

Gardner Newsletter



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Alabaster Offering

By Paul Gardner as well as excerpts from the WorldWide Web

In our last issue, 2nd Generation Gardner Cousin, Kelsie Griffes, contributed a wonderful article about three generations of Gardners who attended, and still are attending, Eastern Nazarene College. The Gardner Newsletter, over the years, has had several articles about how Grandma and Grandpa Gardner (along with several other families) founded the East Charleston Church of the Nazarene in the early 1950's.

The East Charleston Church of the Nazarene was under construction when Jean, Linda and I went to live with Grandma and Grandpa Gardner. I vividly remember one particular evening service at the newly constructed building. The climax of the event was the celebration of the Nazarene Church's "Alabaster Offering." (*We will learn about the history of that later on in this article.*) The protocol was

for each person to offer his or her "Alabaster" offering by coming forward to the front of the church and placing the money in a little church bank placed on the offering table.

During that time period, Wesley Hinton, a local indigent man, came to almost every Nazarene church service. (*Perhaps a friend or relative of his was the "tramp" that Aunt Lois kissed, as mentioned in the Gardner Newsletter a few issues back.*) Be-

cause of his life's circumstance, Wesley was less than meticulous about his appearance and often-times exuded a potent aroma reminiscent of a burgeoning landfill. Not wanting to deny Wesley of his "right to worship," Grandpa Gardner allowed him to attend every service, but segregated him from the rest of the

congregation. He was unceremoniously confined to a folding chair in the very back of the auditorium. None of that seemed to matter to Wesley.

Unfortunately, for the rest of us, Wesley's folding chair was placed right over the open heat register,

and the offending fragrance wafted throughout the sanctuary more so than if he had been allowed to sit with the rest of us. Is there a lesson there? Maybe. In any case, Wesley decided he

wanted to come to the front of the auditorium and contribute his Alabaster offering.

After everyone else had made their contribution, Wesley slowly sauntered to the front of the church down the center aisle. There was a decided hush as everyone watched him intently. When he got

to the table where the little church bank was, he began taking things out of his pocket, one by one, and laid them, almost reverentially, on the table. There was a pocket knife, a used handkerchief, all kinds of little folded papers. Then, (gasp!) a full package of cigarettes! He finally produced one shiny quarter. With an obvious flourish, he deposited it into the bank. He slowly put everything back into his pockets, one item at a time (including the cigarettes that were, it seemed at the time, given to him by the devil himself). He shuffled back to his assigned seat with a satisfied grin knowing that he had done his part to further Nazarene international missions work.

That brings us to the concept of the "Alabaster Offering" itself.

History of Alabaster Offering

In 1948, Rev. Elizabeth



Rev. Elizabeth Vennum



TAPS

By Tyler Seeholzer

From his Facebook page

America,

When you live on base housing you wake up to reveille, come home to the national anthem and go to sleep to Taps... All played on a 'giant voice' sound system that easily cuts through the walls of your home like butter.

Tonight, as taps played, I happened to be outside returning from a friend's home and checking on his dog... I turned, faced the music, closed my eyes, and listened....

I thought of the 6 Airmen we lost a week ago today in Afghanistan, the Marine we learned we lost this week on this very base, and of my family sleeping soundly behind me while I took each note in a little more clearly than I have in years... And I realized something I wanted to share...

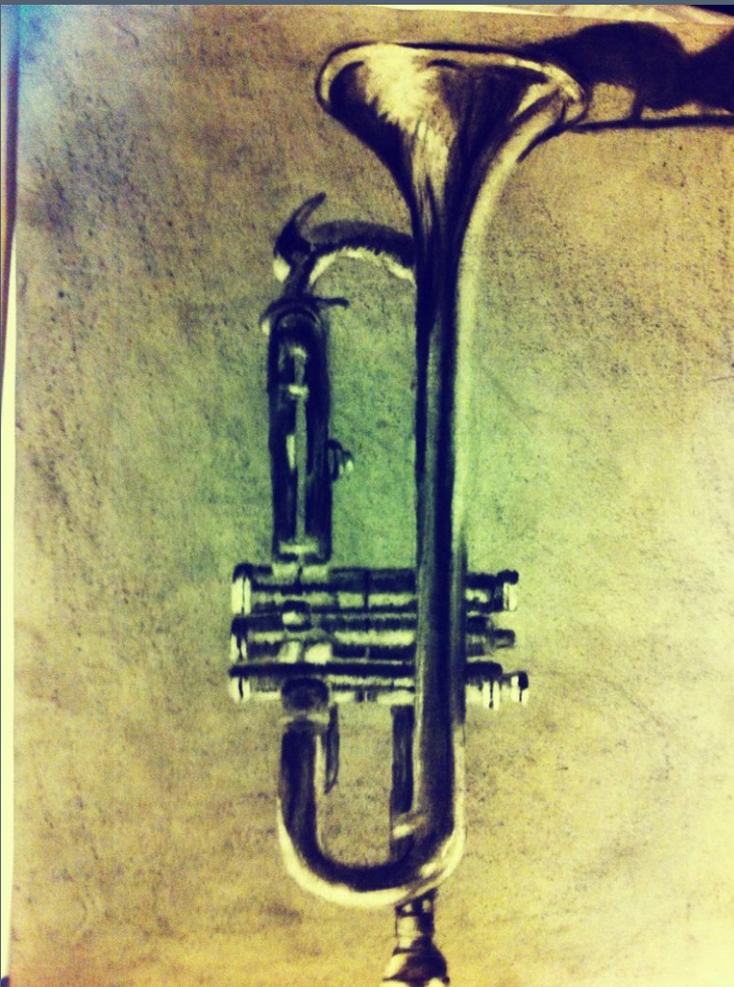
This thing we do... Not just the 7 percent of us that raise our right hand, but this thing we ALL do in the name of our family or of love is pretty huge. It's called sacrifice.

It drives some of us to fight in foreign lands, pushes some of us to depths of our own mind that we sometimes can't return from, but it's a conscious choice we make because we place the life of another ahead of ours. Whether you wear a uniform or not, we all choose to do it... It's what wakes us up in the morning... Or what should... Right?

Taps means something to me... And to many others... Because it represents a final call. It is played in remembrance of so many loved ones who chose to sacrifice of themselves for the love of another. It's not always with their lives, but it is always with their hearts.

I once had to create a mantra in a resiliency course that defined my perspective of others. I dialed it down to three simple words:

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Venum, Global Council member, was asked to think and pray about a challenging project for Nazarene Missions International (NMI). Rev. Venum knew if God wanted the project to take place, He would provide the plan. On the return trip from Kansas City, God gave her His plan of giving “love” gifts. It was modeled after the sacrifice of the woman who anointed Jesus’ head with expensive perfume poured from an alabaster jar (Matthew 26:6-13).

At the Global NMI Council meeting in 1949, Mrs. Venum told of the Alabaster plan God had given her. The Council unanimously adopted the plan, and the first offering was received in 1949.

The Board of General Superintendents approved the plan for Alabaster funds to be used exclusively for buildings and properties in cross-cultural ministries.

Now, more than 60 years later, Alabaster is still strong, having provided more than 9,000 projects since 1949. Faithful Nazarenes around the world have given over \$100 million dollars for this much-needed ministry.

The Alabaster Offering provides funds for property and buildings around the world. While we understand the church consists of the people of God and not a building, buildings erected for the purpose of ministry help provide a sense of permanence, functionally enhance ministry efforts, and convey an attitude that the Church of the Nazarene intends to “put down roots.” Alabaster funds help provide land for many Work & Witness projects, and the entire Alabaster Offering goes toward the purchase of land and construction of churches, schools, medical facilities, and homes for missionaries and national workers



How Are Alabaster Offerings Received?

The Alabaster Offering gets to the mission field via several avenues. The most widely used is the Alabaster Box. Individuals are challenged to regularly contribute the cost of items they desire but do not need. The boxes also serve as reminders to pray for those people who will benefit from Alabaster buildings.

In September and February, the money is collected. Sometimes a “march offering” is received with individuals carrying their boxes to the front of the church and pouring the money into a large offering container. (This was the case at that Nazarene service many years ago in East Charleston.) The way an offering is received is as varied as the world areas in which the Church of the Nazarene has a presence; however, it is always accompanied with a spirit of rejoicing.

Many churches receive regular offerings throughout the year that are designated as Alabaster funds. (This is often a part of the Faith Promise plan for missions giving.) However, the semi-annual offerings should still be received, allowing opportunity for giving by those not participating in other ways.

Alabaster should be well-publicized. All ages are encouraged to participate with leaders educating local churches as to the need for centers of holiness evangelism around the world.

I like to think that Wesley Hinton’s gift of one solitary quarter given by someone who had no resources at all is a powerful reminder of how good things can happen when many others, perhaps like Wesley, perhaps like ourselves, contribute to a cause that has world-wide outreach.



Tyler and Chantelle Seeholzer

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People mean well.

I still believe that holds true for the vast majority of us. We mean well, and our interest is generally for another. For me, it’s for my family sleeping as I type, it’s for my neighbor who trusted me with his dog over the holidays, and for all those who currently choose to give of themselves because of the love they have

for those they hold dear.

That’s what I think of when Taps plays... Tonight a little more consciously than others... But it makes me grateful I live somewhere where I am reminded of the importance of what we do so wholly, every day.

God bless America, and you... Good night



Match the photos with the names appearing in the table

Did you read Kelsie Griffes' article in our last issue? It was about all the Gardner's who attended, and still are attending, Eastern Nazarene College. The table below lists all the people mentioned in that article. See if you can draw an arrow from the First Name column to the appropriate picture. Perhaps you should re-read Kelsie's article from the previous newsletter.



Who's Who!		
LAST NAME	FIRSTNAME	INDETIFIER
Whitney (Cove)	Nancy	Gardner cousin, wife of Pastor Dan Whitney, daughter of "Original Gang of Ten" member, Elinor Cove
Metcalf (Gardner) (deceased)	Ruth	Oldest "Original Gang of Ten" member and first of the Gardners to attend Eastern Nazarene College, mother of Cousin Geri
Cove (Gardner) (deceased)	Elinor	Original Gang of Ten member and the second Gardner to attend Eastern Nazarene College, mother of Cousins Nancy and Chris
Cove (deceased)	Dick	Husband of Elinor Gardner and Nancy Whitney's and Chris Cove's father
Griffes (Gardner)	Beulah	Youngest "Original Gang of Ten Member, wife of Don Griffes, third Gardner to attend Eastern Nazarene College, Kelsie Griffes' grandmother
Vasko (Johnson)	Teresa	Gardner cousin, daughter of "Original Gang of Ten" member, Elizabeth Johnson, retired math teacher
Metcalf	Geri	Gardner cousin, daughter of "Original Gang of Ten" member, Ruth Metcalf, music major at ENC
Cove	Christopher	Gardner cousin, son of "Original Gang of Ten" member, Elinor Cove, renowned heart surgeon, former ENC student
Manchester (Griffes)	Sharon	Gardner cousin and aunt of Kelsie Griffes, daughter of Beulah Griffes
Griffes	Len	Gardner cousin and uncle of author Kelsie Griffes, owner of NEVTEC in Newport, VT, son of Beulah Griffes
Griffes	Jay	Gardner cousin, husband of Kim Griffes, and son of Beulah and Don Griffes
Hosford (Griffes)	Sheryl	Gardner cousin, daughter of Beulah and Don Griffes, married to Gary Hosford, NEVTEC employee
Whitney	Dan	Pastor of Manchester Church of the Nazarene and husband of Nancy Whitney
Gardner	Will	Patriarch of the Gardner family who fathered all of the "Original Gang of Ten," married Olive Lucy French
Griffes	Kelsie	Daughter of Jay and Kim Griffes, music major at Eastern Nazarene College, author of the article about ENC, 2nd generation Gardner cousin
Griffes	Kim	Wife of Jay Griffes who met Kim while attending ENC, and is Kelsie Griffes' mother
Whitney	Greg	Son of Dan and Nancy Whitney who is presently attending Eastern Nazarene College
Griffes (deceased)	Don	Grandfather of Kelsie Griffes, husband of Beulah Griffes, founder of NEVTEC



Why is TAPS used at all military funerals?



It all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The captain lit a lantern.

Suddenly, he caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when

the war broke out. Without telling his father, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status.

His request was partially granted. The captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for the son at the funeral.

That request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. Out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of his dead son's uniform. This wish was granted. This music was the haunting melody we now know as "Taps" that is used at all military funerals.



English Language “Oddities”

There is no egg in eggplant, no ham in the hamburger and neither pine nor apple in the pineapple. English muffins were not invented in England. French fries were not invented in France. We sometimes take English for granted, but if we examine its paradoxes, we find that quicksand takes you down slowly. Boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. If writers write, how come fingers don't fing? If the plural of tooth is teeth, shouldn't the plural of phonebooth be phonebeeth? If the teacher taught, why didn't the preacher praught. If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what the heck does a humanitarian eat? Why do people recite at a play yet play at a recital? Park on

driveways and drive on parkways. How can the weather be as hot as hell on one day and as cold as hell on another? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language where a house can burn up as it burns down. And in which you fill in a form by filling it out. And a bell is only heard once goes! English was invented by people, not computers. And it reflects the creativity of the human race (which of course isn't a race at all). That is why when the stars are out, they are visible. But when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why it is that when I wind up my watch, it starts? But when I wind up this poem, it ends.



**Please, please send
in your articles for the
Spring and Summer
2016 Newsletter issues!**