

October

AGING *GRACIOUSLY*

A Newsletter for UUCGV Seniors and Near-Seniors
Honoring Duane Carr who exemplified living graciously and started an Aging Graciously group.

Gracious: Amiable, compassionate. Congenial, considerate. Courteous, good natured, loving, benevolent, big hearted, charitable, merciful, obliging.

Gracious Harvesting

October is the month when farmers and gardeners harvest crops. Most of us are not able to do that, but we can harvest the results of having lived a long time.

One senior citizen, quoted in the book *A Life Complete*, provides a possible answer as to our crop: “We’re lucky. We develop the humor, love, joy, and humility to discover life again – as a child. That is wisdom. And it usually takes old age to find it.” Humor, love, joy, and humility.

Humor? Maybe the absurd antics of younger people and politicians. We can find humor also in the behavior of children and pets, even wild animals. Real YouTube posting: A bear steals a box of toilet paper from the front porch of a home! All-to-real jokes about getting old. Maybe a cartoon that hits home.

Love? The patience to listen to a spouse, partner, or family member. The ability to support a friend in learning a new activity. Providing a spontaneous hug to a loved one. Taking care in selecting an appropriate birthday card for someone. Simply smiling at a stranger or thanking a store clerk.

Joy? Getting a message from an old friend. Stepping into a warm bath or a hot tub. Having someone scratch or massage your back. Waking up to sunshine. Invited to lunch by friends. To cook up a favorite meal and then sit down and enjoy it. Having someone put a hand on your shoulder.

Humility? Knowing that it is okay to let someone go by you in a supermarket aisle. To be able to look at an old tree or a very old rock formation in awe. Recognizing that earlier achievements have been made moot by progress; Or to look at the night sky and realize how small we are...

Planted, nurtured, and harvested wisdom.

Celebrating Our Guardian Angels (Not the Mythical Ones Floating Overhead)

Halloween is a holiday that dates to Celtic days. It is the day that is halfway between the Fall solstice and Winter equinox on the Celtic annual calendar. It was devoted, in various places and times, to witches, goblins and ghosts. Because they were considered evil, people offered sweet treats to appease the malevolent spirits. Pope Gregory III saw an opportunity to convert the celebration to a Christian holiday in which folks would remember all the Catholic saints. Hence, "All Saints Day."

Recently I made a list of the people who supported, nurtured, and inspired me. My personal Guardian Angels. The list included two people from undergraduate days, four during professional work, one a graduate school faculty and another a Hopi (when I did volunteer work for the National Park Service). Last and most certainly not least is my wife.

I realized that I needed to celebrate their contributions to my life and that my own All Angels Day would be a good time to reflect and offer thanks. That is what I am going to do on the evening of October 31 while the neighborhood kiddies are out grabbing candy. I will devote time to thinking of my "angels" and how they not only transformed but saved my life.

A Reflection on Success

"The problem...had something to do with having finally arrived and wondering what I had arrived at."

Luciano Pavarotti.

Ponder

"Home is not where you were born. Home is where all your attempts to escape cease."

Naguib Mahfouz

Closing Words

"What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action."

Meister Eckhart*

*First Christian mystic who believed people could have direct access to God; tried and convicted of heresy by Pope John XXII.