

By Nancy Whitaker

I WONDER AS I WANDER

I have always been a curious person and have always found myself wondering about things that maybe no one else thinks about.

I used to ask my mama, and anyone else who would listen, so many questions, they used to call me "News Reporter."

A child does wonder about things and as an adult, I still do. Some of my musings may sound funny, however, I bet we have all questioned some of the same topics.

For instance, my coworker and I said that when we were kids, we both wondered where our soul was located. We both confessed that we thought it was an organ close to our heart. I used to ask anyone who would listen, "Where is my soul?"

Another intriguing thing that I have always been curious about is ants. As a youngster, I used to sit for hours just observing those little insects as they toiled carrying bits of food to their nest.

Today, I still wonder how ants can live and work together peacefully. Each one seems to have a job to do and always look busy. But, you do have to think about where that food is going and who gets to eat it first. Plus, do ants share and divvy up their food?

Another species that I often wonder about are birds. For instance, the other day when driving home from work, I noticed a long line of birds all perched beside each other on a telephone wire. A short distance away on the same wire was one lonely bird sitting by himself.

My first thought was, "Why isn't he sitting with the rest of the bird crowd?" "Is he in trouble?" "Are the rest of those birds family members?" "Is there a certain pecking order?"

After all, the old saying goes "Birds of a feather, flock together." Perhaps it was a different species or just one who lost his way.

The same question came up the other day as we were driving out in the country. There was a flock of geese overhead, flying in a perfect "V" formation. To me, this is a fascinating marvel of nature.

One goose seemed to be leading the way with the rest following. Occasionally, they would honk as if to signal something and I had to wonder, "What are they saying to each other?" "Where are they going?" "How do they know the direction in which to fly?"

I remember as a child I was taught about heaven and hell. I was taught from an early age that heaven was a beautiful, joyous place, located beyond the clouds, paved with streets of gold and that we would all live in mansions when we got there.

I remember looking up at the sky trying to imagine such a wonderful place. How could the sky which looked so soft with those big, fluffy, white clouds hold a city called Heaven? Wouldn't it fall through the skies?

I was also instructed that hell is below the earth and bad people go there. I was told that it is an inferno of flames that burns continuously.

I remember of being afraid that if I didn't behave, the flames of hell come from below and burn me up.

We are inquisitive from the time we are born and our wonderings and musings are varied.

A lady told this story about her little granddaughter who was not only inquisitive, but came up with her own answer.

She said, "While working for an organization that delivered lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds.

"She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass.

"As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'"

The wonder of things we can't explain will always intrigue and fascinate us as a child and as an adult.

In the words of Albert Einstein, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed."

Do you ever wonder about birds, ants, heaven or hell? Do you think we as people can live as harmoniously as the ants and fly together as the geese? Let me know and I'll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.