

The Perfect Gift

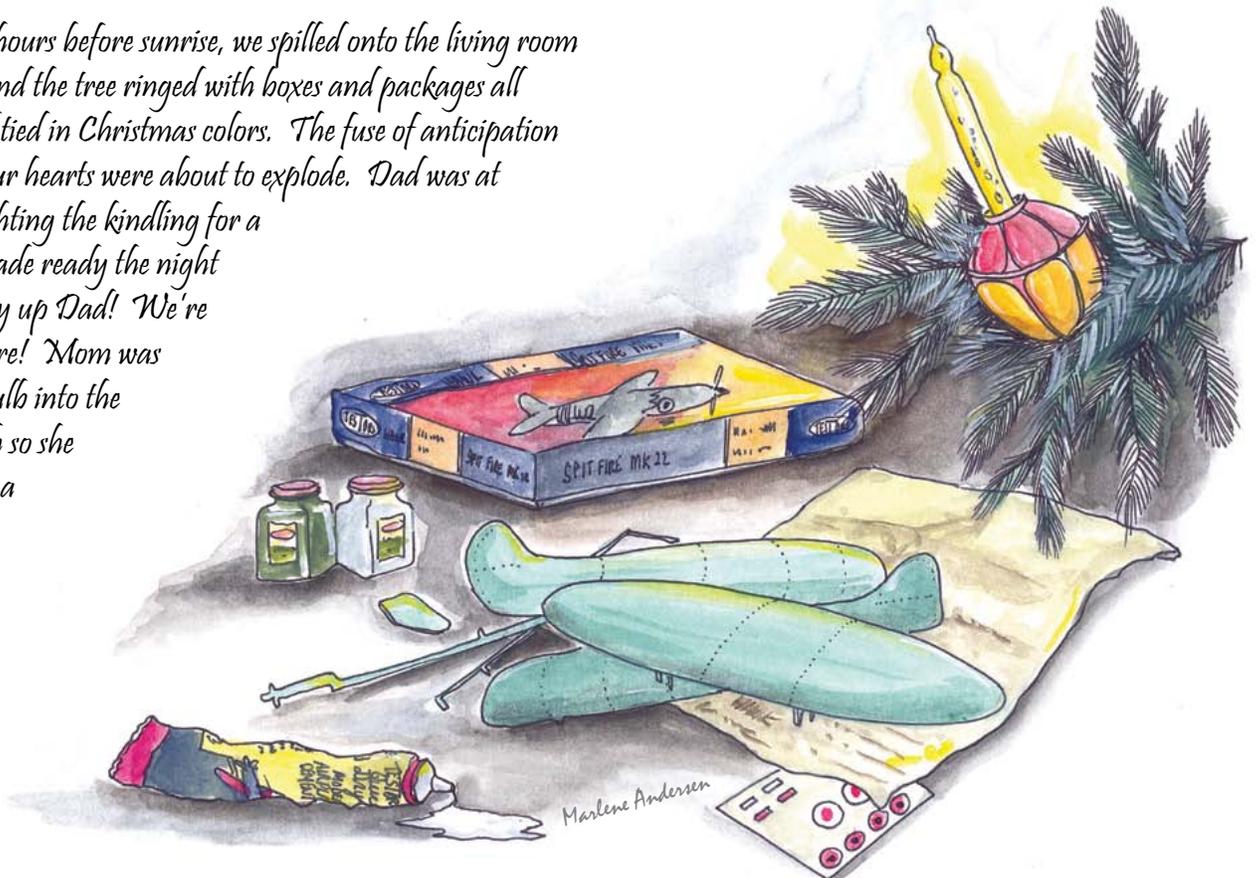
by Larry Harris, CEO

Old yuletide reflections beckon me home as I calm the lights and sink into my La-Z-Boy. I drift away on a sea of memories to a far-off Christmas morning in Kansas City, 1959. It was the era of bubble lights and popcorn strings. Now more than a half century removed, I return to that holiday this cold December night with a trace of regret still lingering in my heart.

I was nine, my brother Rob and sister Judy were eleven and six.

It was five a.m., the absolute early limit set by Mom and Dad for opening gifts. If the matter had been put to a full family vote, my siblings and I would have been up at three, or two, or twelve-o-one. After all, we held a three-to-two majority over our parents. But our household was no democracy, so we suffered the imposed five o'clock rule and were grateful it wasn't six or seven or even eight.

So three hours before sunrise, we spilled onto the living room floor and found the tree ringed with boxes and packages all wrapped and tied in Christmas colors. The fuse of anticipation was lit, and our hearts were about to explode. Dad was at the hearth lighting the kindling for a fire he had made ready the night before. Hurry up Dad! We're dying over here! Mom was snapping a bulb into the Brownie flash so she could capture a black and



white freeze-frame of our reactions as we tore into our treasures. Dad finally gave the word, and we dived in.

Before I could open my first, Judy had rooted through the pile and come up with a present from her that she wanted me to open ahead of the others. Fair enough. It had the dimensions of a cigar box. The tucks and folds of its Christmas wrap were imperfect, and clearly the work of little hands with no assist from Mom.

I lifted the box to my ear. With squinty eyes and a tilted head, I shook it, trying to catch a hint of its contents. There was no rattle or internal commotion – nothing to betray the secret inside. Judy watched with eager brown eyes as I slipped the paper open to reveal a model fighter plane. Assembly required. The molded plastic pieces had made no sound or movement because my sister had carefully wrapped each in a Kleenex. The box was stuffed tight with tissues she had installed to muffle telltale clatter and string out my suspense.

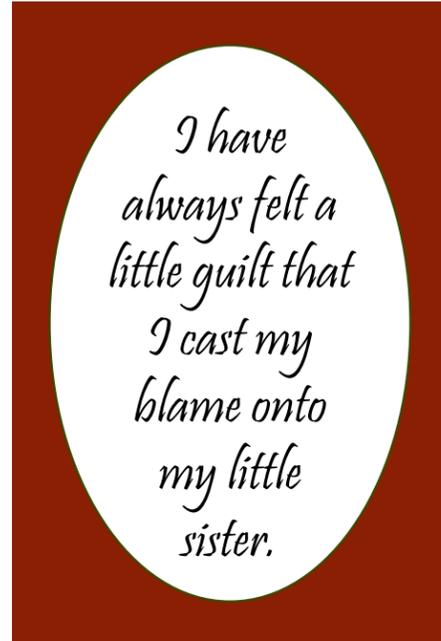
She had purchased the gift with her meager allowance – a whopping 25 cents dutifully doled out by Dad to each of us kids on Saturday mornings.

I peeled the Kleenex from around each piece and tossed the wad of tissues onto the growing pile of Christmas debris on the



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living room floor. When our Christmas riot had simmered down, Dad gathered it all up and shoved it into the fire. This is one of my favorite memories of Christmas mornings as a kid. A raging bonfire ensued. I mean, it was a roaring blast furnace that sucked



air from the room and shot tongues of fire up the chimney. Then in ninety seconds, it all decayed to a smoldering heap of ash.

Later when the day had descended to its mellow stage, I opened the box to assemble the plane. As I got into the project it became apparent that a couple of parts were missing. I forget whether they were a wing or an engine or a fin, but they were important pieces, and I couldn't complete the project without them. The plane would remain forever unfinished.

The dominant theory of the day was that I hadn't completely unwrapped all the pieces, and they had been tossed into the fire with the tissues.

In my disappointment, I remem-

ber chiding my sister that the Kleenex ploy was unnecessary. How much better it would have been had I figured out from rattling parts that it was a model. Big deal. And now just look what had happened. The gift was rendered useless. Her eyes dropped and the pride in a clever deception wilted into a six-year old's shame that she hadn't thought all this through.

Well guess what. After some reflection, I turned the spotlight of blame on myself, where it belonged. I should have been more careful. In my haste to get on to other gifts, I had tossed away key parts.

I never voiced that change of heart to Judy. She is out in Springfield, Missouri, reading this with you right now. Could be that with the offense now buried beneath an avalanche of years she doesn't even remember it. But I do, and I have always felt a little guilt that I cast my blame onto my little sister.

So Judy, you are off the hook. Truth is I hoisted you off that hook a half century ago. Thank you for attempting to make my Christmas morning 51 years back a little more fun. And by the way, a model airplane was the perfect gift.

Love you Sis, and Merry Christmas.



All three campuses

Willow Brook Earns Perfect Scores from State Inspectors

We're so proud! In October, the Ohio Department of Health conducted its annual inspection of Willow Brook Christian Village's Cherith Care Center and Delaware Run's assisted living and memory care centers.

They passed with zero deficiencies – perfect scores!

Add them to the assisted living center's perfect score at Willow Brook Christian Home earlier this year, and you can see why our buttons are about to burst.

We are so very proud of the people who care for our old friends at Willow Brook. They and those who help out in other ways, from culinary services to housekeeping and maintenance have vital roles to play, and their work is evaluated.

These perfect scores from the State of Ohio simply confirm what we already believe – there is no better home for your loved one than right here at Willow Brook. Please congratulate the staff when you see them!



Trees, trees, trees

Kyle Grumbarb (left) and Tyler Brown (right) and the rest of the landscape crew put about 350 trees into the ground at Delaware Run this fall. In all, nearly 2,500 trees have been planted at Delaware Run. In a few years the lush fullness you see at Willow Brook Christian Village across town and pictured below will be replicated where 1,500 trees have been planted.

Attention to the role that nature plays in contributing to our quality of life is a hallmark of Willow Brook. Some day, the haunting white bark of this little sycamore, whose roots will be fed by the Delaware Run that gave the community its name, will become a towering silhouette that stands out against the green of its leaves in summer and the browns and grays of winter.



Mary Catherine Bauder
 Lucille A. Reinhard
 Marjorie E. Beem
 Corinne D. Esau
 Bruce & Barbara Reiersen
 Helen J. Reppart
 Helen "Virginia" Bell
 April L. Rausch
 Eugene Bianchi
 Barbara J. Ekelberry
 June Chambers
 Corinne D. Esau
 Donna J. French
 Arlene W. Palenshus
 Helen J. Reppart
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 Lois K. Smith
 Phyllis A. Starner
 Mary F. Tipton
 Evelyn Wildermuth
 Katherine "Louise" Clark
 John & Shelly Hubbell
 Dorothy S. Collins
 Corinne D. Esau
 Helen J. Reppart
 Mary Jean Roach
 Donald P. "Dan" Conant
 Michael & Shannon Bell
 Dale & Josephine Bichsel
 Curtis & Dena Bremer
 Thomas & Phyllis Chambers, Sr.
 Comporium Communications
 Nadine Conant
 Cheryl A. Ellzey
 Lila Ellzey
 Corinne D. Esau
 Jean L. Flahive
 Charlotte A. Gallant
 Robert L. Hoover
 Harry & Mary Jo Humes
 Jeffery & Sherry Jamison
 Gabe & Melissa Keller
 Anson S. Knoderer
 William & Dawn Knoderer
 Dan & Cindy Koehler
 Helen T. McLin

Dan Conant, continued
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 Raymond & Helen Nally
 Tim & Anne Newton
 Arlene W. Palenshus
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 Lois K. Smith
 Alvin & Betty Stein
 Marilyn J. Terry
 Walter & Lois Weismantel
 Larry & Marian Wenger
 Shirley Wichner
 Dale & Elizabeth Williams
 Sandra L. Wilson, Ed.D
 Ed & Evelyn Winter
 John & Mary Lou Wolfe
 Phyllis M. Wood
 Clyde E. Wooley
 Charles & Bronwyn Workman
 Duane & Diane Yothers
 Robert & Ethel Zimmer

Rose P. Coville
 Lavetta M. Bryant
 Marilyn M. Cryder
 Marty Ames
 Sandra J. Cryder
 Corinne D. Esau
 Donna J. French
 Charlotte A. Gallant
 James & Ann Norum
 & Family
 Mary Jean Roach
 William & Diane Russell
 Lois K. Smith
 Judith E. Cyrus
 C & L Improvements
 Ruth L. Dennis
 Lavetta M. Bryant
 Margaret J. Forsythe
 William & Diane Russell
 Lela J. Goodpaster
 Tiffany C. Wilson
 Leah Mae Green
 Delores V. Lallathin
 Audrey and Alberta Harris
 Larry & Janet Harris
 Carol J. Hart
 Mary Jean Roach
 John T. Hayes
 Karen S. Hayes
 Ruth L. Hickok
 David & Connie McNeal

William L. Hoffman
 Lynn & Debra Askins
 Frank & Elizabeth Dewitt
 Corinne D. Esau
 Fred & Debra Rake
 Helen J. Reppart
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 Mitchell & Dyana Welch
 Charles W. Lackey
 Bruce & Barbara Reiersen
 Marie Langford
 Mary Jean Roach
 Mary Anne Slattery
 Lois K. Smith
 Emma "Maude" Prince
 Phyllis M. Wood
 Gene and Maude Prince
 Larry & Janet Harris
 Mary V. Reed
 Corinne D. Esau
 Jean L. Flahive
 David & Rosalie Miller
 Helen J. Reppart
 Lois K. Smith
 Marilyn J. Terry
 Robert & Ethel Zimmer

Terence J. Ryan
 Mark & Teresa Ryan
 John G. Sauer
 Marvin & Diann Graham
 Jennie Carpenter Stephen
 Carroll & Bonnie Bogue
 Wilma Watts
 Lura Jane Stewart
 Corinne D. Esau
 Donna J. French
 Charlotte A. Gallant
 Arlene W. Palenshus
 Phyllis M. Wood
 Wilma Stewart
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 First Ohio Planning LLC,
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 Arlene W. Palenshus
 Lucille A. Reinhard
 Phyllis M. Wood
 Mary Tilson
 Corinne D. Esau
 David & Rosalie Miller
 Helen J. Reppart
 Lois K. Smith
 Max Wildermuth
 Jayne W. MacKay
 John Wood
 Arlene W. Palenshus

Gifts of Love

Memorial Contributions

September 13 - November 11, 2010

Gifts were also made in honor of
 Rose Froelich
 Gayle A. Moe
 Lois M. Ward
 Lindsey R. Robinson

For The Joy Set Before Me

by Frank Chappell, President of the Board

As one of the longest-serving members of Willow Brook's Board of Trustees, I have been asked to relate the history of the organization and explain why I have chosen to serve so long. Most people who accept such positions are replaced or resign after a few years. I have been on the Board since 1972 and have never seriously considered ending my service. The question can

be answered in a review of the history of Willow Brook.

I became a Christian at age 14 and ever since have had a strong sense of identity and dedication. I believe that God has each of us here for a purpose and that he gives us abilities to be used for the good of others. I have experienced the Joy of watching people benefit and prosper from the time I have spent working with Christian outreach. Willow Brook is a large part of the Joy I continue to receive.

Abilene Christian University and the U.S. Navy taught me how to respond to problems between people. I learned in church-related activities that I could influence in a good way group goals and outcomes. I also observed that leaders in the best of projects have their detractors and that they sometimes need someone to come to their defense. Since I am not afraid to speak up, I have found myself thrust into leadership positions. Such problems never go away, so I continue with my involvements long term.

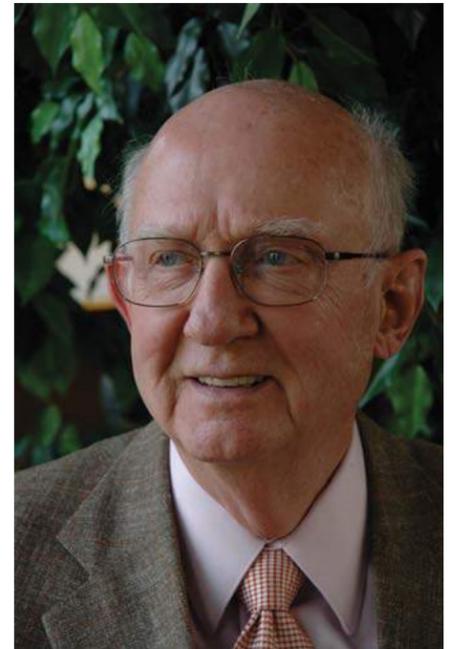
Betty and I were married by a minister who knew, of all people,

Leslie Ward. Leslie was one of the Church of Christ men in Columbus seeking to build a nursing home. When we moved here from Houston in 1971, Leslie encouraged us to become members of the Northland congregation, an easy decision. He

I believe that God has each of us here for a purpose and that he gives us abilities to be used for the good of others.

then later asked me to serve on the Board of Will-O-Lock Haven, the predecessor of Willow Brook. The group had been given some property by the Williams Road congregation in Columbus to be used for construction – at the intersection of Williams Road and Lockborne Road. Hence the name.

The efforts to build a nursing home were not successful. However, in 1971 a 25-bed nursing home near Worthington came up for sale and the Board bought it. I came on the Board in 1972 and we were immediately presented with a big



Frank Chappell

problem. The Home was not being well operated and the state took away the license. We convinced the state that as new owners we could improve the operation to meet standards, but we did not have a quality administrator.

In the 70s regulations were not as rigorous as today, so two of us – David Myers and I – agreed to work closely with the administrator we inherited with the purchase. David and I in effect administered the Home for almost three years. During that period we were looking for someone to be the administrator. At Northland, I was responsible for part of the education program and was on the lookout for Bible School teachers. I had my eye on a young man who had married Janet, a daughter of Gene Prince, one of our elders. I observed that when I pushed on him, he pushed back, a trait I like. It tells me the person has convictions and courage, traits needed by an administrator. With Board approval, I asked Larry Harris if he would like to become a nursing home administrator and to

continued on page 6

Joy, continued

our good he said yes. All Larry really knew about the Board was that we had a nursing home and that he had a job. He was surprised to learn that we had a *negative* net worth of \$81,000. I remember his question to me, "What are you going to do about it?" My answer, "Nothing, that's what I hired you for. You solve it." (And solve it he did.) I also told Larry I wanted the Home to be recognized not only in our brotherhood but also among other philanthropic homes and facili-

We had the "water problem" and the "sprinkler problem," both very expensive and license-threatening. We found the money and survived.

ties. And I wanted him to become involved in industry associations and to work to influence legislation at the state level.

We continued to operate the Home on Lazelle Road for ten years. During that time Larry was surrounding himself with quality people – Lu Wellman for accounting, Margaret Dronsfield for nursing, Sue Vierow for dietary, and others. Lu is still with us. Sue and Margaret have retired after many years of service. We had the "water problem" and the "sprinkler problem," both very expensive and license-threatening. We found the money and survived. In 1981, with the help of a Farmers Home loan, we doubled to 50 beds. Farmers Home came to consider us a showcase example of how their program was supposed to work. At that time, Larry pushed for a new name and we became Willow Brook.

After being Chair of the Board

for ten years, it was mutually agreed that other Board members should serve in that position. In 1982, upon completion of the Home's expansion, I stepped aside but remained on the Board. My family has been involved from the beginning. My mother-in-law, Cleo Holland, volunteered as a hair dresser and aide, and two of my children, David and Cheryl, ran the halls. David worked in cooking, maintenance and laundry, and is now Executive Director of The Home; Cheryl

worked in cooking and as an aide. We took resident Herbie Strigle to church and Friendly's Restaurant for a hamburger (forbidden fruit)

weekly.

After the expansion, our financial situation improved and we built a reserve to be used for further service. We had enough to purchase 30 acres in Delaware, Ohio, so plans for The Village were developed. We did not have enough money to build the whole campus, so we "boot strapped" the project. We would borrow to build a residence, pay the loan off, and then borrow for the next. The process took four years but it worked. A HUD loan built the Centrum, the assisted living center on that campus.

With completion of the Village, we were serving a lot of people from diverse life experiences. As people interact, friction often develops and some serious problems arose among some residents. The problems were thought to be threatening to the continued operation of the Village. Some on the Board wanted to cancel the project. I re-

member the meeting vividly. I spoke up, saying, "We are not going to do any such thing." The Board response was, "So if you feel that strongly, you will have to handle the situation." I was immediately made Chairman of the Board again for a year to solve the problem. We had lots of meetings with residents, lots of lunches with offenders and offended, and we solved the problem. I became good friends with some of those involved and Willow Brook came out all the stronger. Such events contribute to the Joy I receive.

As things at the Village calmed down we began to reflect on what we, with God's help, had wrought, what we had accomplished over 20 years. We recognized that we had become a multi-faceted ministry serving in many ways. The staff wanted to take a breather from construction, but there is no rest for the weary. Many people were waiting to move into residences, so we pumped up Larry and the staff again to build Delaware Run, our second community in Delaware.

I have been elected as Chairman of the Board again for just two years this time. Delaware Run is nearing completion and even as I write, financing for an additional apartment wing is near and start of construction is to be announced. When a second minor project is completed, Delaware Run will be finished. The Staff will want to rest. Perhaps for a little while, or perhaps not. Who knows when another opportunity will present itself? When it does, we will rise to meet it. My Joy will continue. ❤️

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Brook

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www.willow-brook.org

Delaware, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Village

100 Willow Brook Way South
Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 369-0048
Fax: (740) 369-7034

- Independent Homes & Apartments
- The Centrum Assisted Living
- Passages Alzheimer's Care
- Cherith Skilled Nursing Care & Rehabilitation Center
- Heritage Day Health Center Adult Day Care
- The Courtyard Restaurant

Willow Brook at Delaware Run

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Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 201-5640
Fax: (740) 201-5740

- Twin-single Homes
- Apartments
- Assisted Living
- Memory Care
- The Water's Edge Restaurant

Worthington, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Home

55 Lazelle Road
Columbus, Ohio 43235
Phone: (614) 885-3300
Fax: (614) 885-8476

- Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation
- Assisted Living
- The Grapevine Grill

REFLECTIONS

Larry Harris, CEO
Teri Ryan, Director of Community Relations, editor & designer

*A not-for-profit ministry
of members of the Churches of Christ*



Mark your Calendars

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

Christmas Sing-along with Robert Nims

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20

Tanya & Ken Matsuda - Piano & Viola

FEBRUARY - Swing Music

THURSDAY, MARCH 17

St. Paddy's celebration with fiddle and

hammered dulcimer by the Delightful

Sounds duo of Priscilla Hewetson and Ellen Ford.

*All performances begin at 7:00 pm
on the mezzanine of Willow Brook at Delaware Run
and are free.*



Bobby Wheeler, left, and other maintenance team members on all three campuses took advantage of the long Indian summer to string Christmas lights. If you've never seen Willow Brook at Christmas, come pay us a visit. Dozens of trees are decorated on each campus, and if the sights and sounds don't give you that Christmas spirit, then nothing will!

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The Fifth Stocking

by Tom MacLaughlin

Christmas Eve, 1966. Heather and Scott, seven and five, bubbled with excitement as we hung our stockings from the fireplace mantle – big sturdy red stockings for Santa to fill in just a few hours. Plus one tiny red stocking for Bruce, born the previous March.

Finally, to bed. But soon we were awakened by Heather and Scott thumpety-thumping downstairs. Suddenly, Scott was upstairs again, sobbing inconsolably. “Scott! What’s wrong?”

“He...di...didn’t...ss...see it!”

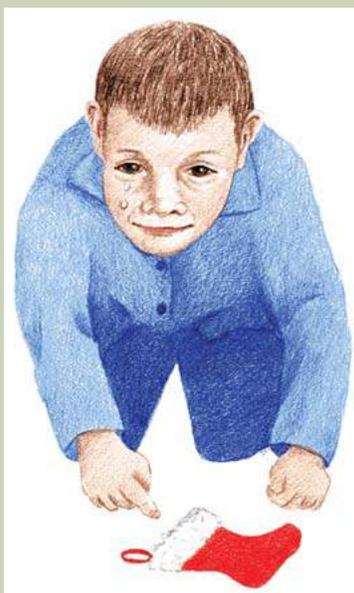
“Didn’t see WHAT??”

“Th...sto...sto...stocking...Br...Bru... Bruce’s...sto...stocking!”

Wow. Serious business. Could Santa really have missed a stocking? “Come on, Scott—let’s go see.”

Down we went, Scott quietly sobbing all the way. “S...see...th...there.” Scott pointed to the tiny red

stocking, now resting flat and very empty on the hearth. Oh, my.



Carefully we surveyed the scene. There were several big bulging stockings hanging from the mantle. “O.K.,” I said, “Let’s check these. They all have our names on them. Here’s Heather’s – Scott’s – Mom’s – Dad’s – Hey! Here’s a fifth big one hanging on the hook where we hung up Bruce’s tiny stocking last night! With Bruce’s name on it! Wow! His stocking was way too small, so Santa gave him a brand-new *big* stocking, and filled it up! Santa didn’t forget Bruce at all. Isn’t he something!”

Scott’s face, tears still glistening on his cheeks, was full of wonderment. With the beginning of his smile, Scott’s Christmas morning – and ours – had begun.

*Author Tom MacLaughlin and illustrator Dee Seebode
are residents of Willow Brook at Delaware Run.*