

features

“Painful memories of a dark time” - Part 2

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Stone was only ever stopped in a streetcar once. It was packed like a tin of sardines, each person standing quietly, solemnly, lost in their own thoughts. The Gestapo would often force street cars to stop on their route, make passengers get out, stand with their hands up by a tree or building, and do a search of everything on their person without any respect for anyone. She suddenly realized the car had stopped. It was already quiet, but this silence thickened by fear was something else entirely. She heard a raspy whisper from behind her.

“I am an undesirable.” Glancing over her shoulder, she saw an elderly gentleman with a yellow star on his shoulder. She was wearing a loose coat with wide sleeves. She instinctively stretched her arms above her head, reaching for the bars, hoping to hide the elderly man with her coat. The officers squeezed through the train car quickly, and left just as fast. They did not see the elderly man.

This was the beginning of Rosianne Stone’s involvement in the resistance. In 1942 she spent most of her time at her aunt’s farm, visiting for weekends and summer vacation. She soon realized her aunt was very much involved, although it was never openly spoke about. Who would dare?

“One day my aunt said to me, ‘get a bike. We are taking a ride,’” Stone said. Her aunt filled bags with food and other items they would be taking with them. They rode their bicycles across pastures, through fields and on narrow paths, places that were completely unfamiliar to her. Forty-five minutes later her aunt stopped and took all of the bags on her bicycle, having to walk the rest of the way because it was so heavy.

“We are only 10 minutes from Bash,” she said. She gave her niece directions to get there, for from Bash, she knew her way back to the farm. “Do not stop or talk to anyone. You will pass the armory. If anyone pauses you or questions you, say you took a bike ride and got lost, but knew your way home now.”

What she didn’t say was that the people most likely to stop Stone were the two German guards pacing in front of the armory, their heavy machine guns glistening on their shoulders. “I never knew my heart could beat so hard and so fast, during those few moments,” she recalled. That excursion was repeated,

avoiding the armory all together. Only when she returned to Belgium in 1999 did she find out the location where the goods were being delivered: a farm at the edge of a forest where a group of 15 to 20 men were hiding, performing acts of sabotage to prepare the Alliance for invasion. They would receive supplies and instructions parachuted during the night by a small English aircraft. The Nazis soon discovered their hiding place.

The horrific atrocities inflicted on those men are too awful for Stone to describe. Their screams were heard from miles around. Some were executed right there. “My uncle Arthur, I found out, was among that group and fortunate enough to escape. Shortly after D-Day, when the Nazis were retreating, one of them, defeated and walking alongside his horse, pulled out his gun and shot him,” Stone said. The last survivor of that group of men told her everything that had happened to them and her uncle all those years ago. That memorable day, June 6, 1944.

The Allies had disembarked in Normandy. The people were elated, dancing in the streets wild with hope for freedom.

Stone’s best friend’s father, Armand Gerard, was waving a small Belgian flag, shouting “Vivent les Americans!”, live, Americans. Those words would be his last. Just as her uncle was shot by a retreating Nazi, so too was her friend’s father, right in front of his family.

No, the war was not over yet. Christmas of 1944 was their first celebration of the holiday in the last four years, Stone said.

Everyone was merry, rejoicing even, reveling in the freedom they had so long yearned for. Laughter turned to tears as everyone returned home, filled with a deep sorrow, for they had heard the tragic news of the Battle of the Bulge.

“No, no...the war was not over yet,” Stone said. “So many more lives were lost. So many of you here in the U.S. made sacrifices beyond measure, being separated from your young men and women, losing your loved ones for the sake of our freedom, freedom so very precious. To all of you I will forever be grateful.”

But still, life must go on. Stone left school after she turned 17. Influenced heavily by the work of her grandmother, she responded to an apprenticeship ad in a couture

shop. She made custom clothes for people, day and night, once going three days without sleep and nearly collapsing. She made enough money in two years to go to Paris to study design and pattern making.

After studying in Paris and returning home to Belgium, Stone had an important decision to make..

“I get off the train and my mother is waiting for me with a bouquet of roses, and the first thing she said after we greeted each other was ‘your dad and I have the opportunity to go to America, but we won’t go unless you’ll come with us.’ How could I say no?” Stone said.

She had such a love for Belgium that she wanted to stay in her country and open her own dress shop there she said. But she agreed to come to America, but only for two years.

Stone and her parents immigrated to Long Island. There, her parents were hired by John and Evelyn Olin, the owners of Winchester Guns and Ammunition. The Olins had a mansion in Illinois, another one in East Hampton, a home on a private island in the Bahamas and two airplanes.

In Europe, lower class economic status citizens were treated differently, treated poorly. Stone was brought up in a socialist country by a socialist father, and had a certain way of thinking about the rich. They were not equal. Here, John and Evelyn Olin treated her like a daughter, but she still did not want to be too friendly with those rich people she said.

“I don’t know what was wrong with me sometimes. I had a way of keeping my distance. Here was completely different than Belgium and I didn’t really understand it at the time,” Stone said.

After two years, Stone met her husband, Clifford, in East Hampton. Initially, she wanted nothing to do with him. He worked part time for a market and delivered groceries and meat to the mansion every day. He asked her to go out and she said no, but he was incredibly persistent.

“He is such a nice guy, why don’t you go on a date with him?” her mother asked. She did it for her mother. He fell hard. She couldn’t say she had no feelings for him at all, but her ties to her homeland were still very strong.

God had other plans. After six months of dating, they were to be married.

The Olins wanted someone

better, did not want her to get married so quickly. They thought she was making a big mistake.

Though Clifford was bright, energetic and successful, his work would often be interrupted by long periods of mental disability.

He, too, had suffered like Josianne. His father had left home to work at war weapon factories for defense and did not come back. At 16 years old, he had volunteered the be on the lookout for enemy airplanes over the Long Island coast. There he witnessed German spies getting caught on a Nazi submarine on the coast in Amagansett.

January turned the corner and the wedding day was approaching, but Clifford was gone.

“He went to help a friend to deliver something in NYC and did not come home,” Stone said.

“He was located in a hospital where he had been brought in, found totally confused. The accumulation of tragic incidents probably took its toll on him.”

Stone was living with Clifford’s family in East Hampton. His mother had a breast removed to try and stop the cancer from spreading, but there was little hope for her survival, as there was not much medicine could do at the time.

She was there. There was a woman who needed care. A boyfriend in the hospital. How could she leave?

She stayed and took care of his mother until he was released from the hospital. They were married shortly after, and they stayed with his mother until her cancer took her life six weeks later.

Though now it is just the opposite, East Hampton was a remote resort only rich people went to. Clifford wanted to move to New York, but that meant starting over and finding another job.

“I must say when my husband was sick, I had called Mrs. Olin and told her – because they had warned me against marrying this guy – and I said I needed work. She called a few friends who lived in the city, and one especially gave me work right away. I was able to make it on my own,” Stone said.

Clifford eventually recovered from his mental health issues and found a good job as a real estate salesman. They had three children. They owned the home they were living in and made good money, especially after opening their own real estate office.

It did not last long, however. The real estate market took a hit, they could not sell houses, the bills piled up and Stone worried they would not be able to send their kids to college.

“In this time of desperation we called to God, and he came through in many ways. Not in a big lump of money, but slowly and surely,” Stone said. “This was 1972, over 40 years ago. He has never let me down. Continually I see His hand in my life over and over again.”

The housing market eventually turned around and her kids went to college. Her sons and daughter got married. Clifford became suddenly ill, despite his good physical health, which was better than his wife’s. After he died, she decided to move to Ashland, Ohio at the age of 75 to be closer to her son Steven and his children.

“When I moved to Ashland, Steven said ‘we will pick you up every Sunday for dinner at my house’,” Stone said. “I was diagnosed with cancer five years ago and had treatments. After my second treatment, I was in a car accident. The car was totaled. I broke my right knee and was out of circulation for a while. Five years later here I am, they still come every Sunday.”

Everything Stone and her family eats is made from scratch. Sometimes they had farm raised meat, always fresh fruits and vegetables, and occasionally homemade desserts. She knew if that was her last dinner, she would want them to remember it as a good dinner.

Since moving to Ohio and settling down for her golden years, Stone has lived every day by choosing to be happy she said.

Stone said Psalm 30:5, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” has greatly influenced her outlook on life. She endured a traumatic past, but now she was home, safe, in good health and surrounded by family.

“I loved my country. I might be still there now had it not been for the war. I may never have had the opportunity to immigrate,” Stone said. “I have grown to really love this land and its people. I have met many people who are grateful to live here in America because we found freedom, and even prosperity, but most important a sense of security and safety. To me, this is God’s country, a country which has been blessed by God, a God who delights in blessing his people.”

The Melting Pot: student run worship service

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The Melting Pot is the newest branch of Christian Ministries at Ashland University.

Still in its provisional charter phase, the Melting Pot is a large scale Bible Study that is completely student run and student led.

Melting Pot services begin with a welcome from the organization’s welcoming team at the door. The service officially kicks off with a time for worship that normally is led by the worship team from Melting Pot’s leadership team.

After worship it is time to dive into the main teaching for the day and at the end of the message there is an altar call. The service concludes with a homemade meal and fellowship time for everyone in attendance.

The schedule is set but changes slightly week to week, but the Melting Pot has not always looked this way.

Rewind ten months to November of 2017 and the Melting Pot looked very different.

The idea for a new ministry outreach at Ashland started from from a conversation between a pair of freshman at AU.

Brenden Archer and Ray Vernon decided to start up a Bible study on their floor after they had heard from some of the peers that they would attend the study if they knew the people who were the leaders.

“We were going to a lot of different things on campus and there is a lot of great ministries such as FCA and The Well. There’s a lot of awesome things on campus and in our community but one thing just for our class that was being said was we don’t really want to go to these things but if you all started something we would go to it,” Archer said. “Especially with the African-Americans on campus if you go to some of the other events there are less African-Americans at those certain events, we just wanted to

get those people that don’t necessarily go to FCA or some of those other big ones.”

The showing was outstanding for the groups first meeting as nearly 30 people showed up at the initial meeting and Archer and Vernon realized that they were onto something.

Archer said that ideas just started coming out of nowhere.

“It sounds crazy but we were telling one another about similar dreams we had pertaining to the group and Ray loved the idea of the Melting Pot because integrated in our plans from the beginning was a diverse community where people of all races worshiped one God,” Archer said.

When the two got back to campus, they started to push towards creating something bigger.

They wanted to take the steps necessary to become a university recognized organization and they applied for a provisional charter.

The Melting Pot started to form



SUBMITTED BY AASHAWNTI WEST

Student leaders and volunteers sing worship at the Melting pot during every meeting.

their leadership team to help bring the organization to life.

Aashawnti West was named as the head of the communications team and started to help grow the

Melting Pot.

Read the rest at AU-Live.com