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Truth Without Fear

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WWII book, 'Waiting for Peace,' was a labor of love for author

By **STEPHANIE TAYLOR FERRIELL**
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Writing a book, many authors will say, is a labor of love. Never could that be more true than when one writes about one's own family.

Karen Berkey Huntsberger's labor of love began with her late father, Richard Berkey's war journal, which her mother typed from the handwritten copy in 1995, years before Karen would consider writing a book. "When I read it for the first time, it was the most compelling thing I'd ever read," she recalls. She also remembers her mother saying, "It would be great to make a book out of this someday."

Thirteen years later, Karen was cleaning out her mother's Marshall Avenue home when she came across her father's items from World War II in the basement. "I found all the letters he had sent home and all his parents had sent him." Her father carried every letter he received with him through the war. "How he never lost them is amazing," she said.

The cache of letters include those written to Richard Berkey from his mother, his younger sister, the late Virginia Martin, and others. Many other local residents are mentioned in the letters. "These were all boys they all knew and were communicating about. Dad wanted to know where his friends were, the moms were communicating with each other and they all shared these letters around."

At that time, the Berkeys lived in the house at 306 E. Walnut St. now owned by Karen's cousin and her husband, Gail and Mick Napier. (The house at 303 E. Walnut was built by Karen's great-great-grandfather Jonas B. Berkey, who with his brother in 1845 opened Berkey Brothers store on the square. An open house will be held there Saturday.)

"My Dad grew up in that house," she explained, referring to the Napiers' current home. In addition to conveying much about the war, "the letters to him give a vivid description of

Open house Saturday

Gail Napier will host an open house at 303 E. Walnut St. Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Copies of "Waiting for Peace" will be for sale (\$16 each), tours will be offered and refreshments will be served.

what it was like to live in Salem at that time," said Karen.

The book opens with a letter to Richard from his mother, Lennie Martin Berkey, written two days after Pearl Harbor was bombed. Richard was a pre-med student at Indiana University. "We have been thinking about you boys and this terrible situation," she penned. "It looks as if we are in for a bad time of it. ... Why can't the poor old earth just learn to exterminate War?"

Of the correspondence, Karen said, "This mother knows her three sons are going to get drafted or volunteer. That would feel horrible. Many, many mothers - their sons didn't come back. Lots of people lost all their children."

On Oct. 22, 1942, Berkey received his draft papers. He became one of the 12 million young men to serve in WWII.

Karen said once she read through all the letters and her Dad's journals, she realized "I could connect the story." It took her five long years of personal research, compiling her discoveries with those of researchers she hired, interviewing many people and organizing photos to put "Waiting for Peace" together. The book consists of journal excerpts, military history, letters and more than 70 period photos. These soldiers from Salem are included: Gene Rodman, Edgar DeJean, Dee Bush, Dale Rigdon, Carol Moore, Lee Henry Norris, Lee Edward Smith, Jack Colglazier, Junior Martin, Hugh Roach, Marvin Martin, Basil Martin, John Robinson, Dale Huckleberry, James Grimes, Mancel Smith and Frank "Buster" Crockett, Richard's "lifelong best friend," said Karen.

"It was a huge labor of love," said Karen, who said the decision as to whether to make the book public took her two years to make. While the story is personal and details the Berkey family's war experience, it's also universal. "It speaks volumes about how a normal family got through it," she said. "I felt it was a story people needed to know."

Karen did decide to make the book available to the public, running a successful Kickstarter campaign to raise funds for publishing.

When he was drafted, Berkey was a



Photo by Tec 4 Sidney Blau.
March 5, 1945
Pfc. Richard Berkey receives the Bronze Star from Brigadier General Albert C. Smith.

third-year pre-med student and he served as a medic attached to the 68th Armored Infantry Battalion C Company. Karen writes that "a combat medic's job was to get the wounded off the battlefield as quickly as possible. Medics were unarmed and risked their lives every time they came to the aid of a wounded man."

Following the war, his family expected Richard Berkey to continue his studies

research, three years ago Karen and her husband traveled to Europe and traced her dad's footsteps. They visited the graves of the 11 people he watched die. "I felt like I knew these guys," she said. "I photographed each grave. It was a really, really intense experience. I felt like I was representing those mothers who never got to go there."

While the immensity of that cemetery, which contains 13,000 graves is "staggering," said Karen, "it's a drop in the bucket to the amount of people that were killed." An astounding 60 million people worldwide lost their lives in WWII, Karen noted.

Books about WWII are tributes to those who lived through that dark time, but they're also important for those who have no memory of it. "Kids need to know about World War II and not have it be forgotten. These things can happen again."

Karen said her dad wasn't scarred by his war experience, but found a way to cope with the tragedy he witnessed. "These guys didn't talk about it. My dad never talked to me about it," she said. "...The majority came home and had happy lives. ... My Dad was just a happy person. I figure he'd seen the worst in life he could, so the day-to-day stuff didn't bother him."

While Karen said "Waiting for Peace" is "not your normal World War II book," she's been thrilled at the reaction thus far. "The reviews on Amazon and Good Reads have all been good. Most people say they can't put it down. ... People have said they felt like they were walking in my Dad's footsteps. That's exactly what I hoped for."

Richard Berkey died in 1991 after suffering a heart attack. He was 69. While his career as a minister took him far from his small town southern Indiana roots, Berkey never wavered in his love for Salem. "It was so important to both my parents," said Karen. "Dad loved to come back there. My Dad just loved Salem; it was home. The book expresses so much about that."

"The power of home is very important to every soldier all over the world, no matter where they're from."

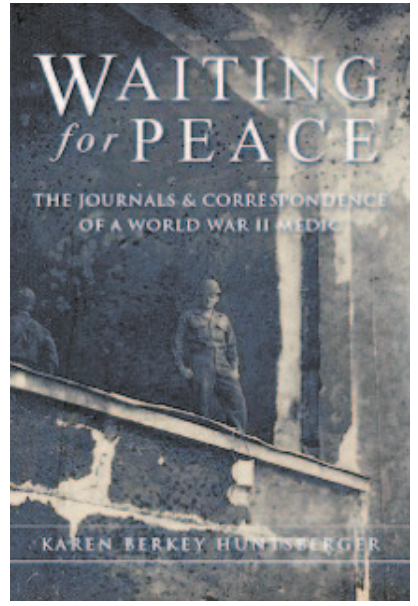


Photo by Norman Eliasson
Book cover - Cpl. Richard Berkey standing in the front window of The Berghof. Berchtesgaden, Germany, May 19, 1945.

and become a doctor. It wasn't to be. "Virginia remembers him saying he'd had it with medicine after what he saw in the war," said Karen. The "horribly brutal things he experienced" soured him on a career in medicine.

Instead, Karen said, her father found a career in which he served people, but in a very different manner. He became a minister. "He just had that magnetism," said Karen. "People just loved him. He served people in that way. It wasn't easier at times; it just wasn't bloody."

Berkey was ordained by the Disciples of Christ and his first post was Saltillo

Friday Night kicks off Old Settlers'

By **MARCIA WALKER**
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It's time!
Time for the big block party that goes by the name of Friday Night on the Square.

The event officially gets under way at 6 p.m. Friday; the square will close to motor vehicles at 5 p.m. and reopen at 10:30 p.m. Better come hungry! Many of the 70 plus vendors who are planning to attend will be offering food and there will be quite a variety, including "chocolate moon suckers," which are being offered by Awareness Washington County.

Some more familiar food offerings will be available including kettle corn, ice cream, fried fish, popcorn, candy, cotton candy, snow cones, soup, hot dogs, baked goods, blooming onions, pizza, pork barbecue, chicken barbecue, fire burgers, ice cream floats, beans and cornbread ... the list goes on and on.

Burn off the calories by walking laps around the square and checking out what other vendors have to offer. A number of businesses and organizations will be offering information about their services. And some vendors will be selling merchandise: jewelry, T-shirts, knives, antiques, hair bows, crocheted items, handbags, scarves and soy candles are some of what will be available.

Also, there will be activities. The YMCA is bringing a climbing wall and is planning a scavenger hunt (entry form, page 7). There will be pony rides and visitors can demonstrate their vocal skills: thanks to karaoke provided by WSLM.

Some of the ARCA drivers will be present to sign autographs; the ARCA fall classic is the following night at Salem Speedway.

And don't forget the second annual Moon Over Washington County outhouse race! This is a fund raiser for Awareness Washington County, local leadership program. Teams construct non-motorized outhouses and compete for prizes. There is prize money and trophies, including a people's choice award for the most creative outhouse.

The race will take place on South Main Street between Poplar and Cherry streets. Cecil Durham plans to host a car show and cruise-in during the event; it will be held in the city hall parking lot. The lot will be closed for parking at 4:30 p.m.

Also:
• The board of directors of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce has asked the people to not smoke while attending Friday Night on the Square. A designated smoking area is available at the North Main Street entrance.

• Purlee Plaza, at the corner of High and Market streets is designated for handicap parking.

• The square will be closed to motor vehicles beginning at 5 p.m. and that section of Main Street between Poplar and Cherry will be closed.

• East Market Street between the square and High Street will remain closed for Beer on the Bricks, which is Saturday night.

Tenth graders to take ISTEP this year

ISTEP replaces ECA, but concerns remain following last year's changes

By **KATE WEHLANN**
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Students are going to see some changes to the state tests they'll be taking this year.

First of all, Pearson is taking over the writing and distribution of the tests this year, rather than CTB-McGraw Hill, who's done it in the past, for ISTEP+ in grades three through eight, something most administrators agree isn't a significant change.

"The standards are the same," said East Washington Superintendent Steve Darnell during the August school board meeting. "It's just a different test creator. We don't know the format for

questions. We anticipate it being mostly the same, but we don't know. It's frustrating for teachers. We had pilot questions to use last year and we don't have them this year."

An ISTEP+ test for high school sophomores has been added, replacing the ECA tests. This test is domain-based, covering English and language arts, math and science. Algebra I and English 10 are the graduation examinations for students currently enrolled in grade 10, 11 and 12 only. No Biology I test will be given.

"The ECA has always been ISTEP, but now they want to change the name," said Salem Community School's Direc-

tor of Assessment and Program Improvement Jackie Arnold. "Once this year's tenth graders become seniors, this will be the graduation exam."

"This year, the tenth grade ISTEP doesn't count for graduation, but it does count for school accountability," said West Washington Superintendent Keith Nance.

One benefit to the change, Arnold said, was this would translate into less time spent testing, and students who don't pass as 10th graders will have the opportunity as juniors and seniors to retake the exam.

"We just have more testing and more testing and more testing,

which is taking time away from teachers to teach," said Arnold. "Any time we can shorten testing time means more time learning."

West Washington Principal Mary Ann Knapp said her 10th graders aren't thrilled with having to take the test, but will step up to the plate.

"The teachers look at it as a challenge, but hold high expectations for our students," she said. "The students are not very happy, but they do what they need to do."

Teachers and administrators at the three county schools are more concerned about the simple amount of, and type of testing, especially following the major changes with the test last year.

"It's scary for the kids and frustrating for the teachers," she said. "The test this year is changed from last year and the test already changed drastically last year ..."

-Jackie Arnold, Salem Schools

"The biggest change happened last year," said Nance. "It was the first time students were assessed under new standards. We've been told we can anticipate a drop ... The questions changed and standards changed. We were forewarned there could be growing pains."

The state has told schools to expect a delay of months before the school grades and evaluations are released, possibly in December or even later, by the state, so they are still waiting to see what kind of

drop they will have.

"I don't like the way they changed the test program without research," said Arnold. "They're making a new kind of test while giving kids no real time to learn the new way."

Arnold likened it to teaching kids the way to play football for years and then bringing them to the field and telling them diving will be included in the game.

"It's scary for the kids and frustrating for the teachers," she said.

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Larry Pickerill, 61
Larry Clark, 74
Rev. Orville Hendrixson Jr., 81
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Community

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-Students of the Week, EHS homecoming candidates are pictured in Education, B-10.

Sports

-Senators roll over Springs Valley, 50-0; Salem, Eastern suffer losses.
-Lady Lions' soccer team picks up third straight win.
-New fastpitch team forming. See Sports, B-1-3, 9.

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