

Share a story: Winter ride lasts for a lifetime

"We all have a story to tell. We invite you to share yours."

That's how veteran-journalist-turned-professor Dan Shaw started his invitation in last week's Sunday News. The invitation is linked to Monroe County's 2013 One Book, One Community novel "One Amazing Thing" by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.



Deborah Saul
Evening News editor

The organizers welcome your participation. You may write your own story of an amazing experience or time in your life and send it to me (e-mail below) or go to monroenews.com and submit it online. You can record your story at the M-PACT studio (call 243-5707). Also, you can choose an object of importance to your life and include it in a display at the historical museum. Watch The Evening News for more details.

Don't worry about perfect grammar or polished sentences. Just tell us something about yourself and we will learn about one another together.

You can read Dan Shaw's story at monroenews.com by clicking on the blue One Amazing Thing button. Here's mine:

When this experience happened in early March, 2001, I wrote a column about it – naturally – and used a headline that said: A moment of truth on I-75.

Incredibly it has been 12 years. Concentrating too hard on it still leaves me breathless.

My two cousins and I had spent the day on what we called a "walk-about." That is code for "shopping trip." I was driving south toward home in late afternoon on a gray, overcast day. We were in my red Olds Cutlass.

I had just crossed the Monroe County line and was in the middle lane next to a green semi-truck and trailer when raindrops started splattering on my windshield. That's not a good thing in 32-degree weather.

I eased my foot off of the accelerator thinking it would be safer to let the truck pull ahead and I could slip into the slower lane behind it.

Immediately, the car was not going where I was steering. In fact, it seemed to be floating and revolving on its own. If we had been alone on a wide-open ice rink it even might have been fun.

But I could see nothing but green as we spun and slid toward the semi. My car was gliding and I was watching my hood disappear beneath that trailer.

After so many years in the newspaper business, reporting so many stories about highway accidents, my first thought was, "So, this is how it happens." For one crystal-clear second I saw the future: the surprising loss of control, the decapitation, standing at the Pearly Gates.

Then, like an invisible hand pushing a boat away from a dock, the car seemed to be spit out from under the trailer. As other vehicles spun out and swerved around us, we were hit by another semi, two cars and an SUV before we rammed a guardrail and realized we now were sitting still but looking straight into on-coming and out-of-control traffic.

Only one driver, an off-duty state trooper, stopped to see if he could help.

I found out later that 104 accidents were called in to Central Dispatch that night.

My cousins and I did not have a scratch. Besides damage to all four sides and the hood of my car, I ended up driving it home. The repair shop did a beautiful job; it looked like new and I drove it another four years.

But those were the outward results.

The inward aftermath remains. The questions. It's funny the things we think about after something like this.

Did I ever realize before, I wondered, the awesome responsibility when people ride with me? Have I been reckless with other people's lives?

For that matter, have I been reckless with more than others' physical well-being? How do my decisions, actions and words affect those around me? What would people say they've learned from me?

The next day at work I asked one friend what impressions he would have been left with if he had never seen me again. Not his impressions of me, but my impressions of him! I wondered if he felt I respected and cared about him, as I did, or if I had never adequately conveyed that. And what about other people?

After 12 years, these questions still haunt me.

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650,000 in March for Life

14 from Lutheran High School South show their choice of life, stance against abortion

BY DANIELLE PORTEUS
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NEWPORT — Rachael Hunter and her mom, Denise, are grateful her teenage parents chose life.

The 17-year-old was adopted because her birth parents were too young and couldn't care for her.

"I'm adopted and I realize how hard it was for them to choose life," she explained this week.

Rachael and her mom were among dozens of Monroe County resident who participated last month in the March for Life walk in Washington, D.C.

Fourteen students from Lutheran High School South participated in the event, which was the first time for the school.

More than 650,000 people participated in the annual event, this year marking the 40th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that created a constitutional right to abortion in some circumstances.

The walk was about one mile beginning at the Washington Monument and ending at the steps of the Supreme Court.

"I think it's important as young people that we went," Rachael said. "We are the younger generation and we are growing up to be the voters. Younger people listen better to their peers than adults."

Mrs. Hunter, a Gibraltar resident, went to the march on the 30th anniversary of the decision.

"When I went, it planted the seed that this would be a great thing to take young people to," she said. "I wanted to take a bus trip down and educate the students about abortion."

The maternity ward nurse coordinated the trip, which also included 40 members of Redeemer Fellowship Church in Monroe.

Pro-life advocates packed the National Mall, holding signs and shouting phrases about choosing life.

Ashley Jordan, 15, explained the scene as "crazy."

"There were so many people and it was great to see them all," she said.

For Ashley, participating in the march was a way to make a difference.

"It's important because one person can still make a big difference," she said. "There were more than a half mil-



Deb Dutcher (center) holds a sign advocating a stop to abortions during the March for Life event in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Dutcher attended the event with her daughter Casey and other delegates from Lutheran High School South, Redeemer Fellowship Church and the Monroe County region.

— Courtesy photos



Lutheran High School South students (from left) Katie Holtzen, Bailey Bosman and Ashley Jordan were among dozens of Monroe County residents who participated in the March for Life event Jan. 25 in Washington, D.C. The students carried signs against abortion while walking a mile from the Washington Monument to the steps of the Supreme Court.

lion people but that doesn't compare to all of those babies who were aborted."

Each student from the school who participated in the march created signs with varying messages including, "Why say no to life when you can say yes," and "Life is precious. Don't waste it."

The students were emotionally impacted when they saw pictures of aborted fetuses during their walk.

"It made me want to cry," Casey Dutcher, 16, said.

Alexis Starman, 15, has learned a lot about abortion after coming to the school and participating in March of

Life.

"I grew up without much knowledge of abortion and I had friends who were pregnant as teens. Abortion is murder," Alexis said. "I think a lot of teens who are pregnant think they are in trouble and need a solution."

Students listened to speakers including former Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum.

During the bus ride, the students spoke with a woman who had several abortions and regrets them.

"She was raped four times as a teen and had three abortions and a miscarriage," Rachael explained. "She was forced to do it and regrets it."

Bethani Meeks, 17, said she hears people say a baby isn't alive until its born.

"It's breathing in the womb and people are killing an innocent child," she said as to why she wanted to participate.

Though the students said they enjoyed the experience, it was difficult at times. It also has started conversations with their friends who didn't attend.

"When I got back, my friends were interested in the trip and talking about what happened," Christyne Hilken said. "It was a sad vibe there, but loving."

Summerfield wins phone book recycling contest

■ Together, 11 schools took part and won \$1,700 for collecting more than 16 tons of old directories in the recycling effort.

BY DEAN COUSINO
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For the second year in a row, Summerfield Elementary School has taken first place in the third annual telephone book recycling challenge sponsored by Monroe County YP (Yellow Pages) and the Monroe County Solid Waste Program.

The school, one of 11 that took part in YP's "Project ReDirectory," won \$400 for collecting the most tons — 7.7 tons — in the fall collection. The school nearly doubled the 3.91 tons it recycled in 2011.

Together, the 11 schools collected slightly more than 16 tons of directories, almost 4 tons more than the 12.43 tons gathered from the 2011 drive, said Jamie Dean, coordinator for the Monroe County Recycling and Green Energy Division.

All of the schools were recognized at the county Board of Commissioners' meeting Tuesday night. The board passed a resolution commending the schools for their efforts.

Directories from the YP Real Yellow Pages are 100 percent recyclable and can be turned into a number of other products such as cereal boxes, home insulation, drywall and animal bedding, Mrs. Dean said.

Jerry Oley, chairman of the board, called the phone book recycling a "tremendous program."

"Improving the environment in Monroe County is not just the responsibility of some, but everyone," Mr. Oley said in a press release. "It's exciting to see these young people take this so seriously and get excited about recycling."

YP, a local search, media and advertising company that offers the Yellow Pages, awarded prizes totaling \$1,700. St. Patrick Catholic School, Carleton, was the runner-up and won \$300 by collecting 1.35 tons. Waterloo Elementary School in Monroe was third with 1.2 tons and earned \$200. The following schools recycled just under a ton

of phone books and received \$100: St. Joseph Catholic School, Erie; Ritter Elementary School, South Rockwood; Temperance Road Elementary School, Temperance; North Elementary School, Newport; Meadow Montessori School; Dundee Elementary School; Sodt Elementary School, and Monroe County Intermediate School District.

The number of schools participating was almost triple the four schools that took part in the first recycling effort in 2010.

The recycling helps educate students and parents and benefits the environment by keeping the books out of landfills and roadside ditches. Project ReDirectory demonstrates YP's strong commitment toward environmental sustainability, said Amy Healy, vice president of public policy and external affairs.

Anyone wishing to limit or stop delivery of directories should call (866) 329-7118 or visit www.YellowPagesOptOut.com to submit a request. Requests take several weeks to process, Ms. Healy said.

Making Connections conference marks 10th anniversary

Making Connections, a communitywide in-service for front-line staff, will be held March 14 at the Monroe County Community College Administration Building, 1555 S. Raisinville Rd.

The free event allows employees at community agencies to meet, share and learn

about resources of value to their customers, organizers said.

The conference will begin with a breakfast sponsored by the United Way of Monroe County and the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance and end with a luncheon presentation by the

Monroe County Opportunity Program.

Attendees will have the opportunity to attend up to three panel discussions on topics such as early childhood services, housing services and the like. Making Connections also is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year. To commemorate,

the planning committee is asking that attendees bring one item of canned food for The Lord's Harvest Pantry.

For a registration form or to learn more about the event, contact Stacey Goans by calling 240-7958, faxing 240-7974 or e-mailing staceyg@mcetd.us.