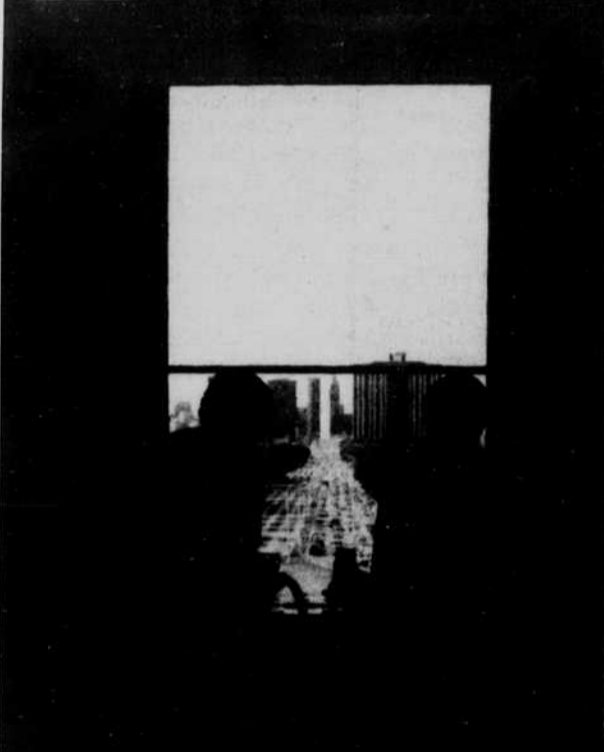
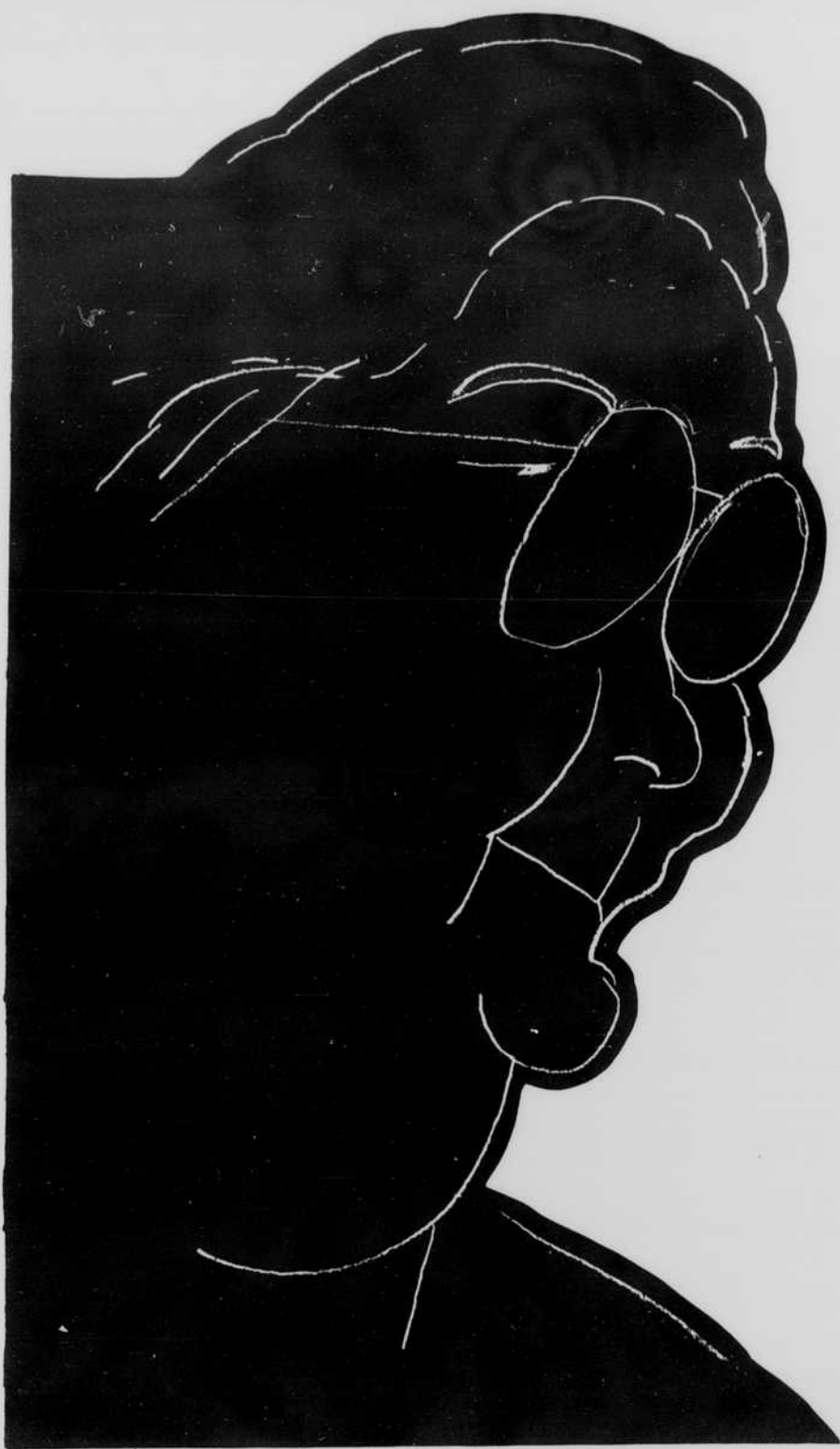


Edition I

Pastures of the Past





"Just Call Me Buckeye . . ."

by John Starr

I remember when I was eight years old I went to Florida to visit my grandparents and do some fishing. When I got there my grandpa said his boat was on the blink but not to worry because he had a friend who would take me out the next morning at 5 a.m.

I got up at 4:30 a.m. all ready and raring to go. We went over to this guy's house, and I saw a big guy come out.

"Howdy," he said. "My name is Buck but you just call me Buckeye."

"Why Buckeye?" I asked.

He popped out one of his eyes and proudly proclaimed, "I only got one eye, that's why!"

Well, his wife told him to quit teasing, my Grandpa chuckled, and it just plain scared the heck out of me.

We then got down to the business of loading up the boat. We had all the regular equipment, but he had a couple bottles of something. Not knowing what they were, I asked, "What's in them bottles?"

"Hooch."

I didn't know what Hooch was, but I wasn't going to appear totally ignorant either so I just nodded my head.

We got in the boat and he started up his outboard motor. His wife said something about taking it easy on the Hooch and B.S. and he said he would. Grandpa said to have a good time. I said I would and off we went.

Buckeye was kind of quiet for a while. But after fishing for a big with nary a nibble plus a few hits of his Hooch, he said, "I can tell you right now we won't catch any fish."

"Why?"

"It's been too hot lately and besides the gators have been eating all the fish."

"Gators?"

"Yep, gators or alligators. They eat anything and everything."

He looked at me and said, "You ever seen one, boy?"

"Sure, I've seen them on T.V."

He sort of snorted and said, "Just the other day I seen one get a dog."

"Really?"

"Yep," Buckeye answered. "It was a big dog too. This gator just came up from behind and chomped. Swallowed him whole."

"Wow," I was amazed.

He nodded his head and said, "I used to have this wolf. She wasn't too bright and liked to go swimming in the lake. One day she got attacked."

"Yeah?"

He took a couple more belts of his Hooch and went on. "Yep, that wolf was splashing around in the lake and I seen this big gator coming up on her real slow. Well, I tried to yell, but she never paid me no mind no how. Before I knew it, that gator attacked. Why that gator must've been 25 feet long and they battled for a good hour. Being a wolf was the only thing that saved her."

"Wow! So you still have her?"

"Nope! Game Warden made me get rid of her."

"Why?"

"Because once them wolves taste gator meat, they get hooked on it. Why she was killing 10 to 15 gators a day after that."

I thought to myself that must have been one mean wolf.

Buckeye sat back and started in on his Hooch again. Then he said, "Did you hear not too long back some old lady got her arm bit off by a gator?"

"Yep, old lady was standing on the bank feeding them gators marshmallows. Well, this one decided he wanted the marshmallow and then some."

I was astonished and said nothing.

We still hadn't caught any fish, and while Buckeye was drinking his Hooch I was thinking about that gator-killing wolf and the old lady with one arm.

Buckeye said, "I'm going to show you something, boy." He cranked up the motor and off we went.

We got to the other side of the lake. He cut the engine to low throttle, and we cruised into a natural canal that looked like something out of a nature film.

Buckeye said, "One time me and the Sheriff's posse chased a band of poachers through here."

"Wow, did you catch them?"

"Hope! But we found their skinning camp."

"Yeah!"

"Yep. Must have been 400 to 500 gator hides in that camp."

My eyes widened.

He nodded his head and went on, "You don't see any gators right now because they're asleep, but you come back in here at night and all you can see is the red eyes of them gators up and down both banks. Must be thousands them back in here ready to chomp down."

Well, luckily it started to rain. Buck said some words I didn't quite understand, and we went flying full throttle back to his house.

I said "luckily" because by this time I was totally speechless and just wanted to get off that alligator infested lake, but I also knew I had some good stories to tell when I got home.

John Starr is finishing his associate's degree in business administration at Parkland. He works for the *News-Gazette* and likes to bowl, hunt and fish in his free time.

Uncle Bill

by Brian Green

My first memory of my Uncle Bill goes back to 1963. My family was visiting my grandparents during summer vacation. I was building with blocks on the living room floor. Bill shuffled by and asked if he could help me. He sat down and listened while I told him how to start. I put the first block down and let him put another on top. Every time he did it, he hugged me and laughed.

I thought to myself. Why is this 18 year old man playing blocks with a little 5 year old? I had known how to count since I was 3, so Bill was old to me. I learned he was mentally retarded. That was why he couldn't talk plain and walked so clumsily.

Bill still has to be treated like a little baby. If he doesn't think he's getting enough attention, he gets "sick." He claims his stomach hurts and scrunches his face up like he ate something sour. If he's left alone, Bill gets "better," but if he knows someone is concerned about him, he "develops" more ailments.

Last year, my brother and I played a game of basketball. Bill tried to help but only made matters worse. He grabbed us and said "Gotcha" and laughed. My brother tried for 15 minutes to explain that he wasn't supposed to grab us. He kept right on doing it. We gave up and let him. After all, it was his basketball.

One evening after supper, Bill and I were sitting on the porch. I saw a black dog at the end of the yard. I whispered, "Look there, Bill."

"Whar?"

"At the end of the yard."

"Good golly. My get him, by gosh." He stuck his tongue out, grabbed his cap

pistol, yelled and fired a shot. The dog took off.

Bill turned around and said, "My get that goshdanged dawg. Him go jail."

"Why? He's only a dog?"

"My sheriff. Him get a kicket and go jail."

I laughed. He walked up and hugged me. His head just reached my chin. He barely got his chubby arms around me. He let go and rushed off to tell everyone what he'd done.

On another afternoon, grandma, Billy, and I were the only ones home. Grandma was asleep on the couch in the living room, and I lay on the other reading a magazine. Bill was in the basement.

I heard a banging noise. I got up thinking Bill hurt himself. I went to the top of the stairs and started to ask him if anything was wrong. But I heard a voice, then another. I could't figure out what he was doing until I heard "Sold!"

He was holding his own auction. He played the part of the buyers and the auctioneer. I sat down and listened. After grandma woke up, I asked her when Bill started holding auctions. She said he always did after he listed to "Swap Shop" on the local radio station.

About 3 days before we left, Bill was crying, so I asked him what was wrong. He said someone died, but he wouldn't tell me who. He dug out some dress clothes, changed from work clothes to good shoes and a tie. He found his Bible and guitar and left crying. I thought I'd better follow him.

He went to a patch of woods at the edge of grandpa's land. I hid behind a bush and watched.

Bill stood beside a flat rock turned on its

side, throwing flowers in front of it. I was too far away to hear, but his actions told me what was happening.

He opened the Bible and spoke for a while. When he finished, he walked up to the rock and bowed his head. He stood there for a few minutes and the way his shoulders heaved up and down, there was no doubt he was crying.

He picked up his guitar and sang a song. When that was over, he knelt down and cried some more. I waited for him to finish and let him see me. He came up, hugged me, and cried on my shoulder. I asked him what was wrong.

He looked up and said, "My die."

"Yes, Bill. Someday you'll die."

"My die now."

"No, no. You'll live for a long time."

He told me he wouldn't. He buried his head in my shoulder and cried some more. I let him cry until I thought he was going to get sick.

I asked him if it wasn't time to get back to the house. He sniffed a few times and said okay. We walked back with our arms around each other.

Ten minutes later, I watched him write me a "kicket" to go to jail. I asked him if he wanted to "ba ball." We went outside and played until he wore out. As we walked back to the house, he hugged me.

A first year business administrative student, Brian Green plans to transfer to the University of Illinois or Illinois State University after he receives his associate's degree in the spring of 1978. He considers himself a "history buff" with interests in music and stamp collecting.

About Thirteen and Forever

by Claire Jackson

God, I had it all and I really didn't care. My days were drunk with freedom and laughter from the heart — those days on which I look back so longingly. The color of the grass was summer green and my dog brought the ball back every time. I remember sleeping under clean, always clean, flowered sheets and waking to a voice offering a breakfast menu of my favorite things. On the weedless grass I went to Oz each summer as I lay reading under the bush with the clusters of delicate pink flowers. What ecstasy to take it all for granted and never even know that I was doing it.

There was another world though that I loved and counted on just as much. It lay across the cornfields over the Wabash River in the house where one generation ago another little girl had kept her summer situats and passed them on to me. Like two extra columns that supported the porch of the old house, my grandmother and grandfather stood to greet us each time upon our arrival. To step inside demanded a slowing down. An ease was there and the house breathed quietly and deeply. The clock had Grandfather's name and sang out for him each hour of his life.

Grandfather: self-supporting college man, soldier, extraordinary doctor, strict father, fretting grandfather. I sat on his footstool and learned from him until his head nodded and his eyes surrendered to sleep. On that

same stool I sometimes lay, pants down, face red, in front of all the others with roots there, to get shots — shots to take a fever down or shots to keep me from growing too far up. Grandfather thought by the time I was a woman I'd be six feet tall. I squirmed on his stool while once — or twice — removed relatives paraded through, primarily I assumed to check my growth. It was over that stool that grandfather fell, breaking his hip.

Grandfather had concealed his cancer from us for years. He knew he was its waiting victim and delayed our suffering in his own private, self-contained agony. He showed, not his pain, but his steady gentleness and his kind love. He was dependable and true as the time kept by his clock and as comforting as the sound of its chimes singing the hours of the night.

The hospital room was fading white. The walls, my mother's face, grandfather's skull-like head floating above the starched, flat sheets — all were medicine white. Somewhere from the whiteness that was the bed, from under the sheets arose a mound. Once this mound had been his stomach and liver. Now grandfather's mid-section swarmed and grew with the cancerous things that ate his flesh away. I ignored that horrid deformity and smiled into the eyes that looked at me with an adoration and told me I was beautiful. I felt less sad than impatient for his recovery. The unfamiliarity of grandfather's physique was outweighed by his eyes that spoke to me of life, and I was reassured.

There were flowers in the hall of the funeral home. Men in black suits stiffly stood by. As I was introduced, I flashed the smile I reserved for the grown-ups I didn't know. Still wearing my painted-on smile, I followed mother, winding through the flowers into grandfather's visitation room. People there spoke in whispers, the sound floating up over grandfather's casket at the head of the seats. In the center of the flowers he lay, ignored by everyone.

I approached him with curioisity and a happiness at the thought of seeing him again. The sight was shocking and I froze. His skin had turned to wax, the strong steady hands folded but not resting together. His moist eyes were closed behind useless eyeglasses, sunken behind eyelids mocking sleep. Still, I rationalized his pallor away.

The room felt warm with him and the chill in me melted away. I sensed a bond between us even when I was tugged off to a different corner of the room. It was as if he stood behind me with his hand on my shoulder, whispering and reminiscing.

I stood by or near him all day feeling insulted by those small town folk who came to see the family Doc but who could not bear to greet him personally for more than a moment. They were there to "visit" grandfather but were reluctant to come near him even though he lay in wait for them.

The flowers stood impeccably arranged in their static clusters. They were so apart from grandfather that I was moved to give him one rose, placing it at his shoulder on the satin cushions of the casket. Then I gave grandfather a daisy to hold. Touching his hands in a gentle caress, I waited for his eyes to open and gaze at me once more. The commotion of the guests rose from all sides unnoticed by grandfather but distracting me. A glimpse to the others there told of

much weeping, sobbing, and mourning — a display of regret for the members of grandfather's family.

Suddenly a guilt that adolescent shoulders could not bear came crashing down on me — the one who felt no sorrow. The tears that streamed so easily over the wrinkled faces of comrades, patients, and the friends of Doc McCormick would not well up in the eyes of his greatest admirer. Shame gripped me and I couldn't stand by grandfather. I decided my uncle was right, and I took away the affected-looking daisy which the cold fingers couldn't grip.

Something called a eulogy droned on and still the tears wouldn't come. Grandfather was still calling to me from his kitchen for cantaloupe at breakfast, still waiting for me to sit by him on the striped cushion of the porch swing. I yearned to hear his voice coming from the stiff, lifeless doll. It would not come.

When we had to leave the room, my hope left, too. An unending sorrow took its place and I understood life's ending.

Grandfather is with me. He sits in his rocker yet in his old sleepy house caressing and guding me as I stumble on what is to me the endless climb of the living. He has reached the summit now and knows what lies beyond. With this wisdom, perhaps, he smoothes the way for me — letting the ascent test but not conquer me. And I know that he has gone home to a peaceful slumber knowing his footprints remain in my heart — the heart that with each beat quietly reminds me of grandfather, grandfather.

Claire Jackson, an Edison High School graduate and a former art student at Parkland, aims her education towards becoming a commercial artist or art therapist. She enjoys drawing, painting and outdoor activities.

Son, Now Father

by David A. Sieminski
(Chanute AFB)

One evening last winter as I sat reading, my young son James approached my chair in friendly silence. He stood just outside the half-moon of light made by an old brass student lamp I cherished, the one that had once lighted my father's blue reading chair.

These days James likes to approach me with his most serious problems when I'm reading. It wasn't long ago he did that whenever I was working in the garden. Perhaps he feels most at ease with difficulties when I'm doing what he is getting ready to do. In the season past he learned to plant seeds and leave them, instead of digging them up the next morning to see if they had grown. This year he is beginning to read to himself — although he won't admit to me that he can.

I looked up from my paper, and he gave me his wide-open grin. Then his expression turned abruptly serious — a not too flattering imitation of me when I look serious.

"I broke my saw," he said, withdrawing the toy from behind his back. "Here."

He didn't ask if I could fix it. His trust that I could was a compliment from a small boy to the miracle fixer of tricycles, wagons, and assorted toys. He watched me intently, his expression revealing absolute confidence that I could do anything. That look stirred memories. I examined the saw with great care, turning over the broken pieces in my hands as I turned over the past in my mind.

When I was seven, I'd gone to my father's gas station after school one November day. My father was clearly the best mechanic within a thousand miles of the Allegheny River town where we lived. I was perpetually astonished by him, by the things he could do — as were his customers. He could not only fix whatever was the matter with anyone's car, but he could also break and train a horse, carve a top, and slide down Yellow Mountain on my sled, standing up! I liked to hang around his station and hear people call me "Little

Greaser," and I liked the way his customers always had a smile when they left his station.

But on this day, my purpose for going was to have my father fix my bicycle; it has been run over by a truck when it slipped out of my hands at an intersection. It truly was in a mess, but I just knew my father could fix it.

When the last of the afternoon's customers had left, I showed my father the bicycle. He examined it with great care, sorry to say he could not fix it. It was too bent up even to try. I started to whimper when my father grabbed me and hugged me, saying, "I guess it's about time you get another bicycle anyway!"

That winter seemed to have gone on forever when I lived through it long ago, but the memory played itself out in my mind in seconds as I sat turning over the pieces of my son's toy. I said to him, "I'm afraid it's broken."

"I know that. Will you fix it, please?" There was thinly disguised impatience in his voice.

"I can't fix it."

"Sure you can."

"No, I can't. I'm sorry." He looked at me — and the expression of awesome confidence faded. His lower lip trembled, and he fought his tears even as they came.

I pulled him up on my lap and comforted him as best I could in his sorrow over his fallen idol. Gradually his crying subsided, and I was certain he sensed my melancholy at seeing myself only an ordinary mortal now in his eyes.

As he left the room, giving me a direct and friendly look, I could hear by father's voice telling me in his certain way that Love was not conditional. Son, now father, I knew that out of that discovery comes the beginning of understanding.

Airman 1st Class David A. Sieminski plans to get his education through the Air Force. Sieminski attends Parkland at Chanute Air Force Base enrolled in the general studies program. His interest lies in the field of electrical engineering.



A Visit to Grandmother

by Dixie Bickel

The old, two story house was set back from the road about a quarter of a mile. As we drove up the lane, I could see only the front door and the roof because the house was surrounded by giant trees. My parents, in the front seat, had become silent, and I sensed tension growing inside the car. At the end of the drive, my father let my mother and me out while he found a place to park. Then we all walked into the house together. This was where my grandmother lived. This was my first visit to a nursing home.

As we walked through the front door, we entered a long, white room and were greeted by a stern-looking nurse. She talked to my parents while I explored the room. A bubbling water fountain was at one end and a statue of Jesus at the other. I remember thinking how wonderful it would be to live in a fantastic house like this. Then my parents called to me: the nurse was going to show us to my grandmother's room. If I had known then what I was going to see, I would have begged to stay in the safe and serene, white room. But being six years old, I looked forward to seeing the rest of this beautiful house.

To get into the part of the house where my grandma lived, we had to go through

some elegant French doors. Walking through those doors was like walking from day to night. Here the halls were narrow, the walls dark and gloomy, and the lighting poor. I could see people, old and gray, sitting in overstuffed chairs, and some were even lying in bed. Some waved to me, and I was terrified that one might touch me or take me away. The air in this part of the house was completely different, too. I can still smell that mixture of Lysol, urine, and cooking food. We walked down the hall to a door at the end and started to climb the stairs to Grandma's room.

I wondered how the nurses had got the patients up that tunnel-like staircase with only a patch of light at the end. The ceiling sloped steeply to the door, and the walls were so close together I almost panicked. I remember walking up those stairs as fast as I could because I knew if I stopped the walls and ceiling would close in on me. My father had to walk up them stooped and sideways because they were so narrow. When we reached the top, the hall seemed less gloomy. We turned right and walked to the last room on the left. There was my grandmother sleeping in a chair.

She looked so small in the huge, overstuffed chair. Her chin rested on her chest, and her soft, snow white hair fell down

across her face. I remembered how only the Christmas before she had played house with me, and it was hard to believe she was the same person. She looked so alone and sad sitting in that room by herself. My father walked over to her and touched her hand. As she opened her eyes, a look of recognition passed through them and was gone. She didn't know who we were. She didn't even recognize her own son.

As I leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheek, I felt helpless and sad because she had been so funny and active just a little while ago. After my father reminded her who he was, she was able to carry on a conversation with my parents. At times she would forget we were there and just stare off into space, but my father would always draw her back with a "Mom, are you all right?" I sat at the foot of her bed and looked around the room. It was so gloomy and cramped compared to her bedroom in the huge, old farmhouse where she had spent fifty-five years of her life. There was no warmth here. It was no wonder she had withdrawn into herself.

We sat there for what seemed an eternity to me. Then my father kissed her; he told her he loved her and would see her again next month. As we got up to leave, she told us to be good and to drive home carefully.

My mother told her we would and kissed her good-bye. Now it was my turn. As I bent to kiss her, she said, "Why, Dixie, I didn't know you were here." I looked to my mother for help, but she only shook her head and looked sad. So I told her I had been sitting on the bed, and I loved her. After that she was silent, and we left.

On the trip home my parents tried to play games with me, but once in a while they would remark about how pale she had looked. It was then I told them that they could always live with me, and I would never let them be sick like grandma. My mother laughed and said she would take me up on that some day, and we all seemed happier.

My grandmother died a few months after that visit, and I never had to go back to that horrible house again. But even now when I go into a nursing home, no matter how modern it is or clean, I smell those same odors and see the same gloomy walls. And every turn I take, I look for a tiny, gray, old woman with snow white hair sitting in a big, overstuffed chair. She's always there. She's a grandma, a human being, and once she was young and alive.

An expectant mother, Dixie Bickel is a perspective May graduate in Parkland's nursing program. In her spare time, Dixie likes to go camping with her husband.



The Returning Seasons

by Barbara Hoffmann

Once again the land slowly shrugged its winter shroud and awoke to another spring. I watched as the fields turned to crisp greens and dew-frosted blues, contrasting with the black which only overturned earth produces. The land, waiting for the change that occurred with planting, seemed as restless as Dad, waiting for the day when the weather was "right" for planting. The nervous attitude which affected my father implanted itself in me, and a growing excitement churned inside my stomach.

Finally, the right day appeared on the horizon, and Dad and the fields were reunited like two friends after a long absence. From the house I watched Dad on his tractor make round after round as he neatly transformed the rough land into straight, uniform rows of corn. He had a calming effect on the land as he cared for it; sensing this, I too felt secure.

Then, with planting aside, summer descended, with its heat and unpredictable weather. Day after day, the crops continued to grow in spite of the danger that the heavens held for them. Threats of possible flash floods, hail, wind, and drought made the crops seem daring and vulnerable in their process of maturation. The constant opposition between weather and crops made summer a period of anxious waiting and wondering for my father. Every day Dad

faithfully watched the weather report, hoping for good weather and anticipating the worst. In the evening he checked the sky for nature's forecast. When the sun went down with a pinkish-red sky for a backdrop. Dad would comment, "Red in the west, sailor's best"; the following day would be clear and warm. Like a detective unraveling a mystery, I listened to Dad recount the weather forecast. Drawing conclusions from this evidence, I also made my own decision about the next day's weather.

During the summer, the crops faced another enemy — weeds. It was then that Dad took me to the fields. Walking through the fields with him, I thought of myself as his helper, caring for the crops just as he did. All of the greatness that I saw in Dad was transferred to me, and I felt like a "big" girl, even though the hoe was twice my size and I could barely make my way through the tall rows.

With the tasks of summer completed and the crops fully grown, fall began to show itself. The bright, warm sun began the gradual drying process. Slowly, the crops turned from deep green to golden yellow, and the humidity of summer within them was replaced by the crackle of autumn. The warm, dry days and the cool, crisp nights of fall overtook the unpredictable weather of summer. The crops, like Dad, seemed relieved that the dangers they had encountered during the summer were now

behind them. This was the time of year that I enjoyed the most. Dad was relaxed and jovial, and I was happy watching the change in him.

Harvesting was not an easy job, with its long days and nights of work, but the promise of rest which winter held made the task less difficult. I watched as Dad worked on and on, gathering the crops from the fields and hauling them in his huge grain truck to market. Once again Dad was the caretaker, this time rescuing the crops from the cold and snow of winter that would soon ravage the land. I felt safe knowing that Dad protected me like he cared for the crops.

When harvesting was completed, the land lay barren as far as I could see, and everything seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. The land awaited the deep sleep which winter gives, and Dad looked forward to another season of "retirement." I was eager for winter, too. Winter brought the snow that I loved to play in and the colf from which I retreated into the warmth of the house. Then we rested because the planting of springtime, the waiting of summer, and the harvest of fall lay in wait for us in the breath of a season.

Barbara Hoffman is a student at Parkland and a former biology major at the University of Illinois. Barbara raises sheep dogs for a hobby and enjoys horseback riding.

How is it that people grow old?

by Dan Price

What brings about old age? The change isn't only physical, it has a great deal to do with psychological outlook. I have a grandmother who is seventy-three, yet she looks like she's ninety. Ever since her husband died, she has witered progressively. She tends to be wishful for death. Evidently, from her comments, she thinks that she has out-lived her usefulness now that her children have grown and her husband is dead.

On the other hand, I know an eighty-three-year-old woman who has been close to

death four times. Yet she looks ten years younger than she is. Her sense of humor is lively and she takes an active interest in the world around her.

The total difference between these two people leads me to believe that age is dependent on outlook, not years. Some people are truly senile, some people are merely old; yet, the happiest ones are the people whose minds haven't caved in.

Born in Bermuda, Dan Price is a freshman in biological engineering at Parkland. His hobbies include skiing, bag-piping, camping and sailing.

Edition J J

**will be published
the end of March**

Students with
short stories, poetry
and art work
are urged to contact

Cheryl Niemiec
c/o *The Prospectus*
Room X155
Phone: 351-2266

Contribute to

Edition J J

Staff Box

Editor..... Cheryl Niemiec
Photographers..... Jonathan Sivier
Jerry Lower
Cheryl Niemiec
Artist..... Denise Niemiec
Advisor..... Audrey Hodgins

Special Thanks to
Larry Gilbert and Ward Page