

# We're Family Park Newsletter

Dedicated to the family of James & Amanda Dennison Issue 13, March 2007

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We look forward to your presence at our next Family Reunion – July 28, 29, 2007

## Background:

The following poem was written about a storm, two birds in a hurry, and a very large window.

## Romeo and Juliet

by Stanley Dennison

The pregnant clouds  
Hung low, dark, and heavy,  
Inviting some anticipation  
Of an impending birth:  
And carried the sound,  
On quickening wind,  
Of a distant crow  
As if it were with me.  
Two mating woodpeckers  
Missed the warning signs  
That caused others to scurry  
To a place of sanctuary.  
Reacting late,  
They flew at breakneck speed  
Into the invisible,  
Creating a sonic boom  
Like the muffled sound  
Of two under-inflated tennis balls  
Against a plate-glass window.  
They could not have anticipated  
Their journey  
To the greater Sanctuary  
Waiting for us all.  
They lay, wing in wing,  
With life's last flicker,  
And I marvel at their beauty,  
And I grieve for my loss.



## York Fisher Dennison

On September 29, 2006, Jerry (11-4) & Dianne Dennison became grandparents to **York Fisher Dennison**. His weight was 7lbs 8oz. The proud parents are Jeremy & Megan.

## Other Births: **Bryan Dennison** **Dylan Dennison**

Our grandparentship has been augmented this year by 40%! Our youngest son, Ryan, and his beautiful Latino wife, Rocio, presented us with a 9-pound little guy in September, whom they named Bryan. He was born in Paraguay, but he and his mother have returned with Ryan to their new home in Chattanooga. One month later, Todd and Brenda, our second son and his lovely spouse, blessed us with Dylan. They live in California. Our children have kept us busy flying around, trying to visit all of our grandsons. We now have five grandsons, no granddaughters.

Jim and Doris Burns

## Alfred Prince - **First Grandchild of Mommy & Poppy**



Alfred died after less than two months illness with cancer of the esophagus. I saw him New Year's Day and called him several times. He was taking radium treatments. He was in good spirits all through this. He was seldom sick and hard for him to be in a rehab center and made the remark that three months earlier, he was playing golf! This is very sudden and shocking for all of us. He turned 86 on Nov. 10. Love, Margie

## A Family Tradition

## Making Apple Butter

Evalee Oggy, Pearl & Wanda Coen



## Traditions and other Family Events

### “Apples Rule The Day”

storyline by Debbie Vance - other info by Wanda Coen

On November 25, 2006, I drove to my Aunt Wanda and Uncle Pearl's place with two goals in mind, one physical – one mental. I was responding to an invitation to help make apple butter. The entire process can only be described as a labor of love, since it cannot be left alone for even one minute. Making the apple butter started at sunrise and ended about the time the sunshine faded into dusk. I knew exactly what I was getting myself into, for I had made the trip to do the same thing once before. The mental side of my trip was to reassure myself of my place in the family by actually participating in an event that I would not soon forget.

The process that Aunt Wanda follows in making apple butter has not changed much in the past five generations. However, modern technology has helped to delay the timing of when things have to get done. A larger yield for the investment of time involved to get the final product is now possible. The apple crop was good this year, but apples do not all ripen fully at the same time. As the apples started trickling in, Aunt Wanda made applesauce and froze it to save for later.

A friend of theirs gave them six bushels of apples, so all plans for the following Saturday were canceled - for apples were going to rule the day. Uncle Pearl had his pile of oak wood close at hand, as he made the fire to handle heating a 15-gallon brass kettle. Although a lot of preparation happened before the official starting time of 8 a.m., the sliced apples began entering the kettle at that point. A lot of care needed to be taken to keep the apples from sticking to the bottom of the kettle, so apple juice was added to make the stirring more free-flowing until the apples started breaking down into their own creamy mixture. Experience had also been a wise teacher, so 12 pennies were thrown into the kettle to act as mini scrapers as the long handled, slotted paddle stirred everything around. Once the cooking process started, the stirring continued nonstop for at least 10 hours. The frozen applesauce had been thawed and added to the kettle as the evaporation process took place. We ended up with 14 gallons of apple butter instead of the 10 or so that would have been normal years ago. The first apples of the season that had been preserved by freezing until the long day's work began made the difference.

If not for so many helpers hanging around, there would have been two ways of knowing when the apple butter had cooked long enough. One was when the surface of the then dark red mixture became very glossy. The other would have been when the stirrer's arms were ready to fall off. All of the measuring was done by sight and taste. On this particular day we used 45 pounds of sugar and a half of a dram of oil of cinnamon. (A dram is 0.125 of an oz.- a very small bottle.) Everyone was a taste tester. The group for the day included Uncle Pearl & Aunt Wanda, Uncle Rondal, Aunt Evalee, and three of my first cousins – Dale, Gail, Cindy, and of course yours truly. To complete our band of workers, Cindy's two children, Erin (age 14) and Shane (age 10) helped.

Group fellowship continued throughout the day in the midst of stirring, eating, stirring, drinking coffee or water, preparing the jars to be filled, telling stories, and more stirring. Some of the jars used were slightly larger than pint-size, but the pint-ones were preferable. With the taste testers agreeing and with the gloss being on, the assembly line started for filling the jars. When the last jar was being filled, a discovery was made. There were only 10 pennies left in the bottom of the kettle. Often the jars of apple butter are given away on birthdays, anniversaries, as thank you gifts, and most certainly for Christmas presents. For those not aware of putting the pennies in the kettle during the making of it, finding money while spreading a tasty treat on their toast might give them a little more meaning to the saying, “A penny for your thoughts.”

Since Shane and Erin were the youngest ones involved in the activity of the day, I kept telling them that they were in the process of making memories. I was reminding myself of that fact also. It would be so much simpler to walk into a grocery store and buy a jar labeled apple butter instead of making it the old fashioned way. However, after being involved with the true art of a tradition along with tasting the difference of 100 plus years of family pride, the flavored brown applesauce from the store would no longer be appealing.

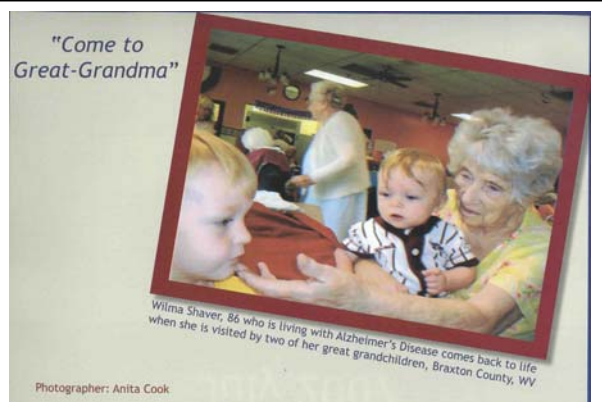
The making of real apple butter involves a very simple but labor-intensive process. The only thing I failed to mention as an ingredient is one that is not purposely added. Occasionally when wood is added to the fire, it stirs up ashes, and what goes up - must come down. If you have ever purchased a jar of old fashion handmade apple butter, and the word “**organic**” was used on the label, you now know what that means.

## Goodbye Pampers – Hello Florida

storyline by Valerie Long (Tracie's sister)

When Geraldine Dennison's (2-2s) great granddaughter, Averiall, turned three she was not yet potty trained. Her Aunt Tracie liked being with her, although some aspects of quality time were undesirable. Tracie told Averiall that if she would become potty trained, Tracie would take her to the ocean. Tracie was thinking it would be a great opportunity to see her cousin Sandy in Wilmington, NC, and have a vacation with Averiall. Once Averiall realized that going to the beach was far superior to trying to be bribed with a candy bar, a miracle happened – the diaper days for her were over. She told Tracie she wanted to go to a clean ocean - not an ucky one. She wanted to go to Florida. I guess they have a great tourism bureau down there, for that is where they went. Averiall was only three, but she knew how to get a great vacation.

### Ms. August, 2007 with Eli & Ashton



This is one of the pictures chosen for the West Virginia University 2007 calendar, highlighting West Virginia's seniors. I was so happy that they chose this picture of Mom with two of my grandsons. Even though she no longer knows what is going on around her, kids seem to bring her to life. She always gives them a kiss and loves to hold them.

Mom was such a wonderful mother and grandmother, and we all love her so very much. Time with her is so precious as we never know when God will call her home. On my birthday this year I got what I felt

was the most precious gift I had ever received. I was holding Mom's hands when I told her that I loved her. She looked me straight in the eye and said, "I love you, too." It had been a while since I heard those words from her. I will always cherish that moment. I hope she knows how much she is loved and respected. We have been so grateful that she has been around for 87 years. With love, Anita 10-13

### From the President's Desk

This is my first article for the newsletter, and I must admit that I have really struggled with it. I have been president of We're Family Park just over 6 months and haven't really done anything presidential. While I could give all kinds of reasons (aka excuses), the real reason is that I'm not sure what it means yet to be the president. I fear I may never live up to the fantastic legacy left by my father and Robert Shaver (both of whom were superb leaders). But, with every member's help, I'm sure that we can keep the Park moving forward. There are some wonderful projects that have been completed, and several more on the verge of being completed. What I will need from every member is not only their support, but their ideas and desires for sustaining and growing the Park.

One of the incomplete projects that we all need to focus on is the memorial bricks. Those who wish to immortalize their family or loved ones should contact me or any other member of the board. We hope to have this project completed by the end of the summer. Brick sales will end on the last day of the '07 Reunion.

I am exploring 501C3 status for the Park. If successful, all donations made will be deductible per IRS guidelines around charitable organizations. If any member is able and willing to assist with this, please contact me. Jerry Dennison, 3807 Oweda Terrace, Chattanooga, TN 37415. Phone 423-314-8470.

### A Touch Of Humor

Ro and I own 5 rental houses. Our rental application has the normal questions, but sometimes the responses are different than what we intended. Such as with the following questions: Employment status?

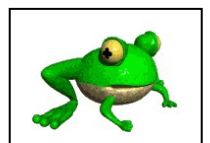
"My husband works for the Cincinnati Water Works," the wife answered.

"Children?" (Names and ages if any)

"Oh, yes, Mike is eleven and John is twelve," she answered proudly.

"Animals?"

"Oh, no," she said earnestly. "They rough house a bit, but both boys are well behaved."



# FOX CHASING WITH POPPY

by Clifford Dennison

It was during the fall of 1932. I was eleven years old when Poppy invited me to go fox chasing with him. Poppy was a young man of 57 but he had snow-white hair and I considered him old.

Poppy had two foxhounds. Old Rex and Old Joe. Old Joe, a black and white Walker foxhound, was Poppy's favorite. One time Joe failed to return from a fox chase. Poppy searched the countryside far and wide for three weeks looking for him. Poppy offered a reward of \$100 for his safe return. \$100 was a lot of money in the depression days of the early 1930s. Joe finally showed up one morning, haggard and worn but unharmed.

The reason Joe was Poppy's favorite was because he emitted a musical bass bark when pursuing a fox. The sound changed to a long warbling bay when Joe gained on the fox. The melodious sounds coming from Joe and the higher pitched voice of Rex as they echoed from hilltop to hilltop in hot pursuit of a fox raised the hair on the back of one's neck.

I was thrilled with the anticipation of spending the evening with the father I loved very much. In my mind's eye I could see us climbing to the top of a hill, building a cozy fire to snuggle around for the evening while talking and listening to the hounds as they chased a fox over the surrounding hills. Not so with Poppy. Instead, when the hounds first located a fox and gave chase, Poppy anticipated where the fox would cross over the adjoining ridge and he quickly left the hill we were on, rushed down into the valley and up the other side so as to be on top when the fox came by with the hounds baying after it. I was just barely able to keep up.

Poppy was hard of hearing and needed to be close to the hounds to enjoy the chase. For Poppy, the whole idea of fox chasing was to listen to the baying of the hounds as they chased the fox. This same procedure, rushing from one hilltop to the next so as to be close when the fox and hounds came by, was followed throughout the night. Needless to say that along about two or three in the morning, after having climbed a dozen hills, I was dragging with exhaustion.

Poppy finally said, "Well, Brother, we had better call it a night. I have to work tomorrow and you have to go to school."

I was just barely able to drag home and crawl into bed before falling into a deep sleep. That was the beginning and end of my one and only fox chasing experience with Poppy.

## Letter from the Editor

By Garywayne

I was reading some of my past 'Letter From The Editor' articles in preparation for this one. The common theme in all of them seemed to shout, "Help me, please." In so many words, Ro told me that I should no longer beat a dead horse. I view the newsletter as a future historical document. As such, it is where births and deaths are recorded, creativity of family is expressed, and where the importance of family unity can establish a foundation from which to draw its identity.

Even though the newsletter (in its current form) is my baby, it is obvious that many do not share my enthusiasm for it. For three years now I have tried to set an example of what our newsletter could be and how it could function. Apparently what I have to offer is not what the family wants. I'm sorry I have failed. I am tired of begging people to show a little pride in their forefathers and their offspring.

I would think that three newsletters a year should be a minimum for our size of family. However, the majority has sent me a different message. It saddens me to think that people might not care enough to support one newsletter, but I am not ready to give up totally yet. The silent voices of the family have been heard. The March and December newsletters are now a thing of the past. Hopefully, the July issue will be a survivor.



Editor: Garywayne & Ro Dennison, Proofreader: Dale Inman

