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Thought for Today

➤ **From the MD's Desk:**

Dear Friends,

In this issue, I would like to highlight the issues discussed in the Open House held on 1st March 2015 at our Club House.



Update on Phase 1a

The house was appraised about the progress of Phase 1a; Construction of cottages on the upper reaches will begin soon. On enquiry, it was clarified that the price of shares is unlikely to change in the next 4 weeks. Confirmation of subscription to 3 more cottages has been obtained; i.e a total of 11 cottages in Phase 1a are subscribed to; serious enquires for a further 4 cottages have come.

Landscaping matters

A lot of discussion took place on the guidelines set out by SLC. Some of the residents felt that the landscaping restrictions are curtailing their 'freedom' of expression. After due discussion, the house agreed on the following points, by a large majority.

1. Some uniformity and theme based landscaping is essential to maintain the present good quality landscaping.
2. Enthusiasts can always use the space on the ramp and the portico to 'express' themselves.
3. The designated space of 2ft x 10ft is adequate for planting plants of individual choice.
4. Management agreed to expand the list of permitted plants; residents were requested to submit names to be included in this list.
5. Idea of an advisory board to the SLC was mooted; the house felt that this was not required.

Water Conservation

During the discussion of landscaping matters, the important aspect of water shortage and water conservation was discussed. It is clear that all stake holders have to work hard to conserve water. The ideas suggested were as follows:

1. Have an inlet valve outside the cottage to control the inflow
2. Have a water meter and charge according to use
3. Levy a standard water cess for everybody
4. Quantify the water used for various activities – gardening, employee use, construction use, resident use etc. – MD requested residents to volunteer to do this as the present staffing levels does not permit deployment of office staff for this purpose.

It was clarified that rationalization of use of water is being actively done by the company; construction site has been instructed; SLC is devising methods of minimizing use of water. He requested the residents to conserve water on a war footing.

A new bore well is being dug at the southern end of the estate.

Sign boards

It was pointed out that sign boards were inadequate in certain areas; also, it was requested to mark lanes that are dead ends. MD promised that this would be done.

Miscellaneous suggestions:

1. Technicians to carry repair kit with them when they make visits – presently they waste time by making two trips – once to assess the situation and a second visit with the tool kit to correct the problem.
2. Fire extinguisher location needs to be corrected – Mr Chigateri was requested to advise the office about it.
3. Foot rugs to be placed at strategic areas of the club house

Success of the Open House:

The inputs regarding administrative matters from residents and SH will be discussed in the 'open house'. Presently the open house is held once a month; we can have it more often if there are issues to discuss. Unfairly accusing the administration of lack of transparency serves no purpose. Also, expecting the Board to take permission from SH for every single thing the Board does, is not reasonable. It is important that SH attend the 'open house' in large numbers and ensure that their voice is heard; people who cannot be present can express their view by writing to the Board. We can then make sure that the decisions are truly democratic. If SH are apathetic and fail to participate, the vociferous minority, who may harm Suvidha's growth with their narrow-minded view of the world, will push their agenda through.

I request all the shareholders to extend their cooperation in implementing the decisions taken in the interest of Suvidha.

Regards

Dr. K. Lakshman.

➤ Event Highlights:

As usual, last month was very eventful and Suvidha witnessed many welcome changes. It would be very interesting to recapitulate these major happenings.

- ✚ **15-02-2015 : Spring Carnival:** With the initiative of Ladies' Club of Suvidha, 'Spring Carnival 2015' was organised in Suvidha on 15th Feb. Entire Suvidha had a festive look and hats off to Ladies' Club; the function was a grand success. The participation of everyone - the staff, residents and the volunteers was exemplary. Various departments within Suvidha worked in tandem and executed their 'bit'

perfectly. In particular, the brunt of the task was sustained by everyone in the Ladies Club, led by Vani, Aruna, Sathya & Rathna and the team. Food arrangements from our canteen were very good. The



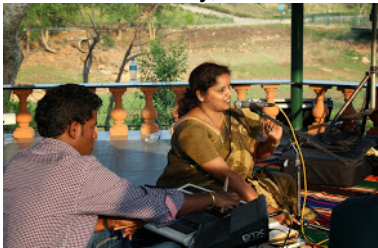
energy and enthusiasm of the group of musician friends brought to the event was fantastic! Some of the songs really struck a chord with the receptive audience! Mr Narendra and his group regaled everyone. Special mention includes the flute recital by 'Amol Palekar', was very much appreciated by one and all. However, the sound output in the court was on the higher side and tended to drown out the general conversations and personal interactions amongst the Carnival participants! Part of the problem was the echo inside the badminton court's open architecture with metal ceiling and hard concrete floor. Next time, one might consider adding more 'sound dampers' such as ground cover carpets, or more cloth partitions to adsorb sound reflections.

A group of about 60 prospective visitors brought by the Clover Mark was quite timely. From a marketing perspective there was a good exposure to Suvidha and perhaps a few interested parties, have promised to discuss more in detail later.

We are confident that in the coming days more Share Holders of Suvidha will take active part in such functions. A pat on the back of all those who spontaneously came together and made this an event to remember! Here is the link to photos.

<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6116679344584298001?authkey=CLXw0LrBxdCcywE>

✚ **5-03-2015 : Light Music Programme** : On the day of inaugural evening of Band Stand ,that is, on 17th of January, Dr K S Shekar, Chairman, Suvidha Board had graciously announced that he will



sponsor the next music evening. Accordingly, he arranged a Light Musical programme on the evening of Thursday, the 5th March. Smt. Suneetha and her troupe rendered Bhavageethas and enthralled the audience. March 5th. also happened to be Dr. Manjula Shekar's birthday. Please go through the photos taken on the occasion by clicking on the link.

<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6122968366850694321?authkey=CO3ujLHsqvPTcA>

➤ **Suvidha On The Move :**

During the month, the following developments have taken place.

- **A landmark achievement for Suvidha:** Indeed it is a a big step forward for SUVIDHA, when the DC has decreed that we belong to BBMP Ward 198. This landmark declaration is achieved by the singular efforts of Sri. Veerupakshaiah. The next step would be to get BBMP to accept payment of tax from us. Once the BBMP accepts the tax from us; we stand on solid ground. Indirectly, this will without doubt increase our property value. One must take advantage of this "regularised" status and systematically

leverage the BBMP's capabilities to improve the locality in and around Suvidha, pertaining to the Roads, water Supply, Public health, sanitation and Solid Waste Management and other public amenities.

- **Additional Street Lights:** On 07th of March, additional streetlights all along the staff quarters to main gate No 2. have been installed.
- **B S N L cable laying:** B S N L cable laying project by the SUVIDHA staff was completed from cottage number 165 to 179. With the completion of the project the cottage owners in this area are contactable by the land line.

- **Waste management programme** at the Village is progressing satisfactorily. Wet waste segregation and composting is along with garden green is proceeding as per the schedule. A new composting area and a shedder unit area next to STP is being planned under the guidance from the experts. Suvidha has acquired a cute wheel barrow to transport the wet waste.



- **Kitchen garden** is continuing to yield a high variety of tomatoes, bitter gourd, brinjal, drumsticks and other greens.



- **Phase 1a :** Is progressing as per schedule and the roofing of almost all the cottages under construction is being completed. Having confirmed that the same construction company has been awarded the contact to complete the rest of the cottages under Phase 1 a, the ground work has been initiated following a combined meeting of the contractors, architects and the Directors of SUVIDHA recently.

- **Water scarcity in the Village:** There was some sort of anxiety in every one's mind with depleted water availability during the last weeks of February 2015. This kind of water scarcity in spite of continuous over working of the bore well motors led to a situation, where the watering of the garden had to be restricted to almost a zero level for the first time in the history of SUVIDHA. Fortunately, untimely rains for continuous three days saved the SUVIDHA greens. A new borewell was sunk up to 508 feet and is yielding a satisfactory amount of water and thus one expects an anxiety free summer.



<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6122970443085166721?authkey=CIWnlujKt47ZAg>

- **Office Extension:** On the first floor, Office Extension is being erected to accommodate a spacious MD's chamber, Manager's chamber, Board Room and a Reception Area.
- **New Covered Car Park:** It has been decided to build a covered car park at the entrance to the village towards the hillock on the left as we enter Suvidha. The design is intended to enhance the beauty of Suvidha as the car park is located at the entrance to the village. An aesthetically pleasing frontage is also planned. The area can accommodate 24 parking slots. As some of them had given their written request earlier, 5 slots are allotted to them and 19 slots are available. It is priced at Rs.3.5 lakhs per slot. Please note that this amount is refundable when you surrender the car park slot to the company. Bookings will be taken on a first come, first served, basis. The particular slot in the car park will be allotted by lottery.

➤ **Suvidha Family News :**

- **A wedding in the family:** Our House Keeping supervisor Mr. Chudamani Reddy's Wedding was celebrated in the early hours on Thursday the 26th February 2015 . Entire Suvidha community blessed the couple during the lunch programme. We wish the young couple a happy and prosperous married life.



➤ **Picture Gallery:**

A picture says a thousand words. So goes the common saying. Hereunder, we have presented the major events in pictures to transport you to that very event with just one click. So relax and enjoy!!!

Archives:

- **Ladies Picnic - 27-01-2015:**
<https://picasaweb.google.com/110142373058695926282/LadiesClubSrirangapatna150127?authkey=Gv1sRgCL3-8mRpcGZwAE>
- **Waste Management - 26-01-2015**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6109271834004216833?authkey=CLPi0MiW4lbrggE>
- **Republicday Celebrations - 26-01-2015**
https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6109272081926882609?authkey=CKz0v4Sw9Y-3_gE
- **Light Music Programme - 17-01-2015**
https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6105636160068792241?authkey=CPrijvP_0YP31gE
- **Discourse on Upanishad : 11-01-2015**
https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6104225980469096433?authkey=CM7NieOc5Pmr_QE
- **New Year Celebrations – 31-12-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6099384845647941521>
- **50th Wedding Anniversary of Dr Shekar Couple -- 17-11-2014**
https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6082717539941833649?authkey=CNXLoJ_HnPvHMg
- **Kannada Rajyotsava -- 1-11- 2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6078045167637707377>
- **Staff Sports – 25-10-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6076179498871069585>
- **Divali Celebrations - 23-10-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6076363233510266001>
- **Ayudha pooja celebrations – 3-10-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6065922506997420081>
- **Gandhi Jayanthi – 2-10-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6065621288180490177>
- **International Day of Older Persons – 1-10-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6065621728240223265>
- **Beauty parlour, Library and Banquet Hall inauguration – 27-09-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6064320275129696065>
- **Ground Breaking Ceremony – 26-09-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6063396405392137953>
- **Rotarians from Rotary Cantonment - 25-09-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/108282941260356382969/albums/6063271329055857393>
- **Ganesh Puja – Library – Beauty Palor - 31-08-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6053920250576543425>
- **Bandstand Inauguration - 17-08-2014**

- <https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6048464450147649377>
- **68th Independence Day 2014 – 15-08-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6047691657626994961>
- **Suvidha Vanamahotsava 2014 – 10-08-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6045854550653105985>
- **Musical program "Baar Baar Dekho" – 2-08-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6046887354098837889>
- **Marketing initiative for Suvidha's Phase-1A – 2-08-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6046889931783647761>
- **Living Will and Organ Donation – 29-06-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6034403211395729665>
- **Veena Recital & Art Appreciation Program – 15-06-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6025077471979169665>
- **Nutrition for Senior Citizens – 01-06-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6019891682683628625>
- **Photography Workshop at Suvidha - 25-05-2014**
https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/6018309312138203793?authkey=CMmP-eWG7_adoAE
- **Pre-Ugadi celebrations @ Suvidha - 30-03-2014**
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117291397490350207875/albums/5996914717033107585>

➤ **Talent Corner:** Under this banner we plan to introduce to our readers, the contributions of our Suvidha family members who have developed substantial special skill sets as hobbies. Hope you will all enjoy such presentation. We welcome all such talented members to participate in this endeavour.

- **Paintings:** Dr. Narayanan R, a popular gynecologist and a resident of Cottage No. 107 at SUVIDHA, will be introducing us to the fantasies of flora / fauna around the Village through his intricate miniature paintings.



CHRIST'S THORN



Latin name: Paliurus Spina-Christi ; Also known as Christ's thorn jujube , siddir, Crown of Thorns, Garland Thorn, Jerusalem Thorn

Family: Rhamnaceae

Christ's Thorn is native to Mediterranean region, southwest and central Asia. Grows on hedges, roadsides, on dry and sandy hills up to 3000 meters. It is a perennial, deciduous spiny shrub, growing 3 to 4 meters. It has woody, spiny stems, and oval, shiny green leaves. The plant flowers from July to August. Fruit is produced as a dry, woody nutlet.

Forming dense, sometimes impenetrable thickets, Christ's thorn (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) grows as a shrub or small tree, armed with short spines that are positioned in pairs along the branches, one of which is straight and the other curved or hooked. Christ's thorn is covered in whitish-brown or pale grey bark which is deeply fissured and cracked, with a twisted trunk which branches widely, drooping at the ends to form a rounded, usually umbrella-shaped crown. Christ's thorn produces small, greenish-yellow flowers, which cluster tightly and red-brown coloured, small, fleshy fruits that enclose a hard stone in the centre.

Referred to throughout history by many cultures and religions as a sacred or holy tree, Christ's thorn has also traditionally been used in medicine, carpentry and as a source of food. Medicinal use: as a hypocholesterolemic, diuretic and anti-hypertensive agent.

Christ's Thorn latex contains caustic and irritant chemicals. Contact to the skin and eyes should be avoided. General symptoms of ingestion are: abdominal pains, blistering, irritation of the mouth and throat, vomiting.

Christ's thorn is extremely drought tolerant, due in part to the presence of long, deep taproots which facilitate the plants ability to reach underground water sources. Christ's thorn usually flowers between August and December, with fruits produced between October and January. The seeds of this desert plant (the hard stone in the centre of the fruit) have tough, woody coats and it is thought that in order to germinate, they must first pass through the digestive tracts of an animal to break down the outer layers.

- **Birds of SUVIDHA:** This is a series of beautiful and at times stunning pictures of birds that are either resident of or visitors to our Village. Mr. Ashok Dey, a permanent resident of SUVIDHA since November 2010, has been able to photograph as many as 69 different species of birds in the Village.



Asian Paradise-flycatcher



My morning walks in the Village are almost always full of pleasant surprises. But sometimes the experience is extraordinarily overwhelming. Two weeks ago I was waiting in our nursery for any small bird that might want to sample the fruits of the two large fig trees that stand by the dry bed of the stream that once flowed into our lake from the western side. My patience was more than rewarded when quite suddenly this handsome male **Asian Paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)** flew over our western boundary wall to land on the fig tree closest to me. I had seen the species in the forests of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra but never in Bangalore. One of my friends claims to have seen it visit the garden in her Bangalore home over two decades ago.

The adult male of the species is around 20cm long (beak to tail) with almost 30cm long tail streamers which undulate very gracefully when the bird is in flight. Its metallic, dark blue-black head and crest are in sharp contrast to its silvery white body and tail streamers. To quote the great Sálim Ali, "The agile fairy-like movements of the male as he twists and turns in the air after flies, with his tail-ribbons looping or trailing behind, is a spectacle of exquisite charm." As this specimen foraged around in our nursery for nearly 10 minutes, I was fortunate enough to witness this first hand.

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➤ Readers Corner :

Some random thoughts on Śakti

Courtesy: Dr. T. S. Rukmani, PhD, DIITT.

Resident of Suvidha Village, Cottage # 73-74

(Presently, the author is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.)

On the Women's International Day which is celebrated on the 8th March every year I thought I will share some random thoughts on the supremacy accorded to Śakti in the Hindu tradition. It will be heartening to know that amongst the major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism) it is only Hinduism that has recognized the supreme divinity of Mother Goddess and accorded Her equal importance as that given to the male deities like Śiva, Viṣṇu etc. Moreover She is not depicted as the consort of one of the male Divinities but is independent and is Supreme in her own right.



The Devi Māhātmya which is considered to belong to the sixth century of the Common Era recounts in detail the exploits of Devī who has been described as Mahāmāyā, Prākṛti and Śakti. Each of these terms has significance in the tradition but my purpose in this short piece is just to highlight the uniqueness of Devī, a female Divinity, being considered as the ultimate reality in the Hindu pantheon responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe as well as to reward devotees for their devotion to Her.

Devī is worshipped in many different ways throughout India. She has attained a paramount status and a festival exclusively devoted to her is the nine day Navarātrī festival in the South and the grand Kālī pūjā in Bengal apart from the other many ways in which She is celebrated throughout the land. The entire Durgā Saptaśatī which is another name for the Devī Māhātmya and which has about 700 verses (almost like the Bhagavadgītā) is recited during the Navarātrī festival. I still remember the voice of Hemant Kumar over the All India Radio reciting the verses from this Purāṇa on the first day of the Navarātrī. One of them which has a special meaning for me is 'yā devī vidyārūpeṇa samsthitā namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namaḥ' (I bow down repeatedly to that Devī who is the very embodiment of learning). In fact this Purāṇa attributes all that exists in the universe as a representation of Devī Herself. For a society which is patriarchal in so many ways (like almost all societies round the world) it is no small wonder that Śakti has been raised to this exalted position in Hinduism. In fact Western Feminists are now emulating this model and are trying to bring in changes in Christianity with emphasis on the Mother Mary Cult juxtaposed with that of Jesus Christ. It is also reflected in a more conciliatory approach to admitting female bishops and rabbis into Christianity and Judaism respectively. In Hinduism while the Vedic paramparā has preferred male pūjārīs for temple worship there have always been female pūjārīs for the wayside shrines and in some non-Vedic shrines mainly dedicated to Śakti worship.

It is not possible to state definitely when this supremacy accorded to Śakti came into being. Depiction of Female figurines on seals are available from the Indus Valley civilization (third and second millennium BC) and later on in the Mauryan period (3rd-2nd centuries BC) which by then had both masculine and feminine divine representations. It was with the age of the Purāṇas one notices written documents which accord this Supreme status to Devī. One can boldly assert that there can be no region in India which is not familiar with the Mahiṣasuramardinī narrative of Devī slaying the demon Mahiṣāsura. This is celebrated in one form or the other in almost all the regions in India. This narrative is depicted in great detail in the Devī Māhātmya to which reference was made earlier. It is in this Māhātmya that we find the identification of Devī with yoganidrā as well as the origin of the all-powerful Śakti who combines within Herself all the śaktis of the other male deities as well.

The yoganidrā story in brief goes like this: Viṣṇu has entered his yoganidrā and the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha use this moment to start tormenting Brahmā who tries to awaken Viṣṇu from his yoganidrā. The

same story occurs in the Mahābhārata which is slightly different, by not giving importance to Devī. Thus the Mbh mentions Brahmā shaking the lotus in which he is born from the navel of Viṣṇu in order to wake up Viṣṇu from his yoganidrā who then slays the two demons. But in the Devīmāhātmya Brahmā prays to Devī addressing her as Mahāmāyā who then agrees to withdraw herself limb by limb from Viṣṇu who then wakes up and kills the demons. The emphasis in the Māhātmya is the grace shown by Yogamāyā to a devotee and granting him his wishes. In the story of the slaying of the asura Mahiṣa, the story goes that in the long protracted war of a hundred years between the devas and asuras Mahiṣa the leader of the asuras defeated the devas who were led by Indra and took over in a sense Indra's position. Faced with this situation the devas went to Śiva and Viṣṇu and explained their plight. Filled with anger there arose a jyoti or 'tejas' from the faces of śiva and Viṣṇu as well as Brahmā. There also arose energies from the other devas like Indra etc and they all gathered in one place and transformed themselves into a fiery mountain. That same Energy then became a woman called Devī who was also given their various weapons by the different devas. Equipped with all this Devī was able to defeat Mahiṣa and restore peace in the world. If one reads between the lines it becomes clear that the Māhātmya extols the tremendous śakti of Devī who also surpasses all the individual male deities. Moreover She is not represented as one of the consorts of the male devas like Śiva, Viṣṇu and so on but is independent and is capable of removing all obstacles to her devotees.

So developing from the early historical evidence of female worship in the proto- historical times as seen in the seals of Mohenjadarō and Harappa this worship of the feminine representation of the divine never diminished in India and reached its supreme position in the Tantric literature of the 17th, 18th centuries of the Common era. There is a whole 'genre' of literature called the Tantras which are dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti but increasingly Tantra literature has come to denote the collection of sacred works which worship Mother Goddess(Devī) as the Supreme Divinity.

I do hope this brief introduction to the exalted position of Devī in the Hindu tradition will act as a catalyst to all our women and enthuse them to grab every opportunity that comes their way to improve themselves and also society where we still have a number of women suffering under the yoke of patriarchy.

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IT'S WHAT YOU SCATTER ! - a great story.

Collected by Mr. Satya Murthy Subba Rao, Suvidha Cottage # 139

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.



"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?" asked Mr. Miller.

"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it," said Miller.

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked.

"Not zackley but almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble". Mr. Miller told the boy.

"Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store."

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary, we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts ... all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket.

Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

"Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about colour or size....they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho "

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

It appears that we will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath.

Today I wish you a day of ordinary miracles - A fresh pot of coffee you didn't make yourself... An unexpected phone call from an old friend.... Green traffic lights when you drive.... The fastest line at the grocery store.... Your keys found right where you left them..... and so on.....

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