



Randy Hall

Chat Room

Laugh or cry, it's in your attitude

"If you stop and look around you can always find a reason to laugh or a reason to cry. It's just a matter of choosing which one." - Randy W. Hall

"All I want in life is a little bit of love to take the pain away. Getting strong today. A giant step each day." - Jason Pierce

Far be it from me to suggest that life is one big primrose path. I realize there are things that go on around us everyday that ask for - no, DEMAND - our attention. And many of them are negative, at least on the surface of things.

As I write these words to you today, I've had one of the biggest jolts to my confidence I've had in quite awhile. However, I realize through my faith in God that it may in fact be happening for a reason I'm not intended to understand yet.

Without going into too much specifics, let me say a good friend has been treating me in a way I wouldn't prefer (that's worded very delicately). I understand that I do share some blame in things and how they've developed, I just couldn't see myself handling it in such a brusque, and even rude, way. But maybe, just maybe, that's the only way she feels like she can get her point across to me and get me to give her the peace of mind she needs.

All I know is that there's a lesson for me to learn.

Take almost any situation or place in life, and there's some beauty to be seen in there. It could easily be a person, place or thing. Almost some good can be found in anything. The opposite is also true. If we set our minds to it, we can find fault or ugliness in just about any person, place or thing.

I'm not talking about an unrealistic belief that life is "all-good". I'm just talking about reframing your perspective.

At one time (not so long ago) I was a bona fide fault-finder. I was following in a long, illustrious line of fault-finders in my family. But, as I approached maturity and developed a mind of my own, I began to be exposed to a people with a different perspective.

They in turn exposed me to a better caliber of books and paradigms, other than the sarcastic, fear-ridden points of view I'd been exposed to during the formative years of my life. And you know what? I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in the world.

NEGATIVE NELLIE

If I hadn't gone through that, I wouldn't truly understand the toxicity of being what I refer to as a "Negative Nellie". I created a fun little character named Negative Nellie to demystify and joke fun at the "I can't" way of thinking.

I realized that having Negative Nellie meant she had to have a positive counterpart, so I came up with "Positive Peter Bagonous". Now I can almost hear you thinking, "What is this guy doing, writing children's books?"

Please bear with me as I illustrate a point. For every

PLEASE SEE CHAT ROOM, C6



The women of Adat Shalom listen to tales from Heloise.

BILL BRISLER/OBSERVER

Holiday tables get personal touch



BILL BRISLER/OBSERVER

Heloise shows her portable radio broadcasting studio.

BY JONI HOBRED
STAFF WRITER

You can take the girl out of Texas, but you can't take Texas out of the girl.

Long-time San Antonian Ponce Kiah Marchelle Heloise Cruse Evans - better known simply as "Heloise" - brought a bright, Southern flair to the Sisterhood of Adat Shalom's annual Hiddur Mitzvah, a display of holiday tables and luncheon held Thursday at the Farmington Hills synagogue.

Hundreds of women toured a large room filled with holiday tables anyone would be proud to display. The key to decorating those tables, according to Randy Forester of Studio 330, is to make use of the familiar. Forester was the featured guest on Heloise's radio show Thursday morning, broadcast from the synagogue offices.

"I thought they were beautiful," Forester said of the displays, "and what I really appreciated is people used things in their homes. That's what I stressed on the show. Use the things you have."

That's Ellen Bean's secret. A board member with the Anti-Defamation League and owner of "Tables that Talk," she set a Hanukkah table with her mother's china and antique crystal, as well as her own sterling silver flatware.

"I definitely use what I have," said the Birmingham social worker, who admits to maintaining a virtual warehouse of items in her home. "I just happen to have a lot."

Her gold and white color theme even extended to the napkin ties, which were pearl and gold ribbons from a local fabric store. The table even included holiday foods, like blue-sprinkled, cut-out cookies in the shape of dreidels and menorahs and jelly doughnuts, the fried food included on Israeli holiday tables.

"Here, Jewish people eat potato pancakes," she added.

While some of the tables featured flower arrange-

PLEASE SEE HELOISE, C6

Hundreds turn out to honor former sheriff Nichols

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

Few people in the history of Oakland County government could match the presence of longtime sheriff John F. Nichols. A new monument unveiled Thursday in front of the county jail will ensure his presence be felt by future generations.

Nichols, who died Dec. 18, 1998 while serving his fourth term as sheriff, is largely credited with turning the Oakland County Sheriff's Department into one of the most respected police agencies in the state.

Nichols began his 56-year career as a Detroit police officer. He eventually rose through the ranks to become that department's highest-ranking official. His time in Detroit culminated with him running against Coleman A. Young for mayor in 1973. After losing the election, he became the chief of police in Farmington Hills.

Nichols was elected sheriff in 1984. The granite monument, which sits in front of the John F. Nichols Law Enforcement Complex, was paid for by hundreds of donors. It is the first monument to honor an individual on the 450-acre Oakland County campus.

The unveiling ceremony, which included a 21-gun salute, bagpipes and a helicopter flyover, was attended by more than 100 of Nichols' friends, colleagues, and admirers, a group that included a virtual who's who of local political and law enforcement officials.

County executive L. Brooks Patterson said the late sheriff was a strict disciplinarian, who demanded and earned the respect of everyone he worked with.

"John was an inspiration to so many people. You could complain about his gruffness. I could complain about the fights we had over the budget. But the bottom line for many of us, you respected the old man," Patterson said.

Farmington Hill Police Chief William Dwyer, who served with Nichols as a member of the Detroit Police Department, was just one of the many uniformed officers participating in the ceremony. He said Nichols was always known for his toughness.

"John was an icon who devoted his entire life to law enforcement. He was the George Patton of law enforcement. He was the last of an era," he said.

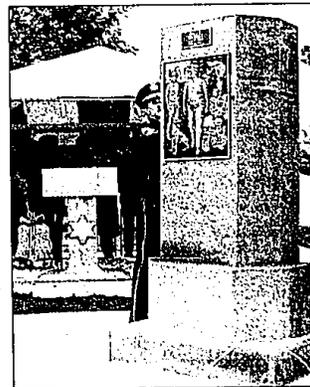
Current sheriff Michael Bouchard, who was appointed after Nichols died, was also awarded the first John F. Nichols Medal of Leadership. Congressman Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Township) presented Bouchard with the award, which will be annually given to exemplary individuals in law enforcement.

Despite the honor, Bouchard said nobody could ever truly replace Nichols.

"When I first took this position, I was asked how I would fill his shoes. I say now what I said then, nobody can fill his shoes," Bouchard said.

Jean Nichols, John's wife of 44 years, also attended the ceremony. She said her husband would have been humbled by all the kind words and adulation.

"If he were here, I know John would be speechless," she said. "That would be a first."



JEFF ZAVANZO/ECCENTRIC

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard unveils a monument to honor longtime sheriff John Nichols. Jean Nichols, John's widow, is sitting in the background.

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