

The Joan Times

Newsletter #19
From Joan Huguenard
Valley Forge and Philadelphia, PA
July, 1991

No Moss

Just as I was certain God called me into the Office of Haitian Ministries in Norwich, CT last year, even so I was confident that I was now called to take time out from full time ministry to write my first two books. My friend Dyane is certain that some angel has been given a special assignment to see that I am always in the right place at the right time. I was in Nanjing, China when she needed me there, and now...

Though Dyane and her husband, Dave, had invited me to share their spectacular new home on Valley Forge Mountain while I write, and unexpected event placed a different framework around the arrangement; her mother had a stroke this Spring. This led Dyane and her brothers to contract my services to help Nana, fully recovered from the stroke, to sort through her accumulations in the family home. We agreed I would consult half time so that I could make progress with my writing.

Thus, on June 28th, in sweltering heat, my bulging little Mustang moved my own accumulations to Nana's home in Philadelphia, and for a week we made wonderful progress. Then came the S-T-O-R-M-S of Sunday July 7. The day started out magnificently. Nana and I had gone to the Valley Forge for a lovely Saturday party to celebrate Dyane and Dave's birthdays. Next day I took a grand morning walk around the mountain before church. Then, driving home, I got caught in lightning, hail, gales of wind and sheets of rain that reduced visibility to zero. Safely through all of that I attempted to get up the mountain, but felled trees blocked every roadway. I phoned Dyane to learn her mother had fallen, they were awaiting an ambulance. I agreed to meet them at the nearest hospital. Winding among roads blocked by more downed trees and power lines, I arrived to find the entire emergency room under water and closed down. Since tree surgeons had cleared a path for the ambulance, I did get back home where David and I waited to learn to which hospital Nana and Dyane had gone. Meantime we learned Dyane's daughter, less than six months pregnant, had gone into labor. By day's end we knew Nana's hip was broken and would require surgery, and her one pound eight ounce

great grand daughter was struggling for survival. At this writing both are doing well. Luckily phones kept working though the power was out for hours.

Philly

So I hold down the fort here in Girard Estates while my client recuperates. A wealthy farmer, Stephen Girard, left this section of land to the city in the eighteenth century. Subsequently hundreds of homes were constructed, consistent in style and floor plan. Some remodeling took place over the years, but recently structural change was banned to preserve the neighborhood character.

Marguerite moved into this home with Dyane's father when I was about six years old. They weren't Italian, but nearly everyone else around here is. Just beyond the estates and as close as a block away are stores of every description, including many Italian specialty food shops. So my exercise walks are most interesting.

Also, it was a delightful surprise to find a library branch directly across the street. It's very small and they don't have any of my favorite checkout material: audiocassettes. They do have lots of videos, but we don't have a VCR. But it's still nice to have it so close. Another delight welcomed me when on three nights in early July the grand fireworks displays after Phillies' games were perfectly framed in my bedroom window. Sitting at my desk I had the finest view.

Office of Haitian Ministry

Be assured the office is in good hands and I know the ministry will continue to grow under the influence of the new director. He first visited Haiti some years ago and has been involved ever since. At the close of a career in retailing, he's very excited about this opportunity to use his energies in such a rewarding work.

While it was difficult to choose to leave this service after a short time, I do feel very pleased about many of the things we were able to accomplish during my tenure. At heart, a basic difference in philosophy separated me from the Directors' Board.

Newsletters

My debate continues; do these newsletters perform a service or just feed my ego? But friends continually offer to help with the mailing, including a gentleman I met only once. He sends dozens at his own expense. Another person I'd met just once connected through me with support systems in her home city when she was desperately in need. Such things encourage me to continue the ministry of correspondence I could not manage without the newsletters. But if you wish not to receive them, just drop me a postcard. I'm including with this one a copy of my final column on Haiti.

Note: Does anyone save my old newsletters? I need copies of numbers three, four, and thirteen. Bless you if you can help me out.

Visits

In May I visited the families of my two sons in Florida and attended a writers' conference there, adventuring back by Greyhound and stopping to see friends in Atlanta, Richmond and Washington, D.C. Throughout August I will be in the Midwest.

Blessings,

Joan