

Author's BAZAAR

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Editor's Note

Dean Rea

After writing a review of one of the most delightful books I have read during my lifetime, I realized that we needed photographs to illustrate the story that appears in this issue of *Author's Bazaar*.

In an effort to locate an e-mail address to get in touch with the Tales of the Lonesome Pine Used Bookstore in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, I discovered that the free people search sites on the Internet aren't free. So, I did what any journalist should have done in the first place: I obtained a telephone number from the chamber of commerce there.

A pleasant voice answered my telephone call and said that photographs I requested of the bookstore and of the proprietors, Wendy Welch and Jack Beck, were available and would be sent to me via e-mail.

Turns out the voice was that of Wendy, author of "The

Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap,” the book that I had reviewed. She was as friendly as her book and confirmed that Buelah, the cat, was sitting in the sun awaiting customers.

I trust that you will enjoy meeting the characters at my favorite bookstore starting on page 10.

Dave Griffin turns serious on us in his short story, “Guardian,” which first appeared in 2009. Delores Miller recounts memories of choosing to work as a hired girl while in high school because she was too frightened to take a train to Chicago where she could have been a nanny. A couple of poems and a photograph add a change-of-pace.

Lee Kirk confirms that her dog Bimbo really did climb a tree. Tina Howard shares her secrets in making sauerkraut. After reading her instructions, I decided to stick with something easy, like editing *Author's Bazaar*.

Guardian

By David Griffin

He was young, barely handsome. She was pretty, hardly 20. Through the falling snow they strolled to where I waited in the Horse and Carriage Parking zone at 59th Street on the edge of New York's Central Park. I might have guessed their path would cross mine.

He did all the talking. She listened, sometimes raptly. At other times, her gaze wandered off to anything of interest, but her attention always returned to him, eyes watching him with humor, and surely with love. The girl's look said she had decided on him — for better or worse. It's a look I always recognize and sometimes lament.

“Oh, it's a beautiful snowfall,” she said.

“Let's go to Tavern On The Green,” he replied.

“Take me in the Hansom Cab. Oh, please,” she pleaded, her face lighting up with a smile.”

But he said his funds were meager and would barely

cover two drinks at the tavern. A taxi, too, was out of the question. The young man persuaded the girl to walk and suggested a route that would take them north and then across the park on the east-west road at 65th Street. It was now beginning to snow heavily again. Four inches were already down, making the streets a mess.

I nudged the fellow beside me and nodded toward the



young couple. He shook his head in disagreement. I stepped on his foot and leaned heavily. He quickly relented and offered the couple a free ride in our carriage along the

route they had chosen “because we’re going home that way, anyway.”

I truly hoped they would ride with us. Walking on the road through Central Park in a blinding snowstorm is something only an idiot would attempt or a barely handsome young man. I suppose I shouldn’t be so harsh. In truth, I often do it myself. And after all, as the young wom-

an said, it was a lovely snowfall. It's impossible to describe the beauty of falling snow in New York City. The charm in part stems from the covering of the city's many visual sins. Then too, the mantel of pure white helps to hush the incessant noise of a million automobiles.

I was relieved when the couple accepted our offer and climbed up into the carriage. Had they been native New Yorkers, they might have refused us with suspicion. And maybe with reason because my partner, free on a kind of parole from a place you seldom hear about anymore, is not the most angelic looking individual. The top hat doesn't improve him and barely hides his horns. Myself, you wouldn't take notice of me unless I were standing in your living room, all 1,400 pounds of me, swishing my tail and leaving hoof prints on your Oriental carpet.

It was indeed a wonderful evening to be out and about in the city, but perhaps not a great night for a carriage ride through the center of the park. Each driver coming up from behind insisted on passing, swishing his car in the snow and sliding around us, often getting hardly beyond the carriage before an oncoming car zoomed down on us like a bobsled. Cabbies tooted, swore and seemed to aim at us as I strained to pull the carriage behind me off to the side each time a vehicle careened our way.

New York City drivers should stay at home when the snow falls, but foul weather brought them out that night. As conditions worsened, so did their driving skills, common sense and demeanor. They were like crazed battalions of novice soldiers turning more inept as they continued to lose the battle.

I began to feel sorry for myself and wished I'd let my lazy devil of a partner talk me out of this last trip of the evening. He and I are from two separate worlds, as different as night and day. We were paired for that reason to better understand humans.

We persisted and delivered the young couple safely to the tavern. I'm sure they quickly ran out of money. But that's not my concern. I'll come across the two again. Keeping lovers safe while helping out a little is why we're here. You could say we're old softies, especially for the younger lovebirds.



You may call us whatever you like ... heralds, guardians, cupids. Not all of us have the youth and beauty of an Adonis or Psyche. We take the physical form we're given. I'm sometimes sorry I wasn't made to fly. The view up there is wonderful, surely a lot

better than down here between the traces of my harness. If I were an eagle, you would see my wings spread in grandeur, rather than watch my backside clomping along ahead of you.

Ah, but wishes are for the young. Life has only so many magical evenings and snowy walks in the park. Age will bring wisdom to expose the conceit of self-reliance and with it a dawning awareness that a carriage of benevolence has carried us through the storm.

David Griffin © 2009
www.windsweptpress.com

Sunset in the West Texas Wild Mountains

Sheryl L. Nelms



five dragonflies
do a square
dance

over the garden

full of tomatoes
and zucchini
cucumbers
and pithed
radishes

in the distance
a deer
steps

from the grove
of live
oaks

lifts her head

then jumps
the fence

into the black-eyed peas



"The place felt snug and cozy the moment we walked in despite its voluminous size," Wendy Welch writes about the house they purchased near two intersections in a residential area.

We read books and tell stories to find each other.

— Wendy Welch

A book review

My Favorite Bookstore

By Dean Rea

As you enter the Edwardian mansion, you notice the bookshelves that line the walls, the squeaky hardwood floors and Beulah sitting on a mat, licking her paws.

There you discover a story about a couple who — on a whim — purchased this two-story, five-bedroom house and turned it into a used bookstore in a struggling Virginia coal-mining town.

In this memoir, “The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap,” Wendy Welch describes how she and her husband Jack, a Scotsman, abandoned workaholic careers and a life of travel after discovering the house in Big Stone Gap, an Appalachian mountain community of about 5,000 people.

You take the journey vicariously with Wendy as she shares how they built and stocked the bookshelves, promoted the business that townspeople believed would fail and found themselves with a limited number of books and little cash to buy more books days before the opening.

“The Grand Opening had that surreal quality of a wedding when it’s yours,” Wendy writes. “Is this really happening? Did we actually pull it off? And is the kid sitting in the parked car out front using an e-reader? (We decided we didn’t believe in omens. A firm sense of denial can be a dream-turned-business-owner’s greatest asset.)”

Then the reader meets customers whose lives are in tur-



Jack Beck and Wendy Welch

moil, those who as just looking for a book and one who could not read. Eventually, books cram every available space on the first floor, including a space above the cat's litter box. Wendy and Jack live upstairs.

“While browsing for books, visitors re invited to sit a spell — in fact, a sign tells them to do just that — and sip a cup of coffee or tea while nibbling on homemade short-bread,” Wendy writes. While there, you can buy or swap books — used, of course.

“To entice people to drop in, we devised special events featuring music, stories or crafts,” Wendy writes. “These

would play to our natural strengths. As past director of an arts organization back in Scotland, I'm used to making things go, while Jack spent the last forty years playing gigs at festivals, clubs and coffeehouses."

On one occasion, the pastor of a church used a bit of salty language in playing a role during a mystery night performance. By Sunday, the guy was defending his entire ministry. That "Pastorgate" eventually blew over as do most problems in a small community.

Wendy eventually persuades her husband to join a civic club to help promote the bookstore. They picked the Kiwanian chapter because it boasted many of the town's movers and shakers. They did not know, however, that one of the movers and shakers held a personal grudge against Wendy.

Shortly after Jack applied, he received a rejection letter, which prompted him to buy an oak frame and to hang the letter in a prominent place in the bookstore.

During the next five years, the bookstore became an important place to visit, not only to buy or to trade used books, but also to share stories. For example, writing club members who met there encouraged Wendy while she wrote this book, which was published last year.

Wendy is adamant that secondhand book dealers will

survive the onslaught of Big Box stores and Internet book retailers and includes a chapter describing a regional tour of bookstores she and Jack visited.

In summarizing what she and Jack learned through establishing and operating a bookstore, Wendy writes, “If I had to pinpoint the biggest gift this place has given us, it would be creating a sense of belonging, of community.”

Wendy does that so artfully that the reader is hesitant to finish reading the book, ending what develops into a love affair with Big Stone Gap and a bookstore where you are always welcome.



Dixie strikes an "author's pose" for photographer Crystal Tillman



The Hired Girl

By Delores Miller

It was the summer of 1954, the year between by sophomore and junior year of high school. In central Wisconsin a summer cash crop was a half-acre of cucumbers, and young people picked the blasted pickles to earn cold hard cash. Some raised beans to be picked for four cents a pound and hauled to the canning factory in Clintonville.

Being a hired girl was one step up from bending over in the hot sun. Pickles had to be picked every day, rain or shine with mosquitoes sucking blood.

Some teenage girls migrated to the Chicago area to be nannies for rich people in the summer. I was too frightened to get on the train to travel south that far. So my only option was to be a hired girl. This was a 12-hour-a-day job with Sundays off.

It was with a dairy farm family north of Marion. Big Holstein cows, which produced 40 cans of milk a day, hauled to the Caroline Gold Cheese Factory. My pay was a dollar a day, or seven precious dollars a week. Baby-sitting four small mischievous whippersnappers, two in cloth diapers. (Today in 2013 these lads have grown up, became responsible citizens of the community, nearing retirement.)

I cleaned the house, scrubbed floors, ironed white shirts, house dresses, children's clothes. Cooking for that family of six, plus the multiple hired men. The missus was a very good cook and made delicious cakes, pies and cookies. Some recipes I still use. The hired men got paid three dollars a day for a 12-hour work schedule, and for that they had to maintain an automobile, drink, carouse, dance at the Caroline Ballroom and court the girls. They earned their money. The military draft was looming over young

men's heads, hence working on farms earned deferment. Some threw in the towel and joined the Marines anyhow.

The task I dreaded most was cutting a half-acre of grass. Granted, even in those days they had a power mower with a rope pull starter, which I could never get started. Then it would snub in the tall wet grass. Leg cramps at night. Small pine trees I clipped off, whoops!

This was a happy, church-going, social family and they treated me well, even though I was the hired girl. The Mister and Missus died a few years ago, we hired men and hired girls went to their funerals, sat together in a church pew and remembered how hard we worked way back then.

On being a smart dog



By Lee Kirk

It was Bimbo's theory that there are three kinds of dogs: smart dogs, dumb dogs, and "other." The smugness with which he placed himself in the first category suggests that he was probably the only canine to occupy that position.

Most dogs fell into the second division, including his best pal, a young Cocker Spaniel named Albert, who tolerated Bimbo's conceited cleverness because Bimbo could always be counted on to change an otherwise boring day into one filled with events.

The two dogs would be sprawled on the lawn watching each other's fur grow when Bimbo would suddenly leap to his feet.

"Hey!" you could almost hear him shout. "What a great day! Let's sneak off for a swim in the river." Or, "Good grief," his attitude would say, "let's stir up some excitement — let's nose around the neighbor's bee hives!" (They indulged themselves in that last adventure only once.)

One of Bimbo's favorite pastimes was tug-of-war, a game he decided to teach to Albert.

Bimbo grabbed the tail of an old shirt and shook it vigorously, then attempted to stuff it into Albert's mouth. After several tries, Albert took it. Bimbo raced to the other end, grabbed and tugged. Albert let the rag slide from his lips. Again! Bimbo demanded. Something finally dawned in Albert's pancake-shaped brain and he gripped the shirt in his teeth. As the idea enlarged in him, he held on harder. He braced his short legs against the ground and growled and yanked until his eyes were like brown ping-pong balls about to bounce from his head. It was the moment Bimbo had waited for. He let go of the shirt.

Albert tumbled over backward in a jumble of old shirt and flying ears, and landed in a heap halfway across the yard with what appeared to be the wrong end wagging.

Bimbo grinned.

When Albert grew tired of his new vocation as acrobat, Bimbo suggested the next game: tag. As usual, Bimbo was “It.” Tag was hardly fair. Bimbo’s English Springer Spaniel blood was evident in his vivid black-and-white coloring and long, silky fur; while German Shepherd dominated his build. His athletic legs were made to outrun a cocker’s stubby appendages.

This particular game of tag involved two complete circuits of the house, a circle of the apple tree at the back of the property (carefully avoiding the bee hives), once under the rabbit hutch and back around the house. Then Bimbo raced down the sidewalk to the vacant lot and climbed a tree. Panting and grinning, he stretched out on a fat branch that hung over the road, while Albert collapsed on the ground, heaving enormous sighs and rolling his eyes in disbelief.

Bimbo had taught himself to climb this tree. Its limbs and those of its straggly neighbors crisscrossed to form a ladder ideal for the clambering of a determined canine. Bimbo managed a remarkable air of dignity for a dog up a tree. His tail fluttered like a silken banner and he lifted his nose regally to every passing breeze.

Sometimes when a car passed the house, there’d be a

sudden screech and the scrunch of braking tires on gravel. Amazed faces and wildly gesticulating arms would appear at the open windows of the halted vehicle, pointing at the large black-and-white dog lolling in the branches of a tree. As for Bimbo, he never grinned until they were gone.

Bimbo's third classification of canines, "other," included the Great Dane at the end of the block. He was the sort of dog people cross the street to avoid. The other neighborhood dogs tried to avoid him, too. Bimbo was certainly too smart to take on the Dane, but one day he found himself in a confrontation he couldn't avoid. His only defense was political diplomacy.

The butcher at the nearby market offered free dog bones for the asking, and one day he produced the all-time prize: a long, meaty beef leg with gristly knobs at both ends. Presented with this treasure, Bimbo was in heaven.

He lay in the front yard gnawing ecstatically at the knuckly ends of the bone. His eyes were nearly closed with trance-like pleasure. He was unaware when the Dane strolled by, moving with that kind of loose-jointed power you see in heavy weight wrestlers or a well-oiled locomotive.

The Dane spotted Bimbo and the bone, and stopped. His docked ears pointed forward like compass needles. He ex-

tended his neck to its yardstick length. His nose twitched spasmodically and his eyes narrowed.

Bimbo chewed on in blissful ignorance as the Dane approached him. He remained unaware as the other dog came to a stop, towering over him with its jaws slavering.

Perhaps it was the dripping that caught Bimbo's attention. He glanced up, back at the bone, and then up again to meet the unwavering gaze of the Dane. Bimbo looked horrified, then resigned.

"Well, hi there. How're you doing pal?" he seemed to say. Bimbo slowly pulled his front paws back until he was sitting. He glanced at the bone, then back at the Dane.

"This? You're interested in this old thing? (a-heh)," as he managed to inch backward without ever lifting his bottom from the ground. "Just something I had lying around (heh heh, gulp!) Say! Would you like to have it? Shucks, I'd just be pleased right down to the ground if you'd take this thing off my paws. A-heh."

By then he was several feet away from the bone. There was anguish all over his muzzle as the Dane's head dipped down and its massive mouth surrounded the treasure. But Bimbo sighed with relief as soon as the bone-bearing dog trotted out of the yard.

Bimbo retired glumly to the tree, where he spent the

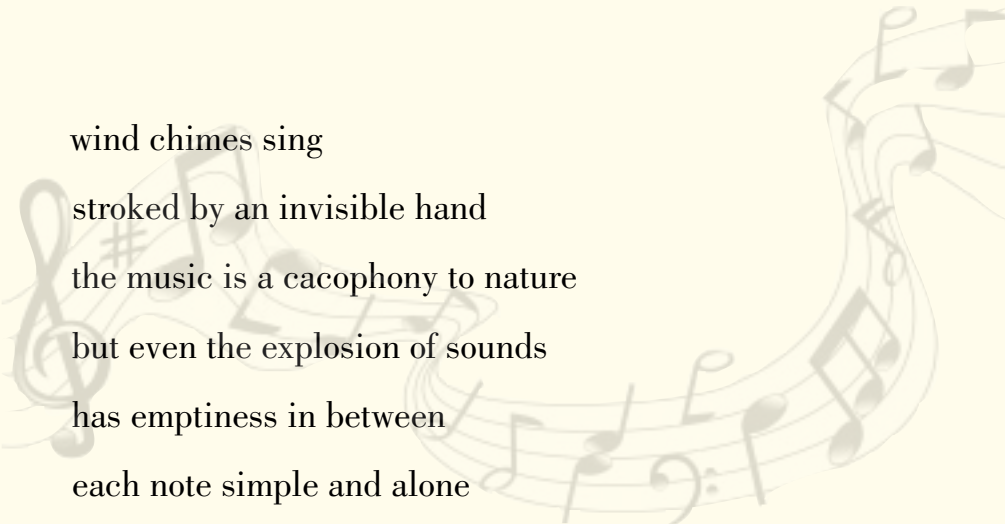
rest of the afternoon flopped out on a branch, staring into some far place.

“Being a Smart Dog isn’t everything,” he seemed to say gloomily. Another car full of astonished people stopped to gawk, then drove off again.

“But it is something,” he added as he wagged his white plume and grinned.

silent awareness

By Bruce Rea



wind chimes sing
stroked by an invisible hand
the music is a cacophony to nature
but even the explosion of sounds
has emptiness in between
each note simple and alone
who hears?
not an object nor person
just the entire universe
hearing
no hearer
no heard.

It's a piece of cake



By Tina Howard

My family made pickles, but never sauerkraut. We ate it though. A regular weeknight supper at my grandparent's house was "weenies and sauerkraut."

My husband's mother Thelma made her own kraut

when he was a baby. She said when he was toddling around, he would reach into her crocks and get handfuls of kraut to eat. Cabbage in any form is still one of his favorite vegetables.

We have sauerkraut fairly often, cooked in lots of different ways or on hot dogs. (Hebrew National, thank you.)

The health benefits of fermented cabbage or cucumbers are huge. But we don't get the same benefits when the pickles are made with vinegar, or the kraut has been processed to death and treated with all kinds of "preservatives." The lactic acid that turns cabbage into kraut, which makes it sour and prevents it from spoiling once it is fermented, comes from the action of lactobacilli. These little friendly bacteria keep our digestion working properly, help remove toxins from the blood (sauerkraut was an old staple in hospitals that treated alcoholism) and now it looks like sauerkraut can even help prevent cancers. And fermenting the cabbage bumps up the vitamin C content tremendously. (Is there nothing vitamin C can't do?)

Usually by the time I think of doing things that require time to ferment, it is already the height of summer and too hot for things to "bubble" properly. But one day in April, I took advantage of the very cool spring we had this year and tried my hand at it.

For this batch, I used a gallon glass jar. Next time, I am going to use one of grandmother's big crocks. You could easily use one of the old style "crock pots" without plugging it in. You would still need to use the plate or bag method to weight down the cabbage to keep it under the brine. Be sure to read up on how to use various containers and weights before you start. The National Center For Home Food Preservation is a reliable reference for safe canning and preserving methods. Here is the URL: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can6a_ferment.html

The recipe I used was originally an Extension Service recipe from the University of Georgia. It is the same recipe that is given in many cookbooks and other websites, but I chose this one because it is simple and the instructions are complete and matter-of-fact. I've added my notes and have given the lower portions for making a small batch.

I loved that there is also a recipe for making sauerkraut out of Collard Greens. It is too warm here in Texas for cabbage to do well, but we can grow some collards. Collards are one of those biennial vegetables that you can keep alive all through the year, making it possible to have fresh home-grown veg even in the dark of winter. The Collard Sauerkraut Recipe is just below the one for cabbage. I haven't tried it yet.

Homemade Sauerkraut Recipe

1 head of cabbage or about 5 pounds

3 tablespoons of canning or pickling salt (you could use kosher salt but not sea salt or iodized salt, the iodine will interfere)

Discard outer leaves. Rinse the whole head under cold running water and drain. Do not use disinfectants or vinegar rinses on it, just a simple wash with plain tap water.

Cut the cabbage in quarters and remove cores. Shred or slice to a thickness of a quarter (about 1/8"). You can use a knife if you don't have a mandolin but don't chop it into little bits. Long shreds are what we want. I used one head of cabbage, and shredded it fine with a mandolin (be REALLY careful with those and always use the safety guards, make sure someone else is in charge of the kids while you are using it, etc. Most important: Think and pay attention. Don't get distracted by anything.)

Add 3 tablespoons of salt. If the weather is very warm, you may need to use a little more salt. Toss well and mix thoroughly with your hands, then pack it all into your fermenting jar or crock. Leave space at the top, maybe 4 or 5 inches, for the brine to cover the cabbage completely.

Here is the hard work part: beat it down firmly to bruise it and start drawing the juice out. I used a wooden meat

pounder, or you could use a jelly mortar. I hammered on it a while until I was tired. Then I made a brine of one quart filtered water and 2 tablespoons of kosher salt, brought it to a boil, and let it cool to room temperature. After it had cooled, I poured it over the cabbage.

I added a round piece of plastic that was the diameter of the jar, sealed weights inside a freezer bag and put them down in the brine to hold the cabbage down under the brine. This time I used brine in a gallon freezer bag (actually two of them in case one leaked) and put it inside the jar to seal the whole thing. You use brine in the bag in case it leaks because plain water would dilute the sauerkraut causing it to spoil. Next time, I am going to use a crock with a plate inside it instead.

Details from my original source are found at this URL: <http://www.canningpantry.com/pickles-sauerkraut.html>

“Add plate and weights; cover container with a clean bath towel. Store at 70 to 75 °F while fermenting. At temperatures between 70 and 75 °F, kraut will be fully fermented in about 3 to 4 weeks; at 60 to 65 °F, fermentation may take 5 to 6 weeks. At temperatures lower than 60 °F, kraut may not ferment. Above 75 °F, kraut may become soft. If you weigh the cabbage down with a brine-filled bag, do not disturb the crock until normal fermentation is completed

(when bubbling ceases). If you use jars as weight, check the kraut two to three times each week and remove scum if it forms.”

I set my jar back in the floor in the guest room. That part of the house, on the south side, is always shaded so it stays pretty cool back there, especially down at the floor level because that room, one of the originals from about 1895, is on pier and beam foundation so cool air can circulate below.

It took right at 4 weeks for mine to be done, and I could tell it was done because I started smelling it! Mine did form some scum (scary looking stuff), but I just scooped and wiped it out before moving down to the good kraut.

I transferred the kraut and its juice directly into sterile pint jars and stored them in the refrigerator. My head of cabbage made 3 full pints of sauerkraut. To can for pantry storage, you would need to process in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes, just like any acidic food. There are specific instructions at the original link.

We have really enjoyed it. My husband Paul says it is the best he has ever eaten, but maybe he is partial.

As promised above, here is the recipe for fermenting collard greens!

Collard Kraut Recipe

A big bunch of fresh collard greens, about a gallon when cleaned.

2 or 3 Tablespoons of canning or pickling salt for each one gallon of collards.

Procedure: Wash the greens well, and shred. Use the same process as given for Cabbage Sauerkraut above. Store at 70 °F for fermenting. At this temperature it will take approximately 3 to 4 weeks to ferment. If any scum forms above the plate or weight, remove it about 2 to 3 times a week. Taste in about two weeks. Allow collards to ferment until desired flavor is reached.

Store in refrigerator or process in boiling water bath as directed at original link or at the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

