

CITY PEOPLE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017

DEAR ABBY

Couple disagrees on buying sports car, 4D

COMICS, 5D

“There was never anything else for me to do but nurse children. That was my life’s calling. I did just what the Lord blessed me to do and it was just a joy.”

RUTH COOK
RETIRED NURSE



Retired Greenville nurse honored for her True love & compassion

Charity dedicates rocking chair to Children’s Cancer Center

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Ruth Cook believes she was called to be a nurse. Others call her an angel.

She’s the “angel” that nursed Lee Easley Harris from back surgery in 1974. And during her years at Greenville Memorial Hospital, she would “rock the babies” in the children’s cancer center and pray over each of them, Harris said.

“I know in my heart that so many of those little ones survived because of her many prayers, her rocking and praying,” she said. “She truly is one of our saints.”

Cook, who began her career at then Greenville General Hospital in 1958 on the pediatric floor, retired from the Greenville Health System’s BI-LO Children’s Cancer Center in 2008.

But what Bern DuPree said is a symbol of Cook’s “true love and compassion” for children will forever remain in the center, thanks to the Clement’s Kindness Fund.

The organization recently honored Cook with the dedication of a rocking chair cancer center.

Cook said she was honored just to be able to do what she did at the hospital for 50 years and to have the support of the people she worked with.

“There was never anything else for me to do but nurse children. That was my life’s calling,” she said. “I did just what the Lord blessed me to do and it was just a joy.”

Cook’s other joy has been to serve on the board of advisors for Clement’s Kindness, a fund that assists Upstate families impacted by pediatric cancer and other serious blood disorders.

The rocking chair from Clement’s Kindness signifies Cook’s years of service and dedication to every sick child in her care.

Among them was Frank DuPree.

When Frank was diagnosed with a brain tumor at three and a half, “the doctor wanted her (Cook) right there beside me because, I guess, they knew what the reaction was going to be. It was devastating,” said his mother, Gay DuPree.

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There is no vaccine for child’s whining



KATHERINE SCOTT CRAWFORD
COLUMNIST

This is a story about whining. Catchy, right? Makes you want to keep reading, right? In all honesty, I sat down to pen a column about blue skies and birds chirping and the unseasonably warm week we’re having here in the mountains. But all I can think about is whining.

If I hear my 7-year-old whine one more time, I’m moving to Australia. If you’ve never experienced this phenomenon — otherwise known as your elementary-school-aged offspring whining about everything under the sun — then bully for you. If you, however, know or remember what it’s like to have your child respond to just about everything you tell them or ask them to do with the sort of grating, nasal tone that strips paint from walls, I feel your pain. Solidarity, sisters and brothers.

My older daughter is in the second grade, and while I was worried for a while that this disease was a rare one, apparently it’s catching. I know this because I’m friends with other parents-of-second-graders. The other day, my neighbor (one of those parents) and I stood at the fence between our houses, watching our kids play. When it was time for hers to leave, he exhibited symptoms of whining malaise: He hung his head, scrunched his shoulders, refused to look his mama in the eyes, and moaned, “Aww, why? I don’t want to go home.” But with longer syllables.

She looked at me and smiled the smile all mothers know: the one that makes your teeth hurt. The smile that says, “I’m going to act like everything’s OK at this moment, because if I don’t I’ll throttle the small person nearby who happens to share my DNA.”

I knew I should’ve offered more support, but what I said was, “Oh, thank goodness. I thought it was just my child.” It’s not kind or empathetic, but sometimes, it’s a relief to learn that

others are suffering right along with you. So, while this is a story about whining, it is not a story about how to fix the whining. Sadly, there is neither vaccine nor cure for this particular disease. And while I’m 100 percent positive there are, in fact, a bevy of multi-themed parenting books available on the topic, I’m too tired to read them right now.

Instead, I have resorted to the very mature method of responding to said child in the exact tone in which she whines at me. It’s not pretty. It takes her aback, that’s for sure. And also seems to do the job, at least for a little while.

I am mystified by this plague of whining that seems to have befallen my child, and many others I know. From where are they catching it? Hearing it? Certainly, my husband and I aren’t standing around whining over who has control of the TV remote, or over the lack of milk in the refrigerator — or, heck, over not having enough free time.

We are not perfect — goodness no — but we don’t whine.

From where does the whining come? I’m flummoxed. All I know is, it’s an epidemic. Maybe this particular epidemic will evolve just like the plague did, into something benign, like a common cold. Something that lasts about a week or two and then only pops up again at random throughout the year.

But don’t listen to me. I’m not a doctor, and I know nothing about the plague except for the fact that it killed a whole lot of people in the 14th century. Oh, wait: and it still does damage today all over the world because there is no cure for it.

Forgive me: it’s a brutal metaphor, but I refuse to take it back. Because, someday, someone down the line will come across my tombstone, and it will read, “Death by whining.”

Farewell, cruel world. Katherine Scott Crawford is a novelist, college professor, hiker and mom who lives in Western North Carolina.