

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



From A Dog To A Gentleman

I read a story once about a man who was walking his dog through a park. The man was walking along the same path that he always walked his canine companion, down a grassy path to the pond's edge, but this time he noticed something near a tree and stepped over to see what it was.

Clearing leaves and debris away, the man found a weathered concrete block of stone with engraving worn but still readable. It read: BUDDIE 1928 - 1941 — Born a dog. Died a gentleman.

The man who found the stone was so touched by the grave marker that he did some research into the matter, and the story goes that a beloved pet was laid to rest there in a park that used to be a Boy Scout Camp, where the dog and his master visited and enjoyed quite often. Such a sweet gesture and a monument of love between humankind and animalkind.

No matter what some people think or say, if you open your heart to be loved by a pet and to let yourself in turn give love, you will not regret that bond. No amount of love shared is ever wasted. Some of my best and dearest friends have been animals.

Animals may not be able to speak our language, but they DO speak to us if we open up ourselves to listen to them. I truly believe that if you cannot love an animal, there is something missing or broken within you. All you have to do is look into their eyes, and you see a soul, you see a life just like your own.

With all that said, I need to tell you about a dog that was a dear friend of mine, and her name was Scout. She belonged to my brother and his family but a couple of weeks ago she left this world to be with Jesus. Yes, I do believe all dogs go to Heaven. God creates life, and breathes into each one, and life returns to Him. I have watched many video testimonies of near-death-experiences of people who saw their beloved pets in Heaven, before returning to their bodies here on Earth. I believe we will all see Scout again, that old red hound doggy, running through the grass, her tail waving high. She was a good dog, she really, really was. Losing a friend like that is really hard. She was with my brother's family for almost a decade.

As my brother and his family recover from the loss, they have adopted 2 new puppies! I can't wait to meet these new members of the family! There

is nothing like the joy of little puppy kisses to make you smile. Puppies are always joyful!

Now the training begins! Like with anything, the end result is directly related to the work you put into it. If you want a puppy to turn into a good dog, you must train them and not let them do everything they want to do. Same thing with raising children. If you want to have good adult children, you must start training them when they are very small to grow up and be respectful, obedient, quiet, clean, calm, smart, and hard-working too. No one likes unruly, loud, jumpy, rude dogs or children, no matter how cute they are. Remember that.

If you ever wonder how a couple will be as new parents, take a look at how their dog behaves. Maybe that should be a prerequisite before a marriage license is given out; have a couple raise a puppy for 6 months to see how that turns out. But I digress.

No matter if you have a dog, cat, hamster, gecko, rat, cow, or whatever animals you choose; our pets are our friends and also family members. All are born mere animals, but they die loved, cherished, relied on, adopted, adored, friended, found, compassionate, examples, healers, heroes, gentlemen, and sometimes showing more humankind than people. Thank you Buddie. Goodnight Scout. Rest easy comrades. Until we meet again.

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

First world problems

According to the CDC, there are 2 billion people worldwide who don't have access to basic sanitation.

Furthermore, according to the world health organization, "About 3 billion people worldwide lack adequate facilities to safely wash their hands at home. The regional disparities are stark: in sub-Saharan Africa, 75% of the population (767 million people) lacked basic handwashing facilities, followed by Central and Southern Asia at 42% (807 million people), and Northern Africa and Western Asia at 23% (116 million people)."

Additionally, "Globally, more than 785 million people did not have access to at least basic water services* and more than 884 million people did not have safe water to drink."

You read that correctly. Nearly a billion people do not have safe water to drink. Ever. So, I suggest to the coward or cowards who submitted the anonymous letter to the mayor concerning our recent busted water main that perhaps they should be grateful that they live in the greatest society the world has ever known, full of wonders that were unimaginable even a generation ago, rather than asking for compensation for

the water they had to purchase when the pipe was broken.

You want some more fun facts? Well too bad, I'm giving them to you anyway.

"There are 1.7 billion cases of diarrhea among children younger than 5 years old.

An estimated 446,000 children younger than 5 years old die from diarrhea, mostly in developing countries. This amounts to 9% of the 5.8 million deaths of children younger than 5.

There are 3 million cases of cholera and an estimated 95,000 cholera deaths.

There are 11 million cases of typhoid fever and an estimated 129,000 typhoid fever deaths.

Worldwide, millions of people suffer from neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), many of which are water and/or hygiene-related, such as Guinea worm disease, Buruli ulcer, trachoma, and schistosomiasis. These diseases are most often found in places with unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, and insufficient hygiene practices.

Guinea worm disease (GWD) is an extremely painful parasitic infection spread through contaminated drinking water.

Trachoma is the world's

leading cause of preventable blindness and results from poor hygiene and sanitation. An estimated 41 million people suffer from active trachoma and nearly 10 million people are visually impaired or irreversibly blind as a result of trachoma."

All this is to say that from my vantage point, things don't look so bad here in the river city.

Was it inconvenient? Absolutely. Was it avoidable? Not as far as I can tell. Our aging infrastructure is one of the main catalysts behind the council's recent decision to sell our water and sewer utilities. We simply don't have the resources that Illinois American Water has to update our facilities.

Here's one more fun fact to end this rant. The mayor, council and public works folks all live in VG and were without water also. We don't have some magical piping system to our homes that allow us to continue to have the blessing of clean water when others don't, so please consider thanking our public works folks rather than attempting to shame them. Trust me. You'll feel better for it, and you won't look like an uninformed clown at the same time. Win. Win.

Public Health Officials Report 207,203 New COVID-19 Cases

Updated data analysis – almost 90% currently hospitalized with COVID-19 are

unvaccinated

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today reported 207,203 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Illinois, including an increase of 738 deaths since January 7, 2022.

Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 2,589,640 cases, including 29,099 deaths, in 102 counties in Illinois. The age of cases ranges from younger than one to older than 100 years. Since January 7, 2022, laboratories have reported 1,956,972 specimens for a total of 47,949,094. As

of last night, 7,320 individuals in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 1,148 patients were in the ICU and 657 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators. Updated data analysis shows almost 90% of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Illinois are unvaccinated.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 7 – 13, 2022 is 10.6%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 7 – 13, 2022 is 15.6%.

A total of 19,893,424 vaccines have been administered

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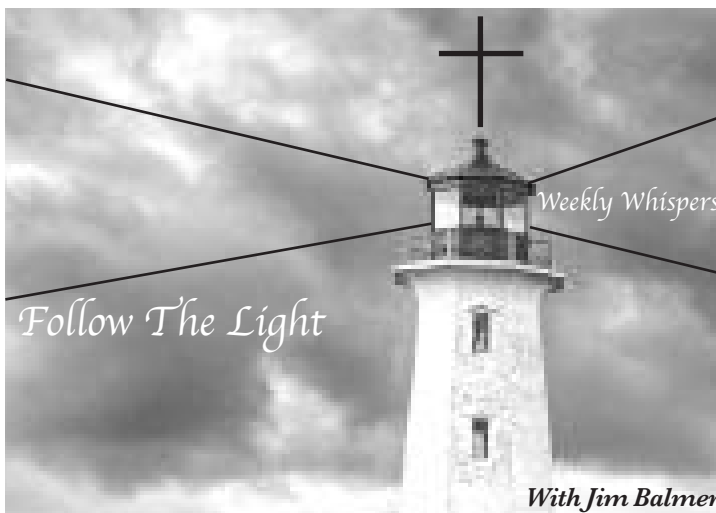
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Psalm 47

1 Psalm 47 For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

1 Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.

2 How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!

3 He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.

4 He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah

5 God has ascended amid

shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm [1] of praise.

8 God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.

9 The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings [2] of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

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e-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com
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