



Hickory Neck Nuggets

February 2014

February: The Shortest Month?

By The Reverend Michael L. Delk

I almost feel sorry for February. It is the proverbial runt of the litter among the twelve months of the year. The other eleven bask in the glory of 30 or 31 days, while poor February must make do with only 28, except every 4th year, when it gets a twenty-four hour bonus. The history of how February became so afflicted is complex and fascinating, but to be blunt, February essentially emerged as a stop-gap measure, a repository of lost time, a purely practical concept to make everything else fit. February is derivative, an invention mothered by necessity. Perhaps, though, February can take some consolation in its role as a tool for order and balance. The calendar couldn't do without it.

However, brief as it is "by the numbers," February doesn't always seem short. In our temperate climate, we tend to endure our nastiest winter weather in February. Damp and gray, the shortest month can seem to stretch unendurably, especially when we enter

the penitential, sacrificial season of Lent, which more often than not starts in February. We yearn for spring and Easter and sunshine and warmth. Unless you celebrate a special occasion, like a birthday or wedding anniversary in February, few would choose this as their favorite month.



So what shall we do with this miserable little month? Shall we hunker down and wait it out, or might the unique brevity of February offer us an opportunity to reflect on and experiment with time?

Now some might describe such an endeavor as ridiculous. Time is time. It marches on relentlessly,

like a well-disciplined soldier: second after second, minute after minute. Numbers don't lie. Atomic clocks measure time with astonishing precision. The rising and setting of the sun, or rather the rotation of Earth, is an inexorable cycle. Yet both modern science and spiritual wisdom suggest that time may not behave in the strictly linear, consistent fashion we assume.

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The twists in time described by quantum physics would take us a little farther down Alice's rabbit hole than either of us probably cares to go. Instead, let's consider how time functions differently in a spiritual context.

The Eastern Orthodox tradition of Christianity views divine worship as a suspension of time. Since we join "our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven," [BCP, p. 362] in worship, we enter the eternity of God when we gather for the Eucharistic feast. Perhaps this is why an average Sunday liturgy in the Orthodox Church lasts about two hours, even though you hardly notice. It is a timeless experience, and certainly not limited to the Orthodox practice. We, too, can enter into that precious present moment when we worship, if we shift our focus from the worries of the world to receiving the abundant grace of God.

Of course, this can be hard to achieve if we practice such deep awareness only on a weekly basis. During the course of the week, we can still our minds and sense our spirits, not doing, but simply being. This, too, can be difficult and requires commitment, but the blessing of following this path cannot be quantified by mere numbers.

Imagine a life in which neither the past nor the future is a constant obsession. Imagine being fully present in a moment; aware of what's happening both outside and inside you, free from judgment and anxiety. When we focus our attention, not on what was or what may be, but on what simply is, we can experience a timeless moment of grace, a taste of the eternity that awaits us, but can be accessed in discrete doses right now.

Occasionally, it just happens. Once in college, playing trumpet at a concert, I was transported to a different place by the music. Usually, performing is an anxiety-fraught trial, full of the fear of failure, but in this singular episode, I became so present in the moment that when the piece was finished, I had no recollection of playing the 2nd through 5th movements. Confused and slightly terrified, I actually had to ask my neighbor if I had played them. Stunned, he assured me that I had. I still have no recollection of playing those movements, but when I heard the recording later, the trumpet player I heard sounded nothing like me. It was the best I'd ever played.

However, we can cultivate those moments, through a variety of means, like meditation. Though there are many techniques that can help us enter altered states of consciousness and change our relationship with time, meditation basically involves focused attention on nothing – except what's happening in the present moment, without analysis or conceptualization.

This reflection started with the factual statement that February, "by the numbers," is the shortest of the twelve months. But is it really? With the right intention and practice, February could be the longest month, in a good way, filled with timeless moments spent in the still present. We have to live with the tick-tock, but that doesn't have to be our life. A true moment is measured not by quantity but quality, and that may be of some comfort to February, if we use her wisely. ✨



*Mindfulness image by
Radicalcourse*

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Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. Items received after this date will be considered for publication in a future issue.

Please send submissions to nuggets@hickoryneck.org

Grants Awarded to Local Charities

By Bill Teale

The Financial Grant Team of the Outreach Committee has awarded \$8,450 to local charities from money raised at the 2013 Fall Festival. Members of the team evaluated what each organization does for our community and what their volunteer and financial needs will be in the coming year. In addition to the funds they receive, most of the charities listed are supported by the time and talent of Hickory Neck parishioners. Financial grants were awarded as follows:



- **The Salvation Army Transitional Housing Program**, a program to provide housing, counseling and mentoring to help families and individuals get back on their feet. This will be the sixth year we have supported this program, formerly known as **HELP**.



- **Angels of Mercy**, a free clinic designed to help patients manage and treat their diseases. This is the thirteenth year we have supported the clinic.
- **Williamsburg Faith in Action**, an organization that helps people to continue living in their homes. This is the eighth year we have supported WFIA financially. We also have over a dozen volunteers helping WFIA.
- **Avalon**, an organization which provides a 24-Hour Help Line, and helps women and children who are victims of abuse with emergency and transitional housing, counseling, life skills, legal advocacy, and other supportive services. This is the fourth year we have supported Avalon.



- **From His Hands** which provides meals that Hickory Neck parishioners prepare and then serve at Grove. This is the seventh year we have supported From His Hands.



- **United Way of Greater Williamsburg Community Resource Center**, an organization which, in partnership with the faith community, provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, health services, employment/job resources and referrals to other services. This is the fourth year we have supported the CRC.

\$738 has been held back for additional grants in 2014 to charities listed above or grants to other charities.

Financial Grant Team: Linda McGee; Tom Gee; Dave Hartsough; Henry McQueen; Mark Kintner; Bob Pringle; Bill Teale.



Birthdays

1	Judy Hodges	11	Laura Kindley
1	Ted Ramsaur	14	Jean Jundt
2	Geraldine Kent	16	Coleman Ragsdale
2	Jim McGee	18	Lucy Rothnie
2	Lucy Purse	19	Bruce Manning
2	Sara Seeterlin	21	John Rothnie
3	Ron Kindley	22	Tara Best
5	Emma Delk	25	Vic Shumaker
7	Martha Connolly	26	Fred Boelt
7	Christine Hanlon	27	Ann Lipp
8	Abigail Hanlon	29	Alan Zoellner

Anniversaries

6	Joan & Dave Forrest
8	Joanne & Jim Izzo
13	Patty Kipps & John Greenman
14	Terry & Chuck Hunter
14	Sherron & Dave Ware
20	Nancye & Bill Morris

Did we miss your big day? If your birthday or anniversary is this month and you are not listed above, please send the information to Nuggets@hickoryneck.org



(12/31/13)

YTD Actual Income	\$446,092.80
YTD Actual Expense	\$423,202.11
YTD Net	\$ 22,890.69

What a fantastic end to another year! The numbers above tell the tale. Almost \$23,000 in the black – a true testament of the stewardship of our parish. And some may be asking what do we do with such a windfall? You will recall from past years that this provides the funds needed for the principal payment included in our monthly mortgage payment. We budget only for the interest payments.

The individual gifts for debt reduction are paid over and above the monthly required amount. In December, we made an extra payment of \$4,100 for debt reduction. \$1,900 was from the profit of the November and December citrus sales, and the other \$2,200 was from special gifts. At the end of the year, the mortgage balance was \$247,408.

Our Davenport Fund increased by over \$6,400 in the fourth quarter, settling at \$74,423 at year's end. This fund provides security for unexpected capital improvement requirements and has served us well over a number of years.

And the recent Time and Talent Festival brought many new volunteers together with ministry chairs. This is another huge testament to the commitment that we all make to God through our work at Hickory Neck and the greater community. It is the sum of Time, Talent and Treasure that increases the brightness of the lamp on our Holy Hill. May all of 2014 be even brighter for our parish!

Fred Boelt



Baptism:

Annalise Jane Morris - 12 January

Transfers in:

Juliana Morris

James and Mary Allegretto

Burial:

John Henry McCray (d. 12 December) 21 December



Our Prologue

by Martha W. McCartney

Christianizing the Enslaved

In 1724 Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, queried Virginia clergy about conditions in their parishes. One of the questions he posed was whether they were attempting to bring the Christian message to non-believers. The responses of James City County's clergymen provide some insight into that issue. The Rev. Daniel Taylor of Blisland Parish said that he had been trying to convert "Infidels, bond or free" but most of the slaves in his parish were incapable of receiving instruction. He added, however, that he had converted and baptized some he considered teachable, mostly children. The Rev. John Brunskil of nearby Wilmington Parish, which straddled the Chickahominy River and extended inland to the upper limits of James City County, reported that despite his urgings, the whites in his parish made little effort to provide their slaves with religious instruction. As a result, "the poor creatures generally live and die without it." The Rev. James Blair, rector of Bruton Parish and Commissary of Virginia's Anglican clergy, said that he encouraged the baptism "of such of them as understand English." He also encouraged "their Masters to



bring them to Church and baptize the infant slaves when the Master or mistress become sureties."

Unfortunately, some mid-eighteenth century religious leaders used their teachings to encourage enslaved African-Americans to obey their white masters and mistresses. In one sermon, the Rev. Thomas Bacon of Maryland, a slave owner, admonished blacks to "be obedient and subject to your Masters in all Things" and quoted Scripture to underscore his point. He went on to say that God-fearing blacks should "be faithful and honest" and "serve your Masters with Chearfulness, and Reverence, and Humility." He contended that blacks who behaved properly, did their duty toward their masters, and followed the teachings of the church, could expect to go to heaven, just as whites did. Despite Mr. Bacon's self-serving teachings, slaves seem to have been comforted and encouraged by the religious instruction they received. It is likely that they also drew strength from the teachings of black preachers and that they were heartened by the evangelistic efforts of Presbyterian and Methodist clergy during the Great Awakening.✻





Diocesan Council, February 7-8

By The Reverend Michael L. Delk

From the very beginning of Christianity, the leaders of various communities gathered for mutual council. In The Acts of the Apostles, we read of meetings in Jerusalem, where the Apostle Paul deliberated with the original disciples on the best way to extend the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Nicene Creed we say nearly every Sunday emerged from a council held in the early 4th Century. The practice continues today.

Every year, our diocese assembles in Council to reflect on the year past, look forward to the year ahead, make key decisions that affect our common life, and to pray, learn, and enjoy fellowship together. On February 7th and 8th, our Diocesan Council convenes here in Williamsburg. I encourage you to pray for the people attending this gathering, especially those elected by our parish to represent Hickory Neck: Fred Boelt, Ann Cooper, Sue Edwards, David Hartsough, and David Simmons. Please pray also for Gay Forloine, who serves on The Standing Committee of the diocese, and for Father Henry and me.

“Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in the Diocese of Southern Virginia for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” [BCP, p. 818]



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