



Accidental genius



by Ben Sonnek
Ultra Sonnek

If you get the chance, look up “George Winston – Forbidden Forest” on YouTube and just listen. George Winston is one of my favorite pianists off all time, and “Forbidden Forest” is a piano piece from his album, “Forest.” I am listening to it right now. Heck, whenever I am writing fiction or nonfiction, I tend to listen to Winston in order to stay more relaxed and less distracted than usual.

“Forbidden Forest” is an example of Winston’s best, in my opinion. It could not help but have its title; “Forbidden Forest” sums up the feel of the music’s sound. It is a chorus of light, faint notes framed by deeper echoes that sound not unlike a cello being plucked. Pardon my non-technical description of music; if you hear the song yourself, then maybe my words here will make sense.

I did not give the Winston sound much thought, though, even as I listened to his songs for years. Then, sometime around December 2017, I got a surprise. My mom was the one who found out that Winston was playing at the Minnesota Orchestra in the Twin Cities, and as I was still a poor college student, she was also the one who got the tickets. I was more than happy to go.

At this point, I should mention I have quite purposefully never been to a rock concert. I like rock music too, but I am also a colossal introverted nerd.

That is how I found myself up in a balcony box at the orchestra, watching the pianist himself down there on his grand piano as he played many pieces I recognized – and many more I got to experience for the first time. It was an amazing experience. For some of the pieces, though, he only had one hand on the keys. The other hand would be inside the piano, holding down some of the strings.

So that was how he made that cello-like noise. It was an amazing realization, but it also got me annoyed with myself at the same time. I, of all people, should have known how that weird noise was made.

See, I have played piano for over 15 years now. I have clocked in hours of unwilling practice as a kid, and my older brother, who had many admirable talents to make up for his utter lack of any musical ability, would often come over to me when I was in the middle of a piece. He too would reach inside the piano and hold down some of the strings. It is really hard to get in the zone when your song sounds like: Ding ding ding ding THUNK THUNK ding.

Then my brother would run away before my parents could scold him.

My point? Well, it is hard on a piano when some inexperienced kid holds down the strings, let me mention that first. I do not recommend testing this method of piano playing for yourself.

But on a different note, who knows, maybe if I had been a more astute 9-year-old, I would have recognized the genius of my inconvenience. George Winston seems to have done so; he tuned the sound and incorporated it into his music. How many inconveniences do I face in a day that I could turn into something that pays off in the future? After all, in the words of the writer G. K. Chesterton – whom I constantly quote – “An adventure is an inconvenience rightly considered.”

It is not difficult to apply this line of thought to Thanksgiving. Do not only give thanks for the great things that have happened to you; give thanks for the less convenient stuff. Maybe that illness found you a new and supportive community. Maybe those car troubles got you on the path to a better car. Maybe those elected officials you did not vote for have given you a chance to reflect on how you, personally, will bring about the change you want. We usually give thanks for the great results, but we tend to forget the inconveniences that brought us there. We can give thanks for so much more.

Oh snap!



by Sara Thompson
At the Centre of it

Turkey day is upon us. For many people, the day includes watching a day’s worth of parades and football games and even more people enjoy a bird baked to perfection served with a side of stuffing, green bean casserole, potatoes (mashed or sweet, sometimes both) and topped off with a slice of pumpkin pie. Of course, Thanksgiving is followed by Black Friday and the official start to the Christmas Season, meaning that those of you who have already been decking your halls can actually enjoy it without ridicule.

Back to the holiday at hand though. In addition to the parades, football and food, Thanksgiving comes with an attitude of gratitude, it is a great opportunity to reflect on our lives and all that we have to be thankful for, but what I really want to discuss is possibly a forgotten piece of Thanksgiving tradition: the breaking of the wish bone. Apparently, this tradition, even though heavily associated with Thanksgiving in North America, actually started in Europe and is about 1,000 years old. I really hope I am not the only one that grew up with this tradition.

If you are not familiar, please don’t judge me, but the idea is that two people each take a side of a bird’s wishbone, technically called a furcular which is Latin for “little fork,” and is basically two fused clavicles. The two people, each making a wish, pull on the bone until it breaks. The person left with the longer piece of the wishbone is said to be lucky and will have their wish come

true. Now anyone who has ever participated in the breaking of a wishbone knows that it is important to let it dry out for optimal breakage. Sometimes the waiting for it to dry is the hardest part.

There is plenty of strategy around a victory, again bringing back childhood memories. I can remember growing up and my brother and I being very competitive in many situations, especially when a wishbone was involved. This Thanksgiving, my brother and his wife are hosting. He will be cooking a bird and I have no doubt that we will be at it again, wondering if we could bypass the waiting game and break it right away.

As a parent this does pose a dilemma: do I defend my pride and go head to head with him, or

do I introduce my daughters to the tradition and pass it on to them? Knowing Nora and Hazel’s competitive spirit, Mark will be roasting a turkey every week to satisfy their desire to beat each other. When I stop and think about it, it is a little weird that one of my fondest memories is breaking a turkey’s neck after sitting around a table in gratitude with my family, enjoying a delicious meal.

At the centre of it, I hope you have many things to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, and if you are breaking a neck, I hope you are left with the big end and have your wildest wishes come true.

Dear Mom,



by Diane Leukam
Random Reflections

Nearly three weeks have passed since you left us on Nov. 2nd. It is hard to believe, because so many times in your life it seemed you had one foot over that threshold, but still you stayed. You rebounded, much to our amazement. But this time something changed.

Suddenly, you were ready to go. After demonstrating a will to live for all these years, you were hospitalized again and one day you declared, “Today, I am going to die.” A little while later, you asked, “How long does it take to die?” – not out of fear, but more out of curiosity, it seemed.

We have spoken about what may have made that change possible.

Was it your twin brother, Lawrence, who passed away just weeks prior to your final decline? I wonder if he and Dad were reaching out their hands, saying “enough already, it’s time to come home.” (Say “Hi” to them from all of us, OK?)

Maybe it was your private conversation with Dr. Thomas. (We had to laugh, because after your talk, she came into the room where some of us were waiting and said you had dismissed her, and we should go back in. You could be very direct like that.)

Was it your visit with Fr. Greg? Did you have things you were anxious about? I think most people do, so that would not surprise me, and extra prayers and blessings never hurt.

Perhaps it was just your time to go. You were 84, and had lived a life of suffering the rest of us will never comprehend. Since you were 21, you never had a single day without a severe headache. You had a laundry list of other sufferings throughout those decades, any one of which would have been enough for most of us to handle. Yet, you refused to complain.

How did you do that, Mom? If I tried to get you to talk about it, you would say, “let’s talk about something else.” You never liked that attention. Maybe it was because you did not want that to define you as a person, and indeed, you were so much more than the suffering you endured.

You were frail, but possessed great strength which you demonstrated in the last week of your life, even orchestrating your passing to a degree.

This is kind of a funny story. That Tuesday when you said you were going to die, Mary was working in Iowa and you said that she needed to come back. She turned right around and made the long trip home. While she was driving, she spoke to one of her girls who said, “Does this mean that even in your 60s you have to do what your parents tell you?”

Yes, I guess we do. You had one last request for all of us that day. You said, “I just want you to be good to each other.” I promise, we will do our best. You always said, “just do your best.”

You faded quickly, and could not speak much after that day. Back at Galeon in Osakis, we kept vigil between the bunch of us. (I am not sure they’ve ever seen anything like it.)

You could still hear, couldn’t you? Lois compiled a list of your favorite music, including “In the Garden.” As we played it for you, tears welled up in your eyes. Were you praying the rosary with us, and could you hear Dave quietly cracking a joke here and there? And it was so sweet when Carol curled your hair, telling you she wanted you to look pretty for Dad.

You hung on for another two-and-a-half days, even though we assured you it was OK to go. You were waiting for something. Late Thursday evening, Mike and Mary visited, telling you the fieldwork was finished. Those who were there saw you visibly relax and settle in. You were devoted to farm life to the very end.

At 4:15 a.m., with Joyce and Janet at your side, you breathed your last breath. You denied yourself and took up that heavy cross until your very last day. I truly believe you have exchanged that “old rugged cross” for a crown. You were so strong, and I think through it all you took your own advice. You did your best.

Today is Thanksgiving Day and I am bursting with thanks and praise for the gift your life has been to our family. We are celebrating together in your honor. Your place at the table will be set, though your chair will remain empty.

Of course we will all miss you. At the most unexpected moments, pangs of grief will wash over us. Mostly though, we are at peace knowing you have moved on to a better life. I hope you are having a glorious time in heaven!

Until we meet again.

All my love,
Diane

Letters to the editor accepted

Letters to the editor and other opinion articles are welcome. Letters must be signed with a first and last name and include an address and phone number. Letters must be under 400 words and be submitted by Monday at 5 p.m.

They can be emailed to office@saukherald.com, mailed to *Sauk Centre Herald*, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, MN 56378 or dropped off at the office.

Sauk Centre Herald

522 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
Phone: (320) 352-6577
Fax: (320) 352-5647
www.star-pub.com

HOURS: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Subject to change during holidays.

Periodicals postage pending at Sauk Centre, MN

THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD (USPS 482-220) is published weekly on Thursdays by Star Publications, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378. Second-class postage paid at Sauk Centre, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378

Advertising: Classified advertising and Classy Canary advertising are on a cash-only basis. Our ad takers have no authority to bind this newspaper, and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser’s order.

Subscription Rates: Stearns, Todd, Douglas, Pope & Morrison Counties, \$48.00. Elsewhere in Minnesota, \$55.00. Out of Minnesota, \$58.00.

Staff	
Mark Klaphake.....	Interim Editor/General Manager.....mark@saukherald.com
Joyce Frericks.....	Business Manager.....joyce@saukherald.com
Pat Turner.....	Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....pat@saukherald.com
Brian Dingmann.....	Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....brian.d@saukherald.com
Amanda Thooff.....	Graphic Design/Page Layout.....amanda@saukherald.com
Janell Westerman.....	Graphic Design
Maddy Peterson.....	Graphic Design.....maddy@star-pub.com
Diane Leukam.....	Proofing.....diane@saukherald.com
Jennifer Coyne.....	Writer.....jenn@saukherald.com
Herman Lensing.....	Writer.....herman@melrosebeacon.com
Laura Hintzen.....	Writer.....laura.h@saukherald.com

Katelyn Asfeld.....	Writer.....kate@saukherald.com
Ben Sonnek.....	Writer.....ben.s@saukherald.com
Missy Traeger.....	Sales Manager/Marketing.....missy@saukherald.com
Kayla Hunstiger.....	Marketing.....kayla@saukherald.com
Brian Trattles.....	Marketing.....brian.t@saukherald.com
Robin Brunette.....	Inside Sales Representative.....robin@saukherald.com
Emily Hoium.....	Bookkeeping.....emily@saukherald.com
Gretchen Jennissen.....	Bookkeeping.....gretchen@saukherald.com
Lorie Swedenburg.....	Receptionist, Circulation.....lorie@saukherald.com
Logan Thomas.....	Sign Design.....logan@saukherald.com
Irene Henry.....	Sign Design
Mike Imdieke.....	Insertor