

CHRONICLE

IS PUBLISHED BY MONDY ON MONDAY FOR THE MONDYS, THE JINKSES,
THEIR KIN, NEAR KIN, AND A FEW FRIENDS

VOLUME VII, ISSUE 13, August 5, 1996

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I must be getting old -- at least in my emotions. Margaret and I had dinner by candle light the other night and I didn't find it a bit romantic. Now it may have been the food. There was no caviar, no chilled melon, no pheasant under glass, no champagne, -- none of that; just a plain peanut butter and jelly sandwich. And the reason for that unromantic dish? Well just as Margaret started a pork-chop ala Margarét dinner, our power went off. We had no oven, no range, no hot plates, no microwave, no TV, no coffee maker, --- no nothing. With a flashlight -- one is always handy -- we hunted up some candles and lighted them. After waiting for two hours with no power, we decided to make sandwiches. Now, as I say, young newlyweds might have found it too romantic to write about, but with no toaster to warm the bread -- it came directly from the "fridge", -- even the sandwich was not the best.

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Here's another from Helen Jinks:

Standing at the pulpit, the old preacher began by saying, "Last week, as you will remember, I said that today I would preach on the sin of lying. I asked all of you to prepare for it by reading the 29th Chapter of Acts. How many of you did so?"

Hands went up all over the room.

"Oh! My! This is very impressive. I have heard that an old document, thought to be the 29th chapter of Acts had been discovered but I did not know it had been released and was now in so many Bibles. I'll have to buy one of the new ones, I suppose, so I can read it. And now I

will begin my sermon on lying."

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Cecil, my brother-in-law called. He said that what I called an apology was about the sleaziest attempt he had ever read. He said he didn't understand why I had to quote one of his admirers who said he wouldn't know what to do with a screwdriver if he had a dozen.

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They say there is no rest for the wicked -- well I must be getting wickeder and wickeder. I went down into the basement to get something and stepped in water about an inch deep. I ran to the service box and cut of the pump and then closed all the valves, and turned off the gas to the water heater because I thought it had busted and was pouring water all over the floor. (It has been leaking a tiny bit for months, and I just knew it had fallen apart.) Then I came to my senses. I looked at the water heater and could find no water pouring from it. It turned out that Margaret had decided to have a long soaking bath the night before in the guest's quarters because she likes that tub better than the others and when she opened the outlet all the water poured into the basement. The drain under the tub had come apart and we didn't know it. (I always did want to be a plumber!)

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I began this issue last Sunday, going to the mailbox every day with the hope that there would be a letter from some one to put in the Chronicle. It's now Friday and I have a letter. Thank you, Nell, I was afraid I would have to postpone the date of this issue, or put out a Chronicle with no letters. Here is Nell's letter.

FROM NELL (7/27/96)

Dear Cousins and Friends:

It is time to congratulate **Brecken** on receiving the Townsend prize for Excellence in English Composition. We are so proud of her accomplishments. Being able to write is one of the most important aspects of an education. I would be interested to have her write for the *Chronicle* her reactions to her freshman year at Yale. Also, it would be good to hear about her activities this summer. **Margaret**, you have a right to be proud of her so keep on bragging.

Harrison, I wish that I could send you some of our rain. It has been an unusually wet year here and my lawn needs mowing every few days. It covers almost an acre and is expensive. I appreciated all the suggestions given me about the deer problem, but I must report that the deer population seems to be increasing and they seem to think they own my place. Each morning a mother and two babies visit my back yard. I can grow tomatoes only in pots on my porch for I find that Ithaca deer really like tomato plants.

Our summer temperature has been very pleasant, -- in the 50's or 60's at night and up in the 70's during the day. The large rainfall supplies our numerous waterfalls and lakes.

I keep very busy with my work. Last week I reviewed a manuscript for a science journal, contributed questions to the national Food Science College Bowl, and participated in administering a PhD examination. The students still ask me to serve on their graduate committees although I am supposedly retired. Keeping in contact with the young helps me keep younger in my approach to life.

Bessie and Bertha, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your visit to the Pocahontas Cemetery and for decorating the graves. When I called Ann Carroll to order flowers she informed me that someone had already been there. I assume it was you. Besides Mother and Father I also have two grandparents buried in the Mondy plot, -- Grandfather Mondy who wanted to be buried by my father, and Grandmother Carroll

who requested to be buried near my mother. It is difficult for me to be at Pocahontas on Memorial Day, so I usually pay Ann to decorate for me. It is so good of you two to visit the cemeteries and write a report for us. This year the Masonic Cemetery Committee requested a large contribution toward maintenance.

Harrison, please keep us informed about your book. I have enjoyed reading excerpts that you have included in the *Chronicle*.

Best wishes to all, Nell.

[Nell, latest report from my agent -- another rejection slip.]

FROM INA HALL (Profile #120A)

Harrison and Margaret, Congratulations on your Golden Wedding Anniversary. From your account, it sounds like you had a high-heel time. It has been 16 years since Jess and I celebrated ours. *[Jess and Ina were married 5/19/1930.]* We had a nice celebration, considering Jess was not too well. Lois and Cecil Sitz and Jerry and Jessie Thornton came and we certainly enjoyed them. I thought it was very nice of them to drive the distance and I will never forget it. They stayed with Jess and me and we enjoyed every minute of their visit.

We have just returned from a trip to the Ozarks a few days ago. I went with my daughter Ramona and family. We spent the first night in Henderson; got there early, could have driven farther but did not want to push Bob, my son-in-law. (He had a 5-way heart bypass two years ago.) After unloading at the motel, we drove over to Kilgore, about 18 miles away and visited with some old friends and looked the town over. We lived there for many years. We made the oil boom in 1930. We always enjoy going back; a lot of our old friends have gone on.

The next day we drove to Benton. Stopped early so Bob could rest. The next day we drove to Mammoth Springs, AR., got a motel and spent four nights. On the way we ate at Newport, passed through Pocahontas where we drove out in the country about three miles to visit an old cemetery. (**Harrison**, I thought I could see some of your

tracks between Pocahontas and Elm store.) [You may have, Ina, I left a lot of them there.] On our way to Myrtle we stopped at the Walnut Grove church and cemetery. We talked to Eveylan, daughter of Omah and Osborne Cox. Omah was the daughter of Frankie Brewer, one of Jess's cousins. We had planned to attend church at Walnut Grove but when we awoke on Sunday morning it was pouring down rain so we postponed it.

On Sunday afternoon we had several visitors. Two of Ethyl Hall's sons and their wives and a couple of friends came from Myrtle, Ray Reynolds and his wife came from Thayer, and June, Mose Brewer's daughter came from Thayer. We had a small reunion and really enjoyed visiting with them.

While there, we went down to Mammoth Springs several time; antique-ing, bought a few items there and in Thater. We ate at the New Fish Cafe in Mammoth, -- very nice.

We drove through Mountain Home to Branson, spent the night there and took in a great show, then headed back to Texas. Arrived back in Lockhart after a very enjoyable and safe trip. Love to all, Ina.

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Saturday was a great day -- got Ina's letter and one from Bessie and Bertha.

REPORT FROM SPRINGFIELD.

July is ending and it has not been too bad, --three or four days in the low 90's with one day at 94. Rest of the time in the 80's. On the 22nd we had a real bad wind storm, -- broke off lots of limbs and blew down some trees. Some people were without power for as much as 24 hours. Bertha and I escaped without damage and without power failure. We received very little rain out of that storm but on the 29th we got about an inch of rain. We are still below average.

Yesterday, Bertha, Daughter Sue, and I attended the Ozark Empire Fair. We looked at lots of exhibits. So many beautiful quilts but the vegetables weren't so good this year. The cakes and pies looked very, uh, appetizing. It was a very nice day and we sat near the top of the grandstand and watched the performers play and sing which we

enjoyed.

Haven't heard from any of the others here but I guess they are doing okay or we would have heard. Bertha is expecting company from St Louis this week so she will be busy. She is excited about their coming. They will all be at Silver Dollar City most of the time.

Daughter Ann and husband Ed are on an Alaskan cruise. They flew to Seattle, Wash., to visit for a few days with Erva, Joe, and Connie (George's children). Joe and Connie are going on the cruise with them. A card from Ann says they are having a great time. Should be back by the 7th of August.

Last week Bertha, Sue, and I went to Billings to see Carolyn (Edward's daughter). She has been ill for so long and bed ridden for some time, and on oxygen 24 hours a day. She was feeling pretty good the day we visited her but when Bertha called her this morning she wasn't feeling so well, hard for her to breathe or talk so Bertha did not talk long. She sure has a good spirit after being so sick and in much pain for so many years.

Glad you and Margaret had a good time with your sisters in Colorado Springs. Tell them to write to the Chronicle -- we would love to hear from them.

Well the railroad shops have gone from Springfield. Only have about 30 employees left to service the trains as they come through here. Lots of workers were transferred to Tulsa, Topeka, Kansas City, Minnesota, and Memphis. Some did not take transfers. It is so sad; everyone knows that the Frisco is what made Springfield years ago.

Here's you a joke for the Chronicle: Three ministers were discussing the problems they were having with bats in their churches. One said, "We have fixed all the holes in the building but they still get in". Another said, "We had our building fumigated, but they still get in". The third minister said, "We caught all our bats and I baptized them and they haven't been back since".

Love to all of you, Bessie and Bertha.

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

When I learned that Brecken had been awarded the Winston T. Townsend Prize for Excellence in English Composition by Yale University, I asked her to send me a copy of the paper that won for her the award. I have just received it. I think you will enjoy it. She entitled it, "Coverings" and you will see the title in her story. It was written near the end of her freshman year, spring of 1996.

COVERINGS

Brecken Armstrong

In Nevsehir, Turkiye, I was different. It is the only place I have visited where I have been strange enough to stick out in a crowd, to feel stinging glares tickle my skin, and to feel the atmosphere choke me. I lived for two months as an American Field Service exchange student with a family in a very religious region in central Turkey. It was a place where a white face and blond hair seemed to shine like a light from a crowd of darkness. Women wrapped themselves from head to toe in black, coarse cloth, with foldings so elaborate that only their eyes peeked out. Men led camels through the dusty streets, looking to prey upon unsuspecting tourists who believed they needed camel rides. Rug shop attendants scurried from shop to shop carrying bronze trays of tea, and water sellers wandered the streets in their long robes and long beards, with heavy ceramic jugs on their backs.

Nevsehir is in a desert. As the eye stretches across the horizon, the only break from the monotonous line of flat desert are the occasional "fairy chimneys", twisting, curving, upside-down, cone-shaped pieces of rock with big flat trays balanced on top. The desert meant isolation. And isolation brings a kind of shield from the modern world. It was not uncommon to stumble upon a hollowed-out "fairy chimney" where families still lived as they had for over two thousand years. And while the richer families of Nevsehir owned cars, most people still used their donkeys and carts. Men and women bent over crops all day long, picking vegetables with their bare hands as their families had done for hundreds of years. In my isolated desert town we were ninety-nine percent fundamental Muslim, one percent "modern" Muslim, and me.

Every once in a while we would see bus loads of Westerners come into town to see the fairy chimneys, the underground cities, and the early Christian cave churches. They usually stayed in the hotel that my host father, Murat, managed, but they were soon gone, and, once again, I would be the only white face within hundreds of miles.

I remember vividly the first time I walked through the open market with my Turkish host mother, Sema. The air was hot and sticky, and we had been inside all day long without air conditioning. Munevver, my host sister, refused to go out that day, so Sema and I went alone. We walked through the Nevsehir streets, past stands of vendors selling magazines, rug stores, and carts selling steaming, twisted bread sticks. We reached the market street, and wove our way through the immense crowd of people, stands with fruit piled high, and windows draped with gold jewelry. I don't even remember what we were going to buy. Maybe it was a bag of nuts, or maybe we were going to the fruit vendor. All I remember is the sweat rolling down my forehead, my shorts sticking to the insides of my legs, the eyes following my every move, and the sudden, piercing sting on my cheek. It hit me suddenly and I wasn't sure what it was. But there was an apricot pit at my feet, orange stains on my white shirt, and a tiny, bloody cut on my cheek. I looked around to see who had thrown it, but no one claimed the missile. Everyone rushed by as usual, the women with their heads toward the ground, and the men looked on as if nothing strange had happened. The sting didn't hurt much, but the cut remained on my face to remind me to wear my shorts

longer and not to look up when passing a man.

* * *

Turkey is a very divided country. The East and the West are as different from one another as if they belong to two separate cultures and two separate peoples. The Western side of the country is European in every aspect of its philosophy, political affiliations, and lifestyle. Once you crossed the invisible boundary into the East, however, the scenery becomes very Middle Eastern in flavor. Religion commands every aspect of life, both politically and socially. Customs, food, dress, attitudes - everything is different.

My Turkish family came from the western, European side of Turkey. They tried to be as "western" as possible and prided themselves on knowing every American movie and rock star, on having relatives who had moved to Michigan, and on their limited knowledge of English. (Though my father and sister could speak pretty well, my mother could only say, "the cat sits on the table".) they did not consider themselves Arabs. In fact, calling some one an "Arab" was a form of insult in my family. They despised fundamental Muslims, and would not wear the traditional covering their religion required of them. Though I was fully prepared to cover myself, or at least wear long pants and skirts, they refused to let me. They were very proud that my Turkish mother had a career before she had become pregnant and that she was a strong "western" woman. When my family was forced to move to Nevsehir because of Murat's work, they couldn't have been more unhappy. They, according to their description, were Europeans stuck in the outer reaches of civilization in Nevsehir, Turkey, and they hated every stone in every building and every face that they passed on the streets.

Munevver was very unhappy in Nevsehir. She told me that I was her only friend there because everyone else was "an evil covered person". But I never quite understood the extent of her unhappiness. One day we had a horrible fight. I don't quite remember why we were so furious with each other. But I do remember that I asked her why she hated the world so much. She ran to the window, flung the curtains aside dramatically and pointed to the skyline. She said, "that is why, those are my problems," and ran into her room and shut the door. I stood at the window trying to figure out the message in her words, looking out among the apartment buildings filled with other tiny apartments like ours, looking to the castle that traps every visitor's soul for seven years, to the mosque tower right next to our building that woke me every morning at five o'clock for prayer, to the two women standing on the street holding babies in each arm with toddlers clawing at their skirts, to the fairy chimneys in the very far distance, rising gracefully, solidly, and lonely in the flat land. And I understood what she meant. Sema, Murat, and Munevver were different and didn't belong in Nevsehir. But, unlike me, they couldn't leave.

It took me as a complete surprise the first time that my family and I left Nevsehir and traveled to the West. Munevver underwent a dramatic change in personality. On one of our road trips, she got so excited that she fell into the white pools at Parnassus, and was covered in silt for the rest of the day. She was so worked up by the white sand beaches of Bodrum, that she begged our parents to let us stay out past 10 o'clock in order to go out to pubs and bars. She flirted with life and loved adventure. A smile crept across her face that was impossible to wipe away. But the moment we returned to Nevsehir, she retreated into a little girl, became silent, and walked with her eyes toward the ground. I hated this, but I also did the same thing.

* * *

It is hard to be different. Everyone knows that. It is not a statement that is shocking or profound, but it is

something that you never realize the significance of until you actually fit the description. Munevver and I were both different in Nevsehir. Obviously my skin color, my facial features, and my hair color made me different. I wore American clothes and didn't cover my body with long robes. I acted bold and dared to look up at people whom I passed. My differences showed in every move I made and in every time I showed my blond head. But Munevver's differences were far more serious. She dared to spit in the eye of her religion and culture. The fact that she refused to cover herself was a personal affront to every other woman in Nevsehir. And though I received an apricot pit in the face, she was hated by her own people and isolated in her own town.

Munevver laughed when I told her what the AFS told me not to do while in Turkey. Their instructions to us were as follows: don't cross your legs because this is unwomanly in Turkish culture, and don't show the bottoms of your feet because it is considered rude. How funny that these two obscure rules of decorum were the only ones that they chose to tell us. How strange that they failed to mention that talking above a whisper in the streets was outlawed for women, or that we would probably not leave the house for much more than the daily shopping.

I learned what was right and wrong by default. When I wore even my longest pair of shorts, gravel was tossed in my direction, so I never wore those shorts again. When I looked into people's eyes, they looked away, embarrassed, and said something in Turkish about me. So I stopped looking into people's eyes. When boys tried to grab my breasts because they thought my western clothing and bare skin made me cheap, I took swings at them with my giant hair brush. One day Munevver and I had been dancing and singing all morning to her favorite Turkish rock singer, Suat Suna. We went out to get ice cream, and I continued to sing as we left the building and entered the street. I still remember the look of horror on her face when she turned to me and said that we couldn't sing, dance, or talk loudly on the streets. She looked down and continued demurely onward.

* * *

I expected to be different in Turkey. I expected the jeering looks and the disapproving words. It is only natural to feel unaccepted in a culture that is so different from your own. But never, until I met Munevver, did I even get a glimpse of the problems of being different and unaccepted in your own culture.

My feelings go back and forth between anger and understanding, confusion and clarity. I haven't had enough time to reflect on my experience in Turkey to truly know how I feel about the culture and the people. But I have come to a sort of resolution. Munevver refused the coverings and the religion of her countrymen and women, but did so in a respectful way. It is this passive resistance and silent strength that I respect so highly. Like Munevver, I have come to embrace the differences of the Turkish people. Though I will never understand or adopt them, I have accepted them.

* * *

On the last day that I was in Nevsehir, one of my friends from the hotel handed me a package and told me not to open it until I had gotten onto the plane. After I said goodbye to my friends and family and boarded the plane, I opened up the small present and found a beaded head scarf. I wrapped it around my head so that only my eyes peeked out, and I went home.