The Prisoner of Guantanamo

By Dan Fesperman

The man who would soon be known to the world as an enemy spy sat down beside me at the picnic table just as the tropical sun was setting across Guantanamo Bay.

"How's the chicken?" he asked.

It wasn't code talk. He really wanted to know. Besides, my military minders had already made sure I didn't have any state secrets to share.

"Very good and very spicy," I answered.

I was about to offer him a beer when I remembered that he almost certainly wouldn't drink it, because he was Muslim — a chaplain, no less, employed by the U.S. Army to tend to the spiritual needs of Camp Delta's hundreds of Muslim prisoners.

His name was James Yee, and the label of "enemy spy" would be applied to him only three weeks later, in September 2003, by U.S. investigators who began telling the world that Yee was part of a Gitmo spy ring.

I was flabbergasted by the news. At the time I was doing research for a novel set at Guantanamo, and the arrest made me question my abilities as an observer. How could I have missed this huge story right beneath my nose? He was a prime example of the very sort of character I was supposed to be creating, but, frankly, he simply hadn't struck me as the type.

Then perceptions began to change.

Investigators never actually charged Yee with espionage, and the "spy ring" turned out to be nothing of the sort. In the following months the case against Yee crumbled, and the Army fell back on charges of adultery and downloading pornography. Later, the Army dropped those charges, too, and Yee departed the military as a free if beleaguered man.

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Religious or not, I suppose he sure could have used that beer.

Meanwhile, I was still working on the book, and grappling with how to characterize a place which, in terms of history, was still a work in progress. The military was offering one version, and plenty of insiders were offering another. Thanks to the Yee debacle, it became easier to figure out which version to trust.

Consider the nature of Guantanamo interrogations, for example. A few participants told me some pretty harrowing stories about what was going on behind closed doors. Prisoners were being stripped naked and chained into awkward positions for hours on end, sometimes in frigid temperatures, while obnoxious music was played at full volume.

The military implied that all the horror stories were greatly exaggerated.

I decided to apply what would best be described as the Yee Rule: When in doubt, don't believe the Pentagon.

Sure enough, as more details emerged about Guantanamo interrogations, even some of my harsher assumptions seemed tame.

As my work progressed, the Yee Rule continued to come in handy.

When the Pentagon claimed that cooperation between various government agencies was going wonderfully well at Gitmo, I decided that couldn’t possibly be the case, especially given that the FBI was known to have instructed its agents to avoid using some of the military’s favored tactics of persuasion.

So, I wrote my scenes accordingly, building in plenty of tension among various government players. Long after those paragraphs went into the manuscript pile, hundreds of FBI memos from Guantanamo emerged on an American Civil Liberties Union web site. They offered a window onto a tense relationship between FBI agents and military commanders, complete with shouting matches.

Score another point for Chaplain Yee.

On the issue of the quality of prisoners being held at Guantanamo (at the time the book is set, there were roughly 640 of them), the Pentagon line may have been most forcefully articulated by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who called them “the most dangerous, best trained, vicious killers on the face of the Earth.”

Under the properties of the Yee Rule, it had to be bunkum.

Sure enough, former interrogators told me that maybe only a few dozen prisoners merited Rumsfeld’s description. Hundreds more were far tamer. Some were merely hapless adventurers who had wound up at the wrong place at the wrong time. Others were enemies of warlords who discovered that an easy way to dispense with your rivals was to tell U.S. soldiers that the fellows were al-Qaeda operatives. Still others had been turned in for bounties.

Then there was the case of the Yee investigation itself. I wanted to include a “spy ring” mess in my own fictional Gitmo, if only because it offered a fine opportunity for creating red herrings and background tension. But I wanted to get the atmospherics right. Surely an episode like that must have created a poisonous atmosphere of mistrust, at least for a while?

The military was mum on the matter. Others suggested I was on the right track.

So, applying the Yee Rule, I portrayed the atmosphere in the wake of the spy-ring arrests as being poisoned by suspicion, mistrust and petty rivalries, both personal and institutional.
A few months later, The New York Times published an exhaustive account of the arrests and their aftermath. According to the Times, "the case grew much bigger than has been publicly disclosed, spinning into a web of counterintelligence investigations that eventually involved more than a dozen suspects. . . . Officials familiar with the inquiries said they also fed on petty personal conflicts: antipathy between some Muslim and non-Muslim troops at Guantanamo, rivalries between Christian and Muslim translators, even the complaint of an old boss who saw (one of the suspects) as a shirker."

So, thanks for all of your troubles, Chaplain Yee. Wherever you are, I figure I still owe you a drink.

Your choice of beverage, of course.

Dan Fesperman, a former foreign correspondent for the Baltimore Sun, is the author of four novels, most recently The Prisoner of Guantanamo, published in July by Knopf.

Ancestor Worship

By Leight Johnson

My paternal grandmother, Mary Elston Quigley, was born in 1863, during the Civil War. She married Hector Lewis Johnson in 1887, and bore my father, Leight Monroe Johnson, and his three siblings in quick succession. After the fourth was born, I'm told she locked the bedroom door.

My mother often told me that her mother-in-law, known in the family as "Nonnie," had attended Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut. This meant absolutely nothing to me as a child, but clearly was important to my mother, who had not finished high school.

I have never understood why many people place so much importance on the accomplishments and social position, real or imagined, of their ancestors. It seems that every great-grandfather who served the Confederacy was a general, or at least a colonel, according to his descendants. It's no wonder the South lost the war, with virtually no enlisted men under arms.

When I was about ten, my mother proudly told me that I was eligible to join the CAR. Children of the American Revolution, thanks to having an ancestor who had served in that conflict. I remember attending a few meetings at the local DAR Chapter House, and being totally bored. The entertainment at one such meeting was a girl my age playing the violin with all the skill of a ten-year-old. I can't recall much else about my time in the CAR, except that it didn't last long.

I was reminded of all this many years later when I read two books by Hamilton Basso, The View from Pompey's Head and The Light Infantry Bull. Both were stories set in the contemporary South, and both were built around the concept of ancestor worship in that society. Who your family was, and what part they had played in history were of great importance to the book's characters.

Which brings me to the question - should I feel more worthy because my great-grandfather might have been a general or mayor or senator? Do his accomplishments reflect on me, make me more respectable? And if he were a lowly private who did nothing of note, am I less honorable?

I prefer to think that what respect I may enjoy depends entirely on what I have done, not on the exploits or social position of those who went before. And I don't expect my children to trade on the fact that I was voted class poet of the eighth grade at Central Grammar School. Let them conquer their own worlds.
Jihad Does Not Mean Holy War
by Leight Johnson

If I had to pick a single word to describe Yahya Hendi, it would be passionate. This characteristic was apparent as I sat through two hours of intense lecturing at his Wednesday class in Colombia. This is a man who has devoted his life to the teaching of the Islamic faith, working on building bridges between people of different faiths and races, and attending to his Muslim constituents.

Why? It was a calling, is his answer. Born in Palestine (the West Bank), he attended college in Jordan, then came to the United States for further study in Texas, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. He lives in Frederick with his wife and four children, where he is the Imam of the Islamic Society of Frederick.

And what exactly is an Imam? Similar to a Rabbi, he focuses on educating and leading prayer.

These activities take him far from Frederick. He teaches at Georgetown University and, in summertime, at the College of St. Elizabeth in New Jersey or Fordham University, New York. At Georgetown he’s the Muslim chaplain, the first hired full-time by any American university. He is also the Muslim chaplain at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda.

So much for the facts. Let me share some of the ideas I gathered during his lecture. Jihad means striving against evil and also using your energy to help others, in many ways. Teaching is one, as is providing medical care, but there are less obvious ways to practice Jihad. Helping a neighbor to build a fence, feeding the poor, raising children, even marital love are forms of Jihad. But please understand, terrorists are not jihadists. The September 11 attack was immoral, wrong, unacceptable, a violation of human rights. That attack and the current violence are absolutely against the fundamental teachings of Islam, which are about respect, responsibility, forgiveness, integrity, tolerance – none of which condone violence. So, to call the terrorists jihadists is nothing but claiming that they have a legitimate cause and action.

Why, then, are those pretending to follow the teachings of Mohamed killing one another and so many foreigners? Their motivation is political, not religious. The strife between Shites and Sunnis is not over doctrine, but is a struggle for power.

There is much misperception of Islam in the minds of many Americans, due in large part to unbalanced coverage in the media. Right after 9/11 many media outlets repeatedly showed a video clip of 16 children in Ramallah cheering the attack on the West. They did not show pictures of thousands of Muslims in Cairo and Ramallah praying for the Americans.

One final question: Do you see any chance for peace in the Middle East, or between Islam and the West, within the next 20 years?

His answer was encouraging: Yes, I do. Given good leadership and a willingness to communicate, we may very well see an end to what seems like endless conflict. You can make peace with those who are different without compromising your own faith. He said, “We must not wait for more people to be killed to realize that there is no way to peace. Actually, peace is the way.”
Not Too Busy for Tea

By Janet George

During the 55 years of Christine Weber's marriage to my cousin Cal, she never applied for American citizenship. Born to German immigrants, she grew up on a large farm in Saskatchewan. Her parents began their days on the farm in a sod house, scratching a living from the land and building a home large enough for 12 children. By the time Chris was seven years old, she could bake bread, sew her own clothes, and knit sweaters for herself and the family. Early in life she was busy. Later when asked about the citizenship, she would say, "I'm too busy right now."

After Cal was discharged from the Navy in 1945, he and Chris moved into their new home in Baltimore. During that first Christmas, neighbors and friends discovered her baking paper thin sugar cookies that melted in one's mouth, multi-ingredient bars, iced cookies, homemade bread, muffins, and rolls. Neighbors found excuses to drop in for a baked goodie and a spot of Chris's famous tea. They soon asked her to make cookies for them. "Would you make some for me next year? I'll pay you," they would say. Her bakery business was launched. To accommodate her customers, she had to start in September and freeze batter for baking in late November and December. She bought packaging materials and her first large chest freezer.

My cousin Cal worked for NSA and off-hours displayed a flair for comedy not expected from one so seriously employed. He never drank a drop of alcohol in his life, but was the life of any party he attended. His wit was notorious with friends and Chris went into gales of laughter at every joke, regardless of how often she had heard it. Their shared sense of humor enabled them to navigate the perils of life.

Perils were many. They had two boys and a girl. The younger boy was born dangerously premature at a time when medical technology was limited in its remedies. He suffered one problem after another. No one expected him to live or to be physically and mentally normal. Today he is vice president of a major construction company. The other boy put a serious strain on their parenting skills, especially in his teenage years. The daughter suffered a multiplicity of health crises. Chris and Cal managed to skirt into middle age with their family intact and five new grandchildren.

Everyone has a dark side, but Chris never let us see hers. She was probably too busy. She was a church woman of the finest kind. She did not drape herself in self-righteousness to magnify the faults of others, but applied her domestic talents to helping the poor, sick, and down and out. She had little interest in church politics. "I'm too busy to be bothered," she would say. When the children left home, Chris and Cal treated themselves to some fun; they used the profits from her business to go on cruises with friends and travel back to Canada.

By the time her 85th birthday rolled around, she was preparing for her end. During her sixties she had suffered a brain tumor operation and a cardiac bypass, neither of which went without complications. Arthritis plagued her fingers and legs. She pushed on with her new project. "I want to make every person in the family his or her own Afghan." These were not small lap robes, but covers that would fit large beds. We all pleaded with her to find something less ambitious, but she would not listen. "I want to do it and I'm going to," So she made everyone give her a sample of their favorite color. In spite of aching fingers, she worked day and night plying her crochet hook and watching Lucy reruns on the telly.

The day of her party we gathered at one of the grandchildren's homes. A humungous cake graced the sideboard and a buffet dinner taxed the dining room table. Nearly fifty people attended and Chris settled comfortably in the big rocking chair, laughed...
and chatted with everyone. Her favorite subject of conversation was the afghan project. She was weak now and working slowly on the last piece; a green one for my daughter-in-law, Holly. As the party began to wind down, she asked for a cup of tea. Though she was of German heritage, she had a Brit’s reverence for tea. She never missed an opportunity to tell others the proper and only way to make tea. “You must slosh boiling water in the teapot and then brew the leaves precisely so many minutes.” I had forgotten the number. Cal spoke up and said, “Janet will get your tea…”

I went into the kitchen and found the man of the house holding a rather beaten-up box of Red Rose De-Caf Tea. She abhorred tea bags. “Don’t you have some real tea bags?” He shook his head with an amused smirk. I would be her victim. I was about to get the lecture on making tea.

I poured the tea, steeped the bag until the liquid in the cup was golden and then held my breath as I served her. She graciously thanked me, took one sip, and then put down the cup. She swallowed. Up went her eyebrows. She took a deep breath and mustered up her loudest voice. “Do you call this tea? I thought I taught you better. These bags must have been here since the war.” Then came what everyone was waiting for, the good-natured scolding about how to make tea. Again we listened and again I can’t remember the exact length of time to steep the leaves.

Several months after the party, Chris finished Holly’s afghan. Later that year she suffered a massive stroke that took her away. We all miss her. I think of her most when I make sugar cookies too thick or bake bread that doesn’t rise properly. She was too busy to worry about being great, or even to become an American, but she gave us a wonderful gift, the example of a simple and quiet life that meant so much to so many.

Meeting the Man in White

By Claude Porsella

The news came at around 3 pm EDT on Saturday, from a man wearing a white wig and dressed in 18th century clothes. “The Pope has died and I am asking you to observe a minute of silence in his memory.” He was the docent at the Old North Church in Boston. As I was bowing my head, I thought it was fitting to hear about the passing of a great defender of liberty in a place that endures as a symbol of liberty for the ages. It was from the church steeple that on April 18, 1775, a patriot named Robert Newman lifted his two lanterns, sending Paul Revere on his “midnight ride” to Lexington and Concord and igniting the American Revolution. John Paul II, armed only with a cross, ignited another revolution that led eventually to the fall of communism.

Surprisingly, I felt closer to the Head of the Catholic Church now that he was dead than when he was alive. I always admired him and respected him, even though, like millions of other Catholics, I didn’t always agree with him. I must confess that during the long ordeal of his last years, I wished he had resigned. To see him so incapacitated was painful. Did he have to travel worldwide when his health was in decline? Unable to walk without help, speaking with difficulty, his head drooping, his left hand shaking in an uncontrollable way because of Parkinson’s, sometimes drooling, and obviously in great pain, the Pope was projecting a sad image. I was afraid those who didn’t like him or his faith would make a mockery of the Catholic Church and of his leader. But my fears were only vanity. Because personally I wouldn’t like the world to see me in such a poor physical state, I didn’t realize that his holiness, by courageously continuing his duties to the end, wanted to stress the sanctity of life.
When bowing my head in prayer, another image came to my mind: the one of a young and energetic Pontiff who, in October 1979, visited Washington. I was privileged to cover his visit to the White House. It was a beautiful sunny fall day. Jimmy Carter spoke. Leontine Pryce sang and John Paul II addressed the crowd in English with his strong Polish accent. For all those assembled, the highlight of this delightful and crisp afternoon came when the Holy Father gave the blessing “Urbi et Orbi” (to the City and the World), the blessing he usually gave to the pilgrims from his apartment window overlooking St. Peter’s Square. Receiving the blessing standing only a few yards from the Pope was a spiritual experience I’ll never forget.

As I watched and waited for the white smoke announcing the election of a new Pope, I remembered the motto of the one who had just left us: “Be not afraid.”

The Good War

By Barbara Orbach

Even if I hadn’t known anything about the history of the place, the first glimpse of it would have still caused me to take in a very deep breath. Silence is the only response possible when the picture in front of you is row upon row of immaculate white crosses. A timid step forward and another, slowly down the rows, absorbing the names and dates and dates of death. No place else, except perhaps at Ellis Island, do the words Melting Pot really have a meaning. These were the children of those tired and poor, of the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Their parents entered through the Golden Door; those buried here died far too young to keep it open.

Hoffman Terpstra Miller Wofford, cz Ramirez, Hie Sabitino Kelley Gallagher Clomp, Jeffrey Bolodovic Tomlinson Zwinsky Ohara Orrosco Chivas

ANDERSON FLAVIO HANSEN NADEL ROONEY UPTON VAN ALTINE PAULANKIS TORINO GABRITO TANASZCZ DZIORNG AH Olsen AVETITTE CUPAJUJO LO FLETCHER ALEXANDER FARRIS LOGAN URALE NISBELLA ROILING ESTEBAN LEERY LEVY LEVINE

and far too many

COMRADES IN ARMS KNOWN ONLY TO GOD

On the western perimeter of the cemetery is a wall that marks the boundary of Omaha Beach. Standing at its rim under trimmed, evenly spaced pines, the grass-covered dunes and flattened shore below appear warm and inviting. At the moment the sea is calm, gently rolling waves like the only break in the ice-blue surface. A group of small children scavenge the tideline for who knows what while their parents lounge nearby, facing to the October sun. As the light of late afternoon turns the pink sand to salmon, it is impossible to image weapons of destruction invading such a serene place.

It is impossible to imagine a coastline fenced with battleships and cruisers, a churning surf clogged with landing-craft and drowning men; it is impossible to imagine the deafening firepower from destroyers and rocket batteries, the constant spurt of machine-guns and intermittent blasts from submerged mines. It is impossible to imagine the heaves crawling with lines of infantry, overrun with bulldozers, tanks, and self-propelled artilleries. It is impossible to imagine the cloudless brilliance of today’s fair sky darkened even in daylight by an umbrella of bombers, fighters, and parachutes, highlighted only by bursts from exploding shells. Yet 20 or so kilometers down the road is Pointe de Hoc, a landscape full of pock marks and craters, the result of 5200 pounds of bombs used to rid the Norman countryside of a foreign army that had bored into the majestic Channel cliffs like a colony of invading insects. The French have deliberately let untouched the remains of the devastation, and despite its solitude, it is not peaceful, even on such a day.

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as this. And the hallowed ground of The American Cemetery that I stand on at this moment may now be a resting place, but on another day was strewn with the bodies of those who fell in battle.

The sounds of activity behind me divert my attention and I realize the sun is disappearing. The United States flag that flies over the memorial is being lowered and "Taps" bestows blessings on the souls of those buried beneath the crosses. Sharp cracks from a 21-gun salute complete the tribute and then the carillon peals out reverently—Amazing Grace. I'm glad I'm alone because as I listen to the bells, the last lines of John Newton's verse stick in my brain and I can't stop the tears.

The Lord has promised good to me; His Word my hope secures: He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures.

Life didn't last long for the young who are buried at Omaha Beach. The war they died in has often been called the "Good War" and I can't make sense of the oxymoron. I understand the term, but war is never good—necessary maybe—but never good.

Our Tasha was a throwaway. A dog that had been cast out. A dog that was left on the street with a newborn litter about two years ago and about whom I had written a story. The magazine that was publishing the story had sent a photographer to our home to take photos to illustrate the story.

Tasha, along with her pups whom she was nursing, had been abandoned by someone who did not even bother taking them to a shelter. My heart sinks every time I think of an animal owner who would do such a thing at such a vulnerable time. Someone noticed the group and called P.A.W. (Partnership for Animal Welfare), a rescue group that will foster nursing moms and pups. They took care of Tasha and her little ones until the pups were old enough to be adopted. After all the puppies had been placed in good homes, Tasha was left and waited for her turn to be adopted. But instead, her next ordeal began. Tasha, you see, was a "Senior Mom" and as such was much less adoptable than younger dogs. She waited in limbo for about six months before we met her.

My husband and I, both confirmed dog lovers, had been without a dog for almost a year when our daughter convinced us that we were not too old to start again with a new pet. We had decided our pet owning days were behind us when Sharon offered her idea. She said that we should look for an older dog, rather than a puppy. After all, puppies required a year or 18 months of hard work including housebreaking, teething, puppy adolescence, basic training, and socializing.

Sharon knew that we had always started with a puppy carefully selected from a reputable breeder, and trained him or her in the way we felt best prepared us all for a commitment of 14-15 years. But after carefully considering this different route to pet ownership, we decided to give Sharon's idea a try, and started our search. We found Tasha only after many visits to shelters, adoption fairs, various Web sites, breed specific, and all-breed rescue groups.

It was love at first sight. Something drew me to this mixed breed dog who was sitting quietly at a pet
adoption fair among many others. Maybe it was her big eyes—dark and warm. Maybe it was her demeanor, quiet and self-contained. Maybe it was her German Shepherd ears and coat. Our first two dogs had been German Shepherds and I had always loved that breed. Whatever it was, the connection was immediate and very, very strong.

Adoption from a rescue group is an interesting experience. A lot of time and research goes into matching each animal with an appropriate family. After all, many animals up for adoption have gone through a lot and no one wants to make a bad placement and add to their problems. We were very thoroughly checked out. Eventually we, our fenced-in yard, and our personal recommendations, were deemed worthy. We adopted this appealing dog, named her Tasha, and she has been our companion ever since.

Tasha is an important part of our household. Our once-tom-silent home is now filled with a loving, welcoming creature who has an immense desire to please and an interesting vocabulary of barks, yodels, whines, and a special purring sound when you embrace her.

We introduced her to toys. When we first got her, she did not know how to play with a ball or chew on a squeaky toy. Now she’s an expert. Though we’ll never know her history, we have faith in her potential.

Because we learned a valuable lesson about pet ownership choices, and because we were so thrilled to give a home to a dog who was languishing through no fault of her own, and because we feel there are others out there who may not have thought of this possibility in their own homes and lives. I set out to write and try to publish our story. I’ve been a teacher all of my adult life. I felt I had something to teach here.

After writing the story, and extolling the advantages of an older couple adopting an older dog, I began to look into publishing venues. ASPCA accepted the story and this is where the Cinderella story truly comes together. ASPCA hired the photographer and sent her to our home. ASPCA published Tasha’s story, complete with photographs of this previously discarded dog, who now has a home, a family, a loving future, and a message for others. She is the dog for whom a professional photographer spent over two hours plugging and unpluging lights, bending and stretching, climbing on chairs, opening and closing drapes, shoving furniture around, and patiently cajoling a puzzled but amenable animal to put her ears up. Tasha was the star. She will be an example. She will hopefully be an inspiration.

After the story was published, I received letters from pet owners all over the country. They poured out their hearts telling me how important their pets were in their lives. Pet lovers really understand each other.

If you are a pet lover who thinks your pet-owning days are over because you are not comfortable making a long, long commitment to a little puppy, please think otherwise. There are older dogs out there who would love to exchange their bleak futures for as many years as you can give them. They may be difficult to place but many would make ideal pets.

Tasha is our Cinderella dog. She may also be a teacher.
Wednesday Morning with Brahms

By Jacob Radin

At 9:30 this morning I left my apartment, viola case in hand, to drive to Columbia. For a number of weeks, Wednesday mornings have been devoted to playing string quartets with three musician friends—Carol and Miriam, violinists, and Faye, cellist.

It was a delightful winter morning. The sun exuded warmth and light. Traffic moved at a brisk pace. No tie-ups. Even the signals were generous with green lights. I arrived exactly at ten, parked my car in front of Carol's house on Fragile Sail Way. I was the first to arrive. I let myself in the front door, left unlocked for us, shouted "Hello" to Carol, who was practicing madly in an adjoining room. "Sounds like walking by the Peabody" I remarked to Carol. She gave me a welcoming hug and a kiss on the cheek. The others drifted in shortly.

Carol has set up the music stands in the sun room, a glass enclosed space with skylights. The barren winter woods surround us. Lifelike silk yellow and red tulips adorn a vase. The room is resonant and responsive. In the next room the parakeet is chattering endlessly. We tune to an electronic "A."

At a previous session we had played the first two movements of Brahms' String Quartet #3 in B Flat major. We continued with the third movement which highlights the viola playing unmuted against the other three muted instruments. Brahms has described this movement as "the tenderest and most impassioned movement I have ever written."

Since the viola is the principal voice at the beginning of the movement, I indicate the tempo and we begin. For reading purposes we play at a reduced speed so that we can play the notes correctly as we listen to each other. This is a democratic process. Every voice is critical to the whole, so anyone has the right to stop at any time to clarify a passage.

The four instruments are meant to speak with one voice. When one instrument repeats a pattern that has been articulated by another, there must be a continuity, a sense of belonging. When two instruments play the same pattern together, their concept of how it should sound must be in agreement. Everything is held together by a common sense of rhythm, with the special support of the cello bass line.

Often there is some complexity of interplay or rhythm that needs to be fractured, or broken into its component parts. As we approach the middle section of the movement, or Trio, the second violin stops. Something in the music is setting her teeth on edge. She finds that, for a brief period, she has a clashing D against the first violin's D sharp. Is it a misprint? That has been known to happen. Carol's husband, Tom, who happens to be home, is called on to adjudicate. He is a highly respected composer and pedagogue at the Peabody. No, it is not a misprint. This is what Brahms intended.

We finish at noon. Our playing is better. Not yet what it can be, but we feel a sense of accomplishment. I feel a kinship with the reputed comment of Goethe that a string quartet is like the conversation of four cultured friends.

I think how fortunate I am that my father put a string instrument in my hands over 80 years ago, that with a modicum of talent and persistence of application I have been able to speak in the language of Brahms and Beethoven and the pantheon of masters.
Almost Our Nation's Capital

By Janet George

In 1608 John Smith sailed up the Susquehanna River. At the site that is now Havre de Grace, he met Indians. "Large and warlike, for the most part seven feet tall, voices deep and hollow as coming out of a cave—stately and majestic—great warriors." Today this city of 11,331 would amaze him not with warlike and great men, but with its great charm and beauty.

In the 1980s volunteers, many of them senior citizens, participated in the discovery of this charming and rich historic treasure. They did their research and formed committees to make their dreams for Havre de Grace a reality. They founded museums, revitalized historic sites, and initiated festivals and reenactments to bring alive the life of the town's past.

That past reaches back to 1658 when a settler, Godfrey Harmer, bought 210 acres of land at the lower Susquehanna River. He called this tract Harmer's Town. On August 29, 1782, Lafayette had an opportunity to cross the river on the Lower Susquehanna Ferry at Harmer's Town. He was so impressed with the town's beauty that he suggested the name Havre de Grace. The people concurred, and in 1785 the town was incorporated as The City of Havre de Grace.

In 1789 the town competed with Washington, D.C., for the honor of being the nation's capital. Washington won out, but the town was to figure in the War of 1812. The British burned it to the ground. On May 13, 1813, the British attacked by barge. John O'Neill, a militiaman, single-handedly tried to defend the town. He was wounded and captured. When his young daughter pleaded with British Admiral Cockburn to spare her father from hanging, he did so, but put the town to the torch instead.

In 1839 Havre de Grace would become a vital center of commerce. The Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal was opened, running from Havre de Grace to Wrightsville, Pennsylvania. Until the advent of the railroad in the middle nineteenth century, this was a major route for the exchange of goods. It remained in use until 1939.

Many Marylanders remember Havre de Grace for its horse racing and industry spawned by the river and bay. A great area for duck hunting, the art of hand carving decoys evolved from a practical production of hunting aids to an art form now preserved in the town's Decoy Museum.

Today Havre de Grace is a treasury of historic sites: Concord Point Light and Keeper's House, Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, the Maritime Museum, the Steppingstone Farm Museum, the Lock House Museum, and the Skipjack Martha Lewis, which provides sailing excursions in season.

A boardwalk skirting the waterfront was recently destroyed by a hurricane and now has been rebuilt. You can stroll on a mild day and enjoy an intimate view of the wildlife and plants of the region. Drive up Union Street. Better yet, park and walk. Enjoy the sight of pastel-colored Victorian houses newly renovated by their owners. You will want your camera with you.

The Havre de Grace Tourism Website will keep you informed of ongoing festivals and special events. Treat yourself to a day in the town that Lafayette fell in love with. His advice is truly worth heeding.
Unfamiliar Quotations

(Obes that Bartlett missed)

I don't mind dying - I just don't want to be there when it happens.
Woody Allen

I don't belong to any organized political party - I'm a Democrat.
Will Rogers

I don't vote, dear, it only encourages them.
Elderly Lady

Young people act as if they had invented sex, even though their very existence proves otherwise.
Jaroslav Pelikan (Yale professor)

What do you mean, we're sinking?
Captain Smith of RMS Titanic

Does anyone back there know what Hawaii looks like?
United Airlines pilot

Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, you walked into mine.
Humphrey Bogart (as Rick Blaine)

This one's four-ever.
Liza Minnelli at her fourth wedding

I wouldn't want to belong to a club that would have me as a member.
Groucho Marx

I told Wilbur and I told Orville, this thing'll never get off the ground.
Anonymous

Evergreen Journal, the newsletter of the Evergreen Society, is published under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins School of Professional Studies in Business and Education two times per academic year.

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