

Looking back to Nov. 3, 2018

Written by Mary Ann Kearns

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Bus safety is serious business
It's one of those moments as a parent that makes your heart skip a beat or two.

Your child is getting on or off a school bus when a driver in another vehicle decides to ignore the stop sign and flashing lights on the bus and drive on by.

"I live on 68 and I've seen cars pass buses running the stop sign four times this year," said Danny Collins, whose daughter rides the bus to Straub Elementary School each day. "Just this past week a car ran the stop sign when the bus was picking up kids at the house just up the road from us. It was in the morning about 7 a.m. and dark. But it's happened at 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon, too. I think altogether I've seen four times this school year cars or pickup trucks passing stopped school buses with their lights on."

In a split second lives can be changed forever or lost by a driver making a bad decision to disobey a very basic traffic safety rule — never pass a school bus when it is loading or unloading or when its lights and stop sign are activated.

In the past week, there have been numerous bus accidents reported across the nation including one in Indiana where a 9-year-old girl and her two 6-year-old brothers were hit and killed, and another child seriously injured, when they were struck by a 24-year-old driver while crossing the highway to reach their school bus.

And that is just the beginning; On Thursday, five children and two adults were hospitalized with injuries after all were hit by a car while waiting at a school bus stop in Tampaws, Fla. and a 7-year-old child was found dead by a school bus driver at a bus stop in Pennsylvania. The child had sustained injuries from being hit by a vehicle. On Wednesday, two brothers, 11 and 13 years old, were injured in Louisville, by a hit-and-run driver while crossing a busy intersection to get to their bus stop. and a 9-year-old child in Mississippi was fatally struck by a vehicle while crossing the road to get onto a school bus.

The problem isn't new, Collins said, recounting his own experiences as a student riding the bus to school each day.

"I live in the house I grew up in and one time I really had a close call," he said. "I was 13 or 14 years old and was crossing the road in front of the bus when a car ran right by and never slowed down. I saw the car and my bus driver, Sue Burns beeped the horn to warn me, but if I hadn't been paying attention or was a little younger I may have been a goner."

"There are three stops for the bus on this hill (Pyles Hill US 68) and from what I've seen of drivers ignoring the warning lights and signs on buses we have a serious problem," Collins said. "And it's just luck and bus drivers being on the ball that's kept us from having a tragedy like Tuesday morning in Indiana."

Mason County Schools Transportation Director Larry Brewer said his bus drivers take every precaution they can to ensure the safety of students. That includes having a monitor on every bus to escort younger students across the road and securing the bus before anyone is allowed to get off or on, he said. Pyles Hill is one of the district's trouble spots for drivers disobeying traffic laws, he said. Another is in Maysville near the Mason County Public Library.

The district is also in the process of adding outside cameras to buses that would allow drivers to activate photos of vehicles that break the law and endanger students.

"We try to educate people, provide training for drivers, we do everything we can," Brewer said. And as technology improves, so will the ability to protect students, he said.

"We hope nothing bad every happens," Brewer said, while acknowledging that some things are outside the district's control. In fact, just a few days ago, a vehicle passed a bus loading on campus, he said.

Mason County Sheriff Patrick Boggs said a photo was taken and given to his department in that case and his office is working to identify the driver.

Breaking bus safety laws is a "no tolerance" offense, Boggs said.

"It's a ticket on the spot," he said. In fact, if an officer witnesses the offense it can mean an arrest. In any case, the penalty includes a fine and possible jail time, the sheriff said.

While his department follows bus routes when manpower is available, Boggs said he will place deputies on buses if the availability of his staff increases. In the meantime, he said the public can help by reporting drivers who pass buses unlawfully or even by taking photos of vehicles and license plates when possible and contacting his office with the information.

"Please call us if you have information or evidence," Boggs said.

Inductions

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Inez, owned and operated their insurance company, Marriott Insurance Company for more than forty years. He was very community oriented and civic minded.

He was a member and always actively involved with the Brown County Planning Commission, since its inception over fifty-five years ago, the Brown County Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio Tobacco Festival VIP committee, the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge #2293, the Masonic Lodge F&AM #71, a lifetime member of the Courts-Fussnecker American Legion #367 in Ripley, Ohio and a devoted member of the Higginsport Christian Church. He also was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel and in 1988, he was named to the Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local School District "Hall of Fame" and was named the Brown County Chamber of Commerce "Person of the Year."

Brown County residents have witnessed firsthand, his outstanding support to every civic, veteran, school and charitable cause this county has had during his lifetime.

His efficient and sensitive approach to his customers and their problems in good times and bad, was remarkable. He has been a role model for many young and inexperienced people entering the banking profession and has been a teacher and had a stabilizing influence in both their business and personal lives.

Through every business or personal crisis, Dwight and Inez were always the first on the scene to offer sincere support, assistance and encouragement. He was a dynamic "Goodwill Ambassador" for Brown County and the State of Ohio.

Accepting the hall of fame plaque on behalf of Dwight Marriott was Tina Germann.

Brian Wade Grant

Speaking about the life and accomplishments of Brian Grant during the Oct. 23 induction ceremony was Stan Purdy, of the Brown County Historical Society.

Brian Wade Grant was born in Columbus, Ohio on March 5, 1972. At the time of his birth, his father Thomas was serving in the military and his mother Dorella ("Gigi") was staying temporarily with a sister in Columbus. Eventually the family moved to Georgetown, Ohio.

Besides Brian, the Grant family included his siblings Brandon, BrieAnna, Stephanie and Lakisha. Brian attended Georgetown schools, and as a Georgetown teenager he worked for area farmers planting, housing, and stripping tobacco, baling hay, digging potatoes, and mucking out horse stalls.

According to his brother Brandon, Brian started to show promise as a basketball player in late elementary school and experienced a growth spurt in high school and became a star player in his senior year. At games in the region where Brian played, youngsters would run up to him and ask for his autograph while he was sitting on the bench.

Brian and his family began to believe that he was good enough and tall enough (6'9") to perhaps play in college. During his senior year,

an assistant coach for Xavier University began to show interest in Brian as a potential player at the school. After several visits by the assistant coach, Pete Gillen, Xavier's head coach, visited Georgetown and assured Brian's family and school authorities that he could play basketball and get a good education at Xavier. Brian signed to play for Xavier upon graduating from Georgetown High School in 1990. His mother Gigi said that when they learned that Brian received a scholarship to play at Xavier, it was unbelievable and like a fantasy.

Brian had a very successful basketball career at Xavier and he graduated in 1994 with a degree in Business Management, achieving a better grade point average in college than in high school. He was a 1994 NBA lottery draft pick, being picked 8th by the Sacramento Kings in the first round. He played for Sacramento, 1994 -1997; the Portland Trail Blazers, 1997-2001; the Miami Heat, 2001-2005; the Los Angeles Lakers in 2006; and the Phoenix Suns, 2007-2008. Along the way, he negotiated several lucrative contracts. At the same time, he was active off the court with several charitable causes and received the NBA's J. Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award for outstanding service and dedication to the community during the 1998-1999 season.

Remembering Georgetown and his high school, Brian donated money to replace the school's basketball court floor and to also build an outdoor track and stadium. For several years, he conducted a youth summer basketball camp in Georgetown which was free of charge to the players.

Soon after retiring as a player in the NBA in 2008, Brian revealed that he was diagnosed with Young-Onset Parkinson's disease. His brother Brandon recalled that Brian was devastated for the first two years after his diagnosis, but eventually he learned how to manage the disease and live with it. He takes medication and therapy, each of which allows him to be active. To offer inspiration to other people with Parkinson's disease around the world, he even climbed Mt. St. Helens (the climb was documented by a film crew) together with a local support group of other younger people living with Parkinson's called The Shakers.

Brian has formed a Foundation, has an annual Gala to raise money for medical research to find the cause of and cure for Parkinson's, and has worked with Michael J. Fox and the late Muhammad Ali and their Foundations to fight the disease.

In 2020 Brian wrote a book co-authored by Ric Bucher entitled "REBOUND: Soaring in the NBA, Battling Parkinson's, and Finding What REALLY MATTERS".

Brian retired to the Portland, Oregon area at the end of his NBA playing career and continues to be active in that community. He is the father of eight sports-minded children, 6 boys and 2 girls. In May of 2025 he was again hired by the Portland Trail Blazers, this time as their basketball liaison. In this role, according to Joe Freeman, reporter for The Oregonian, "Grant is working extensively with players in a mentorship role, focusing on building a connection in

a non-coaching capacity. He is expected to provide an ear for players to talk to, give on-and off-court advice and guidance, and offer life skills... Grant only played three seasons in Portland, but he remains one of the most beloved and respected players in Blazers history, thanks to his rugged, gritty playing style, oversized heart and success."

In his book Brian summed up his life's journey so far with this statement: "Basketball gave me a life; Parkinson's taught me how to live it."

Brian Grant was unable to attend the Oct. 23 induction ceremony, but was represented by several members of his family. Accepting the plaque and thanking the Brown County Historical Society and those who have supported Brian Grant over the years was his brother, Brandon Grant.

Brigadier General Stephen McGroarty

Brigadier General Stephen McGroarty

Speaking about the life of Brigadier General Stephen McGroarty during the Oct. 23 induction ceremony was Dr. Ned Lodwick, of the Brown County Historical Society.

Stephan McGroarty was born in County Donegal, Ireland in 1830. When he was three years old, he emigrated to America with his family. His father, Cornelius, had purchased a tract of land in the new state of Ohio in 1818, sight unseen. The McGroarty family began farming their new land. Cornelius founded a small village near the farm in Perry Township of Brown County and named it Fayetteville after an early American hero, General Lafayette of the Revolutionary War.

Young Stephen was an industrious boy who worked and studied hard. He graduated from the local Fayetteville schools and then from St. Xavier College in Cincinnati. He worked for five years in his uncle's dry goods store then moved to Toledo to study law. He was admitted to the bar a few years later and returned to Cincinnati where he established a very large and lucrative criminal law practice.

When war broke out in 1861 Stephen answered President Lincoln's call for volunteers. He joined the 10th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment formed by Gen. William Lytle and was elected a captain. In a short time, the regiment was sent to Western Virginia. By the time the 10th stepped forward on September 10, 1861, towards the enemy at Carnifex Ferry now Major Stephen McGroarty was two paces in front of his advancing troops.

Major McGroarty looked back to his men and with his sword raised above his head he cried out, "Follow me men!" Almost at the same time a Confederate bullet struck the Major in the left side of his chest under his left arm, passed through both of his lungs, and existed just under his right shoulder blade. The 10th fought well that day, some for the memory of their fallen Major.

When the men of the 10th gathered the dead and wounded from the battlefield, they were amazed to find Major McGroarty alive. Joyfully they carried him to the field hospital.

The medical profession was no more prepared for the war than any other part of the army. The term triage was not yet being used but the system was beginning to take form. The wounded would be quickly examined and divided into

three groups. Those with severe wounds that had a chance of recovery were treated first. Men with less dangerous wounds were left to be treated later and those with wounds considered fatal were given something for pain and allowed to die. Major Stephen McGroarty fit into the third group.

The expertise to treat McGroarty's wounds at the beginning of the Civil War was not available to most army surgeons. Stephen was probably given a bottle of laudanum, liquid cocaine, for pain and placed in a tent and was given no more care. Three days later the burial detail entered the tent and found the Major still alive.

McGroarty was promoted for bravery during his 'death' to Lt. Colonel. After his recovery Lt. Col. McGroarty went to the Governor and requested the command of a regiment. He was made second in command of the 50th O.V.I. that was then merged into a new regiment, the 61st O.V.I, that was made up of 1 Irish catholic company from Fayetteville area and 10 German companies from all across the state. Soon McGroarty was promoted to Colonel of the 61st.

Most of his command didn't speak English. Orders had to be translated into German by the company officers. McGroarty was such a strong figure that another colonel in his division once said that "McGroarty was so Irish that he felt like the 61st was an Irish regiment."

At Chancellorsville the 61st took the full brunt of "Stonewall" Jackson's flank attack. Col. McGroarty took command of his men and organized a fighting retreat. They retreated; they did not panic and run as many regiments did that day. The proof is in the fact that only nine men of the 61st lost their rifles. Skedaddlers, panicked soldiers, throw down their weapons and run for their lives they don't keep them for later.

The 61st was in the 11th Corp of the Army of the Potomac. At Gettysburg the 11th Corp was in the 1st day battle and was again struck in the flank, side. They were routed again. McGroarty again stepped forward and the 61st executed another fighting retreat this time with Dilger's Battery I of the 1st Ohio Light Artillery. The 61st and Dilger's Battery formed two defensive lines that took turns retreating as the other line held back the onrushing Confederates. McGroarty was one of the few officers in the 11th Corp that had control of his troops.

The 61st was positioned then on Cemetery Hill just to the left of the arched entrance of Evergreen Cemetery. A sign on the arch said, "Discharging a firearm in the cemetery is forbidden." The 61st held their position against several vicious attacks by the Louisiana Tigers

After Gettysburg the 11th Corp, including McGroarty's 61st, was transferred to the western armies of Generals Grant and Sherman. The 61st fought their way up Lookout Mountain. The terrain was so steep a soldier asked an officer, "How are we gonna get up there?" The officer replied, "Grab a root!"

McGroarty's 61st moved south towards Atlanta fighting at Battles of Orchard Knob, Resaca, New Hope Church, Lost Mountain, Kenesaw Mountain, and Peach

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