

Show & Tell

By Kurt D. Laff

Anyone who has ever gone to grade school remembers the childhood assignment of Show & Tell. Surely you can recall bringing in "something of interest" (or at least thought to be!) to show off to your classmates. If your parents were brave you may have brought in a family heirloom but, mostly what was on display was not worthy the worry-of-being-broken, (unless of course you were the proud owner of such an awesome article). It could have been your baseball glove. It could have been your favorite doll. Or a hat. Or a scooter. Or a myriad of other things. Sometimes, if you had forgotten your assignment until



just before it was time to leave for school, you would grab anything and hope for the best when asked by your teacher to present your treasure. Regardless of what it was, the one who showed it off was expected to talk about their "prize." Rarely was there ever a possession that needed no explaining. After all, a baseball glove, doll or hat is just that. So what more is there to explain? Ah, maybe you owned the baseball glove that saved the game or the doll that actually talked. Both reasons would be part of your oration about what you brought to show and certainly elevate the items importance and simultaneously vault you into the category of "it must be explained."

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*The Schoolyard
Photo Credits: Richard Ellis*

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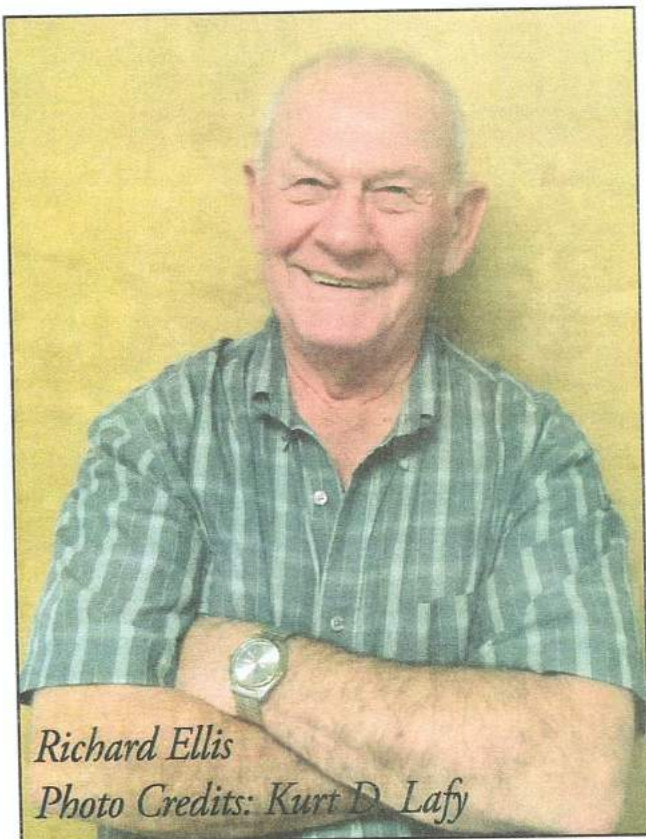
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Richard Ellis

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Ralph, Richard, Llewellyn "Tom" and Elwyn were the boys and Louise, Cathryn and Penny rounded out the children. Both Louise and Cathryn would end up marrying brothers by the last name of Kelly, while Penny wedded into the Gray family. All the kids would attend the Fairdale School, which is currently serving as Jessup Township's Municipal building. As a school, it had but three classrooms. The first through third grade was downstairs while on the second floor were two other classrooms. One was used to educate the fourth, fifth and sixth graders and the other seventh and eighth. All who graduated and moved on to higher education would go to Rush High School.

would work the farms. In the winter it was school time and the Ellis children would walk the mile to the bus stop. Much of it was up hill and their path would take them past their aunt Fannie and Uncle Martin's house. Likely, during their schooling, all would have had to participate in Show & Tell. For the Ellis family's kids, there would come to be perhaps the world's greatest Show & Tell and they would be aided by their parents! This writer is fortunate enough to personally know Richard "Dick" Ellis who conveyed the following historically accurate folkies tale.

During the spring of 1947, the Ellis clan noticed a mother doe with twin fawns! As happens, the trio frequented the area. It was a short time later that the doe was glaringly absent. The twins, apparently, had been orphaned. After a few days of the fawns being around sans momma, it was decided somehow the doe must have met her demise. It seemed to be too early in their life for the fawns to have been successfully weened so, four of the children concluded they would capture the fawns and care for them. With no veto from their parents, the chase was on. Due to the young age and perhaps the malnourishment of the animals, they were captured quite easily. A section of snow fence was erected

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The Ellis family lived on Petty Road, out in Rush Township, here in the Endless Mountains. Martin Ellis married Doris Blaisure and together they would be blessed with nine kids. Robert, Raymond,

Schooling was pretty much the typically sound curriculum of reading, writing and arithmetic. Nothing fancy in those days.

The children of the era would do what was normal during the summer. They

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and served as their pen and bottle feeding saved the duo from a premature death. It was not long before the deer grew bigger and learned they could leap the snow fencing. Regardless they had freed themselves from captivity; they did not run off into the woods! Instead, they stayed around the house and became "two of the family!"

Spring turned into summer and still the twin deer were about. One day the game warden showed up and delivered the bad news. The Ellis family would have to turn both deer over. No reason was given save for the Ellis family, "Couldn't have 'em." A bitter pill had to be swallowed and the children did their best trying to accept the loss of their pets. One day, a short time after the game wardens had visited; the Ellis family received a letter from the State of Pennsylvania's Game Wardens. The written contents left all encouraged. The powers that ruled had determined the Ellis household could have one of the deer back! And so it came to pass that the Richard Ellis' parents went and got the lone deer, which came to be known as "Little Deer." Little Deer did not need to be penned up. He took to the family as if he was a bonafide member. The deer would play in the yard by, "Running around in circles like crazy," Dick explained. Or, it would just hang around grazing. Why it would



Bus Driver Ted Daly
Photo Credits: Richard Ellis

even come into the house and the parents did not seem to mind!

Summer slid away into fall and school harkened the Ellis children. Little Deer would follow them to the bus stop and watch forlornly as they sped off towards their education. Left alone for the day, the deer would graze about while waiting or go home. However, the deer would usually end up by the aunt's house before the children got home. Mrs. Ellis, having realized Little Deer would return to

Fannie's house, would sometimes hang a note around the deer's neck which explained how Mrs. Ellis would need some oleo or flour or whatever she was short of. Fannie would see the note, fulfill the request and send it home with the children as they returned from school.

One fall day started as usual. The children all began their weekday migration to the bus stop up past aunt Fannie's house and trotting right along with them was Little Deer. It stood by them as Mr. Ted Daly's school bus, a panel truck with bench seats on both sides, stopped to pick up the brood. Ted opened the door and some of the kids got on immediately followed by Little Deer, as if he belonged there. Mr. Daly paused long enough to pet the deer before motoring on to school with the children and their Show & Tell. Upon their arrival, the bus stopped, the door opened and sure as heck, Little Deer got off with the lot of children. Other kids who attended the Fairdale School were delighted. Most of them did not know the Ellis family had a pet deer and they all laughed with glee. Schoolmates of the Ellis kids, Dick and Harold Allen, Dick Hall, Jim Welch, Louis Hicks, Howard Oakes, Bill and Doug Jenner, Giles Seeley and others assembled outside the front of the school and enjoyed the spectacle of a deer going to school. Our story teller

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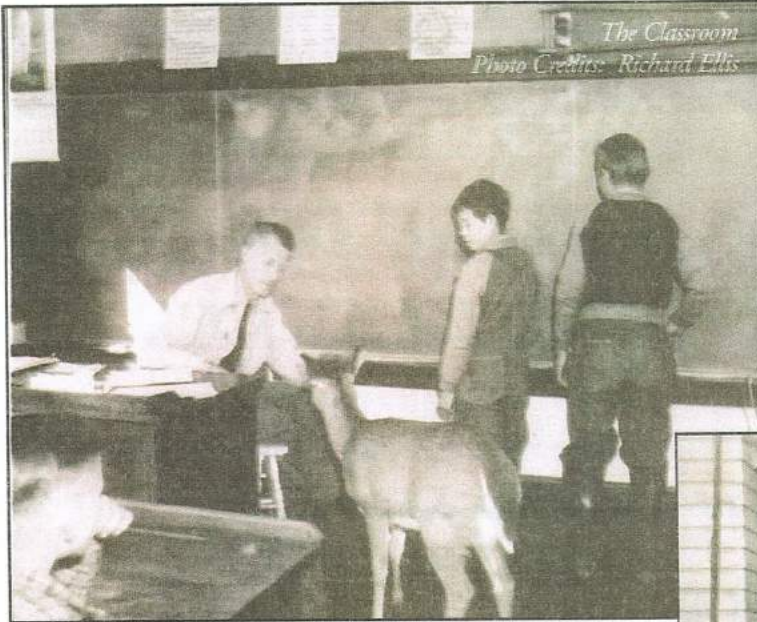
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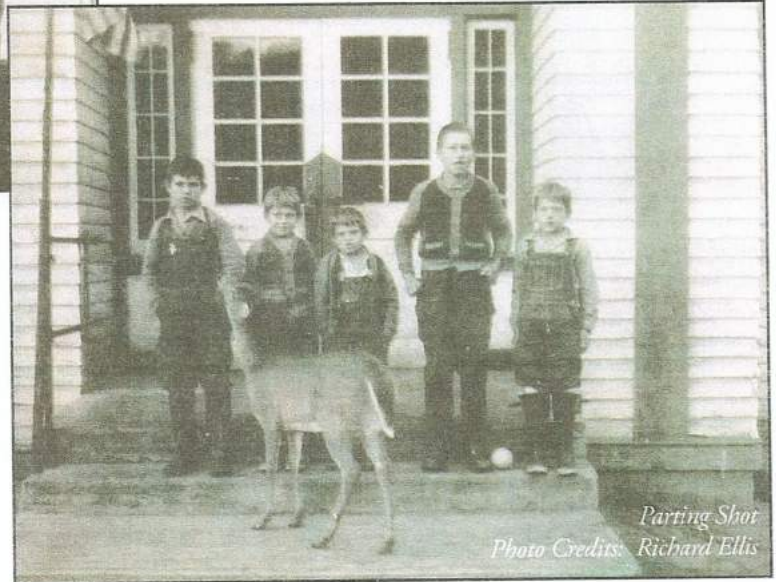
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Dick Ellis was also amazed! He explained the deer was not bothered by the school bus ride or all the children who first greeted him. Dick noted, "I didn't think you could tame a deer enough that they would get on a school bus with you." But the frivolity was not yet over with. Mr. Jenner, who was the principal and also a teacher and a witness to the deer in the schoolyard, called his class to order with Little Deer right there beside his desk. Richard Ellis let it be known that the deer was later placed in the boiler room, likely to end the obvious distraction in the classroom. Recess time came and Little Deer was freed to join the children. It joined the entire school's enrollment on the ballfield and everyone ran

in circles as Little Deer played along by rocketing around the ballfield eighty-eight times. Such a day had never been seen in Fairdale School and would never again, as this day was to be the only day he would ever visit.

As with anything, the family having a pet deer would not last forever. Dick Ellis spoke of the disappearance of Little Deer just before winter set in. One day it was just gone. Rumor had it that a neighbor had gunned it down but that story was never verified. Perhaps that is just as well. Thus ended the exhilarating days of having a pet deer. Little Deer would never be erased from the memories of those who had been part of the greatest Show & Tell item of them all here in the Heart of the Endless Mountains and now perhaps, you won't ever forget either.



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