

newly invented polio vaccine as a 1950s schoolchild: "I'd hope that death would be wiped out by the time I grew up."

Alas, mortality remains uncured. So what does aging mean to a 60-year-old woman, wife and mother? Lindbergh put her left hand to yellow-lined paper to pen a series of essays. Reflecting on the present, she found herself rewinding to the past.

Growing up in a Connecticut suburb where "tea hour" led to "sherry hour," Lindbergh nevertheless found her family didn't drink up fame. Her father—a Midwest farm boy who focused on the moment rather than on memories—never talked about his historic 1927 flight. Her mother therefore had to offer reassurance when they watched Jimmy Stewart re-create his grueling 33½-hour crossing on the movie screen at Radio City Music Hall.

"Does he make it?" his little daughter asked.

Her father didn't fly to escape the earth, she knows today. As a conservationist, he just wanted a bird's-eye view. With a similar love of the land, she moved to the Green Mountains upon graduating from Radcliffe College in 1968, taking a teaching job in the southern Vermont town of Readsboro before retreating north in 1971 to the countryside outside St. Johnsbury.

"The optimists among us thought they were harbingers of a quieter, cleaner, saner way of life on the planet, returning to past customs in order to create a better future," she writes. "Some native Vermonters, especially older ones who had spent their early years on farms without electricity or indoor plumbing and had been chopping, stacking and burning firewood all their lives, smiled good-naturedly and shook their heads."

Others just labeled her and her like "hippie flatlanders." Reeve wed a man named Richard, then befriended fellow transplants Nat and Patty. Soon came children, midlife, divorce and a new couple: Reeve and Nat (Tripp, himself an accomplished author). Today the last of the offspring have flown the coop, leaving Lindbergh with a teeming henhouse, sheep barn and sofa for two dogs.

"Why not?" she says of the canine couch. "Nobody else was using it."

Entering the life stage her mother called "the youth of old age," she also faces countless questions.

SIXTIES GENERATION

The first: Can a couple of "hippie home-steaders" who harvest 600 bales of hay a year get a hot tub?

Her brain said no. But her achy right shoulder and her husband's bad knee screamed yes.

What about her view of wrinkles?

"When I say I don't mind looking at my face in the mirror anymore, part of the reason may be that I can't see it," she writes. "Maybe I care less now than I did then about how I look to other people, or maybe I know from long experience that most people ignore our imperfections because they are concentrating upon theirs."

And drugs?

"As I and the other members of this much-publicized 'Sixties Generation' go through our own sixties—and seventies and eighties and (we secretly hope) beyond—the least we can do for ourselves is live up to our own mythology and take lots of drugs."

("Legal drugs," she clarifies.)

Lindbergh, seeking to comment on both the salvation and side effects brought by modern-day pharmaceuticals, devotes a full chapter to listing everything in her medicine cabinet, from the anticonvulsants required

after falling off a horse to the antidepressants prescribed during the year her mother was dying.

"I realize there are people who are embarrassed about the medications they take," she says in an interview, "but it was in no way difficult for me to write about that."

Neither does she shy away from the topic of death—not that she has made peace with it. Take the three fuzzy chicks on her property that wandered from their mother and perished.

"Even after 30-odd years of country living, with all the dead chicks, dead lambs, dead dogs and dead horses, the hamsters, the rabbits, the lizards and the turtles (not to mention, dear God, the people!), I still get upset about it."

Lindbergh writes about the burial of her father, who died of cancer in 1974 at age 72, and the cremation of her mother, who died in 2001 at age 94. The resulting ashes led to a question: "Where do you put them?"

Family members scattered them in favorite places around the world—but only after their matriarch, a gardener, first considered a flower bed.

"She said it would be so good for the lilies of the valley," Reeve Lindbergh reports matter-of-factly.

A PRIVATE MATTER

Lindbergh has spent much of this new century wrestling with the old one.

In 2004, she traveled to the Florida island of Captiva where her mother wrote the 1955 book "Gift from the Sea." In that collection of essays, Anne Morrow Lindbergh found meaning in shells—from the channeled whelk that represents "the ideal of a simplified life" to the moon shell that reminded her of solitude.

A half-century later, Reeve Lindbergh discovered many of the same shells—as well as discarded plastic cups, drinking straws and cigarette butts. She tucked away the treasures and threw away the trash. But she can't pitch other remnants of her past so easily.

The kidnapping and death of her parents' first child, 20-month-old Charles Jr., topped world news in 1932. Decades later, people still write to say they're her long-lost brother. That's why she was skeptical when, five years ago, the European press claimed her father had affairs with three German women who gave birth to five boys and two girls.

The headlines proved explosive: "Lindbergh fathered children by three mistresses." Adding fuel, the stories reminded readers that some people had labeled the American hero as a Nazi sympathizer when he opposed the United States' entry into World War II.

Reeve Lindbergh replied with a public statement still pinned to her bulletin board: "The Lindbergh family is treating this situation as a private matter, and has taken steps to open personal channels of communication, with sensitivity to all concerned." (Today she translates that to mean: "We don't know any more than you do, but we're trying to figure this out while causing as little pain as possible.")

DNA tests proved the reports to be true. In her book, Lindbergh recalls her initial feelings of anger and bitterness.

"How do I fold this story into my memories of my father?" she writes. "I certainly could have done without his endless lectures on the Population Explosion, with all those graphs and charts on 'exponential growth curves' (that's a direct quote). How could he have done this with a straight face, let alone a clear conscience? A man who fathered 13—I think, I still have to stop and count us!"

Calmer now, she has visited her European siblings and hosted them in Vermont. Meet-

ing one half brother halfway around the world, she shook her head just like he did, all the while silently sharing the same thought: "This is absolutely normal and completely insane, too."

Lindbergh devotes her book's last chapter to her conflicting emotions about her father's secret. (Kirkus Reviews hails it as "a moving account.") She didn't plan to write about it so publicly. Then she found reason.

"I've noticed how many things there are that people are afraid to talk about," she says in an interview. "If you leave something in the realm of scandal and sensation, it becomes very unreal. I just wanted to write about it and then let it be. I've found, in spite of all the craziness, that my new relatives are just great."

LUCKY . . .

Life, she has discovered, eventually puts everything in perspective.

Lindbergh wrote one chapter about clutter in her mind. Ten days later, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. It led to surgery—and something equally unexpected.

"I soon discovered that the effect the two words 'brain tumor' have on people is remarkable: 'I'm sorry, I can't help you/there/send a contribution just now. I have a brain tumor.' Stunned silence, then instant retreat. With these results it's hard to resist taking advantage of the circumstances."

Even so, Lindbergh gladly agreed to serve as grand marshal of the annual Lyndonville (village population 1,236) Stars and Stripes Festival parade.

She isn't the first in her family to face a medical crisis. Her older sister, Thetford writer Anne Spencer Lindbergh, died of cancer 15 years ago at age 53.

"I worry less and less, not more and more, about getting old myself," Reeve Lindbergh says. "I don't mind if I do. I wish she could, too."

Lindbergh faces a busy spring. She'll serve as narrator next weekend for the Bella Voce Women's Chorus of Vermont premiere of Braintree composer Gwyneth Walker's new work "Lessons from the Sea," inspired by Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "Gift from the Sea."

She'll then appear at more than a dozen New England bookstores as the national media rolls out profiles and reviews. She finds such travel can be exhilarating and exhausting—As a result, she'll no longer attend so many far-flung celebrations of her father and instead stay closer to home to read the unpublished writings of her mother.

"With a family like mine, you have to be careful not to let history take over too much of your life," she says. "I think I could let other people represent my parents at ceremonies. My mother's work has always struck a spark, especially with women. I would love to see some of that unpublished material out in the world."

Leaving middle age, Lindbergh hears the clock ticking. She remembers two framed needlepoint phrases in her grandmother Morrow's home. One said, "It is later than you think!" The other said: "There is still time."

"I don't know what further changes I will enjoy or endure as I age, but I do know the answer to the question I asked myself at 30, and 40, and 50: 'How did I get to be this old?' I was lucky."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BILL KENNEDY

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Bill Kennedy of

Inverness, MS, for his distinguished service and exemplary contributions to the Mississippi Delta as president of the Delta Council.

Delta Council, an economic development organization in the Mississippi Delta, represents the business, professional, and agricultural leadership of the region. Bill has commendably fulfilled the role of president during a time when Mississippi agriculture and the economy of the State of Mississippi have faced significant challenges.

As president of the Delta Council, Bill was called upon to commit time and resources to the ever-pressing issues of Mississippi River flooding due to the delta's geographic location at the bottom of a watershed funnel encompassing most of the United States.

Bill Kennedy has set the standard by which other agricultural leaders of the Mississippi Delta are measured. As past president of the MS Ginners Association, past president of the Southern Cotton Ginners Association, and president of Duncan Gin, one of the oldest and most successful agricultural enterprises in the Mississippi Delta, Bill has proven to be an effective advocate on behalf of delta agriculture. Because of his unique understanding of the U.S. cotton industry, his counsel is frequently sought when issues of national, statewide, or regional concern arise.

Additionally, the role which Bill Kennedy has played in wildlife conservation through his leadership as former president of Delta Wildlife is inestimable. Bill is a true sportsman and conservationist who has devoted thousands of hours to making the Mississippi Delta a better place for all those who live and do business in the region.

I congratulate Bill Kennedy, and thank his wife Lanny, his son Larkin, and daughter in law, Jenny Ruth, for the year which they have shared with the delta while Bill has served as president of Delta Council.●

RECOGNIZING BRYAN McDONALD

● Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize the service of one of my constituents, Mr. Bryan McDonald. Bryan has served the State of Mississippi and Governor Haley Barbour as director of the Governor's Office of Recovery and Renewal. In his final week as director, I thank him for his outstanding contribution to Mississippi's progress in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Prior to his appointment, Bryan worked with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency as director of accounting Oversight, where he helped provide assistance to governmental and nonprofit applicants under the Stafford Act. Bryan's extensive management experience as a CPA and auditor suited the State perfectly in our recovery efforts.

Bryan established a team and a process which ensured FEMA public assistance dollars were accounted for and complied with Federal regulations. The system expedited reimbursements to State and local governments and resulted in over 99 percent of projects being obligated by FEMA. Considering the unprecedented magnitude of this disaster, this was truly a monumental task and one that had never before been undertaken.

As director of the Office of Recovery and Renewal, Bryan again put the right people and processes in place to manage the Federal assistance entrusted to the State of Mississippi. Thousands of homeowners have received direct financial assistance through the homeowners assistance grant program; programs and policies have been implemented which will result in the development of low income housing units in excess of what was available before the storm, and Katrina affected cities and counties have received the much needed Federal resources to rebuild and revitalize their communities.

Bryan has worked to ensure that every Federal taxpayer dollar entrusted to Mississippi has been and continues to be spent efficiently and appropriately. The State of Mississippi and this country owe Bryan a debt of gratitude for taking a leave of absence from his private sector career to serve our great State. As we know, public service can be a strain on our families both financially and emotionally. I want to thank Bryan's wife Michelle and his two children, Matt and Laura Beth, for their sacrifice and support while allowing Bryan to serve our State.

Bryan has reflected great credit on the State of Mississippi and I appreciate his service.●

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OMAHA STAR

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the Omaha Star, the largest and oldest African-American newspaper in my home State of Nebraska. The Star is celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year.

The Omaha Star is currently distributed in 48 States, as the paper has become legendary for its civil rights work. Since its beginning, the Star has been a champion in the struggle for equal rights.

The Omaha Star was founded in 1938 by the late Mildred Brown, a remarkable person in her own right, who was also the aunt of the current publisher and editor, Dr. Marguerita L. Washington. Mrs. Brown's foresight and pioneering spirit in establishing the Star required not only a dedicated amount of time and effort, but also courage and vigilance. Her efforts paid off, as the paper continues to educate and advocate; and Mrs. Brown was post-

humously inducted into the Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame this past year.

In addition, the building housing the Omaha Star was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January. Mrs. Brown allowed the Star to provide a home for the De Porres Club, an active civil rights organization within the North Omaha community. The Star also kept its readership apprised of the civil rights movement's successes and failures across the country by researching the issues and urging involvement.

The Omaha Star's mission states that it is "dedicated to the service of the people that no good cause shall lack a champion and that evil shall not go unopposed." My fellow Nebraskans and I take great pride in knowing that the Star has faithfully abided by this mission throughout its 70 years of existence, and we will continue to follow the Omaha Star on its spirited journey to provide a voice for civil rights and equality for all.●

TRIBUTE TO LTC JOHN LUCAS

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today, I wish to acknowledge the love and support LTC John Lucas's family has shown him during his 24 years of service in the U.S. Air Force. LTC John Lucas, an Arkansas native, will retire from the Air Force on August 1, 2008. Lieutenant Colonel Lucas attended the University of Arkansas, making me particularly proud because that is my alma mater, and his oldest son, John Lucas, is carrying on the tradition as a freshman at the university as well.

Lieutenant Colonel Lucas's wife, Coleen, wrote to me on the occasion of his retirement and asked that I write a note of thanks to their family and her husband in an effort to recognize their sacrifice and support over the last 24 years. She writes:

While John served his country, his family and mine were both loving and supportive through times of crisis, war and peace. We had times of struggle but both of our families helped me and our children so that my husband could serve our country. Over the past 24 years, we have moved eight times, lived in 11 homes, uprooted the children from schools, moved them away from friends, and endured deployments. Through it all the one constant was family.

Our men and women in uniform have a tremendous responsibility to protect our Nation's freedoms and it is family support that helps them accomplish their mission. Sacrifice, selflessness and perseverance define the special role of a military family such as the Lucas family.

Today, I thank John C. Lucas and his family for their service to our Nation. Our country is blessed to have you John, Coleen, Kevin, Bryan and Andrea Lucas.●