



Spreading Christmas Cheer By Cheryl Frank Mc Kay

The Seniors Committee met on Friday, December 19, 2014 to distribute bags of goodies, wine, flowers and even black cake to 72 senior alumni and friends of the Bishops' High School. The spirit of giving was evident from the inception as children and grandchildren of members of the committee assisted in the packing of bags. This giving of their time is a reminder to us all. So often we get engrossed in the daily grind that buying a gift is much easier than finding time to visit or call someone.

This year I invited the President of BHSOSA, Lowell Gibson, to accompany me in distributing the gifts. This gave her the opportunity not only to observe what we were doing but also to see the reactions of the recipients. Also, she drove and I didn't.

Lowell and I started deliveries at about 5:30 pm. Our first stop was at the residence of Lyla Kissoon on Main Street. Flora, fauna and fences so obstructed our view of the entryway that we thought that the place was deserted. Fortunately, Lowell who is taller and faster than I, spotted the retreating back of a gentleman in the yard and sprinted over to him. He accepted the flowers on Lyla's behalf. We hope that she enjoyed them. One delivery down, five to go.

Our next stop was Magda Pollard. Not a soul was in sight, so we resorted to our cell phones. Magda came to the door and invited us up. She sat us down and settled in for a visit. We talked for a short while with Magda who is never at a loss for words. Reluctantly, we had to cut the visit short. It was obvious that Magda treasured our presence.

Next, we arrived at the Gentlewomen's Home on Brickdam. Faced with a deserted yard and the onset of darkness, we walked along a long pathway looking for the entrance while keeping a sharp eye out for dogs, barking or not. After a few wrong turns, we found a stairway that led upstairs where we encountered the Matron. She guided us to Thora Chester who had a similar reaction to Magda. She accepted the gift and was happy to have our company. She spoke of her love of reading which occupies much of her time. She talked on, so cheerful, so full of life. Unfortunately, Phyllis Thompson was unable to receive us so the Matron accepted her gift.

It was now completely dark, and we still had 3 gifts to deliver. On Cane View Ave in South Ruimveldt, we drove up and down the lightless street looking for a particular shop front. Needless to say we missed it in the dark. Finally, we found Elaine Williams, or she found us, since she came out to the road to meet us. We delivered our last bag, tired but with a good feeling. We hoped that we had made a difference, even if only for a short time in someone's life, by giving not only a gift but our time. Shouldn't this be part of the real spirit of Xmas?



What is Politics?

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.
~Oscar Amringer, "the Mark Twain of American Socialism"

I offered my opponents a deal: "if they stop telling lies about me, I will stop telling the truth about them".
~Adlai Stevenson, campaign speech, 1952

A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country. ~Texas Guinan. 19th century American businessman

I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.
~Charles de Gaulle, French general & politician

Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.
~Doug Larson (English middle-distance runner who won gold medals at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, 1902-1981)

We hang petty thieves and appoint the bigger thieves to public office. ~Aesop, Greek slave & fable author

Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.
~Plato, ancient Greek Philosopher

Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.
~Nikita Khrushchev, Russian Soviet politician

When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become PM; I'm beginning to believe it.
~Quoted in 'Clarence Darrow for the Defense' by Irving Stone

Politicians are people who, when they see light at the end of the tunnel, go out and buy some more tunnel.
~John Quinton, American actor/writer

What happens if a politician drowns in a river? That is pollution. What happens if all of them drown? That is a solution!!!

I Hope You Dance... This was written by an 83-year-old woman to her friend.

I'm reading more and dusting less. I'm sitting in the yard and admiring the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I'm spending more time with my family and friends and less time working.

Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experiences to savor, not to endure. I'm trying to recognize these moments now and cherish them.

I'm not "saving" anything; we use our good china and crystal for every special event such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, or the first Amaryllis blossom.

I wear my good blazer to the market. My theory is if I look prosperous, I can shell out \$28.49 for one small bag of groceries. I'm not saving my good perfume for special parties, but wearing it for clerks in the hardware store and tellers at the bank.

"Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing or hearing or doing, I want to see and hear and do it now.

I'm not sure what others would've done had they known they wouldn't be here for the tomorrow that we all take for granted. I think they would have called family members and a few close friends. They might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. I like to think they would have gone out for a Chinese dinner or for whatever their favorite food was.

I'm guessing; I'll never know.

It's those little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew my hours were limited. Angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write one of these days. Angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and parents often enough how much I truly love them. I'm trying very hard not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. And every morning when I open my eyes, tell myself that it is special.

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance.

Meet the Seniors

Ethyl Wilson

Ethyl Wilson was born to Conrad Benjamin Wilson and Margaret Emptage at Anna Regina on the Essequibo Coast. During those early days on the Coast, a visit to Kabakaburi on the Pomeroon River made a lasting impression on her as a child. She surmises that it was probably responsible for creating a yearning for seeing the world.

Ethyl had five siblings – two sisters and three brothers. She remembers her brothers with great pleasure for, in her view, they played an important part in her childhood. She moved with her family to East Bank Demerara. First, they lived at Bagotstown and, later, at Mc Doom. Her mother taught at home before she entered Grove Anglican School where her father was Headteacher. From there, she attended Modern High School for a short while.

Ethyl then entered the Bishops' High School in the 4th Form. The class included Elsa Simon Charles, Marion Harding, Doris Wan Ping, Patricia Manson Hing and Bernice Ho Yong. Ethyl noted that the standard of education in primary school was of so high, particularly in Arithmetic and General Knowledge, that she only needed coaching from her brothers in Algebra and Geometry. She remembers cycling to BHS.

Ms. Cookson, who later became Mrs. Allen, was Headmistress. Ethyl noted that “you couldn't get away with anything that was out of order. The girls knew that but they liked her.” One day, Ethyl and others who had lunch at school were joined by some who came back to school early after lunch in the 4th Form classroom which was near to Headteacher's office. Dr. Payne's daughter and others became noisy not knowing that Ms. Cookson was in her office. Mrs. Allen emerged from her office. Everyone had to put their face against the wall. She felt she was wrongly punished since she was not party to the noise. She was exempted from after school games since she had to leave early to go home.

Ethyl is of the firm belief that what she has achieved in life was due in no small measure to luck and the influence of her brothers. She feels that everyone needs an element of luck in his or her life.

After leaving school, Ethyl became a pupil teacher. Although she loved the children, she did not like teaching. She started teaching at Diamond Primary and was later transferred to Peter's Hall Primary.

Ethyl always wanted to be secretary. She eventually applied to the British Guiana Civil Service and gained employment there in early 1942. She was interested in seeing “the great big outside world.” Having qualified for long leave, she travelled to England on vacation in 1953.

Ethyl stayed on in England, working with the London County Council. She spent five years with the Council then decided to return to British Guiana in 1958 thinking that she might stay. She worked with the British Guiana Sugar Producers Association. After two years, the yearning “to see the world” returned. She left for England again and this time went to work with the West Indies Commission as secretary to a Jamaican man, Mr. Campbell. One day, she went to get some documents for Mr. Campbell and was told that he wanted to see her. George McGregor was in the office with Mr. Campbell. Mr. McGregor was interested in recruiting secretaries whose mother tongue was English to work in the translation section of the European Commission since European secretaries produced hilarious translations. Ethyl was invited to Belgium to take a test which she passed with flying colours.

According to Ethyl, recruitment by the European Commission to work in Belgium in 1962 was the highlight of her career. Her first position was that of a stenographer while her last was that of secretary to the boss. She remained with the Commission until 1989 when she reached the age of 65 years. She remained in Belgium for another two years, finally returning home on 1993.

Her wanderlust led to travel in Africa, Asia and Europe, with some of the countries visited being Kenya, India, Egypt, Tanzania, Russia, Austria, Hungary and Germany. In October 2014, Ethyl went to United States at the invitation of her nieces and nephews to celebrate her 90th birthday. She enjoys art and visiting art galleries. Her approach to life now is ‘to live as to what and when she wants’.

French learnt at BHS helped her to function as a translator.



Enid Daphne Knight

Enid Daphne Knight née Abrams was born on April 10, 1920 to Charles and Ruth Abrams of Enmore Estate, East Coast Demerara. Her father was the sick nurse and dispenser employed by the sugar estate, so she and four siblings lived in Enmore until they were adults.

Daphne received her primary education at Enmore Anglican School and Collegiate Private School in Beterverwagting. She entered BHS in 1933, travelling to school by train in the early days. She later stayed with the family of Jacqueline Paul Gordon, her cousin who is also a BHS alumnus. Her classmates included Elaine Dolphin Stephenson, Marjorie Pollard Spencer, Violet Melissa Bourne and Joyce Kawall. She took part on sports day in activities such as bicycle riding. While she participated in sports, she found lawn tennis strenuous and didn't pursue it. She remembers British teachers such as Ms. Goring, Mrs. Sheverson-Jackson and Ms. Keith as well as Ms. De Freitas, a Guyanese teacher who worked with the Third Form students.

After gaining the Junior Cambridge Certificate at BHS, Daphne attended Central High School where she gained the Senior Cambridge Certificate. Next, she was appointed a Pupil Teacher at her alma mater, Enmore Anglican School. However, her teaching career was cut short when she was offered a Permanent Visa to travel to the United States of America.

After graduating from high school, Daphne visited a number of places like Linden, the Essequibo coast and Berbice. She also visited a friend in Trinidad, recalling her outing to the Pitch Lake. On one of her visits to Guyana, she went to Kaieteur Falls. However, she didn't enjoy that trip as she was scared of flying into the interior.

With the advantage of having a sister already living in the USA, Daphne quickly settled in New York. After a while, she considered returning to Guyana as she was not impressed with life in New York. Someone she met convinced her to remain, a decision which she does not regret. She had intended to work as a teacher. However, she changed her mind after hearing about the behaviour of the children in school. One of Daphne's early jobs was with a union. She soon found mistakes which her predecessor had made and this increase her worth to the organization. When she decided to take a job at a hospital, her supervisor tried to dissuade her to stay, saying that she would get ill working there. Daphne pointed out that she could get ill travelling on the subway! She attended Accountancy School while working at the hospital. After graduation, she was employed at The Ford Foundation as an accountant, a position she held for 20½ years.

Daphne's hobby was travelling. She visited places such as Hawaii, Jamaica, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Canada which were closer to home. She also ventured farther afield, finding tours from England through Spain, Italy, Switzerland and France fascinating and exhilarating. She was always enthralled by the wonderful sites each country offered.

Five years after retiring in 1985, Daphne relocated to Palm Bay, Florida. She was joined by her younger sister, her brother (now deceased), and her two nieces. At 95 years of age, Daphne is still active doing voluntary work in her church and her community. She maintains her independence and, until recently, did her own driving.

She attributes her success to the values of honesty, selflessness, kindness, mannerliness, and humility her parents instilled in her, which were reinforced with the influence of Ms. Vera Wearn, the English Headmistress of BHS as well as God's abundant Grace.

