



March 2013

PASTOR SAM NGONG

Merle Stoltzfus

Diane and I had the privilege to travel to the orphanage where our daughter, Corinne works near Jinja, Uganda. I refer to this trip as a privilege because not many people have this kind of life changing invitation or opportunity. When considering how to convey our experience, I thought it may be best expressed by the story of Sam Ngong.

Sam was born in northern Uganda near the border of Sudan in the 1980's. When a young teen, his village was attacked by the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) and most of the teenage boys, including Sam and his older brother, were kidnapped. They were warned with the threat of torture and death not to attempt escape. They were forced to drink a strong mixture that kept them confused. His brother attempted escape and was brutalized and murdered in front of everyone including Sam. Sam was forced to testify before the other captives that his brother's demise was both good and right.

Sam began to figure out how to dispose of the intoxicating potion his captors were forcing him to drink and was able to find some other plants and liquids to quench his thirst. Several months later he prayed for God's help and fled his captors. He did not team up with any other boys in his escape in order to maximize his chances. Not knowing where he was or the whereabouts of his family, eventually he came upon a road and hid on a loaded sugar cane truck that took him many hours to the south to the sugar cane factories around Jinja. As a teenage boy, he

worked from dawn to dusk 6 days a week in these sugar cane fields just for food and a place to stay. This became his connection to Good Shepherd's Fold where my daughter, Corinne ministers.

Sam never forgot that God answered his prayers for his escape from the LRA and faithfully attended a Church on his one day off. Several people in this church were employed at Good Shepherd's Fold. There was an opening for the position of night time security guard. Even



though the wage was less, the opportunity to have a schedule that may allow him to marry was his incentive to apply. He was offered the security guard position over 50 other applicants. His Church relationships were significant to this job offer; he was known as a trustworthy man. Soon he married and now lives near GSF in a small apartment without

running water and electricity.

I met Sam on February 7, 2013, seven years after his hiring. He continues his security work at night and now is one of the pastors of his Church (without pay). On Feb. 10th, Diane and I heard him preach and worshiped with the 100+ congregation in their tin roof, brick and mud wall, windows without glass, dirt floor rented structure. The diversity of this congregation is far more challenging than any church in America can imagine. The sermon was in English (common language of Uganda) but tribal languages demanded the sermon be translated into two more languages. The congregants were dressed in a variety spanning traditional tribal robes to American styles including baseball caps. There were cell phones (yes, one went off during the service) in the same congregation as many barefoot adults.

I had the privilege of spending 10 personal hours of study with Sam in our time in Uganda.

The purpose was to help this pastor with a 9th grade education better understand the Bible. Along with study, we prayed and shared our life stories. Sam has a good grasp of the English language. So much of his life makes mine look benign, uneventful and self-serving. His experiences have developed a wealth of wisdom, compassion and gratefulness not available to us who have never endured the heart changing faith developed by the trials of his life. He is an excellent pastor. I believe I learned more than he did in our time together.

As we return, the messages screaming to me as an Elverson resident are these: 1. The hardships of life are opportunities for me to learn the depth of character I witnessed in the life of Sam Ngong. 2. The diversity we need to overcome in order to live in harmony in this Elverson community is minimal compared to much of the rest of the world (imagine if half of us spoke a different language). 3. My contentment has little to do with the amount of my material possessions. Instead contentment is directly related to my recognition and gratitude for the blessings I already have.

THE CRADLE OF IRON MAKING IN AMERICA— WHERE IS ELVERSON? RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE!

Bob Patry

Thomas Rutter, developer of the first Iron Furnace in America, had a business plan. Very much like the businessmen of today, Thomas wanted to find the right location for his business. Location has always been critical in planning. He came south into our area in 1717 from Macungie (route 100). Tom was searching for the best places to build furnaces and forges.

As soon as Thomas set his horse on the Blue Rock Path, (called Horseshoe Trail around Coventry and Ridge Road around French Creek) he knew he had met the first requirement, transportation. The other essentials became immediately apparent as he rode west. They were iron ore, water, wood, limestone and immigrants.

Today we know these locations from east to west as French Creek, Coventry, Warwick, Reading, Isabella, Poole, Windsor and mines like Jones Mine. All of these and other prime locations made us the cradle of iron making.

Unfortunately Thomas Rutter could not keep a secret! He told his friends, the Potts, Nuts and Bransons. They told their friends, the Jenkins,

Olds, and Davis. All these businessmen converged on Ridge Road and proceeded to buy thousands of acres of forests all the way to Bangor Church in Churchtown.

By 1727 the rush was on. By 1850 all the furnaces and forges mentioned were built and the men mentioned were fabulously wealthy. Many mansions were built around Churchtown since it was further away from the principal market for iron—Philadelphia.



Blue Rock, Springfield, Elverson, was in the middle. We were the half way stop. Men washed in our natural springs. They drank at the White Horse Tavern.

We had businesses and places to live. Elverson became from 1700 to 1900 what it still is today. We are proud to be a quiet suburb, located in the middle of The Cradle of the Iron Industry in America.

By the time of the Civil War, the forests were decimated. The immigrants went west. Coal replaced wood and the railroads headed for Pittsburgh.

THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES

The Community Homeschool Players have an hilarious play in store for you this Spring. On **April 5th and 6th at the Twin Valley Middle School, at 6:30 pm for the evening showings and 1:30 pm** for the afternoon show, they will be performing *The Beverly Hillbillies*, a comedy in three acts based upon the television program created by Paul Henning and adapted by David Rogers. For those of us who watched the Beverly Hillbillies television show, we remember the silliness and laughs. Remembering also dates us. For some of the young' uns involved in the drama, this is new territory, they have not seen a show. However, this has not kept them from loving it!

What makes this play season so exciting is the alumni involvement. Megan (Colmery) Pupek, the director, Kathryn Burkholder, the assistant director, along with Katie Schwartz and Autumn Jackins directing hair and costume, have all been part of the Community Homeschool Players for over ten years. All the women, except for Megan, who joined the Players in eighth grade, have been involved in the drama program since they were in third grade. This is so satisfying and reward-

ing for the parents who have been involved in the Community Home School Players for just as long.

Anyone involved with a drama knows the power it contains; power to connect, power to employ students in a worthwhile endeavor, and power to expand their horizons. The Community Homeschool Players has been a significant part of the Community Homeschool Learning Group. The learning group understands the importance of Fine Arts in a student's life. The learning group meets on Wednesdays for twenty weeks out of the school year at Conestoga Mennonite Church.



What makes a play so satisfying for the actors is audience attendance. Consider it an investment in the future. We would so enjoy having you from the Elverson

area join us. If you would like more information please contact: lynne@lynneburkholder.com.

Please mark your calendars for **April 5th & 6th and come either to the evening showings at 6:30 pm or the Saturday Matinee at 1:30 pm.**

GRANDE OLE OPRY

Join Charlie Horning for another great trip this spring, **April 28 to May 3**. Some tour inclusions and highlights include five nights lodging, nine meals, Nashville Nightlife Dinner Show, guided tours of Nashville, Ryman Auditorium, Belle Meade Plantation, backstage at the Grand Ole Opry, Barbara Mandrell's former home and the Country Music Hall of fame.

For more information and pricing call **Charlie or Sally Horning at 610-913-6712**.



Submission Deadline is March 15th

for the April issue to brenda@stoltzfus.com, 26 East Main Street or 610-286-5115. Remember to check out the newsletter *in full color* online at www.elversonboro.org.

ELVERSON'S WINTER FARMERS' MARKET ~ *Lynne Burkeholder*

The Farmers' Market at Elverson is enjoying Winter Markets for the second year. The Twin Valley Fire Department has graciously allowed the Market to move into their classroom space at the station. January's Winter market was enjoyable in that nice warm setting. Thanks to Ray Dymond who was the connection and even helped to set things up, the Fireman always go above and beyond the call of duty.

Our Winter Markets are on the 4th Saturday of every month. However, we are having the March market on the 30th because it is the day before Easter.

As we anticipate a new growing season we will be looking for the following; an organic gardener, garden and flower plants, unique vendors such as fish, mushroom or Popsicle vendors.

You can receive \$25 in cash or market credit. How, you ask? Here are the steps to follow:

- 1 - Contact the potential vendor to gauge their interest.
- 2 - Contact us to see if it is a good fit.
- 3 - If we say go ahead with the process, you can then contact the vendor and give them our contact information.
- 4 - Once we have received registration money from the vendor we will pay you either cash or market credit of \$25.
- 5 - This is \$25 market credit or cash for each vendor you bring through the process.

Hope to see you at the March Market.

THE GREEN THING

Submitted by John Mohl

In line at the store, the cashier told the older woman that she should bring her own grocery bag because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologized to him and explained, "We didn't have the green thing back in my day." The clerk responded, "That's our problem today. The former generation did not care enough to save our environment. He was right, that generation didn't have the green thing in its day.

Back then, they returned their milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really

were recycled. But they didn't have the green thing back in that customer's day.

In her day, they walked up stairs because they didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time they had to go two blocks. But she was right, they didn't have the green thing in her day.

Back then they washed the baby's diapers because they didn't have the throw away kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts - wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand new clothing. But that old lady is right, they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then, they had one TV or radio in the house - not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen

the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of Montana. In the kitchen, they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't have electric machines to do everything for you. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam

or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then they didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. They used a push mower that ran on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right, they didn't have the green thing back then.

They drank from a fountain when they were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water. They refilled their writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But they didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24 hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And they didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful the old folks were just because they didn't have the green thing back then? WOW!!!!!!

The Farmers' Market



MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF ELVERSON ADOPTED RATE INCREASE

To Our Customers:

Due to a number of factors impacting the fiscal soundness and operations of MABE, the Board of Directors has authorized a rate increase to be effective for the 1st Quarter of 2013 (Jan, Feb, Mar). The rate will increase from \$160.00 per Quarter (\$640.00 per year) to **\$183.00 per Quarter** (\$732.00 per year). Reservation Fees will increase from \$57.00 per Quarter (\$228.00 per year) to \$66.00 per Quarter (\$264.00 per year)

The factors impacting this needed increase are:

- ◆ Increased repairs for Key operating equipment
- ◆ Delayed implementation of updated plant improvements
- ◆ Increased cost of Chemicals and Consumables
- ◆ Increased cost of insurance coverage due to reassessment of capital investment value
- ◆ Multiple plant improvement projects to upgrade conveyance capacity and meet regulatory requirements
- ◆ Upcoming projects mandated by PA DEP to close the old lagoon area

Your Board has carefully evaluated the entire MABE operation/organization and feels this action must be taken to insure the future viability and proper operation of our Wastewater Treatment Plant. We will continue to operate the Authority seeking improved efficiencies and cost reductions to ensure the best possible service to our ratepayers.

Sincerely,
The MABE Board

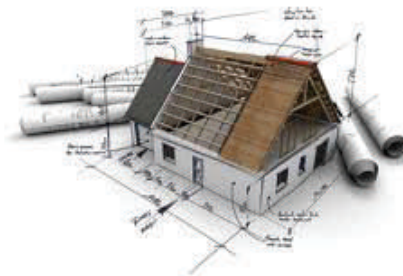
WHAT IN ELVERSON IS IT?



Submit your answer to Jody Phillips at jodyfritz@gmail.com. A gift certificate from our town deli will be awarded to the first correct answer.

QUESTIONS ABOUT BUILDING?

Thinking about a deck, an addition, or have a building or zoning question? Come meet with Borough Building Code and Zoning Official Brian Willicombe, Yerkes Associates, Inc. at Borough Hall on **Wednesday, March 13 and 27, 9 am to 10 am.**



FREE HOME WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Are you spending too much money on your energy bills? Weatherization can help you reduce your energy costs by 20-30%. Apply today, save tomorrow.

Call today for an application or print one from the website—**610.521.8770** or **www.caadc.org**. Funding for this program is provided by PA Department of Community and Economic Development.



**Elverson Borough
PO Box 206
Elverson PA 19520**

**PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
READING, PA
PERMIT #415**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Code Official Meet

Wednesday, March 13 and 27 ~ 9 am to 10 am
Borough Hall

Elverson Winter Farmers' Market

Saturday, March 30, 10 am to noon
Twin Valley Firehouse

Street Sweeping

May 6th & 7th
Borough streets

Primary Election

Tuesday, May 21st ~ 7 am to 8 pm
Community Evangelical Free Church

Main Street Yard Sale

Saturday, May 11 ~ 8 am to 1 pm

Elverson Day at the Park

Saturday, June 22 ~ 4 pm to dark
Livingood Park