

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Greeting and Ushering

May 5 Bryan Grover  
May 12 Jerod Haugen  
May 19 Marc Haugen  
May 26 Ryan Haugen (11:30 service)

**Altar Preparation:** Virginia Anderson

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## Cemetery Clean-Up Day

**Saturday, May 18**

**1:00 – 3:00 pm**

Come and help to make our cemetery look neat and tidy for Memorial Day. Bring your own tools and chairs. Cookies and coffee furnished.

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## May Milestones

### Birthdays

May 3 Barb Smith  
May 8 Inez Mathson  
May 8 Shelley Mathson  
May 13 Jodie Torkelson  
May 15 Tammy Haugen  
May 21 Virginia Anderson



### Anniversaries

May 7 Craig and Sally Torkelson

## Stewardship

We really did a bang-up job this year! The ladies made 28 quilts. Two are graduation quilts and one will be saved as a “fire quilt.” We also assembled 15 Baby Care Kits and 37 Personal Care Kits. This is a RECORD HIGH for personal care kits, for which items are collected by the congregation during Lent. The previous high had been 32. Shipping date is the first week in May.

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## Stained Glass Window Dedication

**Memorial Sunday, May 26**

We will dedicate the stained-glass window on the west wall of the narthex during church services on Memorial weekend. The window is in memory of Ivette Garrett and Memorial Sunday is not only a fitting time for this dedication, it is also the closest to her birthday: May 28.

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## Graduates

We have two of our young people graduating from high school this year: Lainey Dicken, daughter of Kari Iverson, and Rylan Torstveit, son of Chad Torstveit. They will receive their quilt gifts during worship services on May 12.

Congratulations and Best Wishes for Your Futures!

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## Plant Swap/Giveaway

Bring what you don't need! Take what you want! Or relax and take nothing at all.

We'll be having our first Memorial Weekend plant giveaway from 10:00 – 11:00 in the St. Pauli parking lot. Open your trunk to display your wares and go shopping.

Coffee and muffins served at 10:30. Services at 11:30.

# Minutes of the Church Council

April 11, 2024

The St. Pauli Lutheran Church council held its regular meeting Tuesday April 11, 2024 at St. Pauli church. Members present: Marisa Benson, Wade Benson, Sue Kotz, Jim Rondorf, and Barb Nelson.

Council president Wade Benson called the meeting to order. Barb Nelson opened with prayer provided by Kevin Reich.

Approval of agenda: Approved as previously sent.

Secretary's report: Minutes of 02/15/2024 meeting were approved by Marisa, seconded by Sue. Carried.

Treasurer's report was approved by motion from Barb, seconded by Jim. Carried.

Checking account balance end of February:	\$ 24,430.51
March 2024 Revenue	3,185.00
March 2024 Expenses	<u>2,166.56</u>
Checking account balance end of March:	\$ 25,448.95

Other account Balances end of March	
Education Fund	\$1,441.01
Edward Jones	78,876.94
Memorial Fund	8,535.41
Mission grant	5,591.76
Savings	<u>37,963.02</u>
Total Account Balances end of March:	\$157,857.09

Cemetery Association funds end of March:	\$ 72,976.19
Total funds end of March 2024:	\$231,234.57

Reports of members in sickness or distress: Marvin Torkelson

New members or those interested in membership: Dan and Kim Vandeventer have spoken with Kevin and will be requesting a transfer from St. John's. There are a couple more interested and considering membership.

Other Reports:

WELCA: No report

Board of Education: No report

Old Business:

Basement lights: No new report

Directional signs: Will be on hold. Kevin is still doing some more research.

New Business:

Motion made by Sue, seconded by Barb to renew Justin Folkedahl's contract for mowing. Carried.

Motion made by Barb, seconded by Jim to reimburse \$900.00 from the Education Fund for two Rondorf children to attend religious camps. Carried.

NW MN Synod is May 17-18 in Moorhead. Asking for representative.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 7:15.

Barb Nelson, St. Pauli Church council secretary

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## WELCA Minutes

April 17, 2024

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:45 pm with seven members present. The ladies had gathered at 7:00 pm and put together Personal Care Kits and Baby Care Kits and moved all – including quilts – up to the altar and front of the church for blessing on Blanket Sunday.

President Jan Strandlie opened the meeting with devotions titled "The Way to Perfect Peace" based on Psalm 119:114.

Secretary's Report: Read and approved. M/S/C (Cindy/Sue).

Treasurer's Report: For the period February 9 thru April 17. Checking Account: Income \$320.00, Expenses \$613.56. Balance \$1,648.73. Savings balance as of March 31: \$589.76. CD balance remains at \$6,323.29. Cindy suggested a donation to Lutheran World Relief for shipping. M/S/C (Virginia/Sharon) to donate \$125 to LWR for shipping. Treasurer's report was approved. M/S/C (Sue/Virginia)

Stewardship Report: 15 Baby Care Kits, 26 quilts (1 will be saved as a fire quilt), 37 Personal Care Kits, 2 graduation quilts. This is a record high for personal care kits; the previous high had been 32. Shipping date is the first week in May.

Council Report: The church is paying for the Rondorf children to attend Bible Camp. The church will also pay for the CPR fees of \$20/person. Thirteen total have signed up for classes on April 22 and 23. There will be a private baptism after church on April 28.

Communications: We received wonderful thank you cards from various recipients of the Valentine's Day soup meal that included cards made by our Sunday School children: Inez Mathson, Jim and Joan Nelson, Wally Rondorf and his girls, Jim and Jan Strandlie, and Sally and Craig Torkelson. Thank you letters from the TRF Area Community Fund for the \$200 donation. Thank you from Hospice for \$200 made on Giving Hearts Day so it will be matched.

Synod Conference Spring Gathering: Virginia, Sue and Kathy will attend this Saturday from 8:30 - noon at Redeemer Church in TRF. Cost is \$10 per person. We are donating \$25 for the Unit offering and a \$10 Gathering fee. We will discuss increasing these amounts this fall.

Annual Synodical Women's Organization Convention: September 20-21 at Christ the King Lutheran in Moorhead.



Old Business: Thank you to Cindy for arranging for the CPR classes. Thank you to Kathy for having the altar vases cleaned. Thank you to the quilters, everyone who served Lenten services, and to the Mary group for serving the Easter brunch.

Phone numbers have been corrected for the handbook. There is an error for the October Lydia circle date. It should be October 9 at 7 pm.

We discussed whether to re-order the Christmas cards with the St. Pauli photo on the front. Decision was not to do so.

New Business:

Cindy let the council know she has contacted Tammy Swick to clean again the beginning of June. Val Torstveit will be holding a graduation open house at the church the end of May.

Status of Heritage Center wall hanging: Virginia took it home and hung it on the line during a moderately breezy day and it looks nice following this airing. We are wondering where it will be hung because there is now a TV in that spot. Faye will call Gary Johnston to see when we can visit Angus church to look at their framed hanging of the prayer. Jan washed the old backing so it can be re-used.

Next meeting is May 22. Jan will share the program given at the Lion's Convention in January about the World Food Bank and how it works. Sue is serving.

Prayer Partners were exchanged and offering taken. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Faye Auchenpauagh, Secretary

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## What a Great Group of Sunday School Kids!



## CPR Class Graduates



**Day 1 Class above, left to right: Bruce Mathson, Sheila Reich, Sue Kotz, Shelley Mathson, Barb Nelson.**

Taking the class on Day 2 were Myles and Kathy Alberg, Virginia and Ronnie Anderson, Faye Auchenpauagh, Cindy and Kenny Cedergren, and Jim and Jan Strandlie. No one thought to take a photo though of Day 2's graduates.

It is not easy to perform CPR! You need to compress the chest by 2" and do that 2 times per second – for as long as you are able or until emergency personnel arrive. It is much easier to do those compressions on the floor when you can use the entire upper part of your body.

Yet, St. Pauli folks always manage to have some fun, like someone accidentally calling 911. Yes, even casually saying, "Siri, call 911," to your phone during a class works. Oops!

One gentleman was overheard to say, "I hope it's never just me and the person in trouble, because once I'm down on my knees I'm going to need his help to get up again. He'll *have* to live!"

And when the instructor said the first step was to rip the clothing off the dying person's torso and to not be surprised at what you might see, a lady was overheard to say, "Whenever I take my clothes off, I'm always surprised at what I see."

# The Fate of a Mother

The fate of a mother is to wait for her children.

- You wait for them when you're pregnant.
- You wait on them when they get out of school.
- You wait for them to get home after a night out.
- You wait on them when they start their own lives.
- You wait for them when they get home from work to come home to a nice dinner.
- You wait for them with love, with anxiety, and sometimes with anger that passes immediately when you see them, and you can hug them.

Make sure your old mom doesn't have to wait any longer. Visit her, love her, hug the one who loved you like no one else ever will.

Because the brain gets old, but the heart of a mother never gets old. No person will love you like your mother.

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## 21 facts you may or may not know about Norway

1. Norway is home to one of the world's oldest parliaments, the Althing, established in 930 AD in the Icelandic village of Thingvellir. It served as a gathering place for Icelandic chieftains to discuss laws and settle disputes.
2. Norway's Svalbard Global Seed Vault, located on the Arctic island of Spitsbergen, serves as a global backup for seeds from around the world, safeguarding agricultural biodiversity in the event of a global catastrophe.
3. Norway's Lærdal Tunnel is the world's longest road tunnel, stretching over 24.5 kilometers (15.2 miles) through solid rock beneath the mountains between Lærdal and Aurland.
4. The country boasts one of the highest ratios of electric vehicles (EVs) per capita in the world, with incentives such as tax exemptions and toll-free roads encouraging widespread adoption of electric cars.
5. Norway's national dish, fårikål, is a hearty stew made with lamb or mutton, cabbage, potatoes, and peppercorns, traditionally enjoyed during the autumn months when cabbage is in season.
6. The Norwegian tradition of "friluftsliv," or open-air living, emphasizes spending time outdoors in nature for recreation, relaxation, and physical well-being, regardless of the weather.
7. Norway's Stave Churches, medieval wooden structures built during the Middle Ages, are architectural marvels known for their intricate carvings, dragon heads, and preserved medieval artwork.
8. The country's Jotunheimen National Park is home to Galdhøpiggen, the highest peak in Northern Europe, offering stunning alpine scenery, glaciers, and hiking trails for outdoor enthusiasts.
9. Norway's Atlantic Ocean Road, known as "The Road to Nowhere," is a scenic highway that winds its way along the rugged coastline, crossing several small islands and iconic bridges.
10. The indigenous Sami people of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia have a rich cultural heritage and traditional way of life, including reindeer herding, handicrafts, and joik singing.
11. Norway's Trollstigen (Troll's Path) is a dramatic mountain road with hairpin bends and steep inclines, offering breathtaking views of waterfalls, cliffs, and the surrounding landscape.
12. The country's traditional bunad costumes vary by region and are worn on special occasions such as weddings, holidays, and celebrations, representing Norway's cultural diversity and heritage.
13. Norway's Arctic Circle city of Tromsø is known as the "Gateway to the Arctic" and is one of the best places in the world to view the Northern Lights due to its clear skies and aurora borealis activity.
14. The Lofoten Islands, located above the Arctic Circle, are renowned for their stunning scenery, traditional fishing villages, and opportunities for outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, and whale watching.
15. Norway's Sami Parliament, established in 1989, represents the interests of the Sami people and promotes their language, culture, and rights within Norwegian society.
16. The country's Hardangervidda National Park is Europe's largest mountain plateau and is home to diverse wildlife such as reindeer, elk, and arctic foxes, as well as rare plant species.
17. Norway's coastline stretches for over 83,000 kilometers (51,600 miles) when including fjords, islands, and inlets, making it one of the longest coastlines in the world.
18. The country's traditional folk music, known as "spellemannsmusikk," features instruments such as the Hardanger fiddle, accordion, and flute, and is often accompanied by lively dancing at celebrations and festivals.
19. Norway's Royal Palace in Oslo, built in the neoclassical style, serves as the official residence of the Norwegian monarch and is open to the public for guided tours and special events.
20. The country's national day, known as Constitution Day (Grunnlovsdagen), is celebrated on May 17<sup>th</sup> with parades, flag-waving, and traditional costumes called bunads, marking the signing of the Norwegian Constitution in 1814.
21. Despite its northerly location, Norway experiences the midnight sun phenomenon in the summer months, with 24 hours of daylight above the Arctic Circle, allowing for outdoor activities and festivals well into the night.





SONS OF NORWAY SNORRE LODGE  
THIEF RIVER FALLS, MINN.

# Nordic Fest

A Celebration of All Things Scandinavian

**MAY 11-29, 2024**

**Saturday, May 11** – Uff Da Day at the Pioneer Village. 11AM - 4 PM \$3 per person. Viking reenactments, Lefse demonstration, Norwegian foods, and more.

**Monday, May 13** – Movie at NCTC Auditorium. 7:00 PM. “Becoming Astrid” – A biographical story of Astrid Lindgren, beloved Swedish author of Pippi Longstocking, among other books for children and young adults. Freewill donation.

**Tuesday, May 14** – Thief River Falls Public Library 6:30 PM. Ross Sutter: Scandinavian-American Tunes. Sutter plays guitar, button accordion and dulcimer and sings a wide variety of songs from his own family and from many trips to Nordic countries. Humorous stories complete this family-friendly show. Free.

**Wednesday, May 15** – Syttende Mai Smorgasbord – torsk and pork chop buffet dinner. \$15. Serving 6-7 PM at the Eagles Hall. Reservations REQUIRED by May 8 to 218-686-0733. 200 tickets only.

**Friday, May 17** – Nordic Fest DANCE at the Eagles, TRF – 7:00-11:00 PM Dance to the Honky Tonk Troubadours (classic country). \$7.50 at the door.



**Wednesday, May 29** – Dance at the Eagles to the Arnstein Killingberg Orchestra from Norway. \$10. Lunch will be served.

This is a family band from Leksvik, North Trondelag, Norway, featuring accordians and guitar. The orchestra was created in 1930 by Arnstein’s father, Asbjorn, and now includes third and fourth generations of performers.

# Around the Neighborhood

## State Champions!

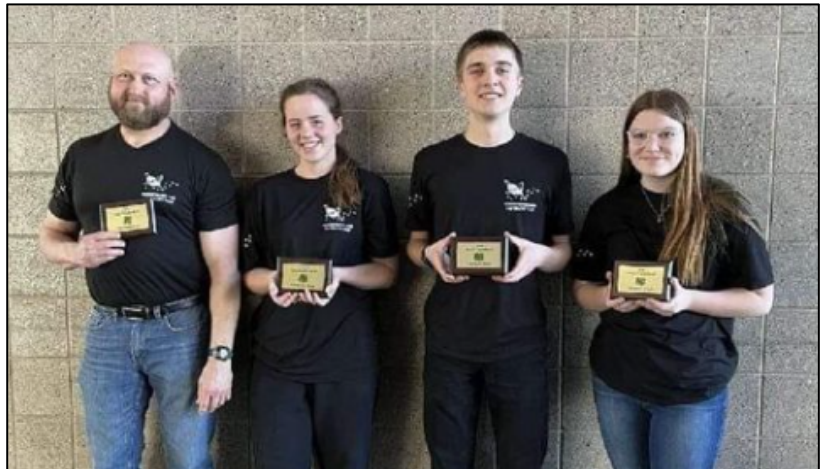
In the April newsletter, we reported that the Pennington/Red Lake County 4-H Senior Poultry Project Bowl team had won the regional championship.

On April 6, they competed in the State competition in Sauk Rapids and placed FIRST. Now they will be representing Minnesota in the National Avian Bowl in Louisville, KY on November 20-21.

The 4-H State Project Bowl challenges teams of 3-6 youth to test their knowledge on a variety of animal science and agriculture topics including dairy, dog, general livestock, horse, llama, poultry, and rabbit.

Hundreds of youth teams participate in regional competitions held throughout the state, with top teams qualifying to compete in the state bowl. Each competition includes junior and senior divisions. Teams are quizzed in one-on-one and open rounds. The first participant with the correct answer earns points for his/her team.

"Through the 4-H Project Bowl program, youth have the opportunity to partner together with other youth and learn about different animal science areas. Participants also work on improving their communication skills and building meaningful relationships with their peers, which can contribute to their future success," said Sharon Davis, 4-H animal science director.



State Championship Poultry Bowl Team, left to right: Chad Torstveit, coach; Brianne Ellison, Briley Olsonawski, Hailey Hanson.

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## Our Kevin is in Jail!



Several of our church members belong to the St. Hilaire Lion's Club and attended the 5M Lions Convention in Winnipeg in April. 5M includes all of Minnesota, Manitoba, and Northwest Ontario. As a fundraiser on "Fun Night Friday," people could pay \$10 to put someone in jail – anonymously. The "sheriff" put you in the striped tent and you, or whomever you call for rescue, must pay \$20 to get you out.

Jan Strandlie was one of the first to be put in jail by David Klemz and Jim Strandlie had to do some hard work at their table to get the \$20 to bail her out because they all thought they needed to pay with Canadian money.

Next, David Klemz put Kevin Reich in jail! While no one snapped a photo of Jan in jail, she took this one of Kevin.

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## Faye Auchenpaugh honored as Community Volunteer of the Year

She received the honor at the Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce's 110<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet.





# This tiny flower teaches us all we need to know about growing old

By Dana Milbank, *The Washington Post*, April 26, 2024



**Dutchmen's breeches, the author's new favorite flower.**

For most of my life, I marked the progress of spring by its blooms.

First came the crocuses of February and the daffodils of March, followed, in quick succession, by the tulips and hyacinth, the lilac and flowering cherry and the saucer magnolias. Later, the azaleas would explode in a pink and red riot — and, before long, the peonies would unfurl to proclaim the approach of summer. Each arrival announced

itself with a spectacular burst of color and, often, a sweet perfume that filled the yard.

But lately I've come to share the view of Wendy Cass, the head botanist at Shenandoah National Park, when she sees a waving clump of daffodils.

"Boring," she says.

What I had been watching all those years was spring as humans made it. This year, I'm experiencing spring as God made it.

Those tulips, lilacs and all the rest were imported from Europe and Asia, curated, and genetically manipulated by humans so they would grow with no effort and display improbably sweet and showy blooms. They are beautiful, no question, and I will always smile when I see a host of golden daffodils as Wordsworth did, "Beside the lake, beneath the trees/Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

But this year, I've instead been walking in the still-bare forest and looking for Dutchman's breeches.

In case you are wondering why some European left his pants in the woods, let me explain that the Dutchman's breeches are my new favorite flower. Its bloom, just a half-inch tall, looks like an upside-down pair of white pantaloons, belted at the waist with a yellow rope. Native to this part of the eastern United States, it's one of the first wildflowers of spring, popping up in late March or early April, flowering for a couple of weeks and disappearing as quickly as it came. Its entire growing season — from the time its first green shoot emerges from the earth to the moment its last bit of green foliage dies for the year — is just a couple of months.

Yet so much life comes from those delicate trousers. It's one of the first foods in the forest after a long winter, and a crucial bit of sustenance for the queen bumblebee. When she emerges from her overwintering nest in the ground (the other bees die during the winter), she stretches her long tongue into the Dutchman's breeches to reach its nectar, which nourishes her as she lays the eggs that will replenish the colony with the next generation of workers.

The Dutchman's breeches are part of a class of plants felicitously known as "spring ephemerals."

They appear on the forest floor before the trees have leafed out, taking advantage of the sunlight. They flower, go to seed, and die back within just six to 12 weeks.

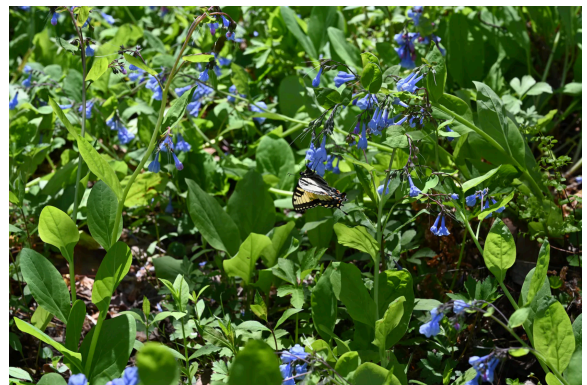
These are flowers you generally won't find at florists: They are bluebells and bloodroot, trout lilies and toothwort, spring beauties and rue anemone. They are joined by other flowers that, while not "true" ephemerals (their foliage lasts a bit longer), generally share the same category: the great white trillium, hepatica, star chickweed and mayapple.

They are notoriously difficult to cultivate, hard to transplant and even harder to grow from seeds. It can take seven years from the time a trillium seed is planted to the appearance of just one of its three-petal flowers. Ephemerals are finicky and fussy plants, growing only in forests and typically near streams. They aren't as bold and colorful as garden-variety flowers, and most don't even have a scent. You won't spot spring ephemerals from your car window with an "ooh" and an "ah." To find them, you have to go on a treasure hunt in the forest. Their flowers can be tiny — sometimes just a millimeter or two — and you could easily miss them if you don't look carefully.

That is just the point.



**The blooms of Dutchman's breeches, just half an inch tall, resemble an upside-down pair of white pantaloons, belted at the waist with a yellow rope. (Dana Milbank/The Washington Post)**



**Bluebells in bloom. (Dana Milbank/The Washington Post)**

"The more you stand and stare at the ground, the more you see," Cass said as we stood in the forest this week. She pointed out an early meadow rue that was just unfurling, then a sessile-leaf bellwort emerging, then a trillium in bloom. "Just stand still for a few minutes and you'll discover."

Her advice for spotting the spring ephemerals seemed as applicable to life as to botany. "Don't be so focused on your destination or you'll miss the good stuff," she recommended. "Look around. Slow down. Even when you think you've seen everything, you haven't."

Spring ephemerals have been one of my happy discoveries as I've begun rehabilitating the neglected farm my wife and I bought in the Virginia Piedmont in 2022. Mostly, I've been discovering that everything I thought I knew about nature and gardening was wrong. In the case of these spring wildflowers, I realize that the knockout colors and fragrances I had associated with the natural world in my urban existence were, in fact, caricatures. In the wild, beauty is more subtle and more delicate — but it is also more satisfying.

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As I grow older, I find that this is true of life generally. It becomes clearer to me with each birthday that we are all spring ephemerals. We are here for just a short time. We sprout, we flower, we go to seed, we disappear. But, as the years race by, I am also learning to find beauty not just in bold colors but in subtler hues. The sublime is with us in every season, if we only pause long enough to take it in.

The metaphor continues, for the spring ephemeral is so much more than its fleeting life above ground would suggest. Their root systems, under the surface, work actively well after their foliage has disappeared; spreading and storing resources in rhizomes, or corms, so they can push out new growth at the first sign of spring. And the ephemerals are deeply interconnected. An individual plant can live for 20 or 30 years, but a colony of spring ephemerals can take a century to form. These colonies can expand for hundreds of yards along a stream. But while the wildflowers thrive in their community, if you dig up one and transplant it away from its colony, it is unlikely to survive.

The spring ephemerals are connected as well to the animals in the forest. The queen bee needs her Dutchman's breeches. The mayapple spreads through the poop of box turtles, who, within their digestive tracts, prepare the seeds to germinate. Bloodroot is spread by ants, who carry off a tasty part of the plant called the *elaiosome* and then discard the seeds. The trout lily and spring beauty rely on solitary bees for pollinating. The wild columbine depends on hummingbirds.

On our treasure hunt, Cass had by now shown me a large colony of mayapples and several Solomon's seals just beginning to sprout. I spied a white bud at my feet. "Ooh! Another trillium!" I called out to her, and she concurred.

It was worth a thousand daffodils.



A great white trillium in bloom.

It's National Arbor Day on April 26, a good time to pose a question that has occurred to me this spring: Did Johnny Appleseed have an orthopedist?

The real-life person who inspired the legend, John Chapman, grew thousands of acres of trees from seed, selling the seedlings to settlers in the early 1800s before he died in 1845. I planted 30 trees this spring and it just about broke me.

For a year and a half, I had been killing off invasive brush on the farm, and this spring it was time to start planting some native trees. Unlike the spring ephemerals, these are easy to grow: Just add water. And yet, even in this relatively simple task, I made a serious miscalculation. If planting a small tree was good, I figured, planting a big tree would be better.

I got in touch with White House Natives, a tree nursery in Luray, Va., checked their price list and ordered myself 15 bagged-and-burlap trees: five American sycamores, two white oaks, two red oaks, two pignut hickories and the rest Virginia and loblolly pines. The catalogue said the trunks were 1½ to 1¾ inches in diameter, which sounded manageable. It was not manageable.

The first sign of trouble came when the guy at the tree farm told me I'd need a 26-foot moving truck to pick up my trees. The second sign came when I learned that the root balls, 18 inches deep and 24 inches wide, weigh some 300 pounds each. I panicked and tried to scale back my order. The guy at the nursery said they had already dug up the trees for me; there was no backing out.

So I decided that, to dig the holes, I would rent a "towable hydraulic auger" from Home Depot. I towed it to the farm behind my minivan. The instructions said it could be operated by one person — and it could be. But it weighed 295 pounds and was meant to be moved from hole to hole by a tractor, which I don't have. So, I had to pull and push it, manually, up and down hills. The result was much like in "Fiddler on the Roof" when Tevye's horse goes lame, and he has to pull the milk cart himself.

For a full day, I drilled and sweated and cursed. I severed an underground electrical line. (It wasn't hot, as evidenced by the fact that I am writing this.) I left the landscape looking as though hundreds of groundhogs had taken over the place.

Things didn't improve when I showed up at the tree farm with my U-Haul. Loading each tree required the efforts of a Bobcat and two large men with grappling hooks. Unloading it myself, without equipment, was going to be impossible. In my driveway, I promptly grounded the U-Haul while backing it over a berm and spent the next hour digging it out and cursing some more. I shoved two of the trees off the back of the U-Haul then went inside for some Advil, and placed a call to a local guy who has a tractor, begging him to rescue me. With his John Deere, we hauled the trees from the truck and, finally, I wrestled them into the holes. I then called all the spas within 40 miles and asked for the earliest opening for a deep-tissue massage.

There had to be an easier way — and there was. My next 15 trees (mostly dogwoods, serviceberry, and redbuds) came from Hill House Nursery in Castleton, Va. Two or three feet tall and in one- and two-gallon pots, they were easy to plant. The hard part was putting up the cages to keep the deer from devouring them — and now watering them once a



week. I'm told that in a few years they will have caught up to the bagged-and-burlap trees that just about broke my back.

But, in the end, even these labors proved to be unnecessary. It turns out I could have hundreds of trees planted at the farm by others — for free! The local Soil and Water Conservation District, using federal and state funds, covers most of the cost. A Virginia nonprofit, Friends of the Rappahannock, covers the rest and hires contractors to do the planting. The logic: It's in the public interest to reforest private land, particularly "riparian buffers" near rivers, as my place is.

To be sure, they're only tiny seedlings, a quarter inch in diameter. It takes all of 30 seconds to plant a seedling: make a few shallow cuts into the ground, stick the tiny bare roots in the hole, and cover the plant with a four-foot, translucent tube, where it will (hopefully) grow, protected, for the next few years until it is ready to bust out. With care and luck, as many as 80 percent will survive.

On Wednesday of this week, Friends of the Rappahannock did my planting, a combination of oak, sycamore, persimmon, black cherry, birch, and dogwood. The little guys are hardly bigger than spring ephemerals right now, and the green tubes are not much to look at. On the other hand, I just "planted" upward of 850 trees — two acres' worth — without any cursing or Advil. Now, I can instead spend my time walking the forest in pursuit of that elusive pink lady's slipper orchid. I bet it's somewhere near the Dutchman's breeches.

Alternatively, I can go to visit Carolyn Smith. There aren't many wildflowers on my farm (years of untreated invasives crowded out everything) but Smith, who lives in Madison County, Va., has the closest thing there is to a cultivated spring ephemeral garden. Her parents began planting bluebells and trillium along a small creek, and, over two generations, the collection has slowly grown to some 100 varieties of spring wildflowers.

On our first walk, in late March, she introduced me to Dutchman's breeches ("they're the cutest little things!") and a blue carpet of hepatica, just six inches off the forest floor. The trout lily displayed its long, yellow flowers, and the little white bloodroot flowers were already going to seed.



**Carolyn Smith, who lives in Virginia's Madison County, has the closest thing there is to a cultivated spring ephemeral garden.**  
(Dana Milbank/The Washington Post)

I returned two weeks later to find an entirely different landscape in the same place. The bluebells had exploded, and eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies feasted on their nectar. Smaller blue flowers, Jacob's ladder, had popped, along with purple woodland phlox and dainty, blue and yellow bluets. The eastern shooting stars unfurled their long, white petals. Marsh marigolds blanketed sections in orange, and tiny foam flowers fringed the stream.

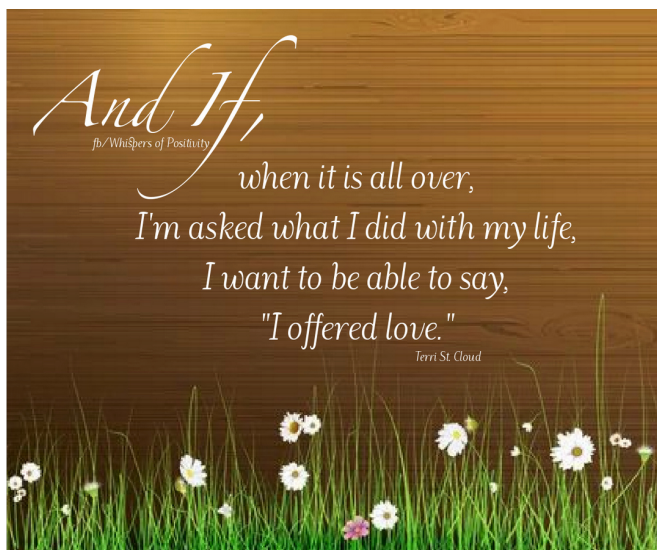
Smith got to the blue cohosh, which two weeks earlier hadn't yet bloomed — and now it was already gone. "Rats!" she said. "It was here three days ago." Still to come in the next couple of weeks: the purple showy orchids, the striped hood of the jack-in-the-pulpit and the lady's slipper. After that, "the show will be over," she said.

Smith dares not travel this time of year, for fear of missing a bloom. "You've got to grab it while it's here," she advised, "because soon it will be gone."

It's a life lesson, taught by the flowers of the forest floor.

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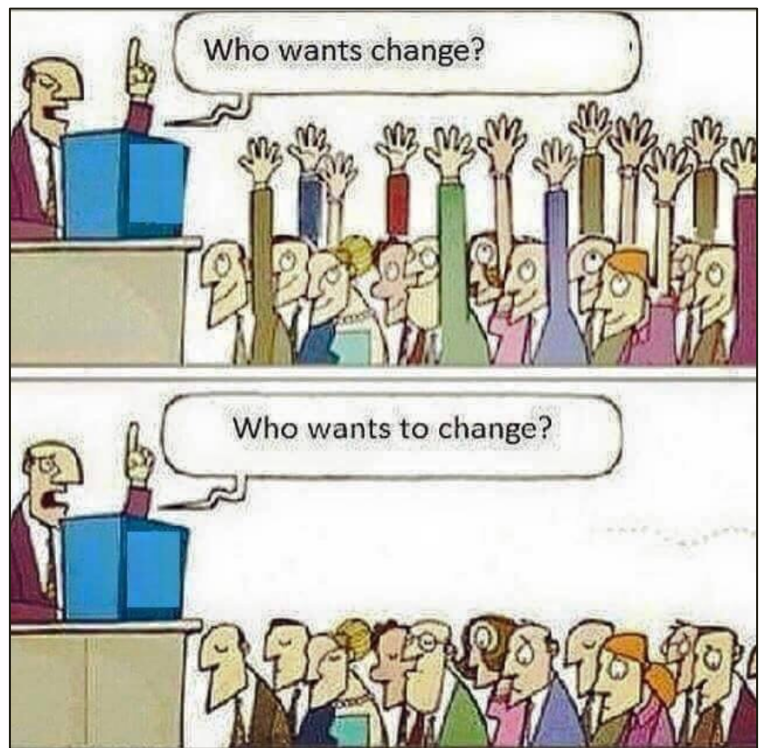
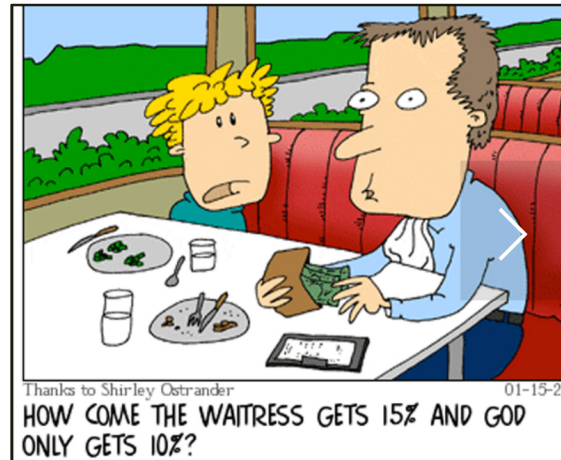
**Editor's Notes:** I checked maps and almost all of these spring ephemerals are shown as growing in Minnesota. You'll find an article on Johnny Appleseed in the September newsletter.



Anthropologist and former college president Judith Shapiro once pointed out that the most compelling reason to get a good education is that it makes "the inside of your head an interesting place to spend the rest of your life."



# The Back Page



Enjoy Your Spring!

