mai, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, Isobel, Judy, Elizabeth, Wade, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Peggy, Gordon & Scott

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Caroline, Mavis, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Erin, Aubery & Kath

IN MEMORIAM: Dan Brooke

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: The Brooke Family & many friends

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt. Col. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

unseemly to call them "fans") took pride in their stoicism and restraint. They unflinching applauded the "visitors" (a.k.a. the rival team), and defeat was accepted graciously, with faint murmurs.

The pitch upon which the game was played, moreover, was an immaculate rectangle of dense, finely-cut grass surrounded by a wide stretch of lush, well-trimmed greensward of the sort one finds only in England.

Be all this as it may, when I left England cricket was

not simply a game, it was one of Britain's most cherished national symbols – a sort of slightly more mobile equivalent of the Statue of Liberty, so to speak.

As long as the smack of leather on willow echoed in the land (cricket balls are bound in leather and bats are made from willow) one could rest assured that all was right with the world.

Now it is true that smack of leather on willow still echoes (assuming polyesters have not taken over the artifacts of cricket in the same way they have supplanted the white flannel) but that is all that remains of the time-hallowed sport.

True, most cricket matches still provide the traditional "beer tent," but doubtless the top selling offerings are Budweiser and a nicely chilled Chardonnay – so they are really quite different from the days when the only drinks available were draught and bottled Bass, and lemonade Shandy.

Next thing, the tea tents will be serving up espresso and lattes. Who knows, they probably are!

The culture shock arising from my "cricket experience" has also affected my appreciation of the Olympic Games. Frankly, I couldn't have given a hang about the shenanigans of highly paid professional prima donnas in Brazil or where ever it was the last overblown contest was held.

Things were different when my Great Uncle Tom represented England in the first modern Olympics back in 1896. Tom was officially a member of the gymnastic squad, but he took part in a number of other events as well because a number of athletes failed to turn up, either having lost their way in the Balkans or having been kidnapped by brigands.

In order to qualify back then, it was not only necessary to be good at one's chosen sport, but to have sufficient cash to foot one's own bill for travel and lodgings. You know, there's something really quite appealing about that sort of tradition . . . GPH✘

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Office: 410 560 6776 · **Rectory:** 410 665 1278

Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar* ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki,

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, The Rev. Robert Ludwig. &

The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers

Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Sungl Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11am: Sungl Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

Choral Services (as announced) – evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Noon: Bible Study

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, October 17th, 7.00 pm

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, October 17th, 7.00 PM

Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Cookie Walk 2018

Saturday, December 1st from 9.00 AM to 12 noon

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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11856 Mays Chapel Road
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