

The Mondy Morning

CHRONICLE

Family Poop Sheet since 1990

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Thanks to **Allen Monday** for his donation to the Chronicle fund.

I have some corrections and additions to make to the article about **Savannah (Miller) Eberline's** article that appeared in Issue 2. Some of the info came from my memory bank which has been overdrawn too many times. She says:

“After high school, I trained Arabian horses in Arizona for a year then returned to Los Angeles and worked at a psychiatric hospital with severely abused children at CPC Westwood Hospital (not St. John's). While working full time, I attended Santa Monica College, then transferred to the University of Montana to complete my degree in Psychology. In Ghana I taught in a nursery school (not a nursing school) while studying native dance, writing and photography. One more thing, **Todd** worked as a carpenter on an island of the coast of Portland, Maine (not in a shipyard).”

[Now let me add one bit of interesting news, Savannah and Todd's daughter, Amelia was born while she was getting her Master's degree and when she went on the stage to get her diploma, she carried Amelia in her left arm and took the diploma with her right hand to a standing ovation of the audience.]

From **Mike and Elizabeth Hill;**

“There have been a few new developments around here. First, we have found us a new house, three bedrooms, (and the girls have their own bathroom) including a large master bedroom, large kitchen, and a laundry-room/computer room combo. The back yard is fenced in to accommodate the pets of visiting families. We expect to move in about the middle of February.

“Second bit of news is that **Mike** is getting his head shaved again. (Mike is announcer and Asst Mgr at a radio station). He and his partner will have their heads shaved in the Central Mall between Noon and One o'clock on Valentine's Day as one way of raising money for a 13 year old Salina girl who has leukemia. She had a bone-marrow transplant not long ago and is recovering in the Fort Worth Ronald McDonald House. They think she will be coming home by the end of the month. So far, the two men have raised more than \$2,000. Anyone can have their head shaved for a donation and the hair is collected and given to “Locks of Love”, a group that makes wigs for people who have lost their own hair as a result of disease or treatment. Last year, Mike had his head shaved for a little 18-month old girl with cancer.

[Good on you Mike. I don't have enough white hair to make it worth while to come to Salina and donate it – besides, who would want a white wig?]

* * *

Margaret received her new glasses on Friday the 8th and has noted a considerable improvement in her vision. She can read ordinary newspaper print without a magnifying glass and that makes her happy.

* * *

While we were in Los Angeles for Christmas two of Mark's three daughters and their families stayed at our house. Afterward, Mark was telling us about his experience as a baby-sitter and we laughed so much I asked him to write it up for the Chronicle. You will find his story with this issue. And I bet you laugh; if you don't, write and tell me why and I'll put that in the Chronicle.

* * *

I apologize for the wrinkle that many pages of the Chronicle have in it. The odd pages, which I run first, never have a wrinkle but regardless of what I do, the second time through, the page gets a wrinkle. If anyone knows the answer, let me know.

* * *

Judith Freeman has written a book called "Red Water" which goes into some detail about the Mormon massacre of the Arkansas wagon train (The Mountain Meadow Massacre) in 1857. If you read the copy I sent you, you saw the name of John D. Lee, who was largely responsible. Her novel is based on the diaries kept by three of Lee's nineteen wives. He was a marrying dude! He married three sisters, then married their mother. I can't figure out what kin that made them. Maybe I'll read the book

I have a hard time believing that God

was once a man and had a wife and some children and that if I become a Mormon and am good enough one day I will be God's equal.

Ah! Religion! The strangest phenomenon ever invented by mankind. Paradoxically it unites and divides. More people have been blessed by religion than any other belief mankind has entertained and yet, more people have been killed in the name of religion than any other belief.

Hundreds of thousands of people were slain in the wars between the Hebrews and the other religions in the years before Christ. Thousands were killed by the Catholic Church in the name of Christianity. Thousands have been killed in the name of Islam. Each religion claims they are the only ones who know God and if they could get rid of all who do not believe as they do, the world would be like heaven.

Don't you believe it. Eighty-seven priests in Boston alone are being tried for pedophilia. Bob Jones will throw you out of his university if your sexual preference is not like his. The Taliban would throw acid in the face of any girl who would not keep her face covered. All in the name of religion.

But we cannot get rid of it. It, like every other trait, evolved for a purpose. It is part of our nature. It binds people together in groups for the good of the group. It separates one group from another for the purpose of competition and advancement, the old "survival of the fittest" theory

No, we cannot rid ourselves of it but I dare say, we can learn to tolerate it for the benefit of all.

Not many letters this time but I want to get this issue out while I have Mark's story to justify using a stamp.

Love, Margaret and Harrison

GRANDPA, THE BABY-SITTER

By
Mark Miller

Amelia, my granddaughter is now two and a half years old and has a crown of golden ringlets just like her mother, Savannah, had at that age.

I didn't think anyone could ever be as cute or funny as Savannah, but Grandpas are sometimes surprised and are, I suppose, easily won over. I remember when Savannah was four or five years old I took her and her two sisters to see the Grand Canyon. We stood on the rim looking down into the depths of the canyon. Smoke was rising from some Havasuppi Indian home down a the bottom and Savannah asked, "Daddy, do people live way down there?" I said, "Yes, the Havasuppi Indians do. They have lived there for hundreds of years." "You mean," she asked, "Real Indians live way down there?" I confirmed that they did, and the smoke was coming from one of their homes. She cupped her little hands around her mouth and yelled as loud as she could, "Hello, Indians". Being a proud Papa, I was sure no kid could ever be this cute.

Quite a few years later, after my little daughter was all grown up and had a little replica of herself it shouldn't come as a surprise to me that my granddaughter was just as cute and funny as her mother ever was. There are numerous reasons why I should have known this, but it was during the past Christmas when two granddaughters gave me a proper initiation into the glorious realm of "Grandpa-dom".

In addition to Amelia, there was Eloisa, the daughter of Penelope, the second of my daughter, and Eloisa was only one and a half years old, and a very pretty little girl, but not old enough yet to be the kind of lovable tike as Amelia. The two families and I were occupying the home of my Aunt and Uncle while they were back in Los Angeles with their children. My little house did not have enough bedrooms to accommodate the guests nor a room that would hold a ten-foot Christmas tree.

One night during the holidays when the "young ones" were talking about going out to dinner and doing the town, I recklessly volunteered to baby-sit the two girls while they were gone.

Now Savannah and her husband, Todd, live in Wyoming where Amelia has her own little tent (in their bedroom)and her own little sleeping bag in which she sleeps. Her little tent had been set up in the upstairs bedroom with the sleeping bag inside and her mother had tucked her in, telling her that Grandpaw would tell her a story before she went to sleep, and also that Grandpa would have to go downstairs to look in on her cousin, Eloisa from time to time.

Penelope had several movies with her and I had visions of spending half an hour telling Amelia a story or two, then seeing one of the movies. The parents departed and Grandpa was ready for his night of baby sitting; one upstairs with an intercom so I could hear her if she should awake, the other in a crib not far away from where I would be watching my movie. And so my eventful and unforgettable evening began.

I kissed Amelia good night and told her to crawl into her sleeping bag and I would tell her a story as soon as I had checked on Eloisa. I had not even reached the midpoint of the stairs going down when over the intercom Amelia's voice rang out, "Grandpa Mark, Where are you? I'm ready for my story".

Not wanting the intercom to wake Eloisa, I turned around and rushed back upstairs, out of breath, and said to Amelia, "Wait until I get a chair. I will pull it up in front of your tent and then I will tell you a story."

"No, Grandpa Mark, you just come into my tent and lay down beside me and tell me a story."

"But I'm too big to get into your tiny tent, Amelia," I explained.

"No you are not," she insisted, "Mama does it and you can too. Come on. It'll be real cozy, you'll see."

Well I squeezed into that little pup tent, and tried to stretch out in some position so I wouldn't get leg cramps, which took a bit of wiggling.

"See, Grandpa Mark, isn't this nice?"

"Yep, this is just great," I lied.

"Now tell me a story," she demanded sweetly.

And so I began, "Once upon a time there was this little boy who lived in the country. . ."

"What was his name?" she interrupted.

"Ah, - - Floyd," I came up with a name, quickly.

"- - Floyd lived way off in the forest with his mother . . .", I tried to continue.

"What was his mother's name?"

"Ah, Dorothy," I was thinking fast, but stumbled out the first name I could come up with.

"Are you sure?" She asked as if she thought that wasn't a woman's name.

"Of course I'm sure. I have a sister named Dorothy."

"But Floyd's mother is not your sister is she?"

"Well, no," I stammered, "they just have the same name

"That's funny," she said.

"Yeah, well, I guess it is funny. Sometimes people have the same name as other people. Listen, do you want to hear this story or not?"

"Sure, Grandpa Mark, go on>"

I started out again, "Anyway, Floyd went to the barn and saddled his horse, and - -"

"What is the horse's name?"

I was ready this time, "His name was Spot."

"Spot," she said, "That is a doggie's name."

Suddenly I wondered, "Is this kid only two and a half years old?" I felt like my fifth grade teacher was giving me a quiz. About that time I got a cramp in my leg and had to get out of the tent.

I squeezed through the opening of the tent and began to stomp around to get rid of the cramp.

"Where are you going, Grandpa?" she asked when I started crawling backward out of the tent, then "Why are you dancing, Grandpa?" when I was stomping the floor.

Not wanting to reveal to my granddaughter how decrepit I was, I lied, "Every now and then I just feel like dancing, don't you?"

"Yes, but not in the middle of a story." She hesitated a moment then started crawling out of the tent saying, "Now I feel like dancing too", and began dancing around the room.

After a bit my cramp went away and I thought I should go downstairs to check on the other grandchild.

"I'm going down stairs to check on Eloisa," I said, "I'll be right back."

"Well come right back and finish your story."

"I will," I said as I dashed down the stairs to Eloisa's bed, thought she needed more cover and spread a light blanket over her, looking at her and thinking, "God, what a beautiful little granddaughter I have here," when over the intercom Amelia's voice rang out, "I'm waiting for my story, Grandpa Mark".

Not wanting to wake Eloisa by shouting, I dashed back up stairs while the little voice kept talking, "Where are you Grandpa Mark? What are you doing Grandpa Mark?"

I ran into the room and there she was still dancing and talking into the intercom.

"Get back into your bed, Young Lady, and keep this racket down. I don't want to wake up Eloisa."

She obediently crawled into her tent and into her sleeping bag.

"Floyd had just saddled up Spot, then what did he do?" She asked. I took a blanket and pillow of her parent's bed and stretched out on the floor in front of her tent.

"Okay, Floyd had just saddled up his horse to ride over to his Uncle's house and - -"

"What are you doing out there, Grandpa Mark?"

"Well I'm too big for your little tent so I'm going to lie out here."

"Okay, I will too," and crawled over me dragging her pillow. She lay down next to me and said, "He rode to his Uncle's house - -" I knew what was coming so we said it at the same time, "What was his Uncle's name?"

"Cecil," I said.

She laughed, "That's a funny name."

"Yes, he was a funny guy." I said.

"How funny was he?"

It was about this time I realized I had a long night ahead of me.

After five or six more stories off the top of my head I felt more brain-dead than usual and decided it was time to look in on Eloisa again. As I reached the bottom of the stairs that little voice rang out, just as I knew it would, "Hurry back, Grandpa Mark, you have just got to the good part."

"I had?" I asked myself. I thought I had finished that story, and which story was it? I looked at my watch. It was nine-thirty. Savannah said she would be asleep by eight o'clock. What happened?

When I got back up stairs from checking on Eloisa, Amelia was stretched out happily on her parent's bed.

"Hey," I said, "What are you doing out of your tent?"

"Mommie always lets me come into their bed before I go to sleep," she smiled up at me.

"But it's way past your bedtime, aren't you sleepy? I am," I said in a yawning sleepy voice.

"Well I'm not," she said, "it's Christmas and Mommie says I get to stay up late on Christmas."

I doubted this. I said, "She never told me that. Are you sure about that?"

"Sure," she said, "and look at these books here by the bed. You can read them to me."

To my astonishment, I saw a stack of children's books, there must have been half a dozen, on the bedside table. I picked up one and started to read, not knowing that before the evening was over, I would read every dog-goned one of them. Each time my failing eyesight caused me to make a mistake, Amelia would correct me. She knew every one of them by heart. At one point I said, "You have heard all these stories, haven't you?"

"Sure, but you haven't. Aren't they nice stories, Grandpa?"

"Yes they are nice stories, but don't you ever get tired of hearing them over and over?"

"No I like to hear them."

"Go on," she prompted me, "you are just getting to the good part."

The page seemed to be getting fuzzy and blurry, but I stumbled on, being corrected when I made a mistake. Surely sleep would come soon, not to me but to that vivacious little girl.

At one point I looked over and she had one foot out from the cover.

"Hey," I said, "what's your foot doing out from under the cover?"

"Mommie always lets me do that," she said matter-of-factly. "I bought this but soon I noticed that both feet were exposed.

"Amelia, you have both feet out from under the cover."

"Yep, Mommie always lets . . ."

I stopped her here. "One foot out is one thing but with both feet out, that I know your Mommie would not allow."

"Why?"

"Because your are completely uncovered and she would not want that."

"Why?"

"Because you would catch cold, that's why."

She considered this for a moment. Some rational truth was accepted. In her little head something told her that Grandpa had a point. She pulled the cover back over her.

"Go on with the story, Grandpa Mark." I had forgotten where I was in the story, but she was quick to show me so I continued. Before I did I quickly glanced at the bedside table, this was the last of the books. "Thank God," I thought.

I got about half way through this last story with no interruptions. I glanced over at the little tike. She was fast asleep. It was ten o'clock. I carried her to her little tent and tucked her in and went quietly down stairs, checked once more on Eloisa, marveling at her beautiful face, and stretched out on the couch. I tried to read an article in the National Geographic. I was tired of reading; I just lay there thinking of those two little girls sleeping soundly, unaware of their surroundings.

Maybe at the end of the long road we call life, this was all that really matters, these grandchildren. This is our golden reward; these two new vital little people, these two unique stars in the universe, filled with wonder and promise.

The gang arrived and found me sprawled on the couch, exhausted and smiling. I must have looked strange.

The two girls asked at the same time, "What is it Papa, why are you looking like that?"

"How much are baby-sitters paid these days?" I asked.

They all laughed. "Why, do you want to get paid?"

"No," I said, "but whatever they are paid, double it."