

Along the Welcome Trail – July 2015

By: Anne Pounds

The storm last week which knocked out power for us and so many others in this area ,,, reminded me of one of my more memorable visits about ten years ago.

It was a beautiful summer day with a deep azure sky, the kind of sky you either worry slightly about as to whether it would suddenly turn darker and become a serious summer storm. But there was not a cloud in the sky. I was visiting a young family on Spring Valley Road where the new Redstone Luxury Apartments are now, near the corner of Rte. 322. Spring Valley Road was being paved right in front of the home I was going to visit; so both I and the woman who lived there had to park in the driveway next door till they finished rolling out the hot asphalt mix.

It was such an enjoyable visit with her and her two darling little girls. Then it was time for the youngest to take her nap, and she reluctantly said goodbye, giving me a hug, sharing a stuffed animal with me, and dragging her blanket reluctantly up the stairs very slowly, peeking through the spindles at each step. She called out finally that she was settled, and we went on with our visit.

Then we suddenly became aware that the sky had changed dramatically, and a storm was blowing in fast. “I left all my windows open! I’ll be right back,” she said, running out the front door.

The storm moved in like lightening, and it got scary so fast that her 5-year-old and I stood by the front picture window to make sure mom was not going to get pelted by rain or a falling branch. As we waited for her to return, we saw their huge garden shed moving majestically down the driveway, spinning slowly in the increasing wind. The house began to emit a howl of protest. No sign of the mother. I watched the guys on the paving equipment suddenly moving in what must have been high gear, but still going back and forth—possibly an unthinking reaction to this fast-moving storm, to get it done quickly and seek shelter. Next I saw a car tearing down Spring Valley Road from 322 and quickly take a sharp left turn into a grassy low valley (now Fellowship Church and some office buildings are on that site). “How strange,” I thought. “That car is careening across rough terrain like a getaway car in a robbery.”

And then I saw it: my first-ever tornado, a rarity in Delaware County. The driver, attempting to get to a low place, was actually running before the tornado, which seemed to be chasing the car. He dropped below my horizon, but I was distracted by the next scene, which was an entire rooftop tumbling in front of our eyes in the front yard. The living room had opened up to the sky, and the swirling storm was carrying the roof away. No mother appearing yet. . .

“Let’s get your little sister and go downstairs and have a tea party,” I said to the little girl. She thought that was a splendid idea, and I found myself gathering up the littler one and holding hands with both as we scurried down both flights of stairs to the basement. We sat ourselves down and pretended to be happily sipping tea, and I told the girls that their mommy would be joining us any minute. In reality, I didn’t know what had happened to her. As we sipped, the five-year old looked kindly and calmly at me and said, “Don’t worry. Jesus is protecting us.” And so it was. Soon their mommy returned safely, and the tornado moved quickly on, leaving the home torn apart. All were safe.