

IN MEMORIAM - Mimi Hallstrom

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"

A warm woman with a rare gift, that of loyalty and lasting friendship. She gave of herself without reservation, wholly, generously. My first impressions of Marie Smith Hallstrom were of her orchid plants, her wide and varied knowledge of gardening, her appreciation of every living plant. Later, I realized her intense interest in music and dancing. One could sense her soul's excitement at the sounds of the classics or native music or contemporary works. She could be transported by the sensuous pleasures of orchestras, the beat of drums. She was a child of laughter, a student of the art of living; to enjoy her pleasures and company one could not help but be drawn to her carefree spirit. Vibrant described her.

It was fun to hear of her recent travels and watch when she unpacked her many trunks, parcels and baskets, and share her joy as she'd fling about bits of cloth, art work, beads, drawings and mementos of her trip - all the while telling anecdotes of the people, of the countries she had visited. She indulged in photographs, slides and would never tire of showing her pictures. I would be amazed at her wealth of memory and enjoy her stories.

Mimi's greatest contribution to life in the community was her founding of the Animal Birth Control Society. She was a sensitive, caring person who had great reverence for all forms of life, for nature and for dreams of a responsible society. As flowers bloomed, trees grew, so did she, never losing sight of God's smaller creatures. It was her work - her obsession, to speak for the animals that could not tell us of their plight. She deplored the senseless killing of stray animals, the starvation of unwanted pets, the wanton neglect for life.

When she was in great pain, in her hospital bed, I told her of the nice man, who, on his way home from work, came upon six tiny puppies left on a busy highway by some mindless, cruel pet owner. The good traveler, stopped his car, got a box, took the babies home and cared for them and eventually found good homes for them. She loved the tale with the happy ending and urged me to tell everyone, so that others would know of his kindness.

Mimi Hallstrom couldn't bear to see a homeless animal. She spent much of her time and a great deal of money to take care of helpless, unloved animals. It was her life's ambition to have an Animal Spay and Neuter Clinic in this County that would provide help for those financially unable to take proper care of their pets. To further her efforts, she carried a card table around town, putting it down wherever there were people and handed out literature outlining the necessity for such a service. She labored long and alone. It was not until quite recently that national, and in fact, world-wide attention was directed to the cruelty and the waste of animal over-population.

St Lucie County is a better community because of Mimi. Those, who in

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the early years laughed or chided, have come to realize that her untiring efforts have been an important contribution. Her fight against the irresponsible society that permitted pets to breed recklessly was a sign of her wise and understanding heart. "They serve God well, who serve his creatures."

Though death has removed her from our midst, her spirit and influence will abide with us and her shining example will light our way for years to come.

To quote from first Corinthians, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." Mimi labored well, her reward will be everlasting.

Susan Gould
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