

Blessings Aren't for Counting

By Maurice Carter in *The Covington News* – November 25, 2012

Perhaps it's a cliché – the columnist recounting all he has to be grateful for in this season of Thanksgiving. But, the problem with the obvious truths in our lives is that we've forgotten they're actually true.

So, with apologies to no one, here's my personal accounting of the bountiful blessings for which I am most grateful. May my list inspire you to see a few you had forgotten in your own life.

In no particular order, I am thankful...

I have friends who treat me like family and family who treat me like a friend.

That, at age 53, I still cry each December watching *It's a Wonderful Life*, reminded we are deeply connected to one another and our actions have lasting meaning for friends, family, and strangers.

I can still laugh until I cry watching *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* on DVD with friends, giggling well before the gags and blurting out the lines we know by heart – sometimes even in July.

That 19,408 times I've been lucky enough to wake and find the sun rising with me to share another precious day.

For calendars and calculators.

That I live in a magical place with neighbors who don't erect fences that isolate, but instead create gates, steps, and walkways that connect – figuratively and literally.

That I've survived all the stupid things I've done in life, stumbled upon some smarter ones, and maybe, just maybe, I'm learning to make the latter more common than the former.

For recognizing the really memorable moments in life are a result of asking "why not?" without waiting around for an answer.

For wagging tails, purring cats, and dogs that lick my face.

That someone still wants to hold my hand more than 30 years after she first placed a band of gold upon it.

For the natural ways passing time, like wind and water over rock, makes smooth the rough places in our lives and in our selves, bringing beauty and peace to those with patience to see it through.

That truly amazing grace manifests itself in the least likely places, especially in the unbroken spirit of those who have suffered great hardships while losing neither dignity nor hope.

For learning to love life more and fear death less, realizing that the moment of letting go is when we encounter the pure preciousness of those we have held.

For good food, wine, and fellowship savored with all my senses and more.

That we live in a world sustained by selfless acts... old people planting young trees... the able-bodied building handicapped-accessible parks... the diabetic fixing dessert for family to enjoy... adults tutoring someone else's children.

For friendships that span decades, ever fresh and never altered by lapses of weeks, months, or years between visits.

For nagging aches and pains that won't let me forget this body of mine is stamped with instructions which read: "Best if used by today."

That I'm happy with who I am, but still have others who inspire me to imagine who I want to be when I "grow up."

For outdoor living on winter evenings when the air is crisp and clear, but a crackling fire and the embrace of friendship bring soul-soothing warmth to our cozy backyard retreat.

For the smell of salt air, sounds of waves crashing and sea gulls calling, and the feel of ocean breeze on my skin that are as real now when I close my eyes as when I stand on the beach.

For purple mountains' majesty.

That I learned from an early age to see possibilities -- not limitations -- and to create good in the world around me.

For positive people.

For that whispered voice inside me that believes there could still be a Santa Claus, that maybe reindeer can fly, and perhaps so can I.

For hope -- not because it is given, but because I choose it.

That so far all those bumps in the night, the funny spots upon my skin, or the pains in unusual places have all turned out to be nothing.

For the simple beauty of honesty.

That I have enough patience to survive the grocery store a day before Thanksgiving and self-awareness to laugh when I lose that patience.

For this jumbled, sometimes overloaded mind that remains an accessible treasure trove of memories that make me smile.

Though I will not live forever, that how I live can cause others to remember forever that I lived.

For people who read my words.

That I lost count long ago.

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