

Friday Follies 04/26/2002

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Hey!

Well, this week has been an emotional roller coaster...high highs and low lows. First, some of you may remember that my husband, some friends, and I starting a foundation last year in the memory of Mr. Richard Hassell. Well, I am happy to report that the Foundation is now well established and is thriving. It is very exciting.

Richard was no ordinary man. Almost without exception, those who knew him felt he was the most compassionate and spiritual soul they had ever known.



In Hollywood, Richard appeared in such classic movies as "Gone with the Wind" and "High Noon." For a time, he was Country & Western singer and cowboy film star Tex Ritter's personal valet. But he left Hollywood to come home to Norfolk in 1964 where he promised his dying Mother he would carry on her work of helping those in need. Richard lived out the rest of his life doing just that. He passed on January 22, 2001. Now it appears that by inspiring countless others, his work will continue through them.

Richard was one of President Bush's "1000 Points of Light" in 1992 and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee in 1989. He lived a very humble life, and was known to even give his social security checks to burned out families for hotel rooms or to buy sandwiches for those on the street. It is hard to believe, but this man who helped thousands, had to have money raised to pay for his own funeral...a funeral attended by over 1,000 and covered by three television networks.

Support is growing rapidly throughout Hampton Roads for continuing Mr. Richard Hassel's legacy. Not only is the Foundation Board implementing the RHF Mission Statement, but plans are under development to open a "Richard's Place" restaurant. This facility would instruct "at risk" youth in the culinary arts profession and all the business skills associated with the facility's success. The graduates of the program would then be placed in the workforce, thus fulfilling the ultimate goal of the foundation...returning self-sufficient, responsible citizens back into the community. If this project is approved, "Richard's Place" could be open as early as Spring 2003.

"Richard's Place" would exemplify Richard Hassell's philosophy  
ACTION - NOT WORDS.

Joe Hoppel of WCMS radio, Joe Flanagan of Channel 13 TV, Carolyn Lincoln of Baby Steps, John Langlois of Tele-Video Productions, Pat Stewart (Richard's daughter) and her husband Louis, John McGourn owner of the Sunrise Breakfast Shoppe, Gardner King of King outdoor advertisements, and JP and I comprise the Board at this point. We cannot believe the way this idea has taken off. There are contractors who are offering to donate the restoration and/or renovation of restaurant space, businesses who are donating computers, speaker systems, kitchen equipment, and on and on.

This past Saturday, Joe McGourn donated all of the proceeds from the Sunrise Breakfast Shoppe from 9-2 to the RHF. There were entertainers performing while everyone dined. Even the wait staff donated their tips. "Standing room only" was what it was, and the *Virginian Pilot* ran a lovely story about it for Sunday's paper. We are very pleased and encouraged by the reception the RHF is beginning to receive.



Note: Many of you have made donations.. Thank you. If any of you would like to know how to contribute to the RHF or to "Richard's Place," please email me, and I will send you the address.

Next, my son surprised us with his first trip home in almost a year! He called Friday night about 6:30 as we were on our way to a movie and said he wanted to come home for the weekend, was that OK? I was ecstatic. He got here about 5:00 the next morning with his dog, "Dock." First, I will say that "Dock" is a beautiful, healthy, well groomed, well behaved Husky/German Shepherd mix. He adores Jeremy and never barked or caused one moments problems the whole weekend. He is the most laid back, gentle dog I have ever seen. Jeremy never raised his voice, just spoke commands to him or snapped his fingers and the dog obeyed.



Jeremy, Jessica, and "Dock"

Jeremy talked at length about his job which I thought was at a fishing type pier in Connecticut, but is actually a fancy marina on the Long Island Sound. The boats are yachts, not fishing boats like I thought. He is not sure how long he is going to stay there and is even making noises about going back to Colorado and enrolling in school again (Hooray!) He just seems to have grown up so much. He went to the Tides baseball game with us and he offered to pay for the food and drinks all night. Of course we did not let him, but it was such a refreshing gesture! I cannot tell you how thrilled I was to see him and what a heartwarming visit it was for all of us.

And sadly, one of our dearest friends passed away unexpectedly this week. We took Tuesday and Wednesday off and drove down to Charlotte to be with his family. We are so very glad that we did. His adult children who live in Oklahoma were there and were "hungry" for stories about their dad...as a friend, and as a businessman. We told "Al stories," or "Al Kesslerism" as we called them, for hours. They could not hear enough of them, and somehow, it helped us as well.

In all of the years that I have known Al, I never saw him without his “signature” Al Kessler smile. He loved life, his family, and his friends more than anyone I know. At 59, he had just retired from a long and prosperous career on January 1 of this year. Over the past three years he had gotten into great shape by working out every day and by taking Karate lessons three days a week. He often boasted to me that no cigarette, cigar, pipe, cup of coffee or glass of tea had ever touched his lips.

He was a great mentor and best friend to many and had proven that friendship over and over through the years. In fact, he and his wife, Gail, even met JP and I as we disembarked our cruise ship in St. Thomas three years ago for our wedding. They were waiting on the dock (smiling and taking photos) and then handed us a bottle of champagne and our first wedding gift, two Waterford crystal Millennium series Champagne flutes. Great memories...

Some would say it is a shame that he did not get to enjoy more of his retirement, but I think JP and I would also say, “What a joy that he lived and appreciated every day of his life to the fullest.”

To Al.



Al and Gail Kessler at our reception



Two Amigos, Al and JP.



Al and my brother, Larry, at our oyster roast. Al and another long-time friend, Tim.

I say this every week, but some weeks it seems more real than others...  
Remember, life is short...we need to make it a good one.  
Grow in peace and wisdom.  
Your Friday Friend,

Judi Godsey

PS. NOTE OF CAUTION... 20 employees were fired from The New York Times here in Norfolk for sending lewd and indecent e-mails. (To my knowledge, none of the 20 were on our list - even though some of the attorneys who represent the company were!) I have asked each and every one of you on this list to tell me if these "Follies" place you in jeopardy, or even if they offend you. Please understand that they are intended to be light-hearted and are not mean-spirited in any way. If you are ever offended, do not hesitate to ask to be taken off the Friday list.

PSS. If you send a joke and I don't use it, it is because it has been used before, and I try not to repeat. Remember, I have been sending these since August of 1997. You tend to go through huge numbers of jokes that way.

Disclaimer: When anyone asks if I type all of these jokes, the answer is, "No!" I cut and paste one evening during the week (30 minutes, TOPS). I don't have time to sit, read, and retype jokes all day! If you would like to see a small portion of what I actually do, look up our homepage at [www.chcs.pvt.k12.va.us](http://www.chcs.pvt.k12.va.us) and check out the Soundings section, a publication I produce four times a year which pretty much recaps most of what I am involved in.

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