

Aging is simply what you make of it

By Jo McCormick

Park Ridge Resident

I just must relate some of the really special things that happened during our adult foster care experience. I say “our” because our family was also the client’s family.

Our children and my husband interacted with our “boarders” at some point daily. The lone “board and roomer” in the middle apartment of the Village Inn was Ira Sparks.

He loved to visit. When he was finished with the space, our second son Kyle occupied it. It was his “man cave.” I did not take meals to him—he was totally responsible to show up at our table—or fend for himself.

One of the ladies was having a craving. She wanted pie-plant. I know nothing of pie-plant, had never heard of it. I finally had to swallow my pride and fess up I didn’t know what she was asking for. I have never forgotten though—rhubarb.

Easy enough to get—my mother-in-law had a huge bed. I pulled some for Lulu, she cleaned and prepared it to cook her some sauce. The large apartment where the women were housed did have a kitchen. However, I cooked their meals in my kitchen. On this day though, I got her a pan and sugar and watched her cook her own “pie plant” in “her” kitchen.

Psalm 71:18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all to come.

Another lady, another incident with the kitchen in the foster care apartment. I had gone down to assist this lady, Minnie, with her bath. I could smell the oven was on. I asked her what she was cooking. “Dirt,” she answered. Whoa! She explained, “Well, I always bake the dirt I start seeds in.” This lady had a green thumb you wouldn’t believe, always out scratching up a place to plant her seeds. She saved seeds from fresh fruit provided for our boarders and also from established plantings out in the yard. I always thought she could plant a stick and get a tree.

Many years later her plantings showed up in some mighty strange places around the outside of the building. I know I hadn’t moved or planted anything in that spot...

Deuteronomy 28:12 The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and bless all the work of your hands.

This same lady was very opinionated and really spoke her mind. She was at the time of this incident living in the west apartment with no “apartment mates.” Two of our clients had digressed in mental capacity so could no longer remain with us and had moved to Golden Ours and two had returned to their homes after brief stays to recuperate from physical problems.

We had mountain oysters for dinner one day at our end of the building, so I built her dinner with the same. I delivered her tray of food to her, set her meal out on her dining room table and as usual told her I’d be back for the dishes.

When I returned she was raving about the delicious eggplant. We did have eggplant

occasionally but I knew I had not prepared any on that day. I was racking my brain for a reply when a light came on in my head— “eggplant” was actually mountain oysters (bull fries) in this instance. Not knowing how squeamish she might be about bull fries I just replied, “Oh yeah, I tried a different recipe for preparing the eggplant.”

Sorry, Lord, but I never did tell her otherwise. She had, at times, a troublesome stomach and I surely did not want to cause an up-chuck.

Spending so many years in the presence of the aging population has taught me that “getting old” can be what you make of it. I feel so blessed now to be able to be in the presence of my “aging population.”

Some days may bring sadness and concern for some fellow “oldster,” but I will continue to be one of them as long as my ordainer sees fit.

God willing...see you soon, Jo