

# Memory Bank Deposits

It is now just a few days after Christmas, a big Christmas. A shorter holiday time and so much busier than any I can ever remember. A few nights ago as we prepared the seating for everybody and made sure we had enough food for thirty people I was just amazed at how our lives have evolved over the course

of the years. This day started out with two very young people, never dreaming that we would grow into a small family army of thirty. That revelation would have been too intimidating for two young marrieds. It seems it happened in such a short time but actually it took fifty-seven years to reach this enor-

mity. But where in the world did the years go and how did they go so fast?

Inside I feel as if I am the same as I was when it was just the two of us but outside, I feel as if I am crumbling and obsolete. Not too many years ago I put up five big Christmas trees, most with home-made decorations, adorned four mantels, put up outside adornments, and our house looked like a

department store trimmed for the holidays. This year, I forgot to even take down my Thanksgiving wreath on the front door but thank goodness I also forgot to turn on the outside lights.

As I looked at the faces of thirteen offspring, I saw glimpses of their daddies and mothers faces. The faces that were so young, readying for Santa not so many years ago. Then I remember at what age

my children are, and I feel as if I am in an alternate universe because this just cannot be true. They were riding bikes, sailing down the road on skateboards, rocking baby dolls and climbing onto my lap just yesterday!

I always become melancholy this time of year because for some reason I judge my age by Christmas times. Every year I think, "Well I am one more Christmas year older."

Please don't get me wrong, I love this time in my life and cherish all of the memories embedded into my memory bank. I do however wish it was possible to maybe go back in time just for a minute or two and have my little boys and little girl climb onto my lap and say, "Listen Mama, I think I hear Santa Claus."

But on a happier note, let's look forward to those grands, great grands and even great

great grands and let's pass on the remembrances of years passed and let's continue to celebrate the season and continue to deposit all the new memories into our memory reservoirs and stockpiles.

This is a fruit salad that my mother used to make at Christmas, and I made it this year. It is good with left over ham or even for dessert.

**PINK JELL-O SALAD**  
1 (16 oz) package of cottage cheese  
1 (3 oz package of strawberry jello  
1 (8 oz) can of drained pineapple  
8 ounces of cool whip  
Sprinkle the dry jello over the cottage cheese and stir. Add drained pineapple and cool whip and mix well. Refrigerate. The longer it sits in the refrigerator, the better it tastes.

*Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.*



Peggy's Take

# The enchantment of gardens and gates

My yard is now a better garden, in the Medieval sense of the word. A new custom-designed entry gate has created a special feeling of being set apart from the outside. As it should.

It can be confusing, what we call our plots of land. Landscape? Garden or its shortened slang "yard" version? No matter, if you can relate to where it all started.

The hortus conclusus or "enclosed garden" practice actually began well over six thousand years ago, when simple people started erecting crude walls, fences, and dense hedges to protect their food and animals from roaming animals and wandering humans.

In colder climates large gardens with tall stone walls were and are still used as shelters against wind and frost; as far north as Scotland I have seen healthy fig trees producing heavily, espaliered against warm south-facing stone walls.

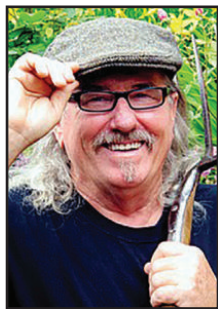
Speaking of figs, the florific spaces the ancient Persians called pairidaeza were translated by Greeks as paradise, to describe what we now call the Garden of Eden.

Anyway, the word "garden" comes from the proto-Indo-European word "ghor-dos" meaning a guarded or enclosed area, which gave rise to English-speakers' modern words including court, courtyard, orchard, and even the hort in horticulture.

I also noticed outside a

public garden in Japan that the symbol for the garden was a closed square.

The important take-away is the concept of it being a confined space.



FELDER RUSHING

In a 1755 dictionary, Dr. Samuel Johnson defined a garden as "a piece of ground, enclosed, and cultivated with extraordinary care, planted with herbs, fruit or food, or laid out for pleasure."

So, the origins of the word garden refers to a special, set-aside space for growing stuff. My way of thinking is, if you don't feel safe and secure, it ain't a garden - just an open field of plants and accessories.

Until recently, because free-roaming animals were a thing, most of us had fences. You can still see great examples in Colonial Williamsburg, or our own governor's mansion, and most cemeteries. And when I was a kid, there were still lots of lesser fences along the main streets, usually picket, hairpin woven wire, and later chain link. Of course, as with so many other social signals, the more decorative the fence, the more prestige it conveyed.

Though some still stand, during the two World Wars many once-fashionable Victorian-era iron fences were pulled up and melted down into war materiel. After that, largely because of the stylistic influence of wide-open suburbia and its wall-to-wall lawns, fences fell out of favor; older ones were even-



Felder's own garden gate, metal, artsy and real.

tually removed, new ones never put up. As we retreated into air-conditioned dens and private back yards, they disappeared (with spacious front porches).

We got away from the idea of front gardens.

It's swinging back into style though, especially in newer upscale home developments. Doesn't have to be a real barrier, just the hint of security, privacy, and ownership. Even a partial fence, a stand-alone gate in the hedge, an arbor delineating the front or side yard from the more private back, can be highly symbolic.

And it begs as an obvious place to plant small shrubs and vines; can't have a climbing rose without an ar-

bor.

Over the years I've had all kinds. Wooden split rail, chain link, loopy wire hairpin from my great-grandmother's long-gone garden, "wattle" made from woven crape myrtle stems, even upright sheets of silvery corrugated roofing tin cut with a wavy top. And tightly pruned hedges, of course.

I now use curvy, vine-like metal rods and one-of-a-kind handmade gates. Makes the garden look artsy. Makes it a real garden.

*Felder Rushing is a Mississippi author, columnist, and host of the "Gestalt Gardener" on MPB Think Radio. Email gardening questions to rushingfelder@yahoo.com.*

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