

The Vintage Voice

Serving The Church Pension Fund's Family of Beneficiaries

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Knowing Stuff

Joyce Anderson Jackson

My high school class — Tulsa Central Class of '47 — celebrated its 60th anniversary two years ago.

In a moment of combined generosity of spirit and utter stupidity, I agreed to edit our Class Yearbook. And was it ever a yearbook! Everyone's senior picture as well as a current one . . . lots of pictures and captions of both then and now . . . a welcoming letter from the mayor as well as one from me, the editor . . . plus lots of other features. All of this for a class of more than 800 seniors!

I practically lived in front of the computer. I translated and transcribed everyone's life story into typed columns, flanked by the two pictures. I have moderate computer skills, and despite the fact that I felt like I was about 57, I had to acknowledge that I (along with all my classmates) was really 77! I kept intending to go to the library and take an advanced computer class, but felt I didn't have time to because of getting out this !*+!A!! yearbook. Thoughts that ranged from running away from home to disappearing with an assumed name came to mind, but "slave of duty" that I am (I've been influenced by Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance"), I plugged away and continued working on the wretched yearbook.

I kept running into computer glitches and kept calling my daughter, who is a computer whiz, who would patiently bail me out and tell me what I had done wrong and what I needed to do next. The occasional sighing tone of her voice told me that in her books, right then, I was about on the level of a slightly less-than-bright child whose constant need to be helped was starting to IRRITATE!!!

During these never-ending days (this went on for weeks and weeks and weeks), an essay began to form in my mind that would speak to my fellow classmates. It somehow got itself composed and printed in the yearbook. And it occurs to me that it speaks to retired clergy and spouses just as much as to the Class of '47. So here it is. Read it and weep!

Remember how it was when our children were little, and we KNEW STUFF? Our children looked up to us, and we worked hard to teach them stuff so they'd grow up to be useful citizens. We were the ones who had the answers. They were the ones who asked the questions.

Sixty years have passed. What happened? That many-headed monster (part monster, part magic godsend) known as computer technology has enveloped us, has overtaken us, and in some cases, devoured us. Now when we want to know stuff (especially in the realm of computers or digital cameras), who do we consult? That's easy. Everybody knows — we ask our twelve-year-

old grandson. He explains it easily and matter-of-factly, without recrimination or impatience — which is often not the case with those grown-up children we nurtured and taught so many years ago. How many of us have experienced the rolled eyes, the irritated sigh, the incredulous tone of voice, followed by the drawn-out exclamation, “Moth-er!!!!”

Suddenly (well, it may be sixty years, but it feels like suddenly), our children are the ones who KNOW STUFF. And we’re the ones who get stuff explained to us. Granted, some of our Class of ’47 are whizzes with computers. (You know who you are, and we take our hats off to you. God bless you! Go for it!)

But some of us are still floundering in that morass of computer-savvy — we’re not computer illiterate; we’re just not as knowledgeable as we’d like to be. And then others of us are happily, completely computer-illiterate — and proud of it!

The beat goes on, as they say. The eight-year-old grandchild can now explain stuff to the twelve-year-old. And we stand by and watch. It’s enough to make you feel humble. Or irritated. Or confused. Or to make you yearn for the easier days in those years after 1947 when WE were the ones who KNEW STUFF!



Joyce Anderson Jackson is a lifelong Episcopalian, having been baptized at Trinity Church, Tulsa, at the age of three weeks. Joyce’s husband, the Rev. Donald L. Jackson, died six years ago, just two months before their 50th wedding anniversary.

Joyce continues to live in the large old house they moved into in 1971, and after thirty-eight years there, calculates that maybe in another thirty-eight years, she’ll have all the pictures hung and things arranged the way she’d like them to be!

Her interests are many and varied, starting with four children, and eleven grandchildren ranging from a twenty-four-year-old to seven-year-old twins. She is a trained member of the Linnaeus Teaching Garden in Tulsa (extensive training similar to a Master Gardener) and volunteers many hours each year helping to plant and maintain the Linnaeus Garden. Her own garden (large and demanding) always beckons to her for just one more hour of weeding or pruning.

Joyce teaches cooking classes in her home — English High Tea, complete with lemon curd, tongue sandwiches, pastry tarts and much more, and she also does Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding Dinner classes.

For many months she has been spearheading a campaign to raise money for new lighting in the nave and sanctuary at St. Aidan’s Church, Tulsa, where she attends. It has recently been completed and the wonderful new lights are now in place (miracle of miracles!). Joyce can now turn her attention to writing her memoirs, and composing limericks and acrostics, with some calligraphy and genealogy thrown in for good measure.

