



People Helping People by Carol (Klenk) Heck

Have you done a good deed for your neighbors recently? Maybe you cut their grass while they were away or unable to do it themselves. Or last winter, maybe you shoveled their snow. Some folks just need their newspaper brought to their porch so they don't have to walk as far. There was such a story relayed to me about this exact deed. And, believe it or not, it was carried out by two youngsters,

no more than 7 years old.

Every day these boys would make sure the newspaper was laid on their neighbor's porch because they wanted to do this good deed. I know first-hand that the appreciation was overwhelming. Deeds like these should be taught at a young age so that children know they are a part of the community.

There have been many events where the citizens of Madeira have pulled together to help each other. One such tragic story was on February 27, 1918. The C. & C. electric Swingline commuter train (once a form of transportation from Norwood, through Madeira, and on to Hillsboro, was at a sharp bend on a steep hillside known as Dead Man's Curve. This was where the electric track ran next to the B. & O. Railroad tracks and close to the Camargo switch station siding. This was west of the Miami Avenue Traction station and east of Madisonville. The accident happened when a freight car pulling a trailer of beer and livestock, collided head-on with a passenger train carrying 50 passengers. It happened around 4:30 as businessmen, women and students were heading home for the day. The motorman of the freight car was normally supposed to wait on the siding in Madeira until the passenger train passes by on the single track. But the orders given that day for the passenger train was to pull over at Camargo and let the freight train go by. That didn't happen.

The motorman of the passenger train, George Franke, had tried with all his might to stop the train when he approached the curve and saw the freight car was heading right for him. Franke, died later that night at General Hospital from a skull fracture and burns.

After the collision, the stunned and injured passengers made their way off the car. The only exit was on the 60 ft. ravine side of the tracks. As they were disembarking, a fire broke out. The electric wires powering the trains were ripped from their supports and almost caused an electrocution.

Dr. William Knight, a Madeira resident living on Miami Avenue, was aboard the passenger train. He himself was injured and bleeding because his front teeth had gotten knocked out. Dr. Knight stayed on the scene, helped with a rescue team and administered first aid to the injured.

The freight trailer was hauling game chickens; used for fighting. Also, it had 3 mules and a race horse belonging to Cliff Todd of Montgomery. The horse got out safely and the chickens had gotten loose. Since the chickens were worth thousands of dollars, young boys from Madeira and Madisonville came back to help round up the chickens on the nights following the crash. This is definitely a case of neighbors helping neighbors. If you want to read more details on this article, contact the Madeira Historical Society.

On February 19, 1960, a twin-engine Lockheed Lodestar crashed in a gorge off of Shawnee Run Road and to the south of St. Gertrude School around 9:10 in the morning. The 3 male passengers were killed upon impact. Lunken Airport authorities spoke very highly about pilot Joe Lockwood's expertise in flying. The Cincinnati Enquirer reported that possibly the plane had been guided to the wooded ravine to escape crashing into the school or closely neighboring homes.

A Sinclair gas attendant working on the corner of Shawnee Run and Miami was outside pumping gas when he saw the plane from the northwest. He said that suddenly the engines roared and then the plane plummeted. The landing gear was up, so thoughts were that the pilot was not looking for a place to land, but trying to avoid more casualties upon the inevitable crash.

A student of St. Gertrude was upstairs in the school building practicing how to be an altar boy. He had been facing a window looking towards Madeira when he heard the loud roar of the plane. He reported that it looked

like one of the props was gone. He saw the plane heading towards the school. The student recalled that the plane then rose as it went over top of the school. Shortly after, everyone heard and felt the great explosion for many blocks away. The crash site didn't give much evidence of what really went wrong. Everyone was very shaken up and also very thankful that others were spared injury and death. Sister Mary John, principal, led prayers with the school children. Rev. Paul Slanina O. P. was driving back to the school and had heard the plane gun its engines and then crash. He went to the site and gave conditional absolution. I believe that the best explanation came from that boy who saw it from the second-floor window. Good thing he was observant and not afraid to speak up.



On January 29, 1967, The George Meyer Hardware and Lumber Mill caught on fire. It wasn't their first fire, either. This was when Kroger was still on Laurel Avenue. This colored picture is snapped from a second-story window of a house on the north side of



Laurel looking south where the Meyer hardware store had been for many decades. The black and white photo shows two fire trucks from Silverton and many on-lookers, unable to fathom the intensity of the fire. Maybe in this situation, there's not much a neighbor can do. Maybe just keep a watchful eye out for others, stay out of the way, check on the owner's family to see that they are coping, or pay up your Meyer Hardware credit tab, if you have one.



Remember the tornado on August 9, 1969? It came up very suddenly out of nowhere. Many trees were uprooted or sheared off and landed on rooftops and in the streets. Power and phone lines were pulled down and power was out through several Cincinnati suburbs.

Attendees of the St. Gertrude festival were injured when a large tent blew over. The winds were so strong that two trucks from the festival were picked up and blown to Madeira Hills Drive. This picture shows men and boys responding to Mayor Dan McDonald's bullhorn the next day pleading for everyone to come out and pitch in to help clear the streets and haul away debris.



The black & white photo comes from the Cincinnati & Suburban Bell Telephone Company's newsletter, called "Telenews". The vice president of Cincinnati Bell at the time was, Dwight Hibbard, pictured here with his Madeira home. His roof was completely torn off and it was never found. Dan McDonald was very proud of all the volunteers and thought it was a tremendous show of civic pride.

On March 12, 2019 you may remember that a twin-engine Piper plane crashed into a house on Rollymeade. The pilot died. There was no one home in the house. The neighbor heard the terrific sound of splintering wood so loudly that he thought it was something at his own house. He rushed outside, saw the downed plane and immediately

called 911. It was in the afternoon just before the children would be coming home from school. News of the crash spread very quickly. The school principal, at that time, was Chris Flanagan. Mr. Flanagan rode on the bus that day as students were delivered to their homes to calm them and make them feel at ease.



Madeira really pulls together in times as these, but we don't need to have a catastrophe to be a helpful neighbor. Let us make sure that we continue to be the conscientious person next-door. I know it is a different world we live in now, but people can still safely look out for others and do good deeds. Children can be taught values at a very early age, like respect and consideration. These things bind a community and make for the kind of neighborhood that everyone wants to live in.

Sources include:

Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, "One Killed and Score Injured in Head-on Traction Collision on Hillsboro Line Near Madeira", February 27, 1918

Cincinnati Enquirer, "Motorman Responsible", February 28, 1918

Cincinnati Enquirer, "Families Mourn After Three Die", Did Fate or Pilot Guide the Plane?" February 20, 1960

The Suburban Life, "26-year-old Tornado Still Fresh in Madeira", by Regina Villiers, August 9, 1995

Telenews by the Cincinnati and Suburban Bell Telephone Company August 15, 1969

Cincinnati.com "Officials ID pilot in Madeira Plane Crash", March 13, 2019

Photos courtesy of Madeira Historical Society, Bob Brockhage, and Tim Brock
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Also see, Traction Line "Swinging on the Swing Line"