

# The Academy Perspective

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Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

## THANKSGIVING IN THE NOT-SO-GOLDEN YEARS

by Vada Lee Barkley

Soon after retirement I wrote a book about golden acres, a utopia for retirees. By now I've learned that eventually the "gold" tends to lose some of its glitter.

During the 60's Art worked for a Country and Western radio station. I listened religiously. One hit song still haunts me. Someone asks an Australian why he's crying. The answer, blubbered between sobs: "MY BOOMERANG WON'T COME BACK!"

With the years, my health has deteriorated. My eyesight isn't what it used to be. My hearing isn't so keen. My teeth are forsaking me. The six miles I walked in high school have now dwindled to six blocks. My girlish figure--if I ever had one--has long since vanished. My physical and mental dexterity is waning. I could cry over these losses. But modern medical science, with all its technology, can't bring them back.

Not only has my health deteriorated, but my financial security is eroding as well. While Congress and the President debate over my minuscule COLA, our drug bill alone skyrocketed over \$300 per month in the past 18 months--\$65 of that in October.

Our car is now 9 years old. Last month it cost \$350 for repairs. We used to trade cars every two or three years. All these new car commercials on TV bring me to the verge of tears. Then it dawns on me: We don't feel like driving anywhere any more anyhow.

Vanishing things lose their significance when compared to friends and loved ones who aren't coming back. True, we know they are better off. But that doesn't erase the pain of loneliness. We grieve more for ourselves than for them. Time may help, but God alone can heal the anguish.

What then can we find for which to be thankful? The following suggestions gave me a start:

1. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8)
2. The Church
3. Salvation
4. Family and friends--those departed and those present
5. Our Country--The Bill of Rights, Social Security, Medicare
6. Memories
7. Food, shelter, clothing; doctors, hospitals, medicine

8. Health commensurate with my age
9. Someone to love, something to do, and someone to live for
10. My hope of Heaven

The Apostle Paul writes: "In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (I Thess. 5:18). If we follow his admonition, this will be a great Thanksgiving Day.

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM

Our guest speaker for November will be Donna Mohling, Director of Patient Services for Hospice of Oklahoma County. Donna graduated from SNU in 1974. She later received her nursing degree at OBU. She has been in her present position at Hospice since its beginning in 1990. The organization was born as the result of the County Medical Society Physicians who acknowledged the need for a free standing nonprofit hospice organization.

Hospice of Oklahoma County is an affiliate of Integris Health. It is a non-profit agency dedicated to providing physical, emotional and spiritual care for the terminally ill and their families. It has many programs and services that will be interesting and informative to all of us.

## ON BEHALF OF OUR CALLERS

If you know in advance that you will not be at home on calling days--Wednesday or Thursday before each meeting--PLEASE let your caller know. Let's not keep her waiting all day for a return call or calling all day to catch us at home.

The Perspective should alert you to expect a call. If you don't get one, call me. We need your reservation.

## VISIT MITFORD

by Wini Howard

Have you been to Mitford? This is the fictitious town that Jan Karon writes about with such charm. The Mitford novels are: At Home in Mitford, A Light in the Window, These Hills, Green Hills, and Out to Canaan.

Let me quote a couple of sentences from the September issue of Christianity Today. "All four books follow the ups and downs of a likable Episcopal priest named Fr. Timothy Kavanaugh. But the main character of the ~

## SUSAN BAKER WILL LEAD RIG PARTICIPANTS IN INTERNET RESEARCH II

by Jack Arnold

Professor Susan Baker, Director of Academic Computing, will lead the Research Interest Group (RIG) in a hands-on Internet Research II session on Monday, November 10, 9:30 to 11:15 a.m. in the computer lab, Room 29A, of the W. Don Beaver Science Hall.

The group will use the Internet to research senior issues such as supplemental insurance to Medicare, proposed options to modify Social Security, long-term care, exercise and fitness, cruises for seniors, financial abuse of seniors, and continuing education.

All members of the Academy are invited to this bi-monthly meeting of the RIG. Professor Baker guides each participant through the necessary steps to access the Internet; so, persons with no experience, some experience, or a lot of experience with computers will find this session educational, useful, and interesting. Academy members who do not wish to use the computers may wish to attend as observers.

Since the computer lab now has been expanded to eighteen computer stations, more Academy members than ever can "seize the day" and discover new worlds of knowledge through computer technology.

## A FRIENDLY REMINDER

If you have not turned in your rig survey questionnaire, please bring it to the academy luncheon on November 13 or mail it to Bea Flinger. Thank you for your cooperation!

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Mitford series is the mythical town of Mitford itself." According to the article, more than a million people have been reading these books and listening to the tapes. The town of Blowing Rock, NC where Jan Karon lives could pass for Mitford. Because of her books, the town has become a real tourist attraction.

Father Tim, the leading character, is no doubt somewhat typical of the small town, country parson of bygone days. His concern for his people is heart-warming. His days are full and far from boring. When he leads a wayward soul in a prayer of repentance, I felt right at home as an evangelical. (Not that I always expect to be.)

CAN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE?

Continued: by Paul Gray

From the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth Rock in 1620 until 1940 there was a strong set of underlying principles that were the heart of American democracy. The Mayflower Compact set down these principles as guidelines for that little colony. They appeared even stronger in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, and by 1776 these principles were found in the governments of all the 13 Colonies. After that, they became embedded in the Constitution of the United States. There is plenty of evidence that these principles bulked large in the minds of the framers of this Constitution. On one occasion as the Constitutional Committee was at an impasse, making no progress, we are told that Benjamin Franklin made a motion that "henceforth Prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our Deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning," observing that without God's aid 'we shall succeed in this Building no better than the Builders of Babel..' " (An American Primer pg. 95). They were not new ideas. They had been tested across the centuries. In these principles we have "the accumulated Wisdom of the ages." In a nutshell, they are combined in what is known as the Judeo-Christian Ethic (The Ten Commandments and the Teachings of Jesus). This Ethic has been around for two millennia. The principles that compose this Ethic became the foundation of Western Civilization, and consequently of American democracy. They governed American society from the very beginning of this nation until recent days.

American Democracy is different from all other forms of government that have appeared on the face of the earth. Under this form of government we have built the greatest nation in the history of the world. Oh, we have our faults and weaknesses. America is not Paradise, but it is the best that fallible men have devised thus far. And, yet, we have some pockets of poverty, but taken as a whole, we are the most prosperous nation in the world. We have the greatest amount of freedom of any people on earth. A person can rise to unbelievable heights if he chooses to work hard and uses good sense. People from the other countries of the world are madly scrambling to get here.

This Ethic has served us well for the two centuries of our national life. It taught us the value of the individual, the importance of community, and the need for honesty, truthfulness, and integrity, both for the nation and the rest of the world, but at the same time it gave us some built in restraints that made for an ordered society. It was and has been the basis of our local and national laws. Before it all men are accounted equal. The common man, across the years, might not have been able to put this

Ethic into words, but he knew it was there, and he knew that some things were right and other things were wrong. In America they were imbued with his mother's milk. Oh, yes, these principles were transgressed by the common man and by leaders, but these people also knew that if they were caught they deserved and expected to be punished.

It was this Ethic that enabled American Democracy to work, and a system of free enterprise cannot survive without the guidelines it provides. Greed, dishonesty and cheating destroys the democratic free enterprise system. The Golden Rule is a vital part of the Ethic, and business, government, and social affairs do not function properly without it. If one studies American history honestly, he will have to admit that these principles gave us our freedoms and our growth, our openness as a society, the joys and the happiness that has been ours for two hundred years.

To be continued.....

A CHINA EXPERIENCE

by Bob Emmel

In June my wife Naomi and I spent eighteen days traveling in mainland China. What an awesome experience that tongue nor pen could ever proclaim what our eyes have seen, what our ears have heard, what our gustatory senses experienced, what our sense of smell was subjected to and what our tactile senses were initiated.

Departing from Oklahoma City to San Francisco was a normal flight; then we boarded an Air China Jet for Shanghai and on to Beijing. In three days we visited the Great Wall, the emperor's tombs on the Ming Dynasty, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven and a very special experience of a Beijing opera after a very satisfying Peking duck dinner and then to the history-making Tiananmen Square. There were other exciting places to visit, shopping to do and exciting experiences in Beijing too numerous for printing space in this publication.

A flight to Wuhan, a city of 7.3 million, gave opportunity to see the renowned Yellow Crane Pavilion. Here we boarded a deluxe Victoria ship to cruise 800 miles up the famous Yangtze river for five nights and six days, stopping at various ports along the way. The scenery through the Three Gorges and the site of the construction of the world's largest dam was awesome. This dam is already under construction, estimated to cost billions of dollars. The statistical data of the size and magnitude of this undertaking is so overwhelming that even many renowned engineers have difficulty comprehending it. Just a very few statistics will give some idea of the effects the dam will have on China. It will provide 15% of China's electricity, reduce horrendous flooding by 90% and facilitate passage of ships through

the great gorges, making possible the increasing of shipping in China by three-fold. The dam will contain the most and largest set of locks in the world. The work on the dam is already ahead of schedule. Negatively the dam will displace millions of people, destroy thirteen cities, 140 towns, 1,352 villages, 657 factories, and 30,000 hectares of cultivated land. Regardless of the environmental impact, when the Chinese government says "Do it", it will be done.

We disembarked at Chongqing, a city of thirty million, toured this huge mountain city and then took a flight to Xi'an, a very ancient city where we visited the Hua Qing Hot Springs, the summer mountain retreat of Chiang Kai-shek before he fled to Taiwan. The eighth wonder of the world entranced us with its 6,000 terra-cotta warriors, horses and chariots, an excavation of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) and the tomb of Emperor Qui Shi Huang (259-210 B.C.). This mausoleum took 700,000 laborers and 36 years to complete. Emperors of China always had an elaborate tomb for their burial and the site may involve many acres of ground and elaborate pagodas. These burial sites were always completed during the lifetime of the emperor when possible, and completed by others if the emperor died before the completion of his tomb. Also, here in Xi'an we visited one of the world's largest outdoor food, spice, herb and ancient medicine markets. It was an amazing experience with the markets covering many acres. It seemed unanimous among our group that one of the most spectacular human presentations was a dinner production by the Xi'an Ballet Company. Not only did we have a most delightful six course dinner served by beautiful young women in native costumes of the area, but the musical ballet production was unparalleled. The settings, the costumes, the dancing, the music was beyond description. To appreciate this fete would be to experience it.

To be continued.....

ART'S CHUCKLES

If the grass on the other side of the fence is greener-maybe your own needs more fertilizer.

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Just because things go wrong, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to go with them.

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A fool and his money are soon invited places.

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The moon will probably be our next vacation spot. People who go there won't have an earthly thing to do.

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If a man says he sees eye to eye with his wife, he simply means that his vision has been corrected.

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