

# The Fun of Living Together

Is Betty Phillips really writing about fun? Well, readers: no, I'm not. This is actually a serious and significant issue facing all of us highlighted in a new book, *The Fun of Living Together* by Roberta Grimes with Kelley Glover (Anderson, 2017). I would love to write just about fun but we're not there yet. The subtitle of the book is a quotation "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." MLK, Jr. Aha, you may have an idea now what is coming in this book and article. You may also remember that Roberta Grimes' series of books all have the word fun in the title while also drawing you into a significant issue.

Before I tell you more about this book, let me direct you to two pieces of information I found in my newspaper dated April 27, 2017. The first issue concerns a part of our North Carolina Constitution that voters have been required to "be able to read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language", first added to our state constitution in 1899. A separate provision was added, "exempting anyone whose family could vote prior to the end of the Civil War – ensuring that illiterate white people could still vote. When black voters came armed with knowledge of the Constitution, they were often asked obscure legal questions intended to disqualify them." Another article quotes a black Fox News anchor who joined the racial discrimination lawsuit against the company stating that Fox had rejected an article he had prepared after racial protests in Ferguson, Missouri, because the article showed blacks in "too positive" a light. Interesting, isn't it, that our newspaper directed me specifically to two parts of the issue that I was preparing to write about today?!

Our Declaration of Independence some 240 years ago stated that "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Is this true? Is this even barely true? Grimes asserts that "most of America's current

**Advice Line**

By Dr. Betty Phillips



problems stem from the fact that to this day it never has entirely freed the slaves." Grimes tells us, even "a century and a half after this Civil War, America continues to grapple with slavery. It is as if the guns still echo since the descendants of America's slaves remain by and large debased, dependent, and relegated to the margins of American life." Although she states that there have been individual successes, these "do little to elevate the condition of so many others! Nearly half of America's black preschool-aged children live in poverty to this day as compared with fewer than 15 percent of young white children". And "40 percent of black American men are in prison now or are ex-offenders, as compared with only 14 percent of the white male population. For far too many men with darker skin, moving in and out of prison is a way of life." One tragedy of the Civil War is the fact that "600,000 Americans died in the Civil War, which is more than have died in all the other wars that we have fought, combined. Our attempts to end slavery by violent means was the most devastating war in American history, and yet even with the loss of so much blood and treasure it accomplished almost nothing."

Grimes explained that "for the great mass of America's slaves, legal emancipation meant only that they were homeless and hopeless and living beneath the boot of everyone who was white." After Grimes noted the poverty and racism that ensued after the Civil War, she described the failure of President Johnson's Great Society. "If you want to understand the stubbornly high rate of black poverty today, and the appalling rate of black male incarceration, you need look no further than America's absurdly named war on poverty for an

explanation." The problem of this legislation was that it led to the breakup of black families without improving their lives in any way.

Grimes draws our attention to our struggle to name different groups of people. Who is white, for example? Only white skinned albinos! If you consider yourself white, look at your skin! No way! Should we call any group black? I'm looking at my black file cabinet now and realizing that I've never seen an individual walking around with this color. If you think of the wide spectrum of colors within the light tan and brown continuum, you might realize that most of us fall into this continuum. There was an attempt to call a dark-skinned group "African-American." Following this nomenclature, I guess I would be called "German/French/Scotch Irish" and who knows what more terms we'd throw in to the mixture. It would be a worthy goal if we were just all Americans.

You'll want to read Kelley Glover's sections of this book which will give you a heartfelt perspective about growing up with dark colored skin and living in our discriminatory society. Although beautiful successful, growing up in an upwardly mobile middle-class family, you will see the difficulties she encountered as she developed. She later had an interesting experience in Paris, where she realized that people seen as African-American in Paris were accepted as equal to other people. She stated, after she left Paris, "I concentrated on keeping that glorious feeling of just being human." It's important to realize that most of us have very limited knowledge and contacts with individuals seen as black Americans. One day a question arose on a TV show as to how often people actually had dinner with individuals classified as black Americans. Many were surprised to find their answer was never.

What are possible solutions? I'm not going to tell you all about it because I want you to read this book. It's actually very short and directed specifically to this issue. I will give you some information to get you started: our solutions thus far have not worked and the tragedy of slavery continues in our country. Einstein tells us, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always get." Makes sense. Grimes describes several

important themes: "The only way to help people is to personally empower them. Human dignity and self-worth must be protected and enhanced. Intact families are essential to a healthy society. Children need both parents. Our efforts to help those blighted by slavery must bring all Americans closer together. It is clear that something major must be done, and soon." Grimes has told us how destructive the Civil War really was, and how impossible it would have been at that time to complete the process of emancipating the slaves. Let's start now. Grimes described their proposed Martin Luther King, Junior, Full Emancipation Act of 2018, "to complete the education and emancipation of children born into families traceable back to slavery." Every American child born between 2010 and 2040 who has an ancestor ever held in slavery in the United States will be provided the best private education our money can buy from kindergarten through graduate school.

You'll be interested to note the tongue in cheek classifications of the authors. Roberta Grimes can be called "melanin-deficient" and Kelley Glover as "melanin-enriched"! They propose a way to implement Thomas Jefferson's solution, "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people." Additionally, Grimes points out the many groups discriminated against in our country including Asian immigrants, Spanish-speaking Americans, Native Americans, Jewish, LGBTQ population, Females, Left/Right political groups. An important point that Grimes makes for us is that we should also not discriminate against anyone including the discriminators or others whose views we see as different from our own. Whenever society allows any kind of discrimination, that society will ultimately fail. As in many of her books, Grimes speaks specifically to Christians as to "What would Jesus really do?" Don't skip that section even if you don't consider yourself a Christian.

Remember that we cannot change the past, only the present and future! Let's start now!

*Need Advice? Send questions to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. www.bettyphillipspsychology.com*

# Pittsboro Farmers' Market — A Hidden Treasure

by Mackenzie Withington

My kids look forward to every Thursday, every week. They get to see many of their community friends, adults and kids alike, meet new friends, play outside, build toy farms, ride bikes, play tag, eat treats, draw with chalk, visit with local farmers, have good conversations. For three hours every week they get to be kids and they love it.

The Pittsboro Farmers' Market has become a treasured part of our beautiful community where kids and adults can gather as the week ends to chill, talk, shop and unwind. Its friendly atmosphere has drawn folks to take part in this weekly community event.

Small but growing, Pittsboro Farmers' Market has an outstanding group of farmers who come out weekly to share the fruits of their labor. With a great variety of locally raised and produced products, there is something

for everyone no matter what age or gender.

Granite Springs Farm offers an amazing variety of vegetables through the seasons. This spring Red Roots Farm has been bringing shiitake mushrooms, green garlic, baby bok choy and kohlrabi, with a promise of more items to come. Celebrity Dairy Farm offers goat cheeses of all sorts, gelato, fudge and soaps all from the milk produced on their farm in Siler City.

Need meat? Lilly Den Farm has all sorts of meat in different cuts and varieties as well as eggs and dairy to give you the extra protein punch you need. Hargrove Family Farm is there, too, with beef, pork, eggs and vegetables picked fresh that day.

How about something sweet? Gramma D's has baked goods that are sure to satisfy anyone's sweet tooth.

Gary Thomas Farm joins us during spring and early summer with tomatoes, asparagus, sweet potatoes and strawberries. Kids love our

berry farmers. McNeill's Farm is there with a sweet variety of strawberries. There are always strawberry stained faces in spring and blueberry stained faces in summer. Blueberries of Cameron and Olde Cathage Farm stock our market with organic blueberries and blackberries, plump and delicious. Summer time offers peaches and melons from Kawalis Peach Farm.

Walk the market and enjoy savory treats from Lu's Farm including stuffed mini breads and vegetable pies, or grab a NC natural hot dog from Gun Dog.

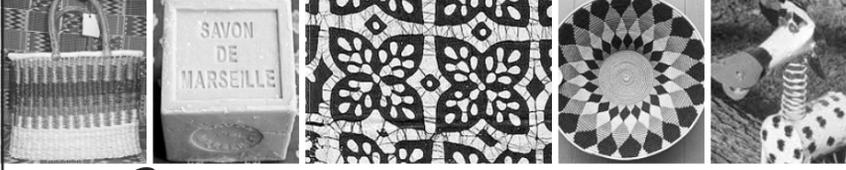
Let's talk breakfast. Route 64 Roaster offers freshly roasted coffee beans and cold brew that will knock your socks off. Bloody Bando is there with homemade, one of a kind, Bloody Mary Mix, perfect for Sunday brunch. Mark your calendars because every first Thursday Fiddlehead Farm is at market with preserves, jams, granola, seasoning salts, hot sauces and fresh made bread.

When you are all done getting your weekly groceries, stop by Solstice Farm to stock up on natural and herbal beauty and health care products from sunscreen to deodorant and much more. Owl Licks is there with homemade soaps too.

Who knows what else you will find at the market with our weekly pop up guest vendors, local educators and talented craft artists?

Pittsboro Farmers' Market is a one-stop shop right in the heart of Pittsboro. With live music, story telling, crafts, grills, festivals, and games, there is always something happening on Thursday afternoon that will bring smiles to everyone's faces. So mark your calendars, get out, bring the family, meet your local farmers and plan to have a good time!

*Mackenzie Withington is the manager of the Pittsboro Farmers' Market. She and her husband own and operate Lilly Den Farm.*



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