The Free Press' Short Story

New Heroes With Old

BY MABEL McKEE

OLD Dr. Dan McGowan was working with his irises when the special delivery letter came to the office for young Dr. Dan. Otherwise he would have suspected himself that the Lamont clinic was fretting because his son had not yet returned to his job on the staff there.

The letter was from Jerry Brakk, and was scrawled so "beautifully," as young Dan termed it, he had to guess at most of the words. Still he could decipher enough to understand that if he did not soon return, Dr. Jones, the head of the clinic, would hunt a successor to him. "Surely your father's well enough for you to leave him now," the letter ended. "And I've got my hands on the very assistant you should get for him. He's middle aged and reliable a regular country doctor of the old school."

Young Dan walked to the window of his father's office to study the man walking among the flowers in the garden stretched over three entire lots the man whose illness had called his son home near the middle of February.

"He's as strong as a young ox in his own words, even if he is still thin," he chuckled proudly. "I wish Dr. Jones could talk to him or some of these people in Newton Center, who went through this epidemic of flu with me. He'd say, then I'm as good with pneumonia as surgery."

His father didn't see Dan at the window. Dan knew that when the older man worked among his irises and roses in May, he was dead to the rest of the world. He fairly counted buds, reckoning how many beautiful bouquets he would have on Memorial Day for "the heroes who had walked before."

The older man's lips were pursed and he started whistling. Young Dan knew from the bit of his music that the buds were most promising. At times it was almost a triumphal march.

He'd answer Jerry's letter and tell him he'd be back on the job the first of June. It was impossible for him to leave before Memorial Day. There had never been a Memorial Day when he had not come home to spend that day with his father.

It was a tradition in Newton Center that Dr. Dan McGowan and young Dan should march side by side in that parade.

The first time they had marched together, young Dan had been just three years old. The crowd had applauded the chubby little youngster trudging along with his tall father, carrying a silk flag in his hand. It had almost gone with the man, seeing how tired the little chap was, had swung him to his shoulder. For two little boyish hands had then lovingly patted the old Rough Rider hat the other man wore, even finding the bullet hole that had been made at San Juan Hill.

Later they had marched together a father and a freckled-faced, motherless schoolboy, and still later a college youth and a man with hair white at the temples.

Even when he was but a boy, Danny was planning a career for himself. His father, though the little chap always tagged at his heels, did not dream how much he loved medicine and surgery until the night he had howled when the older man told the housekeeper to keep Dan in out of the cold.

"But I've got to help you. Mustn't miss days around that hard man," he sobbed.

"I'm going to let you be a doctor then, Dan," the older man had boomed, adding soberly, "and if you do it the one forgetting self and serve for the people who need you, then I'll disown you. Do you hear?"

That night when young Danny had helped dress the wounds of a farmer gored in the leg by an infuriated bull, he had listened to a frightened, scrawny little girl bleat softly and beautifully while she held the lamp so they could see. He had heard her pipe up while his father told the farmer about his bullet wound received at San Juan Hill. "Certainly says you don't know nothin' about war. You should have been in the Civil War with him."

The old doctor had taken the little girl, Judy Burns, on his lap when the wounds were wrapped and called her a little patriot. Had told her, "When Memorial Day comes around, you can march in the parade with me and my Danny."

Now as young Dan watched his father among the flowers, he chuckled to himself at memory of that tired little girl on that Memorial Day 14 teen years before. Then he turned to the calendar and counted days less than two weeks of them until Judy would be home.

Presently the father turned his footsteps toward the office. From his brisk, purposeful steps the younger man knew the older man was ready to go with him on the remaining calls of the day; that he was getting ready to return to his twenty-four hours of "eternal grind" as the younger man termed it after carrying on for him during the last three months.

He took the older man's medicine case from the closet and placed it on the chair beside his own. He took from a coat rack his father's sweater just as the older man entered the long addition to the big McGowan home, which for the last twenty years had been the "new office."

It was a fine office to one who had never known a perfectly equipped clinic, just as his practice was a "grand" practice though it called him from his home all hours of the day and night, and was built of drudgery and unpaid service. He would not have traded his practice for all the wealthy patients at the clinic. The younger man was sure of that, and respected his father for that loyalty.

Still he himself would be glad to get back to the clinic where he would have a quitting time, here he could eat entire meals with friends; where he'd know recreation again. Still, he admitted to himself, he'd hate to leave some of his father's patients to that unknown doctor.

The older man's eyes sparkled when he saw his worn medicine case beside that of his son. "Going to let the old man get back in the harness, eh?" he chuckled. "Shows my boy's a real physician and knows how to find ways to true recovery."

As young Dan held his father's sweater he noticed again how thin he was and thought with a sudden sinking of the heart of the physician who would have to look after his father's health as well as that of his critical patients during the coming months of his father's convalescence.

He spoke rapidly as if to crowd that thought out of his mind. "We have to see Perry Norton's wife, the Megginis twins—and, Monty. We've mouth," he said, enumerating the calls they were to make.

"And we're stoppin' at Burns farm to see what train is bringing Judy home," the older man added.

"Right." Young Dan's voice was hearty. "We both are going to be there to meet her."

It was Judy, a mite of a high school student who had gone to the train with old Dr. McGowan to meet young Dan, through college days. Through three years she had done that and then during the fourth developed into a lovely young woman who demanded that Dan come to see her "in the proper way."

She had won a scholarship to a city conservatory where her success had carried her to a radio station a few months before. This would be her first visit home since, and she was coming to sing for the Memorial Day services.

"Don't let her get too buried in her music to know you're alive, Dan," the old doctor spoke in a dreamy voice which made the younger one know his father was thinking of his lovely young mother.

He couldn't have him gloomy now when he was improving so rapidly, knowing that young Dan started talking about the needed improvements in the town.

"When I get back on my feet I'm going to take those matters up with the Veterans." The old man grew excited. "And I'm going to have laughing in the foundation of the church. But first of all I'm going to put Perry up for selectman against Bad Lem Walker. I'll tell you New Center doesn't want a school trustee who insists on shortening the school term and doing away with physical education." The older man snorted. "We can't let our children pay for the depression, Son."

"I should say not," young Dan's tone too was hot.

"If I were ten years younger, I'd run for that job myself," the older man added, rambling on about conditions in the schools that needed remedying. He didn't stop until they were turning into the side road leading up to the Perry Norton farm home, where Mrs. Norton had been critically ill an illness caused by grief over her son.

Perry Norton, just out of high school, had spent months in the city hunting work. At first, always hopeful, he had written, but at length the mother ceased to hear from him. Her breakdown followed.

"She'll never get out of that bed," the old doctor started to say, then stopped and speechlessly pointed to the porch where Mrs. Norton wrapped in a blanket, sat in the swing while Perry Norton not far away helped his father repair some harness.

A half hour later young Dan asked his father to entertain the car. The youth's heart beating in a paroxysm measure so aroused when Mrs. Norton had said, "Judy Burns talked the boys into coming home, all of them. Said she didn't want to come home and have to get acquainted alone. On the way back they planned a glee club and a literary society for young folks. And they want to fix up the beach for swimming and try to get the park fitted up with ovens for picnics."

As they drove down the lane, fragrant from the blossoms of the locust trees bordering it, young Dan asked, "Judy's voice couldn't have gone bad, could it, Dad? You know she just lives to sing and—"

"Judy's come home for Memorial Day," the old doctor's interpretation was hasty. "That was just her way of getting those silly young fellows home. We'd better start talking about the Megginis' twins now, so you can tell me how to feed them when you're gone, Danny. I thought they were going to die the last call I made there three months ago. And now you've got them crying like young heifers, showing you're an improvement on your dad."

He noticed young Dan's scowl and thought it was worry over Judy, though it really was fear of what that assistant might do to the Megginis babies when he came to help his father.

Joel Burns himself drove Judy in to the old doctor's office that evening to see the "two Dans" as she called them. And while her father and the old doctor argued over a checker game, she and young Dan talked in the doctor's flower garden.

She told of finding young Perry Norton. He had been at the transient bureau in the great city from which she broadcast. She had gone there to sing and had found him, one of the wanderers of the road who had stopped awhile to get much needed food and shelter.

"I asked the superintendent if there wasn't some way to get these jobless boys to be sensible and go home," she traded in her rich voice. "And," her voice was so low then that young Dan could scarcely hear her, "he said in his abrupt way, 'If some of you successful folk would go home and try to make your home towns the kind of towns to hold and encourage young people, fewer of them would come unsuccessfully to the city.'"

She laughed softly. "Danny, I was so angry I walked right out without giving my program," she added. "It was days before I went back. But between times I'd done some thinking and I knew he was dead right.

"There are so many better radio singers in the city I'll never be missed," she continued. "but Newton Center hasn't anyone to start a pep, glee club, an orchestra, a literary society, to do things I can do to keep boys like Perry Norton at home until they've learned the joy of farming with their dads, working in their dad's stores, helping their dads sell real estate."

"And assisting their doctor dads with the sick," Dan added with a low laugh.

And then he was telling her about the new doctor who wanted to assist his father, about his fear for the older man and the Megginis twins, and the other patients he had learned really to love.

He told her too about his and his father's discussion, and the older man's words about the School trustee. "I could see all the time he wanted me to stay, to help him carry on so I'll be able to look after Newton Center when he's gone," he said. "But I was so weak that I wanted to stay in the easiest place. Now," his voice was firm, "I'm staying here to help families like Perry Norton's."

Two Child Family "Cowardly Living"

Gestapo Chief Demands Nazi Mothers Do More to Replace Casualties

LONDON (CP)—The German [illegible] up for battle [illegible] gone to a new swiftly tall new capital in the East, a special correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph writes.

Has recently a new booklet issued by Himmler the Gestapo chief of the Nazi [illegible] says that the German look to their lesser breed to "[illegible] well-[illegible] babies as Europe and the master race.

"German women," it is declared, "will be willing to place at the disposal of our great Fuehrer the people he needs for his titanic task of unifying all teutons."

To have only two children in each German home is described as a "cowardly living." The standard must be raised to six or eight. Even more would be gratifying to the Fuehrer and hasten the day that greater Germany would have 120,000,000 people, the number estimated necessary to keep Europe under the Nazi thumb eternally.

"Illegitimate children," the booklet says also, "are valuable members of the national community providing their parents are hereditarily Nordics aware of their responsibilities of their race."

WHAT THE STARS TELL

OTTAWA (CP)—Two stars on the shoulder strap of a Canadian army officer indicate he is a first lieutenant, commanding a platoon, but two stars on a U. S. army officer proclaim a major-general commanding a division.

Carry The Torch To Old England

Practically every municipality in Canada will have an opportunity to associate itself with the symbolic Torch which is being flown to Winston Churchill in the latter part of June.

In sympathy with the inscription on the Torch, "Part of the Tools Canada's Victory Loan 1941," there will be an artistically designed scroll which is to be circulated to a large number of cities and towns which will not be in the itinerary of the Torch on its way from Victoria, B.C., to Halifax and thence to London. Signatures of Mayors and Reeves will be affixed to this scroll so that the expression of the determination of Canadian citizens to "help finish the job" will be as general as it is possible to make it.

The Victory Loan Organization anticipates that many thousands of citizens from points not included in the itinerary will travel to those places where the "Torch Day" program will be held, there to join in the pledge of allegiance which will be part of the ceremonial.

Following is a resume of a typical Torch Day program:

Citizens will assemble at the point for the ceremony, with a proper local Guard of Honor for the Torch and a good sized band or bands. Adjacent to the bands will be a large singing group, provided from the choirs of the various churches in the locality. There will be a song program for a period of thirty minutes during which the crowd will sing, "O Canada," "The Maple Leaf Forever," "There'll Always Be An England," and religious hymns proper to the dedication ceremonies. There will be Bidding Prayer by a local church dignitary, to be followed by the singing of all verses of "Onward Christian Soldiers," and a prayer for Victory for his majesty's forces by another local dignitary.

Next comes "The Torch Day" address by a selected speaker.

Following this there will be a short, simple parade of the Torch during which a third local religious or civic dignitary will ask all assembled to place their right hands on their hearts and repeat with him the following pledge:

"I hereby declare my belief in Almighty God, and reaffirm my loyalty and allegiance to His Majesty, the King, and further declare my support for British Institutions.

"I pledge myself and my all to hold the Torch on high, and to march shoulder to shoulder with the Motherland and the Empire in an righteous cause through victory and enduring peace."

At the conclusion of the pledge, the national anthem will be sung. And then comes the "Torch Day" parade.

The Torch Day parade will be the biggest parade that the community has ever carried out. It will be made up of local civic dignitaries, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Premier, Cabinet Ministers, etc., in other cities, detachments from all military forces that may be in the area; detachments from all Auxiliary Service Forces that are in the area; all civic organizations, as outlined hereinbefore, school children, patriotic floats, detachments from police and fire departments, and above all, "Hands and Hands and Hands."

BUILD UP HERDS

Sales of cattle in the first four months of 1941 at Canadian yards and plants continue to total slightly higher than during the corresponding period of 1940. It is likely that this trend will continue throughout 1941 states the Current Review on Agricultural Conditions. Sales of calves, however, have been somewhat below those of the preceding year, an indication that breeders are tending to hold back more young cattle to build up herds.

MIGHTY LION COUNTS ON YOU

This mighty British lion, proud symbol of an unconquerable race, is pictured here superimposed on a background of factories whose belches of smoke chide a symphony of determination to rid the World of Nazi lust. Truly a tribute to Canadian industry whose factories produce these planes and ships and guns the tools of war, this design won first prize in a Canadian-wide contest for posters for use in the Coming Victory Loan campaign. The design was the creation of A. J. Casson, well-known Canadian commercial artist, and as a result Mr. Casson will receive his prize, a one thousand dollar Victory Bond, at the hands of His Excellency the Governor-General. When reproduced in striking colors of gold and scarlet, the design will appear on bill boards in every city and town in the Dominion, a reminder to the nation to support the loan so that the tools may be supplied to smash the German hordes.

Be a Man Among Men!

You'll feel like a million dollars the minute you step out in that fine new uniform now ready for you. You'll be a man among men, a vital cog in Canada's great mobile war machine. You are needed to handle guns, tanks, armoured cars and other motorized equipment. Canada is waiting for YOU to spark them to victory. Canada wants ACTION. You want ACTION. This is your chance to get it.

The Canadian Active Army requires men for Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Armoured Cars, Tanks, Infantry, Transport and Supply, Medical and Ordnance and other branches of the Service. The Army is prepared to teach many trades and to train you to efficiently handle Canada's weapons of war.

Go to your nearest District Recruiting Office. Find out about these units; how they work, what they do. See just where you'll fit in. See where any particular skill you possess can best be utilized. Then join up for ACTION!

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Apply to nearest District Recruiting Office or any LOCAL ARMOURY

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