

THE PAPER

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PETERSBURG, TEXAS



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A Broken Heart by Sally Doherty

One of our own has a broken heart right now.

She is a woman that has experienced more in the way of medical procedures than some people experience in a life four times as long as hers.

Picture a small girl, age 7, tumbling and jumping, running and laughing during a gymnastics class. Her light hair is matted with sweat and her green eyes sparkle with pride as she looks up at you at the end of class. Her face is flushed behind her liberal sprinkling of freckles and it stays bright red for quite a while afterwards. You don't think much of it, since all the other kids have flushed faces after gymnastics as well. She complains one day of "feeling kind of bad" and you take her to the doctor for a check up. Her doctor refers her to a heart specialist and before you know it, the heart specialist is shaking his head, amazed that the activity level she's been participating in hasn't killed her. In a blur it seems, surgeries are scheduled and that little 7 year old girl is on a gurney, going in for open heart surgery, her short frame hardly taking up any room beneath the surgical bedding as she rolls away.

The surgery results in a total shut down of her kidneys and she has to spend 4 hours a day, 3 times a week on dialysis, which is essentially having every ounce of blood pumped from her body into a machine that filters it and returns it to her, doing the work that her kidneys are sup-

posed to do. Kidney transplants are not an option since her heart can't withstand the surgery without failure. So she has stage 4 chronic kidney disease along with her heart condition. There are 8 stages to the disease, with 8 being dead.

Not long after surviving the open heart surgery, the same little girl is hit while on her bicycle by a car driving 40 to 50 miles per hour and flipped up over the hood and roof of the car, landing on the street behind the vehicle and breaking her leg in three places. Steel rods and plates hold her back together and she navigates her way through her young life in a state of medical survivalism.

At 15, the girl has to have another open heart surgery to thin the over thickening of the muscle in her heart and have a pace maker put in. During the procedure, the surgeons unknowingly nick her heart wall, cutting it too thin, and when she is removed from life support following the procedure, her heart is gushing and pumping blood internally. She is quickly returned to life support and repairs are made to the initial surgical mistake, though she dies on the operating table and then manages to narrowly avoid dying again once out of surgery and in the ICU.

The girl you are picturing is Allison Griggs.

She's been in and out of hospitals for the majority of her life. Her medications are numerous and her ability to participate in much outside of surviving day to day is extremely lim-

ited. She did manage to graduate high school and played flute in the marching band. She started Vet Tech college courses at Sul Ross and is optimistic about someday getting to finish her studies.

However, at the moment, everything is on hold. She sits in a hospital room in the Lubbock Heart Hospital awaiting a series of tests and results that will allow her to check out and return home, medicated to the point of stability. Her father, Kenny Griggs, said, "Right now, she's a ticking time bomb."

Applications for government aid which would allow her to be placed on the heart transplant list have proved frustrating and seemingly futile. Her third application attempt will yield results in the coming week to 2 weeks that will determine if she can get onto the transplant list. Her family isn't holding their breath for helpful results. The only other way is to have \$50,000 in hand to secure a place on the transplant list. Once she's on the list, she will go to Dallas and begin tests that will cross match her with available organs all over the United States. The condition of her heart will determine where she will be in the line of people waiting for hearts. The worse off you are, the shorter your wait, theoretically. A match can be found anywhere from 1 day to 1 year after getting on the list. Once a match is found, transplant surgery has to happen immediately. The best case scenario, a matched heart is accepted by the new body and a healthy normal

life begins. For Allison, the heart surgery would be a tremendous step toward recovery to a new life, but the new heart would have to prove strong and healthy enough to facilitate her much needed kidney transplant surgery. "Finding a kidney's gonna be no problem," her father seemed pleased to say, "she's already got 3 or 4 people willing to give her a kidney. We just gotta have the heart first."

To say God has a plan for this woman is an obvious understatement. When I asked her why she thought God has let her struggle with this, she said, "I don't know. I've asked myself that question a thousand times." Her big green eyes were tearful, though not defeated, when she said, "He obviously knows something I don't. He's going to do whatever He's going to do."

The Petersburg community is nothing if not a prime example of what happens when neighbors help each other in times of need. Allison Griggs needs our help now. In effort to raise money for the Griggs' goal of \$50,000, there will be a chuck wagon lunch served in the parking lot behind First Baptist Church on July 10. Donations will be taken and all the proceeds will go toward getting Allison a new heart. Bring your friends and families for an afternoon of delicious fare and open your hearts and wallets to help save one of our own. Additional donations may be sent to Allison c/o First Baptist Church.



Have a Safe and Happy Independence Day

Petersburg Profile: Bill Bruington

by Sally Doherty



Sally Doherty

If longevity and loyalty have a name it's Bill Bruington. A resident of Petersburg for 75 years, he has 65 years of church membership at First Baptist, 57 years in banking, 55 years in marriage and over 50 years in Lion's Club and Messianic experience!

Growing up the youngest of 4 children, Mr. Bruington remembers always having a big and loving family. His father lived within the city limits and did custom work on combines. He attended Petersburg schools and played basketball, baseball and ran track. As for his academic performance he had this to say, "Oh, I, probably, average, I guess. I don't know. I think I finished fifth in my class.

Something like that. Third or fourth. I don't know. Nothing to brag about."

No stranger to working, Bruington helped his father with custom combine work until he got a little older. He said, "When I got old enough to work I had various different jobs. I shined shoes when I was a kid. I did marquee at the theater to go to the free shows. I worked at the grocery store carrying out groceries, stocking shelves and clerking. Worked at the service station filling gas and fixing flats until I went to school and after I got out of school I started working here."

I asked him about his movie theater favorites and he said, "Gosh, I don't know. Probably a Roy Rogers movie or Gene Autry, they was my favorites.

John Wayne came along and replaced them. I'm an old western fan."

After attending a business college in Plainview and graduating, Bruington returned to Petersburg and began his career at the bank. He married Ida about 2 years later and had 2 sons. Dennis and his wife, Jackie live in Albuquerque. Kevin lives in Lubbock. He has 2 granddaughters. Kendall attends college in Maryland and Katherine is a beauty operator in Austin.

Around the time he got married, he bought his first car. "My first car was a 1952 Chevrolet. I bought that in 1955, I guess. It was grey. They called it a Fleetline Chevrolet and it see **Bill** page 3

"...You know that everybody helps each other being in a small place..."

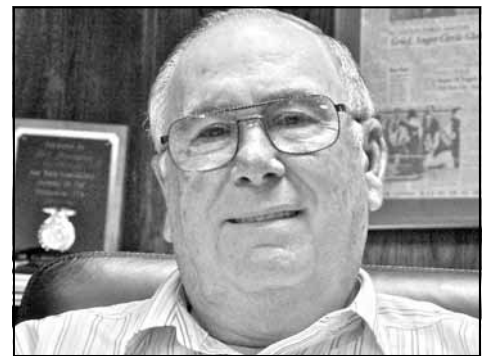


photo by Sally Doherty

Bill Bruington



*Their last 15 radio singles have been in the national top 20 charts
*They have appeared at the 'Grand Ole Opry', Nashville TN
*Their bass vocalist is none other than Petersburg's own Paul Harkey!



Tuesday, July 13 at 7:00 pm at
First Baptist Church of Petersburg

THE ANCHORMEN

Come hear this
dynamic group in concert
with their four-part quartet harmony.

Vacation Bible School

The Baptist church invites all children of the community from Pre-K through 6th grade to come to VBS July 19th-23rd each evening from 6:30 to 8:30.

No pre-registration is needed.

FREE CLEAN-UP WEEKENDS

AT COLLECTION STATION

CITY WIDE ONLY

Friday, June 25, 2010: 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 26, 2010: 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 27, 2010: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

and again

Friday, July 30, 2010: 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, July 31, 2010: 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 1, 2010: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

MUST BRING YOUR WATER BILL TO SHOW PROOF OF RESIDENCY

FEE FOR TIRES (ONLY)