

# A "C.U.T." ABOVE

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## Cathy's Column

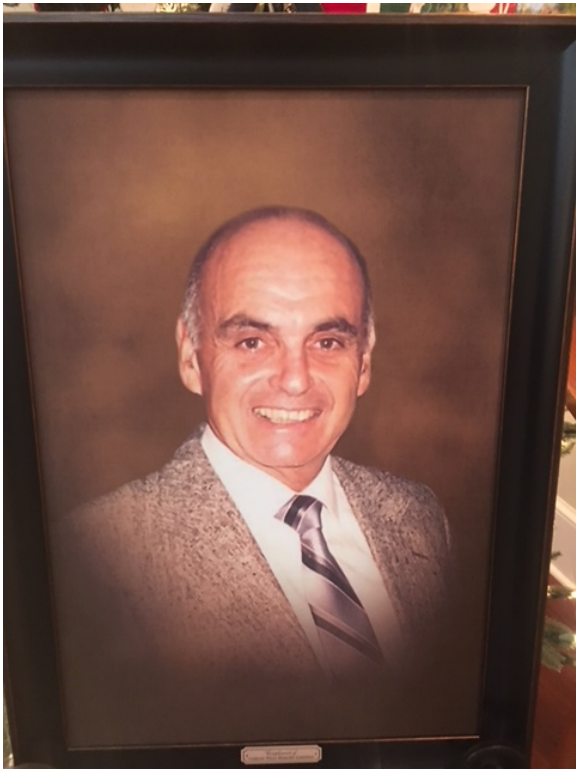
The long awaited holidays are over. The celebratory parties and family gatherings are memories. The decorations are in the process of being taken down and stored for next year. The extra pounds gained during December are being slowly worked off at the gym. What happens now?

We're not working, but many of us are volunteers in our communities, churches, and yes-schools! Being involved with kids keeps us in tune with the younger generation-the future of our great country. I find this to be true whenever I am with my grandsons-now aged 12 and 8. I see their interactions with their friends and I am optimistic and encouraged that youngsters find fun in everything. They have very little to worry about at this stage of their young lives.

When I went to Egan Cottage for our annual Holiday Gift Opening on December 8th along with six other members of our TRIF unit, I got that same good feeling about our relationship with the Youth Ranch. Except for two children who we met last December, the kids were relatively new to the Ranch. There were sets of siblings looking after each other, but their biological parents were missing from their everyday lives. The makeup of the Cottage "family" is fluid. Some kids may go into foster care or move to another facility. Their lives are not always as stable as my grandsons'.

That's where we come in as a stable part of their young lives. We can make a difference by engaging the kids, not only through our donations, but through sharing some common interests. I found out that evening that baseball is a VERY popular sport the young boys actively participate in. ALL the youngsters love to draw. They like to play outdoors. They are healthy, active kids.

There is always an ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE on the Ranch on the first Saturday in March each year. It is quite the event. There are several presentations of equipment used by the Sheriff's Unit including a fascinating canine unit demonstration. They have a band concert and a free barbeque. There are opportunities to visit the various cottages on the campus in Safety Harbor. Visitors can take a peek into what life is like at the Ranch. **This year the event is scheduled for March 3.** I will be forwarding your invitation closer to the event. Please put the date on your calendars—you won't want to miss it!



## In Memoriam

On December 5th, we lost one of our most active supporters and members, Fred Egge. He was a Past President, Program Chairperson, and in recent years, a liaison to Egan Cottage along with his lovely wife, Betty. Fred was tireless in his many roles in our group. It was Fred's suggestion over ten years ago to have Egan Cottage as our charitable project in order to have a direct impact on the youth of today.

Fred was a native of Austria, a Korean War veteran, a teacher and coach in Long Island before coming to Florida to retire. He was an author and always the counselor and mentor for me and, I'm sure, for countless others.

He will be greatly missed by all.

## Egan Cottage Thanksgiving



Our December luncheon was held on Thursday, December 22 at Alfano's in Clearwater. The restaurant was fully decorated for the holidays and most festive. The food was outstanding. There were 22 attendees. We were very happy to have the volunteer coordinators from Egan Cottage with us, Tom and Harlinda, as well as the oldest resident of Egan Cottage, Kerry. We were so happy that Betty Egge, wife of our dearly missed Fred, who just recently passed, was also with us.

After a moment of silence for Fred, Cathy informed us we are planning a permanent memorial for Fred at Egan Cottage. Fred was responsible for the relationship we started and continue to nourish with this Florida Youth Ranch cottage. It has come to mean so much to our group as well as to the children it benefits each year.

Betty spoke about her and Fred's thankfulness for our involvement in this most worthwhile project. Our annual donation presentation to Egan Cottage was made. Betty Egge thanked Egan Cottage for allowing us to be a part of this most worthwhile program and a part of their lives. Tom and Harlinda graciously accepted our donation. Kerry, our guest resident from Egan Cottage, spoke and answered some questions from us. She thanked our group for helping to make a nice Christmas for all the ten children. She is a senior this year and hoping to pursue veterinary studies next year. We certainly are so proud of her accomplishments and wish her well. Tom also thanked us for our generosity and relationship with Egan Cottage.







On Friday, December 8, seven of our members were privileged to share a few hours with Teri and Allan Martin and the ten children at Egan Cottage. What a joyous and most memorable time for us! Ever since my elementary teaching days I've noted that children at this time of year remind me of prancing reindeer! They just cannot walk! Excitement abounded for all of them ranging in age from 6 to 18! We enjoyed a pizza dinner together. But the true excitement for the children was the gift time. Our generous donations gave them all gifts to open! Each and every one of them showed genuine thrill with their gifts! There is quite nothing like seeing Christmas through the eyes of a child!!! I believe each of us were as genuinely thrilled and touched as these ten children! We all left with our hearts full! We'd also like to thank Terri and Allan Martin, the Cottage parents, for hosting this unforgettable event.

# January 11 th luncheon Positano's

11:30 a.m.

We will have a speaker, Ernest Hooper, from the Tampa Bay Times. This promises to be a most enjoyable and informative luncheon. For reservations, contact Maddi or Marilyn (See front page)by January 8th

## February 22nd

## Annual Day at the Races at Tampa Bay Downs.

11:30 is the buffet luncheon in the clubhouse, followed  
by the races.

The price is \$23. If you have not paid get in touch with  
Rhoda for more details.

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