

## CHAT ROOM



CLIFF MARTIN

### Korean War vet recalls power of gram's prayers

I grew up in a home where my family consisted of my mother, my grandmother, and my grandfather. Jesus is God the Father's only child and only son. I was my mother's only child and only son. I was my grandparent's grandson who grew up in their home during their old age. I was very fortunate to have two mothers in my home to love me so much. My grandmother was definitely a born-again Christian. I would see her reading her Bible everyday. I would go to Sunday School almost every Sunday as a child growing up. I learned more about the Bible and God from my grandmother.

It is early in the month of April 1951. I am home on furlough from Army basic training. Our country is fighting a big war in Korea. I am leaving on an airplane tomorrow to fly back to the Army. My grandmother said to me, "When you walk out our front door tomorrow, I may never see you again. All the while you are gone from me, I will pray everyday for you, my lord and savior Jesus Christ that he will bring you back home to me safe and sound. I want you to pray to Jesus everyday you are gone also. If we can get Jesus to make up His mind to bring you home safe and sound to us, no matter what happens to you after you leave tomorrow, you will come home to us safely."

#### A busy division

I told my grandmother that my division had seen a lot of combat in WWII. They had been up the boot of Italy, all across southern and all through Germany in the fighting. They were sending us to Haikado, Japan, to join occupation troops. We were not supposed to go to the fighting in Korea. However, I would pray everyday as she asked me to do.

I was in Japan a little over six months. Then they sent us to the fighting in Korea.

It was the day and night of the worst fighting I had seen in Korea. Our 81 Millimeter Mortar Platoon had six mortars dug in along the side of hill 347. It is now 7 a.m. It is just starting to get daylight.

My 1st squad had fired 1,200 shells at the enemy. All six of our squads had fired 3,600 shells at the enemy. We were totally out of ammunition. It is now 8 a.m. and everything started happening at once. Bumble Bee helicopters like you see on the television show MASH came flying in to take the critically wounded men back to the doctors, trying to get them back before they die.

The last helicopters came in at about 10:30 a.m. Everybody, including the rifle companies, were out of ammunition. Truck loads of ammunition were going by our gun position. They would unload the trucks, then load the trucks as full as they could with dead bodies. They were cleaning off the battlefields.

The medics had bandaged wounded men and stopped the bleeding. We had a constant procession of wounded walking by us to get to the doctors to have shrapnel and bullets taken out of their bodies. This horrible scene lasted from about 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This situation I am in looks totally hopeless. Just as sure as God made red and green apples, I am going to get killed over here in Korea. When you are in battle, you totally hate the enemy. I will be as good a soldier as I can be and kill as many of the enemy as I can. When it is my turn to die, I will die and that will be the end of it.

The Bible includes the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament means "legal contract." We read another word in the Bible, covenant. It also means legal contract. I prayed to Jesus Christ, "This is Clifford Martin, Lord. I am only 22 years old. I want to go home and live a long life. Grandma says if you make up your mind that I should come home, I will go home safe and sound." Then I prayed this covenant prayer: "Lord, if you rescue me from here, I will go to church every Sunday. I will read the Bible from cover to cover. I will take a serious interest in you the rest of my life."

Please see CHAT ROOM, B3

# Confessions of a yard sale junkie

Staffer Kim Mortson spent a day with fellow yard sale fanatics for a firsthand look at the popular summer pastime.

By KIMBERLY A. MORTSON  
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I'll admit it - I'm a junkie. I've been one ever since I can remember and I have no intention of quitting. My drug of choice is garage sales.

Nothing draws my attention away from the road faster than a collage of yard sale signs haphazardly affixed to a telephone pole.

"I find the winter months to be almost unbearable - having to lie dormant waiting for that first roadside sign or classified ad to crop up like a spring tulip.

To feed my own habit and to understand the garage sale culture better, I spent a day with a photographer weaving through several communities observing peoples' sales, purchases, and philosophies about what makes a garage sale so appealing.

First we found you have to start early. Many clichés apply to garage sales, including "the early bird gets the worm," and "one man's junk is another man's treasure."

Years ago most sales took place Friday through Sunday. Today, veteran sale holders peddle their wares Thursday through Saturday and spend Sunday cleaning up and throwing out what's left.

"It really pays to advertise," said Barbara Gallant of Garden City. "This is only the second sale I've had in probably 20 years but we've had a lot of people come through here already."

#### In search of

We left the office at 8 a.m. on a Friday with the classifieds and maps in hand. Many of the sales had already started the day before so there was a good chance we missed a lot of the initial foot traffic and deals.



Lots of stuff: Mary Crews of Farmington unloads household clutter at a recent garage sale.

"People go to sales to get bargains, plain and simple," said Tracy Mason of Canton. "A lot of our bigger items went on the first day."

Garage sale shopping isn't for everyone. Some people aren't willing to travel all over the city, racking up mileage on their cars just to save a few dollars. Also, these trips can prove to be unsuccessful. I'll admit there have been days, even weeks, at a time when I didn't

find a thing that interested me and that can be a little discouraging.

But on the flip side, a good find can be a truly joyous event. It's that one purchase that really makes all of the lackluster sales and tables of "another man's junk" worth it.

"I home school so I'm always looking for books and things like that for the kids," said Jennifer Knayden of Garden City. "I also shop for clothes the kids

can play in and stuff for the house."

When it comes to garage sales, *stuff* is the bottom line. You never know what you're going to happen across and what people are willing to part with once they start spring cleaning. I've seen everything from spaghetti stained Tupperware and feminine deodorizing products to handmade antique Irish lace and a stuffed squirrel mounted on a wall.

Please see YARD SALES, B2

## Balloon bomb hit Farmington during WWII

Old airport: This building on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills is now a collision shop but was an airport called Kris Port several decades ago.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEKLEER

By RUTH MOEHLMAN  
 SPECIAL WRITER

July 26, 2000 will mark the 56th anniversary of the unofficial ending of World War II. Officially, the war ended with the surrender of the Japanese on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 1, 1945.

It all seems so far away from Farmington, but an explosive device launched by the Japanese actually exploded in the garden of John T. Cook on Gill Road in Farmington on March 25, 1945.

As reported in an unpublished paper by Charles Martinez, former director of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, the device was one of the 10,000 balloon bombs launched against the United States by the Japanese.

America entered World War II after the air attack on American ships at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941. It was an all-out war affecting life in Farmington as American fighting men served on two fronts, Europe and the Pacific.

On the home front there was rationing of meat, sugar, shoes and gasoline. Americans bought war bonds, and in Farmington Township a small lookout tower was built at the local airport, Kris Port. Volunteers watched for enemy planes, which fortunately never

came. Kris Port was on Orchard Lake Road south of 13 Mile.

The war in the Pacific went badly for the Americans at first. The Philippines were lost and Americans suffered the notorious Bataan surrender. 1943 was the turning point in the war. In the European war, Italy signed an armistice in September. The Germans surrendered May 7, 1945. In the Pacific theater in 1945, America began to win.

America soon was able to start bombing the enemy's home islands. The Japanese wanted to retaliate but lacked an air base close enough to America to do so. Japanese scientists devised a plan to make up for that lack.

According to Martinez, a small unit of the Japanese military was devoted to building bombs into metal gondolas that were to be carried by hot-air balloons across the Pacific in the jet stream, the high-speed winds that blow from west to east.

There were 10,000 of these gondolas

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEKLEER

Please see VINTAGE FARMINGTON, B2

## Le tour de jardin

### Garden walk tres bien

Le Tour de Jardin promises to be "magnifique," according to spokeswoman Nan Reid.

The Farmington Garden Club garden walk Saturday, June 24, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. has a French theme but an English garden will be among the six local gardens spotlighted on the tour.

"It's nice that this year we share the day with the Farmington area Fun Fest," said Reid, adding that garden enthusiasts coming to Heritage Park from the south shouldn't be discouraged by morning parade road closures.

"Shoppers will be open," Reid said.

The Spicer House in Heritage Park is the beginning point of the tour, west of Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile. Tickets will be available at the visitor's center for \$7.

In addition to the English garden,

"The gardens are magnificent."

Nan Reid  
 —Farmington Garden Club spokeswoman

tour-goers will see a backyard natural wildlife habitat and an elaborate two-story backyard playhouse.

Prior to Saturday, tickets for the walk are at Vines Flower & Garden at 30560 Grand River; Schroeter's Flowers at 29216 Orchard Lake; Springbrook Gardens at 23614 Power Road; Steinkopf Nursery at 20316 Farmington Road; Farmington Florists at 23340 Farmington Road; and Hearts and Flowers at 39298 12 Mile.



Pooler's pool: Betty Pooler enjoys a rare moment sitting down next to her garden pond. Her garden is featured on Saturday's walk.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEKLEER