

STORY OF SURVIVAL

Missionary family endures POW camps during World War II

Linda McQuaid

Kim Yelas and her missionary parents lived in the Philippines and fled from the Japanese during World War II.

They were eventually captured and lived in several Philippine POW camps until they were finally set free by American soldiers.

Her parents were working in the mountainous northern region when the war broke out. Their village was at an altitude of 5,000 feet and most of the people were rice farmers.

They lived near a river her father named "The Champaign River" because it bubbled. The lowlanders in the southern part of the Philippines were taller and lighter skinned because of the Spanish occupation.

Those in their area were short and dark skinned. The women took a rectangular piece of woven material, wrapped it around them and caught it at their waist, like a skirt.

Her parents loved the mission, and the people were friendly and affectionate.

Yelas' dad built a school and an English nurse lived with them. Her father hiked because he went to many out-stations where they carried the gospel.

He also had a shortwave radio and had been an Army chaplain and was familiar with guerilla warfare.

Yelas turned 2 on Dec. 11, shortly after Pearl Harbor was invaded. Her father was asked to give up his shortwave radio, but he refused, so the Japanese came after him.

Her mother had a backpack beside the door ready to leave at a moment's notice. Her father had the foresight to build a cabin in the mountains and had buried cases of food for emergencies.

One day, the houseboy ran inside shouting, "Follow me, the Japanese are coming."

They heard later that the Japanese shot holes in the altar thinking they were hiding behind it. They took everything of any value from their home and then burned the house.

For three months, they lived in their hidden cabin. They hid for 18 months in the jungle, moving every day or every night.

Yelas learned her ABCs and her numbers from a pack of cards and the Bible. Every morning, she woke up to look for her pet chicken's egg, her breakfast.

One morning, her mother woke up to see a Python looking at her. They saw many snakes and monkeys

In 1947, Yelas' parents returned to the Philippines again and ministered to the people there. They rebuilt the mission and later, her father became headmaster of the Episcopal school.

while they were running.

When the Japanese finally found them, she remembers they sat her on a tree stump, and her mother kept saying, "Don't cry." She had long, curly hair so the first thing they did was set a rice bowl on her head and cut her hair.

It took 14 days to travel to Bontoc, the capital at that time. They never let her father lie down; they would tie him to a tree at night. At one time, he had to dig his own grave and they buried him alive. They laughed, then dug him up and moved on.

Then they took them to Baguio, the summer capital. Eventually, Yelas' father was put on trial, but they decided he was not in the Army during the war, so he was not killed.

They put the family in a POW camp with 200 others. The men and women were separated and everyone had a job.

Her father was fortunate to work in the kitchen. Their daily ration was two handfuls of rice. Sometimes, he was able to bring her a bite of potato or something else.

Yelas' marked her third, fourth and fifth birthdays in the POW camp. The teachers in the camp organized a school, but they had no books, pencils, or other supplies.

Yelas has a kindergarten diploma from the POW camp, as well as a doll, and a knitted Christmas stocking.

For her fifth birthday, she wanted a doll. Her mother asked for some ticking from one woman who had a mattress, she traded potato skins for colored embroidered floss, got yarn from a nurse for the hair and obtained some sheer material from someone who had a ballerina costume.

They were in that camp for two years. Some of the Japanese guards were nice; they sneaked brown sugar to her for her rice and, one time, she had some pollywogs and she wanted a leaf from the other side of the fence.

With sign language, she managed to tell the guard and he plucked the leaf and handed it to her. She said the guards loved children and they missed their own families.

Food rations had been cut down and both parents

were down to 80 pounds. They gave Yelas some of their food to help her stay healthy.

During their imprisonment, they received one Red Cross box with dehydrated eggs and Spam and that was a day for celebration.

In the Manila camp, every day her father climbed to the top of one of the buildings and said "the Americans will come."

One day, he came down and excitedly whispered, "I can hear American tanks. They are here."

Then the sky was filled with parachutes; they looked like mushrooms to her. Japanese soldiers were shooting them down.

However, they kept coming and the tanks came to their rescue. When MacArthur arrived at the POW camp, everyone bowed down, weeping.

The soldiers picked her up and threw her in the air and she screamed in fear. American soldiers looked so large to her because she was accustomed to seeing the small Filipinos.

One of the soldiers found out her dad was from Boston and asked if he would like anything special. He asked for "a chocolate candy bar."

The next day, the soldier returned and opened his flack jacket to show Hershey candy bars lined all

the way around his belt. Of course, in the Manila heat, they were melted, but her dad was in 7th heaven.

They were sent to the island of Leyte, where her family was fed and put on a ship to America. Their long ordeal was over.

When the war ended in 1946, her father was one of the first Americans they allowed to go back in. He took blankets, food and other supplies to those who helped them survive.

One unique experience happened when he was walking through the debris and rubble of the bank where they had kept a safe deposit box.

He happened to see the corner of an envelope sticking up and reached down for it. It was from their box and contained her grandmother's engagement ring.

In 1947, Yelas' parents returned to the Philippines again and ministered to the people there. They rebuilt

the mission and later, her father became headmaster of the Episcopal school.

They served in the Philippines for 40 years.

Yelas lives with her husband in Tyler.

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"THIN"

For any general merchandise item
in any given week, the market of
shoppers is very small (thin).



4.9% shopped
for women's shoes

Technological innovation and the economic downturn has changed the way that U.S. consumers shop. Consumers have become more destination shoppers, making more considered purchases and doing their homework before heading to the store. Three-quarters of all U.S. adults read a newspaper in print or online in the past week; over 170 million adults. For shoppers, newspaper advertising is an opt-in medium in an opt-out world.

95% of U.S. adults report that the recession has impacted their shopping in some way. 76% report doing fewer shopping trips. Adults also plan purchases more (67%). Actual purchases continue to be predominantly made in stores (79%) though shopping information channels have dramatically expanded.

59% of adults rank newspapers first as the media used to help plan shopping or make purchasing decisions in the past 7 days. 80% of newspaper readers report looking at advertising when reading the paper.

41% say newspapers are the medium used most to check out ads, more than all electronic media combined. (TV, radio, Internet)

77% of newspaper readers took an action as a result of a print newspaper ad in the past 30 days. 59% clipped a coupon, 52% bought something advertised and 45% visited a store.

60% of newspaper readers followed up a newspaper ad online in some way. 44% went to a website after seeing a print newspaper ad and 28% conducted an online search after seeing a newspaper ad.

82% of readers used a preprinted insert in the past 30 days. On average, adults keep inserts 4.4 days. 59% used to compare prices, 55% used to compare one circular to another, 52% saved until visiting the store and 43% used to make an unplanned purchase.

Scarborough Research 2008
How America Shops and Spends/ MORI Research 2009

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Master Gardeners to host Cunningham on Wednesday

Kathleen Cunningham, director of the Dallas Arboretum Speakers Bureau, is the scheduled guest speaker for the Henderson County Master Gardeners on Wednesday.

The Dallas Arboretum, on White Rock Lake, "is one of the most magnificent gardens in the nation, a visual banquet that is ablaze in color year-round," according to a press release.

Cunningham's 45-minute presentation "will take us through the gardens and the historic DeGolyer home. She will give us a glimpse of the plans for the new seven-acre Children's Adventure Garden that will be the largest and most exciting in the country, and will also focus on current events



Cunningham

that make the Dallas Arboretum an ever-changing place to visit and enjoy."

The Henderson County Master Gardeners meets the third Wednesday of each month, at noon, in the Women's Building in the East Texas Arboretum.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised Anna Strouse is requesting AB 136 S Calderon Sur Tr 206 (211 Main Street) be rezoned from Residential (R1) Single-Family Dwelling to Nonresidential (B1) for the purpose of commercial use (Retail or Bed & Breakfast). Planning & Zoning will hold a meeting on the 6th day of April 2010 at 6:30pm at the City Hall of Chandler, Texas.