

## **Different times, Yet Similar Values: An Interview with Thurston Dale**

**By Adam Dunn**

I sat down with Dr. Thurston Dale on Tuesday, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> and we talked a great deal about family values, life priorities, marriage, and the secrets to happiness.

I was surprised that we shared so much in common when it came to these topics. For instance, Mr. Dale regrets not being around his kids a lot due to his work obligations and that family time should have trumped business time. I have always felt that time with family is extremely important and is one thing you cannot get back. I told him how my dad and I would play cards or board games quite often after dinner and I sometimes miss those days. His advice to me was, "Don't work too hard all the time." I agree with his statement and am a firm believer that money, necessary as it is, cannot buy true happiness.

The next topic we discussed revolved around life priorities. "How do you think life priorities have changed?" I asked.

"It's sad how materialistic people have gotten," Mr. Dale mused as he shook his head. "Everyone wants more, and all the newest things," he continued on.

"Yeah, latest and greatest," I said nodding my head in agreement. He went on to tell me about when people grew up back then, they were happy just to have a place to live. I sometimes feel like going "back to the basics" myself, such as being perfectly content with having a job, house, and a car. I also feel as though I should reprioritize my needs versus my wants.

When it came to the topic of marriage, Mr. Dale had some great advice. Since he had been married 53 years, I was curious to find out what his thoughts were regarding how to have a successful marriage. He believes that sharing priorities and goals are keys to a successful marriage. I believe that too, along with supporting one another while they try to reach some personal goals.

A fourth topic I was interested in was his take on the secrets to happiness. He believed that communication and being a good listener mattered a great deal. Lastly, he reiterated that spending time with family was his secret to happiness. This is one topic that I realized varied from my viewpoint slightly, but that's why it was an opinion-oriented question. I believe that appreciating the things you have instead of always wanting more is one key to happiness. If you spend your life always wanting more, you may get overwhelmed or possibly depressed. On the flip side, however, I do believe that hard work does pay off and you should work for things that you want. At the same time, we should appreciate and enjoy the things we already have in our lives.

I really enjoyed talking to Mr. Dale and appreciated the time and advice he was able to give. It was nice seeing how similar our values were, despite our age difference. It just goes to show that some values can withstand the test of time and some traditions will never go out of style.

## **Neighborhood Talk** **By Mikayla Hilobuk**

Recently, my college composition class decided that it was time for us to learn outside of our college classroom. My colleagues and I met at a local church in town with some of Medina's seniors. My professor was also present, taking pictures while we were discussing our topics with our guests. The goal was to each sit down with a senior and interview that person and to try to learn a little about that person's values in life.

The atmosphere was just right inside the church, as the rain trickled down the windows. We each paired up with a senior at a circled table; it was very known that we were all a little nervous.

"Hello, my name is Mikayla," I said as the stranger that would soon become a familiar face sat down. I continued, "What's yours?"

"Jean Upton," the lady said.

"Well it's nice to meet you," I said with a smile on my face.

At first, I asked Miss Jeannie Upton if there was anything that she didn't feel comfortable talking about, because I did not want to make her uncomfortable in any way. Her answer was no. But she was a little hesitant about discussing children and discipline because, she explained, she was not married and did not have children. Therefore, she didn't think she would have much to say about those subjects. Interestingly, it later turned out she did.

The two main things that we discussed were children and then discipline and war. After discussing many topics, I realized that we are very much alike when it comes to our beliefs and the way we think, which I thought was really neat considering our age difference.

The first topic was raising children and the discipline that was meted out. Back in the day, (as people say), when you were told to do something, you were only told once. Now, kids hardly listen even after many times of being told. Kids also grew up with no Wi-Fi, computers or cell phones. Instead, they played outside till dark. When the street lights would come on, that would be when you were expected home. Looking at children now, things are very different: their eyes are glued to their cell phones, tablets, computers, you name it. Nobody talks in person anymore. Technology has taken over our lives. If you go out to dinner and look throughout the restaurant, all age groups are on their cell phones. It's not healthy: people every day are losing communication skills because they are so used to texting instead of talking.

War is a topic that I believe many people could talk about for hours. Miss. Upton doesn't believe we should be in war now, and many people would agree to that. In Miss Upton's words, "Football players get paid more" than people who serve our country, which is not fair at all. They do not go through the mental and emotional damage that military personnel go through. One difference that I noticed with reference to the military while talking to Miss Upton is that more people were going right into the military after high school when she was growing up. Now, people have more of a choice to go serve our

country (rather than being drafted) and it's not uncommon to see a woman in the military, whereas back in the day, it was. Miss Upton also doesn't believe we should be spending money on the war, but should be spending it on our social security. Unfortunately, we are getting to the point where many of us won't have any social security when we are eligible for it because it will be gone.

After talking to Miss Upton and overhearing some of the other conversations, I realized that there is so much wisdom out there in this community. I enjoyed hearing what Medina seniors had to say about our topics. I enjoyed learning hands-on, as it's definitely a different experience. To say the least, that evening was very interesting and time well spent.

## **Wisdom from an Elder: An Interview with Pat Kennedy**

**By Sara Martin**

Recently, I got the chance to sit and talk with Mrs. Pat Kennedy about how we grew up and the changes between the two generations. We talked about our families, technology, and happiness. I found we had a lot in common even though the situations were slightly different.

The first thing we talked about was our families. Mrs. Kennedy grew up in a very loving, caring, and close-knit family. She was raised by her mother and father, has two sisters, and one brother. She told me, “My youngest sister wasn’t born until I was eighteen, so that was very different. Mostly there was just three kids in the family, and then my baby sister came along a lot later, so it added a new dynamic.” Her father built their house, and later on built an apartment for her grandparents. When Mrs. Kennedy was twelve, her grandparents moved in with them because her grandfather had had a heart attack and needed the help. Because of this, much of their time was devoted to family.

They had a lot of family dinners together. Her grandma did a lot of the cooking and they rarely went out to eat. As a special treat, when they went shopping in Wellsville, they might stop for lunch. They had a garden where they got all of their vegetables for meals and canning. For fun and togetherness, the family had picnics in the backyard on the large picnic table her father built and would also have bonfires in the fireplace he built.

As we talked, I could see a lot of similarities. I was raised by my mom and dad until they divorced when I was eleven. I have two sisters and one brother. I’m the youngest and was born the year my oldest sister turned twelve. My mom and I spent a lot of time in Pennsylvania at my grandparents until I went to kindergarten. My grandmother had diabetes and went into kidney failure, so my mom went to help with the treatments, which were done at home. At home, we too had a garden that had fresh veggies and mom would can some for winter. Mom did all the cooking and we would only order out about once a month on a Friday. After the divorce, I did help with cooking and still only ate out once a month. For family time together, I was so much younger than my siblings, it was usually just my parents and I.

The next thing we talked about was technology. Mrs. Kennedy remembers when the first television came out, she was twelve. She told me, “Before that, we listened to the radio at night.” She went on to say, “When we finally did get a TV, we could only get one channel.” To get the news, they would get the newspaper or listen to the radio. To keep in touch with family and friends, they would write letters. They did have a phone, but it had no buttons and they had a party line. When the phone rang, they had to wait to see how many times it rang: the number of rings told you which number was being called, and their number was one ring.

In comparison, when I was growing up, we had a TV with a lot of channels, except when I was visiting my grandparents, and then it was just one or two. We had a non-party line phone, but my grandparents had one. So I knew of a party line but didn’t know how it actually worked until I talked with Mrs. Kennedy. We also wrote letters to keep in touch, but not as much. Our news came from the television mostly, but we’d also get the newspaper on Sundays.

Our final topic was a question asked by Mrs. Jones, who stopped us to address the whole room. “So what is the secret of happiness?” Mrs. Jones asked. It was a very enlightening answer Mrs. Kennedy gave me. (Meanwhile, I accused Mrs. Jones of asking her question on purpose to make me think!) Mrs. Kennedy’s answer, “I think staying in contact with friends and family, I mean the older you get, especially like me... I’m alone. You need to make a point of reaching out to friends you’ve had a long time. But people tend to not do so. They get into their own little shell and stay home, and don’t have contact with the outside world. I think you need to make a point of calling a friend, or saying let’s go to lunch or let’s do this or do that.” She even gave me an example of what happens when you don’t and it sounded so much like me. Mrs. Jones joined in the conversation and the two of them enlightened me a lot. Recently, I have found myself feeling sad, lonely, and wishing I had friends a lot lately. Since that conversation, however, I was kind of forced to take their advice: I went with a friends to watch my girl’s competition. Afterward, we went out to Duff’s for wings and the whole group of us talked and had fun. I actually had a smile on my face. Thank you Mrs. Kennedy for sharing your story with me and for sharing your advice. Mrs. Jones, I would also like to thank you for the advice!

## **The Untold Wisdom of Our Seniors: an Interview with Mrs. Masters**

### **By Katlin A. Moll**

Recently, my class and I had the privilege to interview some local seniors from Medina, NY. The goal of this project was to get us out of the comfort of our classroom, and to have the chance to meet someone new that has personal knowledge of a time period that we didn't live through. By having the chance to meet these people, we were given the opportunity to learn about the personal experiences of the men or women that we were able to interview. You can do all the research you want of the so-called "olden days," but how often do you get to just sit back and listen to someone talk about a period of time that you didn't experience?

Going into this project I was a little skeptical, as I had no idea what to expect. That skepticism quickly went away when I met the woman I would be interviewing, Mrs. Masters. Mrs. Masters was born in California, in the year 1932. She lived in California for 18 years with her mother, father, and younger brother before moving to New York. As soon as I met her, I knew that this project would be an easy one as she was a very easy woman to talk too.

Mrs. Masters and I talked about many subjects, but primarily we spoke of children, relationships and war. I asked four main questions: One, what were children like when you were growing up? Two, what were relationships like, and how was divorce looked upon? Three, what was it like during the war? And finally, what's the secret to happiness? As you might imagine, her answers would be pretty different from mine, as we have lived through very different generations. It is incredible just how much times have changed since the early to mid-1900s.

The first question I asked was, "What were children like when you were growing up?"

She began, "As you have probably heard before, when I was a child, I was allowed to leave the house in the morning and wouldn't come back till my mother called for me." She went on to explain how the kids never really organized when they would get together to hang out. Instead, it just kind of happened.

To continue on with this subject, I asked her why she thought that kids didn't do this anymore. She responded by saying that she thinks the biggest reasons they don't go outside and play anymore is that there is so much more that the kids can do inside, like playing on their games and watching television. To conclude with this topic, I asked one final question: "Do you think children had more responsibilities when you were growing up"?

She answered this question by saying that she didn't think they had more responsibilities, but that children had more respect for their parents and knew what was expected of them. She also said that it really depended on how you are raised, as well.

Unlike Mrs. Masters, I was unable to roam about the neighborhood with any friends on my own. To be quite honest, the only time I really spent any time with my friends was at school. I didn't even know any other kids that lived in my neighborhood. I think that one of the many reasons that children don't go out and play with other kids as often or even at all, is that most families have two parents with jobs, which means that there is no one to be at the house, and it's just not as safe as it used to be. I also have to agree that the way children are raised has a big impact on how they act and how much responsibility is put

upon them. I believe children don't have as much respect as children in the past because they simply aren't taught too.

The second topic that we discussed was relationships and divorce. I started by asking, "What were relationships like, and how was divorce looked upon"?

She quickly stated that "Dating was kind of different back then," she paused for a moment and then said that girls and boys didn't start having relationships until they were in high school. She then furthered that comment by saying that men and women also got married a little younger than they do now. She talked a little about how she met her husband when she went to school in Montreal and how whenever she has to leave for an extended period of time, she had to prepare all of her husband's meals. "Men worked and women did the cooking; that's just how it was," she said. When it comes to divorce, she said that while it was frowned upon, there were certain occasions where it was acceptable or at least understood. She also said that it wasn't something that happened too often because economically, it was hard. Men couldn't afford to support two households and women didn't have high enough paying jobs to support their children on their own.

Examining her view on relationships and divorce, I realized that once again our lives differed from one another. When it comes to relationships and how early they start, it's no secret that they start happening much earlier than they did when Mrs. Masters grew up. While I don't necessarily believe that two sixth graders are in a real relationship and going to be together forever, they definitely occur at earlier ages. Relationships also don't last as long as they once did. While divorce wasn't too common of a thing when Mrs. Masters was growing up, it is something that you now hear about all the time. It is now more plausible for men to support more than one household if they need to, and women have higher paying jobs, allowing them to care for their children without the support of another person.

The third topic we discussed, and the one I found most intriguing, was war. "What was it like during war?" I asked her.

To begin she stated that she was eight years old when World War II started. "My father wasn't drafted, so I don't think that I felt the impact as much as other families did," she began. She also talked about how the state issued ration tickets for things like meat, tea, sugar, eggs, flour, and gas. She told a story about how her family grew a victory garden full of vegetables and fruit, and she explained how they had chickens for eggs. She also told a story about her father and how he saved up their gas tickets so that they could move, and how a cop stopped them and questioned them about how they were able to get the gas for the trip.

I asked her to give an example of how the lack of money and resources at the time of the war impacted her.

She told a story about how all of the kids she knew would save the tin foil out of cigarette packs, and how they would collect the sycamore seeds. She broke out in a smile, "The seeds were large balls, and we used to take the foil that we saved and we would wrap them around the seeds to make ornaments for our Christmas tree."

Just like the last two topics, I found that our answers to the questions that I asked were very different. The only war that I have experienced is the war that happened in Iraq. I can't say that I noticed too much of a difference from when it was going on and when it ended, (if it's ended), because I wasn't really personally affected by it. I don't know anybody that was drafted in the war because drafting doesn't happen anymore, and there wasn't any restriction on what I could and couldn't have; however, the prices did go up on a lot of things such as food and gas which meant that sometimes we couldn't afford to buy things.

To wrap up my interview with Mrs. Masters I asked her one final question: What is the secret to happiness?

As I asked her this question, she looked at me like I had three heads. "Do you really expect me to answer that silly question?" she said with a slight chuckle. The only thing she could tell me was that "To be happy, you have to be happy with yourself, and you can't rely on the outside...Sure, people can make you happy, but they don't last forever," she said.

Hearing this answer was awesome because I actually agree with this. I have had to learn that I am the only one that can make myself happy is me and that can't rely on any one person or thing to do that.

To conclude my interview, I have to say that having the chance to interview a local senior was truly a fascinating experience. It was amazing to be able to listen to someone coming from a different perspective other than my own. And it was even better coming from someone who seemed so full of life and held onto so much wisdom.

## **Wisdom at Its Finest: An Interview with Kathie Granchelli**

**By Kali M. Nowak**

Recently, I went to visit Kathie Granchelli to find out more information about the past, and how she lived it. The only real way to get wisdom is to have lived through it and know what it's really about. While I interviewed Kathie, we talked about so many topics! I felt like I could talk with her for hours and still want to know more. We discussed topics like war, job opportunities, gender issues, money, raising children, education, dating and marriage, and what is the secret to happiness. I've learned so many cool and amazing stories that I will take with me. Through hardships and struggles, she has done so much with her life.

The first topic we discussed was war. I started off by asking her what war she had lived through. She replied that she was a baby boomer and she had lived through the Vietnam War. She then continued to say that she didn't believe in the war, and that she had lost a lot of friends because of it. She stated this took place during the draft, and some of her friends got married just to avoid going to war. We then moved on to another topic: how did the war affect the living conditions? I asked while she had said that it was her father who was in WWII and they never spoke of war in the household. Following that, I then asked how she felt during this time and she summed it up by saying that she felt anxious, and how people would get angry if you were anti-war.

I had to agree with just about everything she was saying. My grandpa was, in fact, in the Vietnam War. While she was living through it, my grandpa was one of the ones who got sent away to fight for his county. I also do not think war is the answer. There's so many other ways to resolve a situation besides fighting. When my grandfather returned from war, he was never the same. The way I can relate to Kathie personally is in terms of everyday life: For instance, today we face the war on drugs and the war on terrorism. Prices are going up and we have serious security concerns today that we did not have back then.

Our next topic concerned job opportunities. I asked her, As a woman, what jobs were available to you? She replied that there were pretty much three options: a nurse, a teacher, or a stay at home mom. She also said her father taught us to be independent. "Why did you choose the third option?" I asked, and she replied that she was married at the age of 19, and had her first child right away. She became a stay at home mom to raise her children. While raising them, she worked at the library part time, and then when her kids got older, she sold real estate for 15 years.

"Was there a job you wanted but couldn't because you were a woman?" I asked, and she just said, "No, I don't think so," but she also added in that she was the first woman that worked at a police station as a dispatcher in the late 80's, and she was proud of her work there.

As we were talking, it made me realize that in this era, job opportunities are endless, and it's easier now to get a job as a woman. With that being said, I pick where I want to work because it's what I love to do, not because I have to do it. In conclusion, there's no limitation on jobs you can get today.

Our discussion regarding employment led right into gender issues. "What were your responsibilities at home?" Kathie laughed and replied with, "My husband would make the messes, and I would clean

them!” With her saying that, I countered, “Well...then what was expected of men?” And she responded by saying it was their duty to provide for their families.

In my experience, responsibly at home would include doing my chores and picking up after myself. I don't think the roles have really changed that much besides the fact that most parents both work and take care of what they have to get done; it is very common that couples share household duties along with their outside of the home work.

We then moved to the next topic: money and raising children. Kathie started off by saying that, for a blue collar family, you didn't make a lot. People lived from paycheck to paycheck. Most people would build their own things instead of hiring someone to come and fix what ever needed to be fixed. People never used credit cards, only cash or checks. She then told me she learned fast how to write checks, because her father made her and someone else go out and pay all the bills that needed to be paid.

As for the makeup of a normal household, there would be around four to five kids: most of her friends had at least three children. She then stated she thinks there are more rich kids now then there were before. Then I asked he if she had the chance to redo anything, what would it be? Right away, she said, “Nothing!”

Nowadays, I would have to say for a blue collar worker, they would be getting paid at least minimum wage. However, people today use credit cards a lot. People build up so much debt that it's not even funny. People are losing their houses and other things because they are in so much debt. And in terms of family make up, it is much more common for people to have one or two children. Larger families are more unusual, maybe because it is so expensive to raise a family.

The last topic we discussed was education and dating and marriage. Kathie told me that she said education was very important. If her homework was not done, there would be some kind of punishment. She graduated high school, and then she went into real estate. Her brother never went to college, but instead went into the Navy. She also said there were at least 30 to 35 kids in a class when she was in high school. With all of that being said, the most common way of meeting someone was in high school, and that if you were to get into a divorce, it was looked down upon. She met her husband at a pizza shop at the age of 18 while he was twenty one. They have been married for 50 years now.

Today, you need to go to college to advance in your career that you chose. Most jobs require you to have some kind of schooling. I am currently enrolled in college and have been graduated from high school in 2015. My school had as little of 15 kids in a class, mostly due to people not showing up or not caring. I feel like today the most common way of meeting someone is online, and divorce is so common today it's crazy.

The last question I asked was short and simple. What is the secret to happiness? She had a short and sweet answer by saying, “Evolving. Know what it is that you want in life and learn to just let things go. Don't worry about things so much.”

I would have to agree. There's no simple answer to that question. When our conversation came to an end, I realized that she just had so much wisdom to share. It is way more valuable coming from a person worthy of respect and honor then just looking up information on the internet. You get real life stories

and experiences, which you can't find anywhere else. Talking with Kathie made me realize there's so much more to life to be grateful for. I wouldn't have wanted to gain wisdom from anyone else.

## **The Differences: Now and Then: An Interview with Gregg Stroyen**

### **By James Rylander**

Last Tuesday, in my English class, I was assigned to interview a senior. The purpose of this interview was that we might gain some insight from those who already have so much knowledge to give. We were to take notes to really see not only how different life is now but also what constants have remained an integral part of life.

I had the pleasure of interviewing a man by the name of Mr. Gregg Stroyan. During the course of my interview, we were able to touch on many subjects, such as the economy, social and moral values, responsibility, and politics. As Mr. Stroyan and I talked, everything seemed to come back to a few influences: technology, community, and family life.

Growing up, Mr. Stroyan's father was a police officer and his mother was a teacher at his school. This led to having to be almost a straight-laced child, for the most part. If he was caught doing something incorrect in school, his mother would surely hear about it; Likewise, outside of school he also had to watch his step because his father would know if he did step out of line. They would also have meals together as a family. In this way, his parents were very much involved in their son's life.

In contrast, I was raised in a home where my dad would go out of town occasionally for work, and I had a stay at home mother who tends to the cooking and clean in order to keep our life at home running smoothly. While my parents might not have had their hands in everything I did or know every detail about my life, they still tried to take an active part in raising me. Every Sunday, we would go to church, and on weekdays, when school was over, my mother would pick me up and ask me about my day. We ate meals together and talked about how all our days had been. My parents allowed me to do as I pleased because they told me I had free agency so my decisions were mine to make, but the important thing was they took an involved and active part in my life.

The next area of concern was the strength of communities. Mr. Stroyan talked about how when he was young, the parents would allow for their children to run around the neighborhood together playing games without worry of something happening. The parents knew that if something did happen, they could rely on their neighbors to let them know. A community was a single, strong-bonded group that could look to others for help and in turn would help others when in a time of need. He gave a great example telling me "When it was getting dark and we weren't home yet, the parents didn't worry asking where we were. They would know we were out playing hide and seek. That's just the way it was."

Growing up this was not at all my experience with being part of a community. I was not allowed to play outside without supervision when I was younger. I could not walk down the road to a friend's house or stay out late at a friend's house without letting my parents know where I was. We had great neighbors that were always there for us if we needed help, but the same comfort, and safety found in the community that Mr. Stroyan had when he was young was not found in my generation. With the news always blaring the lowest points of humanity, kidnappings, vandalism, and, murder, It's hard to feel safe in your community or anywhere else for that matter.

That brings us to the other and possibly most broad subject that that we covered: technology. During most of Mr. Stroyan's early years, most technology of the modern era was new and simple at best. On

the Regents exams, calculators were not allowed to be used. When you were doing the research, you had to actually go to a library to read the books and find information for your assignments. When the introduction of some technology such as digital watches and Velcro, some serious complications came with these nuances. With digital clocks and watches, children could no easily or fluently read analog clocks. Along with having trouble reading time, velcro introduced its own problems: while it was convenient, it also meant that children didn't have to tie their shoes, leading to them not know how to at all.

Unlike Mr. Stroyan, my childhood was full of technology. Whenever I had to research a paper, there was always a Wikipedia article to help me find the information that I needed. The news was on TV, so recent world events were right at my fingertips, and if I didn't want to wait to watch it on the TV, I could use the internet to see the news whenever it was convenient for me. There are also many drawbacks to the convenience filled technologic world of today. One of the most prevalent drawbacks is social skills. While we can instantly text or friends and order a pizza by simply sending an emoji, face to face communication is on the decline. When people can't go through a ten or fifteen minute conversation without their nose being glued to a screen you can see the lack of social skills the person has.

To conclude our interview, Mr. Stroyan gave me some great words of wisdom for me as I'm growing up.

First, he told me to be happy with myself and don't try to change for other people. He emphasized that point even more when it comes to your significant other. He told me that they should accept and love you for who you are, not who they want you to be. He also said to make your house a home a place where you feel safe and comfortable. Then Mr. Stroyan closed the interview by saying "Those two things are the key to happiness."

## **A Talk With Mr. Emerson: A Great Man with an Amazing Story**

### **Scottie Scribner**

Recently, My college composition teacher tasked the class with embarking on a journey in which we would do a one on one interview with someone older and then take what we learned from that and compare our own beliefs. Despite all the knowledge of the day to day life between smart phones, internet, and TV, we often forget what we can learn from just talking and learning from down to earth, real people.

I learned more than I could have ever imagined. I chose as my subject to interview another teacher, a person who I looked up to as sort of a mentor in life. As I spoke with him, I posed a list of questions and allowed him to choose what we talked about because, to be honest, I didn't want to ask some questions that would make him uncomfortable. While talking, we went over many subjects, but focused on three main topics: who influenced our life the most, what school was like for us, and how marriage affected our lives.

The first question I posed was, "Who really influenced you the most in life?" As I asked this question there wasn't even a hesitation when Mr. Emerson spoke up fast and easily, saying "My Parents. They gave me the freedom to think for myself rather than an indoctrination of society." He spoke of how his parents gave him freedom, but at the same time, there was guidance. "If we needed anything, we went to them. But they also taught us to be self-reliant."

To me, this was such a strange concept. I grew up in a family of alcoholics where the children raised each other and the only guidance we had was from the older of the kids. We knew how to be self-reliant, but on a different level. Even so, I'm not going to say that the concept won't turn out the same. Only time will tell that for sure. The bottom line is, we both value self-reliance.

After we spoke of this for a little while, we moved on to what school was like. When I asked this question to Mr. Emerson, I was quite shocked to hear the response given.

"I was a B and C student at best," he explained.

This was really unique for me, because you think that a teacher naturally always exceeded. He went on, "I hated math. Even now, I still hate math. I took four years of Spanish because it came easier to me." He also told me something else that coming from a teacher would confuse and yet surprise me again. "I learned that I got more of an education and it was more valuable when I went to college after the military."

This was easy for me to relate to, because not only do I hate math (in fact I only take it when I have to), but I am at times only a B to C student myself. I have never been the type to shine unless it is something that drives me, but when it is, I do just as he did and push myself to the fullest extent. I also fall under the belief that the military was the best idea for me before going to college. Sometimes, the life lessons I learned can be considered more valuable than college education, though I won't downplay that either. Also on another note, we both appreciated having the G.I. bill to pay for college so we didn't go into debt trying to get where we are in life.

Finally, after a while of small talk, we got around to the last topic: Marriage and how it affects our life. This was by far the most in depth conversation we have had yet. There was a lot for him to say and I had so much to learn.

“I grew up in the late 50’s, early 60’s, and by the 70’s, I was out of the service and married and had two kids,” he said. This was his only marriage and to date he has been married forty one years.

“How did you make it last so long?” I asked this question because I knew this was something that not only I wanted to know but it was something that people of society at my age and time and needed to know. I waited for the answer and then he looked at me and once again without hesitation he spoke: “We give each other enough space and another thing we do is make sure we don’t change each other.”

I sat for a minute being sure to let this sink in and hoping if nothing else that I let this reflect on my relationship. I have nowhere near the time he has invested in this marriage but I can only hope. The way this man spoke of his wife was amazing to say the least. He talked about how he worked two jobs and went to school full time and as amazing as this was to me he spoke of how his wife took care of everything.

“She was playing both roles (the mother and father) and it is such a thankless job. I appreciate that so much and it is something that I will never be able to pay back.”

He paused right there for a moment and as I let that settle he carried on, “I worked two jobs so she didn’t have to. I mean she could have if she wanted to, she always had the option, but I did it so she didn’t have to” He stated. With all this being said I realized that my relationship is the same in a lot of ways. I respect my wife the same and I try to be traditional in the aspect that my wife doesn’t have to work but if she chooses to, I support her decision. I also am one to realize that my wife plays both roles in our household a lot of the time. I work full time and also I am a full time student and then when I am not doing these things, I am either working on homework or going to the Army Reserves. So all of the little things around the house are done by her, and I do have to admit that sometimes as busy as I am, I tend to forget this important detail, so I can see what he means when he says it can be a thankless job.

We had sat now until we were actually asked to leave the college because it was closing. We even talked on the way out the door, and it was at this point that I knew that no matter how long we had sat and spoke that I would not be able to embrace all this man’s knowledge in the short time given. I did learn many things for him and with that I am indeed grateful, I but I think most of all, the one thing that we as society seem to look past is that sometimes, we search for all the latest quotes on Facebook, we scour the web for everyone’s advice in today’s situations, and we look for information that may never be found through TV shows, but if we took just one hour out of the day, it is amazing the knowledge we would find right in front of us.

## **Secret to Happiness: An Interview with MaryEllen Dale**

### **By Heather VanGorder**

In my English 101 class, our instructor assigned a class writing project to teach us the technique of comparative writing. The project was to interview a senior citizen and compare their wisdom or beliefs against our own. So I sat down with Mrs. Dale and we talked about what the secret to happiness was; at least from our perspective.

Although our conversation was messy, as most peoples are, Mrs. Dale, without knowing it, broke down the secret to happiness into three categories. The first category was happiness with life, which began essentially with acceptance of yourself. Once you accept who you are without the worry of outside opinions, that's when you have accepted yourself.

I couldn't agree more with Mrs. Dale. I was in my late twenties when I finally realized that as long as I was happy and accepted who I was, then other people's opinions of me weren't all that important. I was always unhappy with my hair, for example: curly, frizzy, and different than everyone else's. For as long as I could remember, someone always had something to say about it. Now I couldn't imagine having that long sought after, straight hair. Unfortunately, as a young person, I spent most of my life comparing myself to other people around me, which caused me to miss out on so many thing in life.

Life, or personal happiness, is another big step. Mrs. Dale has found personal happiness through her relationship with God and having a career that allows her to be around people. She has gone to the same church for most of her adult life, a church she loves very much. After the interview was over, she gave me a tour. "This is our new kitchen and recreational hall", she laughed," and by new, I mean twenty years ago." We walked into the church where she told me how she really liked all the people she worshiped with, how it was a great community.

Mrs. Dale has also found happiness in her career as a teacher. She was a public school teacher for thirty-two years, working at schools in Trumansburg, Poughkeepsie, and Medina. She still continues to teach to this day, tutoring migrant children, preparing them for regular school in Newfane. Being with people, teaching them, and learning with them makes her happy. You can hear the joy in her voice when she talks about her church and being able to work with people: it really is her happiness.

I, unfortunately, don't have a comparison for personal happiness at this point in my life. Being happy with life has never been my strong suit, but I have come to accept life for what it is. I don't have any great expectations other than my belief that life can only get better as long as I keep trying. If I find that something in my life makes me unhappy, I work at changing it. Change, I've learned, isn't always easy, and I may not be happy while I'm changing, but I find acceptance in the end.

The last category of happiness for Mrs. Dale is a happy marriage. She and Mr. Dale have been married for over fifty years. "Being able to be individuals, do our own thing," she explains. "If you can't be yourself and do the things that make you happy, it will only bring unhappiness into the relationship...you have to realize you are two different people and allow the other person to be themselves..."

“I completely agree”, I interrupted, “I see so many people that get jealous of their spouses, wanting to spend every minute with them, wanting to know where they are at all times.”

“Yeah, it’s not good.” She replied, shaking her head in agreement.

Although I’m currently single and I’m guilty of wanting to spend every second with the person I was with in my past relationships, I hope in a future one I won’t be. Looking back now at my last relationship, I can see how there were times when I wanted to go out on my own but felt like I couldn’t without upsetting my boyfriend. I’m sure the same goes for him as well.

I can see how all of these relates to being happy with yourself. Doing the things that makes you feel good inside and out, which in some cases like mine isn’t so easy. First you have to figure out who you are in order to figure out what makes you happy. You also need to be happy with the people around you, and you have to accept them for who they are. Mrs. Dale’s last piece of advice was, “The BEST part of life is growing and adapting to our changing situations,” and I couldn’t agree more.

## **Learning From Another's Experience: An Interview with Jane Stroyen**

### **By Travis Marling**

Recently, my English class and I conducted interviews with some local seniors at St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church. Instead of the traditional classroom learning environment, we wanted to jump outside of the box and get some views and opinions from real people with real experience.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Mrs. Jane Stroyan, a very outgoing and strongly opinionated wife and mother of four. We discussed topics like family, personal values, gender roles, and money.

Mrs. Stroyan was born in June of 1944. She grew up in Albion where she attended high school and graduated with the class of 1962. She recalled meeting with her high school guidance counselor about halfway through her senior year to talk about careers and what she was going to do after graduating. When Jane sat down with her, she was asked if she wanted to be a nurse, teacher, or a secretary. When I asked her what her other options were, she replied, "That was it; there were no other options." I was shocked to hear that her guidance counselor was the one who told her this, the one who is supposed to help guide you to the career of your choice. Then Jane explained to me that's how engrained gender roles were during the time period.

If you think about that today, I think the counselor would have been fired. Jane and I agreed that if today you were to tell someone, male or female, that there was only a few options for what they could do with their life, it would be unheard of. We all understand that a woman can do anything a man can and visa versa.

Next, Jane and I went over family and values. We talked about how Jane and her family had a home cooked meal almost every night, and how her family would sit at the table and talk about their day. Jane and her family wouldn't just talk about their own life; they spoke about relevant things like the economy and politics. They cared about what was going on in the world.

I told Jane that when I was younger, I could remember having the same type of home cooked meals almost every night. My family and I would also talk, during and after, about our lives and issues that were relevant at the time. Then I went on to tell her I remembered those home cooked sit down dinners slowly fading to maybe once a week. We both agreed that the fast paced technological society that we live in today is destroying the family unit. Jane explained to me the importance of communicating, especially with kids. She told me it is best to let your children learn on their own, but if you're going to do that, you must stand behind them when they need you. When I asked her, "How do you do that?" She replied, "It's easy: you must do things with them together as a family, that's how."

Jane also believes that you have to admit your flaws and when you're wrong, which I couldn't agree with more. I've learned from past experiences the meaning of this, the self-respect you get when you admit you're wrong or that you've made a mistake is great, not to mention the respect you get from other people.

Another thing that Jane explained to me she valued was helping people who need it. She said " We're here on this earth to help others." I guess I never really gave this much thought until meeting Jane, but

she's right. Just like they say, it's better to give than to receive. We both agreed that there are a lot of people out there that lend a helping hand, but it's never enough.

The last topic Jane and I discussed was money. Jane told me life's not about how much money you make. She said that all you needed was to make enough money to support your family and that you shouldn't compare yourself with other people financially. She told me that it used to be that debt was very uncommon, and that there were no credit cards. She said that there was no need for them, as most people didn't live outside their needs. Jane explained to me how reliable banks were and that if you needed a loan of some kind, you had to go and speak with the manager of the bank directly. Next they would check into you by asking around at your job and with your neighbors to see if you were trustworthy and responsible enough to take a loan.

However, today it's just the opposite. Today, all you hear about is debt. Whether it's student loans or a mortgage, almost everyone has some form of debt. The same for credit cards: they make it easy today to get into debt with all the loan options and credit cards available. Jane and I agreed that if the banks checked into people like they used to, half the people would never get approved in the first place. As far as making enough money to support your family, I agree to some point but I think that today, people are judged very harshly on their financial worth, so I think that people feel like they need to live with all extra things they don't really need and that's what causes the debt.

All in all, I thought the interview with Jane was great. I learned a lot from her past experiences, and getting an insight on some of her opinions and values just may have changed some of mine.