

August 10, 1952

The Bible says "To love thy neighbor as you would thyself." That is a wonderful quotation to follow, if it were widely practiced; but a fellow can't go on loving when he is constantly kicked in the face.

Several months in the past, we had a little neighbor disturbance; but I haven't said much about it; so that it wouldn't get too soaked in and remain very long; but I have been kicked again; and I am afraid we have one neighbor that won't get any loving from this side of the street.

Sometimes I rather hate myself which may be the reason I am capable of hating a neighbor; if he steps on me too often. I got accused of something I am not and wasn't here to be in the first place; and that is, a gossip; and a liar. The incident in question mostly took place while we were on vacation; so I am innocent on that score.

An apology is in order; but hasn't come. Other mean, and petty offenses have been committed by this same neighbor--who I have always went out of my way to favor; so one wonders where there can be found any true neighbors.

If people wish to be treated as neighbors, they should act as neighbors. Most gossip is innocent and actually only concern and interest we have in one another. We cannot live next door and not feel some kinship to our neighbor and have his worries and joys, too.

I have never been one to spend hours visiting with the people next door; but am willing to help in emergencies and to divide the harvest with them. I will visit over the back fence and say "howdy" on the way to the post office.

August 11, 1952

I got grew up and almost lost something that I could sure use--my childhood imagination.

Remembering when--an old burned out snag was a lovely palace; an improvised flour sack was a velvet dinner dress; a bottle of colored water was the tastiest wine; and upon mud pies we did dine.

We children spent hours living in another world. If we were alone, we talked to an imaginary friend and if we played together, each become another character. Worries lived a short life and material things meant little.

Perhaps we were called dreamers. The bubble broke at different ages and suddenly we were caught in a awesome world. The longer we kept that childhood imagination, the longer would be our lives.

When adult living gets into a rut, then it would be wonderful to return to the "mudpie" days and forget all the troubles. Sometimes I fancy I am dreaming; but there is always a big worry pinching me and I awaken before it is interesting.

It is surprising how many tourists visit the Little Log Church. Every day several cars stop and take pictures and go inside. It is indeed a shrine to Yachats; and now it is owned by the Presbyterians, who plan to make improvements; but will not spoil its quaintness.

Note: Marj's marvelous mud pie talk triggers my memory of glorious days behind the house on 128th in Portland when I built a restaurant counter from a long board and two sawhorses and lined it with gooey chocolate/mud sundaes in old dishes topped with gobs of clabbered milk/ice cream and a downed cherry from the tree. Then my imaginary patrons came and bought them! Grandma almost always had buckets of clabbered milk sitting by the chicken pen, which she fed to them as a treat. The cow produced more milk than we could use, but the cream made butter and the leftover milk would be clabbered on the back of the wood stove in the kitchen. Some was made into cottage cheese and the chickens got the rest. They loved to drink the whey and I watched them, fascinated with how their heads bobbed up and down as they drank. No waste in Grandma and Grandpa's household. It amazes me now to realize that on one-half acre in suburban Portland, our little household could be almost self-sustaining. Helen and I visited this place just a couple of weeks ago [in 2006] and of course it is not the same - houses crowded in every subdivided corner and trees grown taller or chopped down. Sad to say, our house has been chopped and cobbled till it's almost unrecognizable, but my memory is still intact and that's enough for me. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's niece

August 12, 1952

This is fair week and I am not referring to the weather; but to the annual county fair. Today I spent the day helping to get things in order for the festivities.

The casual observer of the exhibits never knows what goes on behind the scenes in preparing for the three days of the fair. It seems a lot of labor lost for just a few days a year; but a community would be backward if it didn't have an opportunity to show the folks what they do.

And at the fair we meet old friends and make new ones and the exhibitors learn sportsmanship by competing with others and methods for making the best better (stealing a good 4-H motto).

The pre-fair work day is fun, too. It is one day of the year we people of a common purpose labor together and hash over our troubles and brag about our accomplishments. All formalities are dispensed and before the day is over, we are known by our Christian names and exchange jokes like old friends.

The fair couldn't be if it weren't for the volunteer help and cooperation of the few willing workers. Every time I go to any of these community affairs, I think of the tireless hours someone has spent in its preparation. No blue ribbons are given for this exhibit of public spirit; but perhaps someday there will be another jewel in their crown.

The work doesn't end with the work day, it goes on through the three days of the fair; then the last evening carting home the exhibits and seeing that each gets his own project and proper recognition.

So today it has just begun this busy week; by Saturday will come the final report.

Note: *...I thought I knew my Aunt Marjorie pretty well until I started copying this diary. For example, I never knew of her involvement with 4-H, nor the depth of her spirituality. Then, since the advent of email and the ability to easily communicate with my cousins, Marjorie's daughters, Helen and Haysel, awareness arrives that they have a whole different memory of their Mother than I. No doubt because they saw her through many more of her facets. Also, as the business of my life has slowed and my awareness became clearer, I'm realizing that even for my lifetime mate and my children, whom I thought I knew completely, let alone extended family and friends, my understanding has been narrow at best. To open ourselves to broader vision of who we all really are - to listen and watch - to wake up - and most of all, to love unconditionally, forgive constantly and appreciate infinitely. All of our lives would be richer, if we could remember to do this. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's niece*

August 13, 1952

I have dreamed so many years of building that new home that the vision is becoming faded and now that we have at last begun the basement, I don't have the enthusiasm I thought I would have.

It will be a wonderful foundation, the basement, not only for the house; but also for a dream and with it firmly imbedded on the property, there should be a reminder to make extra effort to get the house over the concrete.

Until the actual building of even a basement, one never knows the little things that come up: size of windows, exits, heights, widths, placements, etc. I can see where house raising could be as difficult as child raising; but I have made up my mind not to let it get me all flustered and ruin the pleasure.

Being no little carpenters in our family, this is strictly a professional affair and I have hopes of not moving in the structure until it is completely done to every last daub of paint. I have found that living and building in a house at the same time, is a trying experience; and mostly many little things never get finished.

Now I say I have hopes of moving in this new home when it is done; but circumstances often alter hopes; so it remains to be seen what the final outcome may be. And I know, too, this house will never be built according to the standards of all the neighborhood engineers.

Building a house often builds a barrier between the two bosses in a family; and I have solemnly sworn this will not happen to our household. When the structure is complete, I want it filled with harmony as well as convenience and beauty.

Note: *I wonder if knowing all that went into the building of the home they now occupy, the current owners would be inspired to look upon their shelter with more respect? To realize they are living in the physical manifestation of a dream and vision carried for years in the mind of a good and caring woman who would only get to occupy it for 23 years before she was called away to a different home. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's neice*

August 14, 1952

To face the great big world of competition we began early in life; probably the minute of birth; but we meet it head on the first time we take any article to a fair.

Today I spent many hours helping put displays in order for the 4-H section of the fair and helping to conduct a style revue of 4-H girls. Many of these youngsters are just reaching their tenth birthday and the first real taste of competing with others.

More and more it is necessary to be trained to compete with others. The adult world is a survival of the wisest, the shrewdest, and the gamest. So from childhood on we must learn to do the job well; with initiative; and with sportsmanship; being able to lose gracefully and to try again.

It would be quite a shock to wake up as an adult and not have had any training or experience in coping with others. So it is a great piece of education for these boys and girls to have an opportunity to do club work and bring their projects to the county fair to compare and compete with others.

At the county fair the youngsters learn to judge the difference between bad, good, better, and best. What may seem to them to be best at home, they find is only good or better in comparison to other projects displayed at the fair. They learn, too, no matter how good they think they are, there is always someone who can do better.

Yes, competition is a wonderful lesson for egotism and poor sportsmanship and certainly should be included in the school of life.

The Lincoln County Fair is blessed with perfect weather and a fine display of exhibits for a small county. Several years of past fairs have ironed out some of the bottle necks and the order of displays has improved and there seems to be a smoother routine.

Note: *I loved 4-H, as a child, and learned about sewing, cooking, and canning through that organization. Although Grandma did all of these at home, learning more about these skills in a specific way through the 4-H setting seemed to enhance my interest and enthusiasm. These were skills that I have further expanded and used all of my life. I don't remember my 4-H leaders emphasizing any competitive nature among the club's members and the only thing I ever exhibited at a fair was canned fruit, and I don't remember if I won any ribbons or not. What I do remember is the great feeling of*

accomplishment that came from learning how to sew and cook and then seeing and using the results of my labor. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's neice

August 15, 1952

Unless there is occasion to have a hand in the inner working of judging at a fair, one never knows exactly what it is all about.

It is impossible for one person to be an expert on every project he or she is asked to judge; so much of it goes by personal opinion. Of course, there are certain standards set that each judge uses for a pattern. I am sure, if I were in the same business, I couldn't help letting my personal feelings enter.

Thus I think a fairer system could be employed for judging and that is to use two; a so called qualified judge and a layman. Opinions certainly differ. I realize most of the judges do the best they can; but some are very stubborn.

Haysel entered the sponge cake baking contest for 4-H'ers and had quite an experience. I doubt if she won any laurels; but she had fun and an interview on the radio. Another girl baked her cake at the same time; but her recipe called for shorter baking period; so when she took her cake from the oven, it made Haysel's fall. The judge shook her head; but the cake really was very good for having fallen and this surprised the judge. Anyway, it was sampled by several men from the radio station; and we finished it for dinner tonight.

Which all goes to show one doesn't always get the blue ribbon; but perhaps learns more by not receiving the highest honors.

August 16, 1952

This was the last day of the fair; so we went up in the evening to pick up the Yachats exhibits and enjoy the show. The other two days I was too busy to absorb much pleasure.

Being on the grounds a little early, we squeezed into the grandstand to view the evening's free show. Usually such entertainments are hardly worth getting T.B. for; but this one was without much dead air and proved very "lookable".

There was a children's majorette group and a parade of horses, a band, a strong man, a matched team of ponies, trained seals, penguin, pelican, Indian Hoop Dancer, horse races of varied sorts, and a pageant of an Indian massacre.

This was an exhibit of training for both animals and human animals; both showing hours of patience and fortitude; and proved anything with a brain can be taught if enough time and patience is allowed. We cannot teach anything or anyone if we lack kindness and perseverance.

Some people can teach animals tricks and yet cannot manage their fellow humans; this is because there is more sympathy for dumb animals--proving that we can learn more by not thinking we are so wise.

This year I played safe to enter both "places" and won blue ribbons for Angel and Devil's food cakes. The Angel cake was auctioned and made \$3.00 for the Communities Hospital Fund. My new African Violet won a first place, too; so I will have \$4.00 coming for awards; enough to pay for materials. The fair is more interesting when one exhibits.
