

"Oh where is the birdseed of yesteryear?"--(adapted)

"... the birds depart, the groves decay... song passes not away." --Sir William Watson

# ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

NOTE! ↓

The first page of the first issue of The Empty Nest News Letter:

I've put on a little weight...

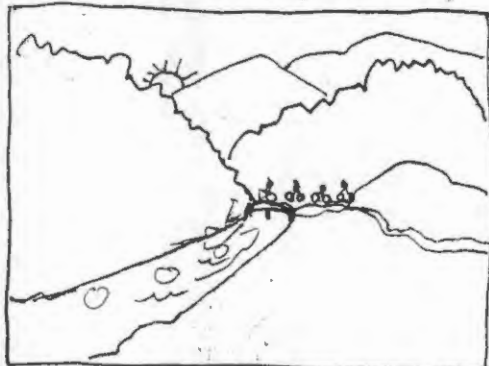


THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER

VOL I NO I Sept 18 1982 ← note date!  
"Something to offend everybody."

## ELLIE VANISHES INTO EAST

NO WORD AS YET



LAST SIGHT OF J.F. JACKSON AS A BDUCTORS BELIEVED TO BE PREPPIES RIDE INTO THE SUNRISE. - A PHOTO

Spfld. IL - Ms. J.D. Jackson of 816 N. 5th St, Spfld 62702, 1-217-528-0943 (call collect) says bravely that she has not started on tranquilizers yet but that her hand has darted towards the bottle several times. Ms. J.D.J. & Ms. Mimi Baldwin, on Sept. 10, left J.E. Jackson at The Lodge, Dartmouth College, along with the entire contents of her room from 816 N. Fifth. The dormitory, a former motel, has private baths & toilets, and provides a feet 8 inches of closet space for the two occupants of each room. It is to be hoped that the other occupant of Suite 76: Caroline, has come to college with no clothes.

### REWARD OFFERED

Jacqueline Jacqueline  
Elspeth Elspeth  
(Commonly known as Els)  
Last seen pedally madly  
Into the N.H. hills.  
(And quite of her own  
accord: 40 shillings  
\*\*\*\*\*REWARD\*\*\*\*\*

PERSONAL!

J.E. PHONE HOME!

--SQUEAKY; BEARY; MONSTER MONKEY

### GODMOTHER HONORED

Philadelphia: The Godmother of Damaris Lee Jackson (correction; namesake); Lee Miller Lowenstein was installed last week as Dean of Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, at its 159th opening exercises. Jefferson is the 5th largest Med School in the USA. Dr. Lowenstein is the first woman dean in the history of the U.S. Said Dean Lowenstein, "When I learned I was to give a speech this afternoon, I asked around about what other deans had said at previous convocations. All the bad speeches were vividly remembered. My aim today then is to give you a highly forgettable speech."

### G.P. JACKSON TO RETIRE

Reno: Gilman P. Jackson does not plan to return to fulltime work at the desk of the Comstock Hotel when her maternity leave is up Oct. 2, but to continue to stay home & nurse the baby, Cressida Ingrid Grey, born July 29 at 9:12. "It's a full time job," says Ms. Jackson. "I haven't made it to the grocery store in two weeks." When asked what the Comstock would do, to lose its Asst Manager, its Accts Receivable (Mr. Broten's job), Alice at the Desk who had 5 feet of gut removed last week, and now Ms. Jackson, the latter replied, "That's their worry."

### PAULETTE MOVES TO MEMPHIS ~ Even Cowbirds Leave Nest

Spfld: Paulette Regan, of 816 N. 5th, plans to move back to Memphis within a week. The reason for her move is lack of job & lack of men. "There are plenty of jobs & plenty of men," Says Paulette, "but none just right for me." She will be missed.



### CRESSIDA BROTEN TIPS SCALES

Reno: C.L.G. Broten, delivered by her father on July 29, & weighing in at 7 lbs even, has doubled her birth weight in less than two months! Now weighing slightly more than the family cat & slightly less than maybe (family Willie.) "I owe it all to my angel mother," says Cressida.

### MAYBE STANDS BY

Reno: Maybe Broten, Collie, has had an upgrading in diet recently. For some time he has had the excellent leftovers of Harry, next door (steak, chicken, meat loaf.) But since July 29 he has been enjoying supplemental milk, left over by Cressida Broten. "It seems a shame to let it go to waste," says Maybe. Ms. Jackson mother of Cressida Broten, earlier offered the surplus to both local hospitals who rejected it.

FLASH: From N.H. A phone call was put through to Ms. J.D. Jackson Sept. 17 but she was not home to receive it, nor did she find the note before the lead article was set.

The editor thanks you for your congratulatory cards, letters, emails, telegrams, and bunches of flowers in appreciation for 25 uninterrupted years of reporting on family and friends, first rate (sometimes even taste-ful) jokes, can-you-caption-this-picture-of-Uncle-Lewie contests, fascinating articles with the all the juicy details, poems, (some) politics, limericks, tributes, and blatant advertising about her excellent publications.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER

It was begun fall of 1982, the main purpose to give everyone Elle's new address, but because there was other news to report, it somehow assumed newspaper form. The first issue was three 8x11 pages, and mailed to 16 recipients. (Currently: 150 copies, 6 pp. legal size format, with extra pages for special issues.) There were thirteen issues that first year, for when the empty nest at 816 got lonesome, I'd hunker down and produce another issue, cracking up at my own wit. Lately, because life is complicated and ENNL has grown out of hand, I've managed only two issues a year. This often hasn't been enough, with weddings, graduations, births, accomplishments, deaths, and specialized news needing to be reported fully. It usually takes me three uninterrupted days to produce an issue, longer with interruptions, longer yet to get it sent out--sometimes, alas, not getting it to everybody on the list.

The newsletter was totally handwritten for years; I came to word processing late. It also came to have a standard masthead: a bird, sometimes with other birds, commenting on or illustrating the main topic. Then some lines of poetry featuring birds, also bearing on the subject matter. This followed by the headline, and a subhead giving a bit more detail on what was to come. Sometimes the front page consisted of eleven or twelve headlines, directing the reader to the page where that topic would be reported. And Shoe's Uncle Cosmo has always been my hero. Note his desk!

There's never been a charge for ENNL. Publication was sporadic and I could never guarantee there'd be another issue, so didn't offer subscriptions. The bookkeeping would have been horrendous, and I'd have suffered guilt about not getting out an edition. But mainly, I've wanted you to have it, whether you want it or not, whether you read it or not. So you've not had the option which charging for it would have given. Only one person has ever asked to be removed from the list, while many, many more have asked to be added. Today Elle suggested I put all back issues on disk--so I may do that, a job my friend Mitch (featured elsewhere in this issue) says is possible. Would such a disk interest you? I have had special issues on Mother, on Dad, on Peter, on Audrey Moore, on Lee Lowenstein; I've never produced the one I wanted on Chad and Eva--was hoping for stories from many of you. I've featured a lot of you over the years--Lew, Megan, Karl, McPhillips kids, Kestrel, etc. and major news stories on the barn, moving Chez Nous, etc. Looking at back issues, I'm seeing a lot of interesting stuff. I don't recall that I've ever had a direct Letter-to-the-Editor though some of you have mentioned the newsletter in notes or by phone, and many of you have sent in clippings or news items. Also, if I write something someone doesn't like, or omit important news, I hear about it!

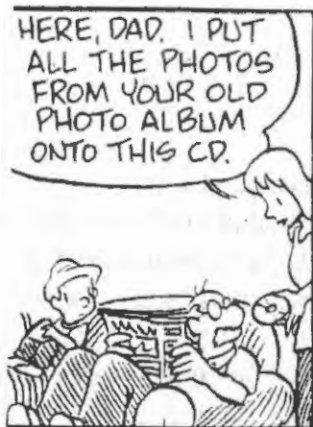


### BIG BOOK'S AMOVERING!

The ark's off Arafat, and on its way to publication. At the moment, we're planning The Round Barn to come out in three volumes (with photos, diagrams, etc.), encompassing the nine "books" of its original format. All the stories from Stories from the Round Barn and More Stories will be returned to their former positions. Volume One should be ready in a year, and will have the introductory matter; Barn and Silo; Milk House; and Milk Routes. Volume Two will have The Big House, Farm Work, and Chez Nous. The last volume will be Neighbors, Town, and Township; and State, Nation and World. Also appendices, including an annotated catalogue of the books in Dad, Trever, Esther, and Eloise's one room schoolhouse. (I haven't bitten off much, have I!) The time frame is 1906-1971, with some casting behind and ahead. The character-count is phenomenal, though Gram and Gramp, Vera and Ronald, Trever, Esther, Eloise, Jackie, and Craig have major roles.

How is this happening? Northwestern was unable to do the big work, although Reg Gibbons, my unparalleled editor, is continuing as head editor/advisor. The next in command is Jeremy Schmidt, already hard at work. Mitch Hopper is technical editor. I expect assistant editors in Wendy Baylor and Gillian Jackson, perhaps Elle DeBow will fit the final manuscript's format for publication as she did More Stories. And the book will be published under the Beloit College Press imprint. (I tried various other university presses, but the work was too long. It would have taken extensive cutting and rewriting. I'm not getting younger, and this book has been in the works since I was 15. Therefore I'm using the farm money inheritance to bring out this work in toto, an appropriate memorial for the round barn--and Beloit, knowing the book's quality, has agreed to sponsor it.) Here is how you could help: Many of you have said you want the book. I'd like to get you on an "interested" list--no obligation--which will give us an idea of how many of the first volume to print. We're thinking price in the vicinity of \$35. You can write me at 816 N. Fifth, Springfield, IL 62702, or email, jjack1@uis.edu. Or phone, 217-544-2916.





### FARM PHOTO ARCHIVE--TA DA!-- FINISHED!

**Spfd.** Not that we won't find more pictures that ought to have gone into it, but as of now the project is closed and complete. It's taken me and Mitch Hopper two years of work, and my going through many boxes and files. Actually, I began many years ago putting photos as I found them into alphabetized categories. This recent project started in order to have pictures digitalized and ready for the Big Book, but the project mushroomed and now contains much beyond the boundaries of that work. The total is 7200 pictures (some duplicates): photographs, slides, and stereoptican slides, organized so that you can find them, view them, and with the DVDs, pull up any picture to high resolution and print it, suitable for framing. Their quality ranges from splendid to not-so-hot. Mitch wore out three scanners, besides inventing a special one for stereoptican slides, which slides professional restorers had long given up on. There are ancestor files of the Dougan branch, Trever branch, and Wardner branch. These are identified by grids, for it's no use to see a bunch of ancestors if you don't know who they are. Almost all the slides also have identification grids, by year, and the stereo slides. The many photographs are organized by categories (I did not grid the pigs). Is this something you want? Maybe. I have already sent the three-disk set to sibs and some other family members. The sets, handsomely packaged and with directions on how to find the photos, are available from Custom Video Systems (Mitch). I cannot praise Mitch enough: for his skill--he's a genius at what he does. For his industry; his attention to detail; his thoughtfulness; his patience; but also his persistent prodding (the way braces move teeth, the orthodontist keeps ratcheting them up); his giving me "preferred client" rates; his sense of humor. He is FUN to work with, and there is more to be done. Work you already know about is the Farm movies, also available from Custom Videos in two, or four (the unexpurgated version, read Craig's trains and zoos) DVD sets. Get in touch with me, and I'll relay any orders, or answer any questions. Write Jackie Jackson, 816 N. Fifth, Spfld IL, 62702. Call 217-544-2916. email: jjackI@uis.edu.



### ONE OF JACKIE'S DISCIPLES

With interest I read "The write stuff" [Amy Karhliker, Nov. 30]. I know Carol Manley personally and have had the pleasure of hearing many of her stories as they were being written — one by one. We are all very proud of her. I was fortunate to hear some of the "welfare stories" in a class we shared at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

That class, called "Writing from Family Materials," was developed as a follow-up to the course mentioned in the *Illinois Times* article. It was in that class, just as tough and demanding as its predecessor, that the instructor, Jacqueline Jackson, helped me find my voice. It was then that I joined the ranks of the Jackie disciples — and I haven't stopped writing yet!

J. Mitch Hopper  
Rochester

Obviously a  
mutual admiration  
society!



**Barbara Dougan.** Craig lost his cherished wife to cancer, in December. Rather than print the obituary, or the loving eulogy by her son David--both worthy--I'm giving here an essay she wrote at her grandson Carson's request, when he was in fourth grade. An inspired school assignment, I think. Now, it gives us Barbara in her own words.

I was born in Phoenix, Arizona. In 1943 I lived in Miami, Arizona, and attended the 4th grade. To go to Phoenix from Miami we took the bus and had to go around the Superior Mountains. it was a very steep, winding road. I always got car sick and the bus driver would stop the bus and let me get out so I could throw up. In those days the buses did not have bathrooms. We made the trip often because that is where my grandmother lived. I was never very well-liked by the other passengers!

Miami was adjacent to a town named Globe and they were both big copper mining towns. The towns were friendly rivals. Many mines have closed now but the Sleeping Beauty mine in Globe is still operating and produces turquoise that is used in jewelry. This turquoise is very much in demand because it is a brilliant, clear blue. I wear a lot of southwestern silver jewelry because it represents the state I was born in and I have several pieces from the Sleeping Beauty mine. One of the things I liked was at night when the miners poured what is called slag down the mountain, it looked like a beautiful art show. All the children and parents would gather outside to watch it.

When I was in the 4th grade most of my classmates were children with parents from Mexico or the children of the miners. I lived with my aunt and uncle and he was in the gaming profession. The local sheriff wanted gambling in town so when the miners got paid they would have something to do. I was a little different from the other children because my family were not miners and were not from Mexico. When I moved from Miami to Nevada I spoke with an accent like the Mexican children.

We were in World War II during this time and we had to use ration stamps for things like sugar, butter, meat, and gasoline. We were given ration books by the government so we could send supplies to our men and women in the service. We did not suffer much because we always had extra ration stamps because a lot of people paid my uncle in stamps instead of money for their gambling debts. I was active in going around with my classmates gathering rubber and scrap metal for the war drive. We bought war savings stamps and pasted them into books to help the war effort. My two uncles and my aunt served in the military during the war. We had posters in our windows saying we had loved ones in the war. We were fighting the Germans and Japanese. My maiden name is Myers, a German name. One day a silly boy called me a "kraut". He was calling me a German instead of an American but I thought he was calling me "sauer kraut" like the food.

My sister and I walked to school. All of the children in our neighborhood would gather in the morning and walk to school together and we would walk home together. There were about ten of us. One day a few of the miners' children were up on the mountain and started throwing rocks. All ten of us gathered up rocks and started throwing at them and they ran away. We were never bothered again. I wore either cowboy boots or Mexican huraches. I wore the cowboy boots to climb the mountains or to go rodeos.

My favorite time in fourth grade was after lunch. That was storybook time. Our teacher had long hair and wore flowing skirts. I thought she was beautiful. She would read from different books and I'd always imagine I was doing whatever the characters in the books were doing. Sometimes I'd imagine so much that the teacher would have to tell me to quit daydreaming. I think this is why I like to read so much. My most embarrassing time in school was when my aunt came to pick me up to go to the doctor's. She was a very bad driver. She was trying to back up and ran into the motorcycle of a cop. He was about three car spaces behind her. He fell off of the motorcycle and all the kids laughed. He wasn't hurt and he didn't give her a ticket but he wasn't very happy with her.

In those days we didn't have television and had only one movie house. My aunt loved movies so I got to go to the movies whenever the movie changed. I still love to watch movies. We ate a lot of Mexican food. Every Friday one of the Mexican women in our neighborhood would make fresh, hot tamales and deliver them to her customers in big galvanized buckets. The buckets held the heat in and the aroma would make our mouths water even before she got to our door. There is a term called comfort food. That means eating certain kinds of food that make you feel better when you are sad or depressed. My comfort food remains Mexican food. It takes me back to the time I was growing up.

I liked living in Miami and going to the school I did. I liked my teachers and my classmates. I am glad that I got to know people from other cultures and backgrounds.

### **Mersky, Pollyann**

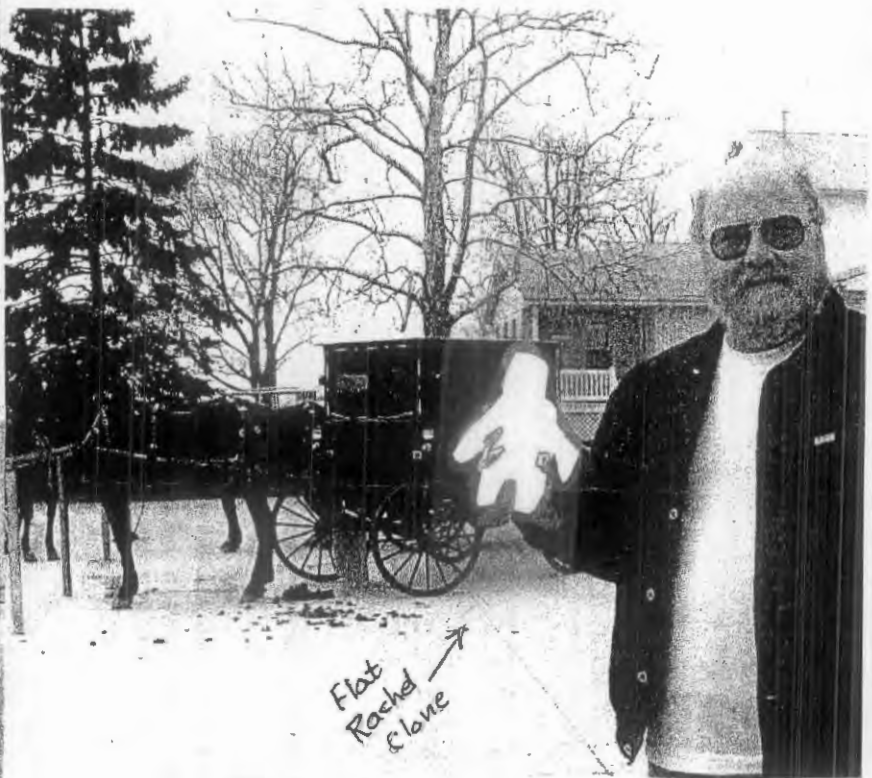


Mersky, Pollyann of Mpls. Born Jan. 23, 1925 in Mason City, IA; passed away while on vacation in CA on Jan. 27, 2007. She was preceded in death by husband, Sam and brother, Charles Kirk. She will be remembered for her busy and active life as a 50 year member of Plymouth Church and Woman's Club. Polly & Sam volunteered with Intergenerational Program at Erickson School and participated in many athletic activities. She is survived by children, Kirk Mahle of Cannon Falls, Chrisann (Harry) Albaugh of CA, Tina Mahle of OK, Josephine (Dale) Freitag of TX; stepchildren, Larry Mersky of CA, Joan Campbell of Shoreview and Robert Mersky of Mpls; grandchildren, Cyndyann (Blair)

Douglas, Zack Albaugh (Katie Ochs), Christina and Alicia Freitag, Robin and Thomas Mahle, Jonathan Bogle; step-grandchildren, Todd, Tom and Brad Campbell, Paul and Marc Mersky; 5 great-grandchildren; sisters, Dorothy (Bill) Lueken and Patricia Bastian and many nieces and nephews.

Our beloved cousin Polly Mersky died unexpectedly in January. It's a sore loss. Our family has been in good touch with her all our lives, and with Sam after their marriage. (He always entered the Empty Nest contests!) I owe my college major to Polly --I visited her ninth grade Latin class in Mason City, when I was ten, and was fascinated with the language. This obit doesn't tell what Polly was like--so vivacious, full of fun, caring. Her wonderful singing voice, her and Sam's devotion to each other. Jo Dougan Schmidt and I went to Mpls for the funeral, stayed with Jerry and Debby Dougan, where on earlier visits Polly had always joined us, or we'd gone to her and Sam's. Demi Jackson, also a good friend of Polly's, joined us there. After the funeral, we much enjoyed getting to know Polly's kids and grandkids.





**Delavan WI** The letter read, "Dear Grandma Jackie, My first grade class read Flat Stanley and learned about his many adventures. I am now sending 'my flattened self' to you for an exciting adventure! Please show me around your town and send me back with a note and maybe some pictures of our adventures. Have fun with my friend. Love, Rachel." (There was also a teacher-letter, and a cookie-cutter figure about 8 inches high, construction paper.) Flat Rachel's first adventure was to the Old State Capital fence where Rachel had caught her head when she was four—pictures of that in a previous Empty Nest. Flat Rachel could put her head through with ease. Next she went with Mitch Hopper to Cozumel, Mexico, where she descended underwater, in a plastic bag, to 100 feet and saw fish, sea turtles, and swam through coral caves. Back in Spfld, she had the adventure of being cloned ("It didn't hurt a bit!") and "Reddy" rode a motorcycle into Amish horse-and-buggy country with Mitch, for cheese. "Yellow Fellow," with Pat Martin, had the dubious adventure of Pat's dog rolling in deer scat and having to be shampooed. "Blackie," with Lola Lucas, had more doggie adventures. Mitch made a small movie of diving in Cozumel, which he sent to the first grade. Rachel says they had a big map and pegged in where everybody's flattened selves had gone. Flat Rachel had the most (and I bet most varied) adventures, though one other flattie went to Mexico. Grandma has plans to make Flat Rachel into a travel bug for geocaching; then she will travel all over the world!

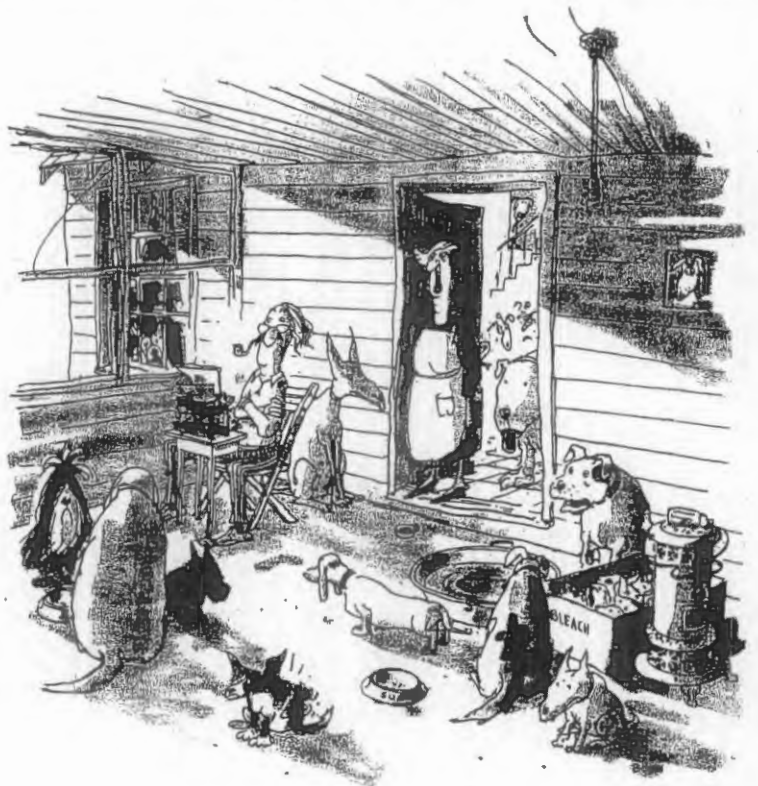
From a Wilson, Wyoming columnist:  
(picture of Kestrel on p. 6)

... we had a plush suburban home at our disposal in Reno, Nev., an ideal rest stop along the route. "The Biggest Little City in the World" is a room – what town out West isn't? – with development fungus creeping up surrounding hillsides. This reates a topsy-turvy sociological arrangement in which the wealthy hunker down on the flats and the working class is perched above them, taking in the view. Or, to put it another way, keeping an eye out.

We spent a couple of nights here with Wendy and Jeremy Schmidt, Wilsonites who have temporarily relocated to Reno, where their teenage daughter Kestrel attends, I believe, The School for the Absurdly Articulate and Charming. The evening's entertainment would be Kestrel's ice skating exhibition downtown. Warming up in the living room, Kestrel showed we neophytes the difference between the toe loop, axel and lutz. Her friend Rachel, a gymnast, further demonstrated how one earns to land both feet on a narrow balance beam while windmilling backward. These kids today.

Years ago, by the way, Jeremy wrote an excellent saga about his and Wendy's circumnavigation of the Himalayas. This book deserves a position upon the first tier of the pre-narcissistic adventure

Never Clear Here,  
a phrase coined by a  
Tibetan.



"Write about dogs!"





PHOTO BY DAVID SWIFT  
Kestrel Schmidt of Wilson exhibits her ice skating



## NEWS BYTES



**Aptos, CA** Andy Ryan, 13, wrote a winning essay and aced an interview, on why he should be the one chosen from his school for a trip to Kawakami (near Tokyo). He's leaving May 13; we expect a report for our next ENNL. He and the others going from the area have been raising fare money with spaghetti dinners and pancake breakfasts.

**Stateline, NV:** The Christmas ski trip of the Ryan boys was postponed till Easter holidays. There was still snow (though not good all winter) and the resort stayed open that last weekend. All three skied; Andy fell and had five stitches--had the honor of being carried off the slopes by a rescue team, who kept asking him who was the president of the United States to be sure he didn't have a concussion.

**Denver:** Our glorious singer, Ben Yde, is graduating from the music conservatory at Denver University. He'll stay on at Denver a year, to earn a business degree.

**Reno and Stateline, NV:** It's been a great time of party weekends up

at Gillian and Eddy's, for Kestrel Schmidt can figure skate in Stateline, there's no rink in Reno, and her folks can ski. She, Wendy, and Jeremy have been up the mountain frequently. Kestrel met her Ryan cousins and skied with them, Easter weekend. Also, the Schmidt family reports that after some growing pains and the ousting of some bad administrative apples, the new school for the gifted in Reno is going very well, and they are happy with it.

**Winnetka:** Megan Schmidt is graduating from New Trier this month, and plans on SIU-Carbondale in the fall.

**Delavan, WI:** Elle DeBow's divorce was finalized April 17. She's redone her dining room, replacing dreary wallpaper with a soft olive paint, and installing the corner cupboard, table, and chairs from 816 N. Fifth, which Jackie got from the Ron Dougans and Chez Nous when the Jacksons moved to Rockford in 1968. The cupboard has languished in a pantry at 816 for 35 years, for there is no corner in the downstairs without a window, radiator, or pipe. Now it has an elegant new home, close to the huge Croft glass-door cupboard which managed invisibility in the basement of Chez Nous from 1938 till Jackie discovered it in 1998. (See an earlier Empty Nest for how that could have been!)

**Cleveland:** Keep an eye on Kyle McPhillips, now 12, on the Internet--just look up her name and follow how she's doing. You may already know she's one of the top young tennis stars in the country.

**Madison, WI:** Jo and Karl Schmidt have become great-grandparents! Kylah Schmidt, daughter of Tom, is the mother of Russell Balcer: I've seen a photo and the baby is bewitching.

**California:** Megan Ryan went on a 20 mile hike with the boy scouts, from the top of China Grade, through the bowl of Big Basin State Park, and then down to the sea. Camped out two nights. She reports she was stumbling and footsore by the end, as indeed were a number of the scouts.

**Philadelphia:** Matthew Schmidt is graduating from the Wharton School of Business with an MBA.

**Boulder:** Jennie and Aaron Soloman are settling in this beautiful town.

**Aptos:** Sad news, a bobcat got the Ryans' pet chicken, Peeps. Megan says the yard now lacks a presence, which they all had enjoyed. I well understand how a loved chicken prowling around all day in search of bugs, and kicking up dust, can be an endearing presence. I am grieving Peeps, though I never knew her.

**Italy:** This country will soon see Jo Schmidt again. She's with Grand Circle Tours, "Heart of Tuscany," plans to study Ravenna and Assisi in the detail she hasn't been able in the past, when she was in her track shoes.

**Delavan:** Elle DeBow has received her gohonzon. This makes her a Nichiren Buddhist.

**Idaho:** Tom Schmidt has finished his student teaching and is getting a Masters in Elementary Education this spring. He plans to be a full time teacher come fall.

**Prague:** Pat and Lew Dalvit, Jackie Guthrie and Gerry Cloud spent ten days in Prague in March. Lew relates, "When I conducted in Stuttgart many years ago, we went to the ballet, Eugene Onegan, choreographed by Cranko. It was one of those rare instances when the artistic takes over and goes right through your shield. It was spectacular! In Prague, we discovered Eugene Onegan was playing, the same choreography! I said we all must go! It's still a masterpiece, after all these years; the heart-stopping choreography has held up. It was the thrill of the trip." Other highlights: The Moldau River, bridges, castles, Dvorak's house, the Zodiac clock with everybody coming in and out and ringing bells, the museum of religious objects from the 1400s, Kafka's house, the city itself, where Mozart finished and conducted Don Giovanni, the art deco, and a different kind of beer every night.

There are things that should be in this issue that aren't. Lew Dalvit received an honor from Belhaven College, in Mississippi, pix and story next time. We've lost a treasured friend, Hap Hornbostel, and he needs a special page: for his many years of strong friendship, all he's done for myself and my books, all he's done for his community. John Trever of Dead Sea Scrolls fame has died; we need a notice of his life and work. And more is missing. So even though this is the 25th Anniversary Issue (bells and whistles!) there will be a Volume XXVI, No. 1, next fall. Maybe even with a Letter to the Editor! JJ



"O.K., this time with a little less feeling."