

AS I'VE SAID TO YOU BEFORE I was born out in a farmhouse without doctors—none of us five—we just had a midwife to deliver us. We lived out there in somewhat isolation on the Collingsworth Levee, a little over 5 miles from town. We looked for things to do. The Collingsworth, after whom the levee had been named, a wealthy and well established and well known family, their place was on the right as you're going out. About a half mile down the road, our place, our house was on the left. At the time the house was built it was a prized site for building because there was a grove, a chestnut grove, between the house on the rise and the levee road below. As many of you know, about the time of the depression, the blight killed the American chestnut. You very seldom see a chestnut tree anymore unless it's a different kind—a Japanese chestnut. For some reason or another, those who cut down these chestnut trees that had been a woods lot in front of our house (and a wonderful place), they cut them off to maybe two feet above the ground. I don't know why. It was never put into cultivation. It was just a field of stumps. But they were very handy for us, my brothers and me, because on summer evenings we would use the rise of those stumps to help us see where the falling stars landed. With the advantage of that perch, we could see where they landed, and then we'd race each other to get them. There's no need of competing fiercely for it because there were lots—some summer evenings, just a lot of stars. I can't tell you how many evenings I went back to the house tired with both pockets full stars that I had collected.

I remember one evening there had been so many falling stars, just unbelievable, that we went to the back porch and got my grandmother's clothes hamper, emptied our pockets into the hamper, gathered others, and almost filled the hamper. We dragged it to the house, bone tired. We didn't know what she'd say, we figured she'd be mad, but we were tired and so we put it on the back porch to plan how we would explain it the next day.

The stars were not still stars the next morning. I think everybody here knows you can't keep a fallen star overnight. It just turns to ashes. Grandma came out before we got stirring and saw her hamper had been used for some strange purpose because there was in the bottom of her hamper cold grey ashes. *It must be those boys.* She called after us, "Come here! What have you been doing with my clothes hamper?" We were frightened of her. She was to us the oldest woman in the world, but she was our grandmother. She had a walking stick and she could do damage, so we headed for the barn to get away from her. And she made no more of it. We had lunch and we had dinner, supper really, and she was there and she ate with us. She brought no devastating word against us there. She said nothing about it.

I had, I think, forgotten the whole thing. She was ill. She was dying. She had her little room off to the side, and she called me into the room. That made me a bit nervous. She called me over by the bed and she said, "I know what you boys were doing with my clothes hamper." I thought, Boy, I'm about to get it. And from a dying woman that just won't wear off. That is really serious. I was afraid. She said, "Open the bottom drawer of the dresser."

I went over and opened it. It had a lot of pieces for quilting and stuff in there and something in newspaper—wrapped up in newspaper—with string around it. She said, "Bring me the newspaper package." I brought it to her and she said, "Close the drawer." And I closed it. I took it over to her. She laid it on her stomach and lying there in bed and with slow, very slow arthritic fingers, she opened the package, undid the string, folded it out, and I looked in to see what it was. It was a little pile of gray ashes. I said, "You, too, Grandma?" And she said, "Yes." I said, "Why didn't you tell me?" She said, "I was afraid you'd laugh at me. Why didn't you tell me?" I said, "I was afraid you'd scold me." And so there we were—grandmother, grandson—who missed a marvelous conversation because we were both afraid. —FBC, 2003

So, you think
you know Helen?



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**SATURDAY,
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YOUR YEAR IN ACTION... YOU DELIVER! 2015

JANUARY



John McCutcheon rocks the house with a crowd of more than 300 during Songs & Stories, and



Helen Lewis regales the audience with poetry about okra and Queen Anne's Lace.



FEBRUARY

Eighty-eight supporters of the Center raise well over half of the capital campaign goal to purchase a new, permanent facility for our service to others.

69%

MARCH



Fred B. Craddock
1928-2015

APRIL



A successful campaign leads to the purchase of a new home ...and not just *any* home: our address sports the name of our founder: **186 Fred Craddock Drive**, still in beloved Cherry Log. It was Dr. Craddock's original "church on the hill."



MAY

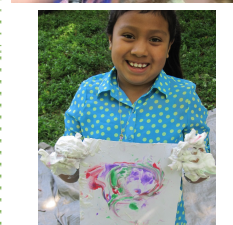
The Story Express makes its final round for the year, distributing approximately **3,500 books** to preschoolers alone across the 58 schools in our tristate Appalachian area.



The Children's Enrichment Program delivers over **2,000 hours of stories & songs to 1,160 preschoolers!** Wow!

JUNE/JULY

Camp Craddock begins in earnest with a story, a song, crafts, and



games to play each day. *That's happy!*



AUGUST



Thanks to you, our Facebook page reaches **1,000 likes!**

Five hundred sixty-seven children borrow books from the **Story Express Lending Library!** **Over 2,000 books** are loaned over the summer break, when reading loss typically occurs. **Cool books work!**



SEPTEMBER



The Children's Enrichment Program **grows!** Thanks to your generosity, **MORE**



children are mesmerized like these! Over the year, **FOUR new schools** were added to our service area—that's **EIGHT new classrooms** of children!

OCTOBER

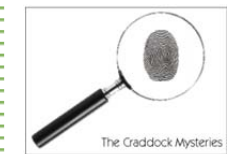


The new **Living Room**

facility, thanks in large part to our friends in Tyler, TX, is installed fully and dedicated to the memory of volunteer, Roxanne Neal.



The **Preaching Workshop** is once again held at "home."

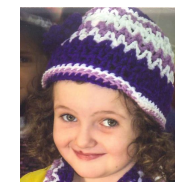


The **Craddock Mysteries**, our inaugural storytelling fundraiser, is a success!

NOVEMBER



Hats and books and gifts are shared with preschoolers, to boost self-esteem, to build pre-literacy skills, and to keep little heads warm during these cold winters in the mountains.



DECEMBER



Santa Jack delivers! More than 720 of our preschoolers sit on Santa's lap to share secrets. ALL of our preschoolers receive a handmade, wooden toy from toymakers in Texas and Florida.



A Cherry Log Christmas Carol is performed amidst festive decorations by Clark Taylor.