

# accent

## have you heard

IN HER COLUMN last Friday, Peg Sloan departed from tradition to write a review of a new book, *Night Fire*.

It was the Rev. James G. Parker who brought the book to Peg's attention last week. As the title indicates, it is a book about night fires in the home and its aim is to instruct small children in the correct procedures to follow.

It is the first published offering of his daughter, **Mary Elizabeth Parker**, a second-grade teacher in Danville, who is already planning another how-to book on childhood safety.

Ms. Parker uses a slightly altered pen-name, Mary Jessie Parker, in honor of her grandmother, Jessie Peel Parker. According to the Rev. Parker, "Her grandmother was a writer, too. She never wrote a book, but times were hard when we were young and she entered every writing contest she heard about. Those \$5 and \$10 bills she won went to help the family."

The book, which will go on sale this weekend at Books Plus in Kankakee, is dedicated to the Rev. Parker and his wife, Betty, who live in the Riverview area, and to Ms. Parker's mother, Ida, who died in an auto accident when she was a child.

The Rev. Parker was rector of St. Paul Episcopal Church for 30 years before his retirement in 1974. Ms. Parker graduated from Westview High School and Illinois State University, Normal. She earned her master's degree at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

Grandmother Parker's writing talent has touched another member of the younger generation. The author's brother, **James**, is a sports writer for the *Ventura Star-Free Press* in Ventura Calif. Coincidentally, his managing editor is John Bowman, a former managing editor at *The Daily Journal*.

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**THE RISING** interest in sign language has put former Kankakeean **Brian Riley** in the news.

Brian is the American sign language instructor at Fresno City College in Fresno, Calif., and the increased demand for his class caught the attention of the college's newspaper.

His grandmother, **Macel Raiche of Kankakee**, sent us a copy thinking that some of his old friends here might be interested in Brian's current activities.

And she was right.

According to the article, Riley has had to turn between 40 and 50 students away from the four ASL classes he teaches. He pointed to both the movie, *Children of a Lesser God*, and the success of Marlee Matlin, a deaf actress, as two reasons for its sudden popularity.

A survey of his students, though, showed other reasons. While some were interested in working with the hearing impaired, others feel more job opportunities are open to people who can communicate with the deaf.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that an interpreter be provided by the government any time



This is a column written by Sherry Weiler, Accent editor, about people who live — or have lived — in The Journal reading area. If you have information appropriate for the column, please write to her in care of the Accent Department, The Daily Journal, 8 Dearborn Square, Kankakee, Ill., 60901, or call 937-3388.

a deaf person goes to court, school or to Social Security and welfare hearings.

There also is a movement among the deaf to drop their classification of "disabled" and be considered a "cultural group" with ASL as their language.

According to the article, Riley says, "ASL is not body language, not gestures, not mime, just as English is not music, humming, gulping or stomach growling."

"Language is the standardization of physical articulations spoken or signed."

Macel adds that Brian refused to teach the ASL classes until the college shifted them from the handicapped department to the linguistics department.

He is the son of **Carol Raiche Riley** of Fresno, who formerly lived in Kankakee, and also the grandson of the late **Clement Raiche**. Brian attended St. Teresa's School and Kankakee Junior High School while living here.

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**BILL WALTERS**, a graduate of Kankakee High School and the University of Illinois, was named State Park Director of the Year by the National Association of State Park Directors. The award was presented at a meeting in September in Anchorage, Alaska.

Bill, of Hoover Road in Brown County, Indiana, has been director of Indiana's state park system for 12 years.

In an article in the Brown County Democrat, Patrick R. Ralston, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, which operates the park system, said the award was "richly deserved."

"In recent years," he said, "Bill has received several prestigious national awards. These awards recognize his innovative approach to providing high quality recreational opportunities while remaining sensitive to state park preservation."

And his job is not an easy one. The Brown County State Park, Indiana's largest and most popular park, has 15,000 acres and draws nearly 2 million visitors a year.

Bill is currently working on establishing new state parks. One will be the Falls of the Ohio near Clarksville, at the site of a 350 million-year-old fossil bed. It will feature an interpretative center to help visitors learn about fossils and human history.

Another park is to be created at

Prophetstown, site of an Indian village in Tippecanoe County. Plans here include a restored Indian village and a small working farm of the 1930s era.

Bill is the son of the late **Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Walters**. (Kankakeeans may remember Mrs. Walters as a children's librarian at the Kankakee Public Library.) He is married to **Ann Schneider**, daughter of **Lorraine Schneider** of Kankakee and the late **Donald Schneider**. The couple's son, **Donald**, attended Purdue University and works for a software company in San Francisco. Their daughter, **Sarah**, is currently attending Purdue.

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**ALEX MORRIS**, a native of Pembroke, wrote recently to update us on his career. He was in Chicago appearing in the play, *The Diary of Blackmen*, in mid-October at the historical Regal Theatre, marking the fifth time the play has come to Chicago.

"Diary," which recently returned from a six-week engagement in London, has been on the road for the past six years playing to capacity audiences. Written by Houston playwright, **Thomas Meloncon**, the script focuses on contemporary street talk between six black men about black women.

The play has led to film roles for Alex. He recently made his television debut in a made-for-television movie "Fire and Rain" and had a role in the film, "Night Games," starring Roy Scheider.

His other screen credits include a lead role in the film, "Riverbend," which premiered at Houston's Film Festival in April 1989 and will be released next year. This role led to another as a crooked Miami cop in "Blind Fury."

Last February he filmed "Dark Angel," and most recently he completed filming the TV movie, "The Challenger," which is the story of the space shuttle which exploded. He is currently filming "Robocop II" in Houston.

His stage credits besides "Diary" include "The Colored Museum," "Camp Logan" and "A Soldier's Story." This spring he performed a one-man show on Langston Hughes for young audiences of Houston.

Alex also has done several commercials for McDonalds and Seaport Coffee.

He lives in Houston with his wife, **Eileen**, and 9-year-old son,



Walters