



Learning Institute for Elders

February, 2012

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February

hearts * flowers * presidents * cupids * flags * love * patriots * romance * country * chocolates



Highlights of Board Meeting February 6, 2012

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Secretary – Alice Reinhardt

Minutes of January meeting approved. Letter of thanks sent to outgoing board members, Howard Kichler and Maggie Harris.

Treasurer – Pat Fluno

Treasurer's report was approved.

Vice President – Judy Thames

Judy is working with Student Union staff on worker awards and pizza parties.

President – Marty Weiner

No report at this time.

STANDING COMMITTEES

By-Laws – Ray Jones

Ray reviewed progress to date on the records retention policy and requested additional input from board members. One of the issues is the format to be used in saving records.

Curriculum – Pat James

Pat announced that there would be no rooms available in the Student Union on April 24 and the board voted to move the last meeting of the spring semester to May 1. The fall schedule was outlined.

Membership – Betty Ingham

Betty reported at least 35 members eligible for ten-year awards. Discussion followed on re-opening the waiting list. Burt Blau has created an electronic application for the website which would expedite the process. Board approved a motion to reopen the waiting list, effective date to be announced later. Applications will be available online as well as in hard copy.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Past Presidents – Phil Easterling

Some suggested areas where this committee could be helpful include Grants & Awards and Gerontology Awards Committees.

Newsletter – Vonnie Bradbury

Vonnie informed the board that the newsletter may be delayed by a week due to unforeseen circumstances.

Honors Program – Roy Scherer

Roy reported 22 LIFE members attended the first meeting at the UCF Art Gallery. Volunteers are needed for the upcoming book discussion.

Attendance/Greeters – Lucy Pulido

The average attendance since September has been 340.

Telephone – Joan Hansen

Three calls were reported—two re: membership and one re: parking.

Audio/Visual – Steve Hall

Shots of the recent Honors events will be on screen at next Tuesday's sessions.

Sunshine – Pat Fritz

Five cards have been sent. Betty Howe is having surgery and Eva Walsh is ill.

Diversity – Judy Thames

LIFE members contributed 470 pounds of food to the Knights pantry in January. The pantry distributed 1600 lbs. to students!

Gerontology Awards – Ray Jones

Applications are due by March 1.

Hearing Assistance

Representatives from UCF Department of Communications & Disorders and a rep from Dynamic Soundfield presented information re: audiology equipment that might be helpful to our hearing-impaired members. Student Disabilities Services will be contacted to determine what is already available. Further research will be done on this topic.

LIFE'S BEST KEPT SECRET:
Spring Semester Socials . . .
with UCF Students

LIFE members have the opportunity to meet socially with UCF students from the Burnett Honors College. Each event includes a shared activity, followed by a buffet meal. Students show as much interest in our experiences as we do in theirs.

For the first meeting of the semester, a group of 22 LIFE members and an equal number of students toured an exhibit at the UCF Art Gallery. Together, we shared our impressions of the art, followed by a delightful buffet lunch.

If you haven't taken part in this program, you're missing a wonderful addition to your LIFE experience. Who knows? You might even offer a word of encouragement to a student working toward a degree in your field. A number of our members have shared insights into careers in engineering, teaching, medicine and journalism.

Below is the schedule for the remainder of the semester:

Monday, February 20 (6-8 p.m.)
Book Discussion – *On Chesil Beach*
Refreshments in the Honors reading room

Wednesday, March 14 (4-6 p.m.)
Albin Polasek Museum in Winter Park
Tour of museum with refreshment to follow

Sunday, April 1 (2-4 p.m.)
"Ragtime" at UCF's main stage theatre
Reception in Honors reading room from 12-1:30

Thursday, April 18 (6-9:30 p.m.)
Symphony Under the Stars at Reflecting Pond
Reception in Honors Meditation Garden, 6-7:15

Monday, April 23 (6-9 p.m.)
Etiquette Dinner in SU Sand Key Room #220
Elbows off the table!

To sign up for one of these programs, register at our desk outside the lecture hall or e-mail Roy Scherer at rovhsch60@aol.com and write "LIFE/Student Program" on the subject line.

Submitted by
Roy Scherer

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REMEMBER EACH DAY

Caress each day as if it were your last.
Enjoy every moment 'case the hours pass fast.
Yes, I lived every hour but still can't recall
What I did yesterday; I don't remember at all.

Submitted by
Elinor Brownstein

FUNNY



**VALENTINE
QUOTES**

Get married early in the morning. That way, if it doesn't work out, you haven't wasted a whole day.
–Mickey Rooney

I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell my children that, they just about throw up.
–Barbara Bush

Instead of getting married again, I'm going to find a woman I don't like and give her a house.
–Groucho Marx

A man loses his sense of direction after four drinks; a woman loses hers after four kisses.
–H. L. Mencken

A kiss can be a comma, a question mark or an exclamation point. That's basic spelling that every woman ought to know.
–Mistinguette



Bert and Tilly . . .

Sounds like the title of a movie . . . or a television sitcom, doesn't it? Something along the lines of "LaVerne and Shirley" or "Starsky and Hutch." But it's not. **Bert and Tilly Hood** are the real deal, a couple who has been together for 56 years and who have been LIFE members for the past 10 years.

It all began when a pretty, young fraulein, a recent immigrant from Germany, met this handsome, young US soldier right here in Orlando. An invitation to Thanksgiving dinner from mutual friends set the stage for what would develop into a lifelong romance.

Bert, born in 1921, grew up in Somerville, MA, the son of a Baptist preacher. There was lots of pressure on him to follow in his father's footsteps. "I was practically disowned because I wouldn't go to seminary," he said. But Bert had other plans. It was 1943 and there was a war going on. Upon high school graduation, Bert enlisted in the army and began a 24-year career in the military.

He served as a tail gunner on a B-24 over Germany during World War II, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, US Presidential Unit Citation, and the Fr. Croix de Guerre along with other air medals and unit decorations.

Tilly was born in Nurnberg, Germany, in 1927, the same year the second volume of *Mein Kampf* was published. She grew up in Nurnberg, described as "the most German of German cities," a fact not lost on Hitler during his rise to power. Thus, Nurnberg was the site of numerous Nazi Party rallies in the 1930's.

Tilly remembers that the textbooks were revised while she was a student. Old textbooks were banned and the country's history, politics, culture were rewritten to reflect the new ideology. Despite

the many changes taking place in her country, Tilly says she had a wonderful childhood. Teachers, parents, and concerned civilians protected the young people from much of the Nazi hysteria.

Following graduation from high school, she went on to business school and received the equivalent of the associate degree awarded in America. Not without difficulty, however. During this time, many days were spent in bomb shelters due to the air raids being conducted across Germany.

Her first job was as a secretary to a heavy equipment company that sold their merchandise to Sweden. It came to an abrupt end one night when the office as well as the factory were bombed flat, Tilly said. Following that disaster, Tilly worked in the US Army Finance offices, one of two females hired, and she remained there for nine years.

Once the war was over, Bert went into the reserves and enrolled at the Progressive School of Photography in New Haven, Conn. Four years later he was recalled to active duty at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, NV where he photographed the entire American bomb program. He then was sent to Korea as a combat photographer, earning the ROK Presidential Citation.

Meanwhile, Tilly had heard stories about how great it was in America and made up her mind she would move there. In January, 1954, after two years of paperwork and waiting, Tilly arrived in New York harbor on a permanent visa. She had a friend in Orlando and decided to settle there, getting a job with an insurance company.

By this time Bert's bachelor days were over—he'd met Tilly. They were married in January, 1956, by the Justice of the Peace whose wife came up to Tilly after the ceremony and said, "If he don't treat you right, let me know." "I took that message to heart," Bert said, "and to this day I'm treating her right."

They took a motor trip around Florida on their honeymoon. Tilly was amazed that they could just hop in the car and go. "You don't have to tell anybody?" she asked. Far different from Germany.

The young couple bought a home across from Azalea Park in Orlando shortly after their marriage "to establish in our minds that this was home," Tilly said. With the \$5 they had left after making the down payment, they opened a checking account. "We started with nothing," added Bert.

While stationed at Orlando Air Force Base, now Baldwin Park, Bert was a member of one of the air force's prime photo squadrons, making training films and covering eastern US public relations needs. One such assignment was taking a camera crew with President Eisenhower to Panama City, Panama, for an Organization of American States meeting. The crew was given instructions by White House security to knock the president to the ground if the lights went out or shots were heard. Fortunately, neither of those things happened.

In 1961, Bert transferred into the USAFE and was assigned to Germany. Tilly, who had just received her U.S. citizenship, accompanied her husband on this assignment. Bert remembers going into a department store with her to shop. The German clerk could not understand English and Tilly refused to speak her native language. Upon leaving the store, Bert asked Tilly why she wouldn't converse with the clerk in German. "I'm not German; I'm American," was her indignant reply.

Living in Germany afforded the Hoods many opportunities for travel. "We covered Europe from top to bottom over the next five years," Bert said. England, Ireland (kissed the Blarney Stone two different times), Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, France Switzerland, Italy, etc. Tilly, her organizational skills on display, has a thick file identifying each and every picture of each and every place they visited.

Bert retired from the Air Force in 1967. He went to work for a polyethylene company called FoamAge, Inc. which he bought and eventually sold. Tilly worked as a secretary at Techtronix for the next 15 years before retiring in 1982.

Volunteerism has been a strong component throughout Bert and Tilly's life together. Tilly tallied scores as a volunteer at the Disney Golf

Classic for 27 years. Bert taught basic computer to seniors at the Marks Senior Center for 15 years. Tilly also kept a orchid greenhouse for many years and was president of the Orlando Orchids Society. A member of the National Association of Investors Corporation (NAIC), she participated in a women's investment club, evaluating advanced stock selections and improving portfolio management.

Bert is a Shriner, has served as president of the Rose Society and the Artist League in Orlando. He was AARP Chapter President and Associate State Director for Community Operations. And Bert has been a major blood donor—he's up to 16 gallons!

Finally, Bert and Tilly are members of the UCF Foundation. The Hoods have willed their estate to UCF, to be used to fund scholarships for UCF students with a GPA of 2.5 to 3.5. We wanted to help the "average" student, Bert said, because we felt really bright students will be eligible for other scholarships. It makes us proud to be able to do this, he said. "I never got a college education but Tilly and I hope to help some other young men and women get one."

"We've been very fortunate," he continued. "I didn't go to seminary, but the Lord looked after us.

This is a love story with an ironic twist: An American soldier doing his duty fighting his country's enemy during WWII could not know that his future bride-to-be was experiencing this war from the ground, a very different perspective as bombs were falling on her homeland. But two hearts met . . . and the rest is history.





It was their first date. George, fussy about his coffee, was valiantly trying to sip the cup of “instant” Dawn had made for him. (Awful stuff, he said.) Suddenly, they smelled smoke! Up the stairs they dashed to find an end table on fire in the living room. A candle sitting on the end table had leaked hot wax onto the silk flowers surrounding it and ignited. Dawn grabbed the candle; George grabbed the table; they were able to put out the flames. What could have been a disaster became an amusing anecdote to the beginning of their relationship. “It was a ‘hot’ date,” George said. And, to this day, the song, “You Light Up My Life,” has special meaning for the two of them.

For Dawn and George Sumrall, this was a second chance at love, both having divorced in the 1980’s. Both were also musicians, having sung with the Monmouth Civic Chorus (MCC) in Red Bank, NJ since 1978. At first they were only vaguely aware of each other. She was a soprano and he was a tenor so they didn’t sit near each other. But, in preparing for musical productions and on choir tours to Europe, they got to know each other.

They started dating and picked Valentine’s Day, 1992, as the day they would become engaged. However, when they went to look at rings, Dawn got that sparkler on her finger and didn’t want to take it off! So, they were engaged right on the spot!

They married August 15 of that year and all five of their children were in the wedding party—her two daughters and his two daughters and one son.

The church choir, of which they were members, sang at the ceremony, and, as George recalls, when they sang the *Lutkin Benediction*, Dawn and George just couldn’t resist and joined in with the choir.

Music has been a part of each of their lives from a very early age, and music continues to be an integral part of their life together.

Dawn started singing at the age of 10 and sang both solos and in choral groups. When she was 17 years old and a guest singer with the Rutgers University Choir, a conductor she’d never heard of was introduced—Leonard Bernstein! In addition, she sang with Chasonettes, an a cappella group in college.

But music, as important as it was, had to be an extracurricular activity while she studied math and science in college. “It was all-consuming,” she said. Likewise, when she became a teacher and spent 28 years teaching science to 8th graders, music was her avocation, an important part of her life but one she engaged in only after the papers were corrected and the equations solved.

George, too, discovered music early in his life. He started piano lessons at 7 as well as violin. By the time he reached high school he was tired of piano, so his mother hooked him up with a man who had played with the NBC orchestra and taught him all the chords and music theory. One day he was fooling around on the church organ, giving a boogie-woogie beat to “What a Friend We Have In Jesus” when one of the elders walked in and George was banned from going near the organ again.

Naturally, George majored in music in college, right? Well, no. George majored in electrical engineering “I was concerned that if I went into music, I might not be able to get a job,” he said. One day, while still in college, he was asked to play a gig. He refused, saying he had a physics electricity/magnetism exam. The guy called back and offered to double the salary. George couldn’t resist. “OK,” he said. And he got a D on the exam!

Entering the computer field in 1956, George spent 32 years in computer research and development. After graduating from the University of Illinois and moving to New Jersey, he got involved in several singing groups, including MCC.

Music offered many opportunities for Dawn and George. While with the MCC, they made seven trips to Europe with the group. A particular highlight was singing a mass in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. They also sang Rutter's *Requiem* under the direction of the composer at Carnegie Hall. And they sang with the Swiss Ramonde Orchestra at Avery Fischer Hall in NYC. They made music wherever they went.

In 2004, now retired, they decided to move to Orlando since one of Dawn's daughters lived here. They came down, bought a house, and went back to New Jersey to pack. It was the year of the hurricanes, three of them! They watched the storms on television and wondered what they would find when they returned. (Fortunately, damage was minimal.) Welcome to Florida!

And, of course, once settled, they found music. They are former members of the *Bach Festival Choir*. They currently sing in the choir at the Winter Park Presbyterian Church. They entertain in nursing homes and care centers with the *Young at Heart* singers. Music permeates most of their comings and goings.



What music means to them, in their own words:

Dawn: "Music has been important to me all my life. It lifts my spirits, encourages me to dream and to express emotion. It makes me happy.

Music washes over my soul. One thing that a lot of women say to me is 'You're so lucky that you both share a common interest in music.' And it's so true."

George: "For me, engineering has paid the bills and music has provided many rewards. If nothing else, music allowed me a few hours each week to forget my troubles and go have fun. But, beyond that, it's been a lot more because of the things we've done—I could not get along without it."

Asked if he had any regrets about choosing engineering instead of music as a career, his immediate answer was an emphatic "no." "I love music," he said, "It's a major part of my life. But no regrets."

Dawn has a big birthday this year and is preparing for a recital this fall, currently studying voice with UCF Associate Professor Jeremy Hunt. "I'd like to let people know you're not dead just because you're getting older."

George is now composing music. Using his computer background and Sibelius software to good advantage, he has written a version of *The Lord's Prayer* which has been performed a number of times. He has also written a new hymn, *Hymn of Thanks*, which is being considered for inclusion in the next Presbyterian hymnal.

20 years later, they are still lighting up their lives . . . with music and with each other. What about the coffee, you ask? It's delicious!



If music be the food of love, play on.
—William Shakespeare

Without music, life would be a mistake.
—Friedrich Nietzsche



Thinking About Our Love Story . . .

On the day before our wedding, fifty-three years ago, I took all my senior year's final exams ahead of my classmates. The next day, I walked to the bus stop, took a bus to the hairdressers' home, had my hair styled for our wedding that night at seven o'clock. My wedding gown was Chantilly lace with a chapel train. On a spring sale I'd bought it for \$40. My veil was attached to a partial crown of seed pearls. To wear beneath the gown I needed a hoop petticoat--oh, yes, with three metal hoops, all three to be centered over my ballet slippers.

Finally it was time: Kermit's Uncle Norwood arrived to collect me, and off I went, my wedding dress's skirt filling the entire back seat of his car, off to be married at 17 to my 20 year old groom. I remember we had absolutely no qualms. It was as clear as day to us that we were meant to spend our lives together.

Such a simple yet sweet wedding followed, with cake and punch reception in the church basement--enjoyed by our family members and friends. Following a 7day honeymoon in Fontana, NC, I graduated from high school the day after we arrived at our apartment, on my 18th birthday.

Money would be limited for our first years together. Kermit was a rising junior at the University of Richmond, and worked part time. I was a bank employee. Our song was "True Love." Our silver pattern was "Young Love." (My mother commented, "You have no idea how funny that will be on your silver anniversary!") Our movie was "South Pacific." Our goal? To show everyone ours was an enduring love.

I admit I was afraid of the dark, couldn't cook much, had never washed a load of clothes or paid a bill. I'd never had a brother. He'd never had a sister. He'd never lived on his own, never traveled on his own. It was thrilling to live on our own-- our friends still had curfews. That summer we went to the all night drive in and collected the next morning our free coffee and doughnuts for breakfast.

Looking back it's uplifting to see that we have met our goal--a lasting love. Plus along the way, we earned degrees, established careers, raised children, gave back to the community, welcomed grandchildren.

We have traveled, attended our offspring's weddings, buried our parents, and have taken on all the things between those events that make for a rich, complex life. We argued, we kissed, we didn't speak, we did speak--we challenged each other, made love. We learned to solve our differences.

As we have aged, we find constant strength in each other's love, care, and devotion. No matter what we have accomplished, we have to admit that, yes... we are too young... too young to have been married fifty-three years.

Oh, this has been a good journey: and, as our daughter wrote on *Facebook* on our 50th anniversary, we still hold hands when we walk down the beach.

Submitted by Pat James