Hello to all our radio friends and Clubhouse members. We just want to tell you how important you are to us. We love bringing you stories, both on the air and in the written form. And in this issue of Clubhouse you can also enjoy puzzles, jokes, riddles, cartoons and poems. So have fun reading, and remember... “We love you!”
The Lady Next Door
By D. Pemberton

The time had come. We were moving into Grandma’s apartment. Naturally, since I was now man of the house, I was helping Mom by carrying in boxes.

Unfortunately, trouble started right away. The heavy box I was carrying slipped from my grip and my basketball bounced out, smashing into some potted daffodils. Dirt and flowers spilled all over someone’s doormat at the apartment next to Grandma’s. That “someone” turned out to be Mrs. Husemann.

The instant the flowers were knocked over, Mrs. Husemann appeared at the door, screeching out, “Who are you? What do you think you’re doing?” She looked at least 99 years old.

“I’m Stuart Shaney,” I stammered. “Sorry about your plant—it was an accident. I’ll clean it up.”

“Oh, no you won’t,” she snapped. “Do you think I want you breaking the rest of my plants? Just look at this mess! Who’d you say you are?”

“My grandmother lives next door to you,” I explained. “My mom, baby sister and I are moving in with her for awhile until...”

“Oh, no!” she groaned. “Don’t tell me they’ve let children move in!” She slammed and locked her door.

That evening Grandma said, “Stuart, Mrs. Husemann has lived in that apartment for years and hasn’t had a kind word to say to anyone. It’s just the way she is. Don’t worry yourself about it.”

I couldn’t help wondering why Mrs. Husemann was so mean. We probably started out on the wrong foot, I decided, and if she got to know me, she’d like me. Maybe Grandma’s chocolate chip cookies would win her over.

When I brought a plate of cookies to her the next morning, she was angrier than before.

“What are you trying to do—put me in my grave?” she demanded. “Those cookies would make my blood sugar go haywire!” Then she slammed her door in my face.

This lady was going to be a challenge, all right! But this latest outburst just made me more determined than ever to find a way to reach her.

Flowers would melt anyone’s heart, I thought, even one as frozen as Mrs. Husemann’s. So with my paper route money I bought a bunch of white and lavender flowers. With the bouquet hidden behind my back, I knocked on her door. She opened it a crack and squawked, “What do you think you’re doing?”

Before I knew what was happening, one of the bags ripped open and a dozen eggs smashed onto her front stoop.

“Get out of here, you good-for-nothing!” she shrieked. “I don’t want any bugs in my apartment. Why do you think I keep my plants outside?” And the familiar sound of her slamming door rang in my ears.

This was going to be harder than I thought. “Why am I even bothering?” I muttered to myself. “I have enough to do with baby-sitting Molly while Mom is at work and with my morning paper route. Why should I care if she likes me or not?” But I did.

After awhile I noticed that every Thursday Mrs. Husemann walked to the corner supermarket to do her shopping. She’d push a shopping cart back and forth each time. So determined to win her over, I offered to push the cart for her.

She always refused. But finally, on a very hot afternoon, she gave in and let me push the loaded cart for her. When we got to her door, I picked up the two grocery bags to carry them in. But she grabbed for them and squawked, “Give those to me! What do you think you’re doing?”

“I presented my peace offering and said, “These are for you.”

“Get those out of my face,” she shrieked. “I don’t want any bugs in my apartment. Why do you think I keep my plants outside?” And the familiar sound of her slamming door rang in my ears.

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Before I knew what was happening, one of the bags ripped open and a dozen eggs smashed onto her front stoop.

“Get out of here, you good-for-nothing!” she screeched. The hate in her eyes made me shiver. I ran away, trying to put those eyes out of my mind.

“That’s it,” I told myself. “I give up. Whatever her hang-up is, I don’t care.”

Dad always said if you could look into a person’s heart, there usually was a person worth loving in there. “Well, Dad,” I said aloud, “this must be the one time your theory doesn’t really work.”

It was the first time I’d let myself think about Dad for a long time. I ran faster and faster, ending up in a vacant lot littered with broken booze bottles. I couldn’t escape the images of Mrs. Husemann and my dad.

What bothered me most was that I knew Dad would have had Mrs. Husemann eating out of his hand. Everyone loved my dad, and he loved everyone back. Mom said he was the kindest man she’d ever met. Grandma said if he would have been less kind and hadn’t run his grocery store by giving everyone credit, we never would have had to move from our house.

Like I said, I now considered myself the man of the house, and I couldn’t even get some old lady to like me. How was I supposed to take care of my mom and sister? “Thanks a lot, Dad,” I yelled, smashing a bottle on the ground. “How could you leave me? What am I supposed to do now?”

A dam broke inside me; tears flooded my eyes. I was mad. Mad about losing our house, leaving my friends, moving into a cramped apartment, Mrs. Husemann... but mostly I was mad at my dad for dying.

When I saw Mrs. Husemann after that, I no longer smiled or waved. I gave her the same mean look she gave me, and was content until Grandma asked me to run an errand.
“Stuart,” she said, “the mail carrier delivered Mrs. Husemann’s mail to us by mistake. Would you take this letter to her, please?”

There I was again, knocking on Mrs. Husemann’s door. I knocked loudly several times with no answer and turned to go when I heard a muffled cry coming from inside the apartment.

“Mrs. Husemann?” I called. “Is that you?” I pressed my ear to the door and heard a faint groan.

Quickly I tried the door, but it was locked. I rushed to the window and pried off the screen, but the window was locked, too. Peering through the window, I spied Mrs. Husemann in a heap on her floor. Grabbing the first thing I saw, I threw one of Mrs. Husemann’s potted plants, shattering the window.

“She’s going to love that,” I muttered as I carefully climbed through the window, missing all of the jagged glass. I ran to Mrs. Husemann. I touched her shoulder, but she didn’t move. She did groan a little, though. Shaking, I ran to her phone and dialed 911.

The dispatcher helped calm me down and assured me an ambulance was on the way. I put a pillow under Mrs. Husemann’s head, and she opened her eyes. “Sammy,” she said. “I knew you’d come home.” I smiled and held her hand.

The paramedics arrived and checked her pulse and blood pressure. She looked scared and called for Sammy. She grasped my hand. “You’re not Sammy,” she said.

“No, Mrs. Husemann, I’m Stuart. You’re going to be all right.”

“Don’t leave me,” she whispered. Of course, Grandma had heard the ambulance arrive and watched with me as Mrs. Husemann was loaded into the ambulance. She nodded her OK, as I climbed in, too. I felt sorry for Mrs. Husemann. She wasn’t the same mean old woman I was used to. She was scared, and I figured I was the only friend she had.

“Call me from the hospital,” Grandma said. “Keep us informed.”

“I will,” I promised.

Waiting in the hospital lounge, I prayed that she’d be all right. A nurse finally came in and said I could see her.

I stood by the door of her room. She looked small and frail in that white bed. “Well,” she said. “What are you waiting for, an engraved invitation?”

“Mrs. Husemann,” I said as I walked to her bedside, “I’ll pay for the window and the plant. And I’ll clean up the mess. I’m sorry, but I didn’t see any other way to...”

“Stop rambling,” she cut in. “Why you went out of your way to help me, I’ll never know. But I’m glad you did. Thank you, Stuart Shaney.”

She held out her hand. We shook hands, and for the first time there was warmth in her eyes.

“Mrs. Husemann,” I said. “Who’s Sammy?”

She looked startled by the question, then sad. “Sammy is my son. He looked a lot like you when he was your age,” she said. “I raised...”
Stars

By Marcella Zoma

Stars come out so nice and shiny,
Some so large,
Others so tiny.

They twinkle, twinkle,
Through the night.
If it’s dark,
They will show you light.

The moon shines upon the stars.
If you look very closely
You may even see the planet Mars.

Don’t be late!
They might go away.
If you missed them yesterday,
Rush out today!!!

Good Steps

The steps along life’s way
are the steps we take
each day.

The doings and the deeds
are the way we plant
our seeds.

Be careful of what you do and say,
good steps will take you
a long, long way.

By Rachel Ann Levy

Q: For what person do all men take off their hats?
A: The barber.

Q: Waiter, do you serve crabs?
Waiter: Sit down, sir. We serve anyone!

Q: Where do Dodo birds fly for summer vacation?
A: Nowhere—Dodos can’t fly.

Q: What seven letters did the old lady say when she opened her purse?
A: OICURMT

Q: What has a tongue but cannot talk, has eyes but cannot see and has a soul that cannot be saved.

A: A shoe! It has a tongue, eyes (through which the laces are threaded) and a soul.

Q: Why do cows wear bells?
A: Because their horns don’t work.

Send your poem, drawing or joke to: Clubhouse,
P. O. Box 15,
Berrien Springs, MI 49103.
(If you submit a picture, be sure it is on white paper without lines. Otherwise we won’t be able to use it.)

Jokes and riddles sent in by readers. Send yours to:
Clubhouse
P. O. Box 15
Berrien Springs, MI 49103
Bible Snapshots

Illustrated by Deborah Weber
Based on God Cares by Doris Burdick

As Jesus’ last days on earth near, Peter, one of Jesus’ closest disciples, vows his loyalty to Jesus. Jesus knows that Peter wants to be brave, but He also knows that Peter is weak and will cave in when the going gets tough.

Later, after Jesus tells Peter that his faith will falter, Judas kisses Jesus, which is the sign Judas has arranged with the Roman soldiers. As Judas betrays Jesus, the soldiers move in to make the arrest.

As the soldiers remove Jesus from the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus and His disciples had been spending the night, the disciples are frightened and hurry away so they won’t be arrested as well.

Later, Peter tries to get close enough to see what is happening to Jesus, but he doesn’t want anyone to know that he knows Jesus. After Peter denies knowing Jesus three times, the rooster crows—just like Jesus said it would.

Puzzle Power

1. In the puzzle below, mark out every X, Y and Z. The letters you have left will spell out a message if you place them on the lines in the box below. Start at the top left and go across each line, placing every letter that you have not marked out in the blanks.

(Solution on page 19.)

It's not really their fault that everyone calls them the McKelvenny monsters. They just don't know any better. There's Bradley, who's 5—he's the wildest little kid you ever saw. Then there's Caitlin, who just turned 3. Caitlin has a beautiful smile, and she's always cheerful, even when she's into mischief. I think she just does it to be like her big brother. Well, everyone calls them the McKelvenny monsters—even their mother does to their faces sometimes!

Let me tell you right from the start that I am not big on little kids. My sister Jan is the natural in that department. She earns enough baby-sitting money to have a big fat bank account. But me, I'd rather spend the summer playing ball with the other guys. But even Jan won't baby-sit for the McKelvenny monsters anymore. She tried it a couple of times, and that was enough.

Mrs. McKelvenny works nights at the paint factory, and she always looks tired and worried and crabby. No wonder, really. She has a friend who stays there, who's supposed to keep an eye on the kids at night. But I don't know how much he notices them. He spends most of the time drinking beer and watching TV with his buddies. Sometimes I hear those kids roaring around outside, even after I've gone to bed at night.

One day Mom shoved me into going over there. The reason? Bradley had run off with my baseball mitt.

“Whatever he did, I don’t want to hear about it,” Mrs. McKelvenny said. “Bradley never listens to me, anyhow. You talk to him about it yourself.”

You can imagine how much good that did. Bradley just smirked and twisted up his little face and said, “I don’t got it.”

Caitlin was just behind Bradley as usual, peeking up at me with that cute smile. “He don’t got it,” she said, shaking her blond head emphatically.

Mom sighed when I told her. “You’ll just have to remember not to leave things lying around thenext time,” she said. “Those kids get into everything.”
“Bradley had to climb our fence to get in and take my mitt,” I reminded her. “I saw him.”

Jan looked up from the book she was reading. “We’ll have to keep things inside from now on,” she said. “And don’t invite them over. Mrs. Bell was telling me she let them into her house one afternoon last week, and they scribbled all over her son’s stamp collection.”

“Why are we stuck being neighbors to the McKelvenny monsters?” I asked no one in particular.

“Listen,” said Mom, “they’ve had a hard time. Their mom’s too tired to look after them properly when she’s working nights, and she’s too proud to go on welfare. People have tried to help her, but she isn’t very friendly. It’s not easy.”

Deep down I knew what she said was true, and deep down I was kind of sorry for them. But like I said, I am not big on little kids. And I’d saved a long time for that baseball mitt. It just made me wish more than ever that they lived somewhere else.

But wishing doesn’t make anything so. And a few days later I had a surprise. It was too hot to play ball, and I was slouched on the glider in the shade of our front porch, reading a sports magazine. I was just thinking about getting some lemonade when I heard a shuffling noise, and there was Bradley coming up the steps with Caitlin toddling along behind. I was about to tell them both to get lost, when Bradley pulled something out from behind his back.

“My baseball mitt!” I said.

Bradley handed it over. “We found it,” he said proudly. “On the playground. It was just lying there. Right, Caitlin?”

Caitlin nodded. “We found it,” she said, smiling.

“You didn’t find it,” I said. “You know you didn’t, Bradley. You stole it from our backyard. I saw you.”

“No, I never,” said Bradley. “I found it. I found it. And I brung it back for you.”

I sighed. What could you do with kids like that? But at least they had returned it.

Bradley climbed up on one side of me and grabbed my magazine. “Wow! Look at the slugger!” he said, pointing to a picture.

Caitlin climbed up on the other side. “Read a story?” she asked, her blue eyes wide. She was smiling that smile.

I hesitated. Well, it couldn’t do any harm, and it might keep them out of mischief for five minutes. “OK,” I said, finally. “OK, but I decide what to read. And you don’t interrupt. OK?”

I was glad Jan wasn’t there to see me. She wouldn’t have believed it. Me, reading to little kids, especially those two. I don’t know how much they understood, but I started at the top of the article and read right on down:

“In the Dodgers’ bull pen this spring, there is one player who cares more than anyone else about RBIs and homers. In the annals of baseball, there has never been another season quite like it...”

I got interested in the story, and I didn’t notice Bradley leaning heavily against me and my putting my arm around him like he was my little brother or something. And I forgot about Caitlin.

Caitlin made herself comfortable, and flopped over on my other side with Mom’s old quilt around her. Before I was half way down the page, she was fast asleep.

“BRADLEY! CAITLIN!” Mrs. McKelvenny’s voice, shrill and angry-sounding, rang out. “You get right back here this minute, you hear me?”

Bradley leapt up. Caitlin, her eyes dazed as if she were in another world, stumbled unsteadily onto her feet and followed. I watched them disappear from sight across the front yard. And only when I got up to get that lemonade did I realize that Bradley had taken my magazine.

It’s funny how things happen. You know you have a good idea, but you’re kind of scared to mention it to anyone.

It took me almost a week before I talked to Mom, let alone to Jan or the guys. But after their initial shock, that I of all people could come up with... were full of enthusiasm. After all, there’s not much else to do on a hot summer day when you’re not going anywhere. And
Jan said it might even be fun, as long as we took turns and there were always at least three of us.

So that’s how it happened. Every afternoon now some of us baby-sit the McKelvenny monsters. It’s like a game to see who can keep them the busiest.

Mom helped us work out some sort of schedule—story time, nap time, craft time, play time. We’ve been teaching Bradley to play ball—he’s quite a natural at it. And Caitlin is quite a little artist.

The hardest part, of course, was persuading Mrs. McKelvenny, because she didn’t want us to do it for free. But we said we needed baby-sitting practice—if you can look after the McKelvenny monsters, you can do anything—and she finally let us. She seems a lot happier now that she gets to sleep every afternoon. In the fall she’s hoping to switch to the day shift, when Bradley starts school and Caitlin has a place at the nursery school.

An me...I’m still not big on little kids. But they do kind of grow on you, don’t they?

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**FRUIT STAND**
By O.J. Robertson

Suppose you went to a fruit stand, and instead of seeing names of fruit on sales tags, you saw a word which was hidden in the name of a fruit. That’s what you have in this puzzle. Add letters, one per dash, to recognize what fruits are for sale. Is your favorite fruit here?

1. __HER__ __
2. __EAR__
3. __RAN__ __
4. __AT__
5. ______ON
6. __ANGER__ __
7. PEA__ __
8. ______ME
9. BAN____ __
10. __APE__
11. ________COT
12. ________GO.

Answer on page 19.

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**TOO MANY SLEEPY PEOPLE**
By Esther Bender
Illustrated by Jim Bowser

“There’s our cottage!” shouted Sandy. “Right by the ocean with our own beach—just like this picture.” Sandy held up the picture of the cottage her family had rented for summer vacation.

Dad stretched out on the double bed. “I’m tired and hot. What a long drive!” he said.

Sandy followed Mom to the tiny kitchen. “Bottled gas,” said Mom. “We’ll have to cook with gas, and I’m not used to that. I’ll have to be careful.”

“What do you mean?” asked Sandy.

“This stove has no pilot light. I have to light the flame with a match. If the burner is turned on without being lit, the gas could put us all to sleep.”

“Put us to sleep?” questioned Sandy.

“Yes,” Mom nodded. “When people are being poisoned by gas fumes, they get sleepy.”

“Wow,” Sandy exclaimed. “I’ll remind you to check the stove! This is one vacation that I don’t want to sleep through!”

“Good,” laughed Mom.

Sandy heard Dad calling, “Come on, everybody. Let’s unpack the car. Then we’ll take a dip in the water.”

Sandy dashed outside to help bring in suitcases, towels, goggles, swimsuits, fishing poles, buckets and boxes of food. When every
thing was tucked away in cupboards and drawers, she wiggled into her bathing suit. She could hardly wait to get in the water.

“Are you hungry?” called Mom as Sandy headed toward the door.

“Can’t we eat later, Mom? I can’t wait to hit the beach. Besides it looks like it might rain later.”

OK,” Mom agreed. “Just don’t go in the water until Dad gets there. Remind Reggie that it’s not safe to swim until Dad or I come down.”

On the beach, Reggie was already building a sand castle. Sandy packed damp sand into a tin can to help him. Carefully, she unmolded the can again and again.

“Race you to the water,” yelled Dad as he headed their direction. Sandy and Reggie scrambled after him.

An hour later, when they went back to the beach house, thunder was beginning to rumble.

“What’s to eat?” asked Reggie.

“I’ll heat the vegetable soup,” Mom said. Sandy and Reggie set the table. They were almost ready to eat when a gust of wind banged the screen door shut.

Rain began to beat on the roof. Water showered through the open kitchen windows across the stove and table. Mom rushed over and pushed the windows shut. Dad made a quick trip outside to check the car windows.

“Whew,” said Dad when he came back inside. “I’m glad we’re all settled in. Let’s eat.”

After dinner when the dishes were washed, Sandy and Reggie played games at the kitchen table. Dad stretched across the bed and fell asleep. Mom sat down to read a book.

Sandy was just about to win her third game of checkers when she saw Reggie’s head nodding. His eyes were shut.

“Move, Reggie. It’s your turn,” she prodded.

Reggie put his head down on his arms on the table.

Sandy felt very tired. She yawned and began putting the checkers away. She felt her head bobble back and forth. Her eyes shut. When the checkers clattered on the table, she opened her eyes. She saw that Mom was asleep, too.

“That’s funny,” she thought. “Everyone’s asleep. We all must be really tired.”

Suddenly, she thought about what Mom had said about the stove. Maybe they were all being poisoned by gas. She felt too tired to look, but she promised Mom she’d help check the gas. She dragged herself to the stove. The room seemed to be swirling around her. Then she saw it. The burner near the window where the rain had blown in was on, but there was no flame. Sandy’s hands felt weak, but she turned the burner off slowly.

She staggered toward the door. “Mom! Dad!” she called. “Wake up!” Her voice seemed to be calling from far away. She grabbed the door knob and pushed the door open. Then she stumbled out the door and fell. Her head crashed against the deck railing.

A long time later, she heard Dad calling to her and shaking her. “Sandra, wake up! Wake up!”

Sandy’s eyes opened slowly. Her head hurt, and Dad was holding a plastic bag of crushed ice against it.

“Are we OK?” asked Sandy.

“The gas on the stove was turned on, and I...”

“Sandy, if you hadn’t turned off the gas and opened the door, we’d all be dead,” said Dad. “The fresh air kept us alive. Way out here on this beach, no one would have found us for days. Now let’s get you to the car and see about his head. I think you’re OK, but we’ll get you checked at the hospital in that little town we came through.”

When Dad, Mom and Reggie were in the car and Sandy was comfortable on the back seat, she said, “Mom, I’m glad you told me about gas stoves.”

“So am I,” Mom agreed. “We’re all glad!”

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Q: Why didn’t the skeleton cross the road?

A: He didn’t have the guts.
him alone and worshipped the ground he walked on.” She seemed to be talking more to herself than to me. Tears spilled over as she went on. “He started in with the wrong crowd and got into lots of trouble. Along the way I watched a sweet boy turn into a hoodlum and a thief. One day he up and left. Just like that.” She snapped her fingers. “I never saw him again.”

“Just like my dad,” I said. “One day he was here. The next, he was gone.” I was embarrassed, because I started to cry. Mrs. Husemann reached up her arms and hugged me. “Shhhh,” she whispered. “Your dad didn’t leave you on purpose, Stuart. Remember that. And remember how much he loved you.”

I sat up and wiped my eyes as the doctor walked in. He was looking at a chart in a metal folder. “Well, Mrs. Husemann,” he said, “it seems you had a reaction to your medication. An adjustment will take care of the problem. You can go home in the morning, thanks to your grandson here.”

“Oh, but I’m not her gran....”

“Thank you, doctor,” Mrs. Husemann said. “I certainly am blessed to have such a fine grandson.” She looked at me and winked.

Silently I said, “Well, Dad, it looks like you were right after all.” And as you might guess, from then on Mrs. Husemann never slammed the door in my face again!

Try to Touch a Star Tonight
By Stan Lee Werlin
Illustrated by Kris Hackleman

Try to touch a star tonight,
Try to steal the sun,
Try to touch the moon tonight,
Yes, it can be done.

Nothing is beyond your grasp-
Try to feel the sky;
You can touch a star tonight,
If you’ll only try.

FRUIT STAND
1. CHERRY
2. PEAR
3. ORANGE
4. DATE
5. LEMON OR MELON
6. TANGERINE
7. PEACH
8. LIME
9. BANANA
10. GRAPE
11. APRICOT
12. MANGO

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