

Points East

By: Ike Adams

I had a lot of time off my day-job over the holidays. We sort of shut down the office for a couple of weeks and let folks catch their breath and come and go as they please here at the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises through the holidays because it's the only chance we get to catch our collective breath.

The end of the old and beginning of the new years are about the only time we can collectively relax for a brief spell and it's healthy for all of us who work here to do just that. We, more or less, agree that it's okay to work as long as that work doesn't involve calling up a coworker, and turning his or her vacation. Sound policy, I believe, because it allows folks who insist on working to solve problems on their own without dragging somebody else in and maybe assigning blame.

Introspection is always good for the soul and normally makes those of us who use it better participants in the human experience.

I had intended to fish for those big walleye in Laurel Lake on my time off, but my boat broke to the ground. I spent a couple of days cursing my luck and the weather and then decided to hole up and catch up on my reading.

And my favorite reading this time of the year has suddenly become "The Wonderful Book".

Nothing, in my experience, has ever been better named. No piece of literature is more entertaining or better written.

My friend, Fred Beste, who lives in Wind Gap, Pennsylvania has been publishing an annual anthology of wonderful stories submitted by his, please note the quote, "Select Literate Friends" over the last decade.

It started out in 1993 as an open invitation to a bunch of folks in Fred's acquaintance who might have read some books in their lives. Fred is a venture capitalist and a genuine hero among several east Kentucky economic development organizations to whom he introduced reality, but I'm wary of the point as usual.

Fred has been wonderfully successful in his business' life and he is easily the most generous person I've ever known. He has far, far more friends who cherish his affection than anyone I know and I'm talking big numbers here.

At least 150 "kids" my age or younger (I'm 53) feel like he is an older brother. Probably as many more older folks call him something like "junior". It's like having 300 siblings.

And outside that immediate family he has maybe a thousand best friends.

So do the math. Fred has roughly 1,300 people close to him and it simply makes sense that 250 of them can

read and write. The rest can only add and subtract; divide and multiply and have little command of the King's English if it can't be expressed in digits, but even they love him.

Over the last decade more than 250 of Fred's Literate Friends have submitted manuscripts for publication in the Wonderful Book(s). There have been books that featured reviews of favorite books, favorite places, movies, recipes, family incidents, gardening, family traditions, cars, web sites, "things that make you happy" and on and on and on. And lately, whatever is on your mind.

Fred compiles the manuscripts in alphabetical order with scant editing and publishes the entire collection in bound volumes of about 300 pages each year. And they just keep getting better and better and better. Over the years the contributors to the book have become close friends. Fred's way of letting us share with each other so much more intimately than if we showed up at a party once a year. And every year the submissions get more personal. More dear to read. More wonderful.

I've been through the 2001 Wonderful Book three times, cover to cover, since Christmas and there is not space enough in this column to begin singling out favorite contributions. I can tell you, for sure, however, that singling out the best pieces over the years would culminate a best-seller. In the meantime we will hold the individual volumes as heirlooms.

Fred tells me that he started the whole thing to create some joy, to share life with folk he really loves, because it was more personal than Christmas Cards, to enable people to share experiences with each other, and because it was unique and creative and because he really like to write, himself. But I suspect that it was a much higher calling.

I know for sure that when I am down and out, I need only pull out a Wonderful Book. From this year or any year past and browse around and soon I will be in touch with someone I know who has written a heartfelt piece of wisdom or spun an incredible yarn and soon I feel better all over because there is comfort in being a part of Fred's Circle and there

is comfort to found within it.

I take great comfort in the love my family gives me at Christmas time and throughout the year and I love the socks and shirts and flannel stuff but when all is said and done, my favorite present every year is Fred Beste's "Wonderful Book" of the year.

Thank you F.J!

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

I would like to take a minute to applaud our community, As Family Resource Coordinator at MVES, I have the opportunity to work with everyone in our community. I planning programs for our school, I often must seek outside help. It is amazing to put a plan into action and watch how everyone contributes. The following is a review of community contribution thus far.

In October, during Red Ribbon Week, we had several parents and grandparents come in to help sew together our Red Ribbon Quilts that hang in our lunchroom.

In November thanks to community support, Kenna's Kitchen was a huge success. We fed 250 people Thanksgiving Dinner.

I would like to give a special recognition to the following people who helped sponsor children in the MVES Family Resource Center Christmas Program during the month of December: Rockcastle Manufacturing, Mt. Vernon Plastics, Image Entry, First Christian Church, First Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon Elementary, Faculty & Staff, Rockcastle County High School National Honor Society, MVES PTG, MVES Girl Scouts, Ms. Jennifer White's classroom, Mt. Vernon Pentecostal Church, Brindle Ridge Baptist Church, Valley Binge, Wal-Mart (Richmond), Migrant Program, Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Wildlife Christian Church.

Please know that because of your help there are 240 children with new clothing, shoes, hats or toys.

Again, I would like to applaud our community for taking part and making our programs successful.

Thank you, Regina M. Hull-Brown, MVES Family Resource Coordinator

Dear Editor,

This is in reference to the article by Deliah Brewer of her father, Isaac Barnett that appeared in your issue November 15, 2001.

The two Pine Hill soldiers that he was inducted into the army with was, James and Howard Robinson, the sons of Bill and Maude McHargue Robinson of Pine Hill. (He couldn't recall their names.) Howard was killed about three weeks before WWII ended. Those two brothers stayed in the same rifle company all during the war. James carried Howard's body back from the front after he was hit by a sniper. Jack and Joe Robinson, two other brothers was

in the infantry in the same area at that time. Bill and Maude had five other boys that went into the service after WWII.

I am the son of Gilbert and Mary Barnett Robinson of Orlando, Bill was my uncle. My brothers, James, Virgil and I was in WWII and Bro. Gilbert, Jr. was in Navy in Korea (retired from Navy 1972).

Brother Virgil was killed in battle of Bulge on December 23, 1944. Buried in Brarfield Cemetery in Orlando. Howard is buried in McHargue Cemetery in Pine Hill.

Isaac Barnett is my first cousin. His daughter did a good job with her dad's story. I don't have her address to tell her so, please pass my congratulations on to her for me.

You have my permission to use this letter.

Sincerely, George Robinson

Dear Sirs,

I would like to protest the latest unwarranted increase in cost for the basic cable TV from Charter Communications.

I have been given two different justifications from Charter on this.

One was that "several people in Mt. Vernon" had requested the increase in the number of channels provided. These people were not named nor their numbers disclosed.

The second justification, during a different phone call, was that the decision "came down from Corporate" and that we are being given no choice in the matter.

It sounds as if there is no definite reason except that the company wants more profits.

About a year ago, I checked with

acquaintances around the state, so far out as western Kentucky, and I could find no one who paid as much as we do for cable. Most of my co-workers were astounded at the rates we are paying.

Typically, their rates were half to two-thirds our rates, and ours are going up AGAIN.

The Mt. Vernon City Council owes it to the taxpayers of Mt. Vernon to see what can be done to rein in this out of control cable provider, or to investigate other options with other companies.

Personally, at the next election, I intend to see how the council members fall on this matter. This will greatly influence my vote. I would urge everybody in town to look at whether or not the council members are looking after their needs and costs.

Sincerely, Stephen Midkiff

Dear Editor,

The Rockcastle County Migrant Program, Family Resource Center, from Roundstone Elementary, Broadhead Elementary, Mt. Vernon Elementary, Rockcastle Middle School, and the Rockcastle County High School would like to thank every individual, faith organization and group that helped to provide Christmas gifts and/or food to families in our county. Every family that was referred to these agencies was sponsored and received clothing, age-appropriate gift and/or food.

This is an annual endeavor and is only successful because of the generosity of the people of Rockcastle County.

Thank you, Rockcastle Migrant Program Family Resource Centers

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Rockcastle County Schools Observe

National School Board Recognition Month January 2002

The Rockcastle County School District is joining the other 14,885 school districts throughout the United States in celebrating January as "School Board Recognition Month." Serving on our local school board are: Samuel T. Stallsworth (3 years), Terry F. Burton (9 years), Dr. George W. Griffith (9 years), Martin E. Vanzant (4 years), Michael Burdette (1 year).



Front row from left: Dr. George W. Griffith, Terry F. Burton and Michael Burdette. Back row from left: Martin E. Vanzant and Samuel T. Stallsworth.

These men volunteer countless hours of unpaid time not only providing the best possible education for our students, but also serving as the corporate board of directors for one of our community's largest employers. Larry B. Hammond, Rockcastle County Schools Superintendent said.

"As your elected leaders, they represent you in their continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision-making for our public schools," Hammond said. "Too often the efforts of school board members go unrecognized and unrewarded."

The key work of our school board is to support student achievement by:

- Determine a vision for what you want your school district to become and how you will focus on student achievement as your top priority;
- Set standards for what you want students to learn and to be able to do;
- Determine assessments that are needed to show that the district is achieving its goals and if students are learning;
- Be accountable for the outcomes of decisions and actions;
- Decide on how to align district human and financial resources;
- Assure a climate of safe and orderly classrooms where students can learn and teachers can teach;
- Bring people together in collaborative relationships to solve common problems and to support common successes; and
- Question, examine, revise, refine and revisit in order to assure continuous improvement.

"Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation for our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round effort on their part. They are dedicated individuals who are committed to improving student achievement and to fighting for the best for all of our students," Hammond said.

The Rockcastle County Board of Education Provides Equal Education and Employment Opportunities

PROCLAMATION

SCHOOL BOARDS RECOGNITION MONTH
JANUARY 2002

To all whom these presents shall come:

WHEREAS, these are challenging times for public education and for the work of local school board members;

WHEREAS, school boards are responsible for putting into place a system for students to learn and achieve at the highest level possible;

WHEREAS, excellence in the classroom begins with excellence in the boardroom;

WHEREAS, the key work of school boards includes taking action to create a vision for what students should know and be able to do; to establish clear standards for student performance; to ensure that student assessments are tied to established standards; to be accountable to the community for operating schools that support student achievement; to align school district resources to ensure that students meet standards; to create a climate assuring safe and orderly classrooms; to build collaborative relationships to solve common problems; and to ensure continuous improvement; and

WHEREAS, we are proud of the work school boards do and the role they play in creating a quality public education system that is fundamental to a strong democratic society;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent, Rockcastle County Schools, do hereby declare my appreciation to the members of the Rockcastle County School Board and proclaim the month of January 2002 to be

School Board Recognition Month.

I urge all citizens to join me in recognizing the dedication and hard work of local school board members in preparing today's students for tomorrow's world.

Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent

Signed this 1st day of January, 2002.