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October 2024

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SPROUTS OF HOPE

My grandfather was not a farmer by trade, but he grew up on a farm in Tennessee. His love for gardening flourished in his youth and remained forever a part of his soul. It was a hobby in his adult life, and I will forever remember the enormity of that garden in mine.

In my youth, that garden was larger than life—just like my grandfather. A large yard remained for us grandchildren to play in, but he tilled a reasonable portion around its perimeter to plant vegetables. He thoroughly pruned and weeded from spring to harvest. My cousins and I had many fun adventures, not only playing in the garden, but helping our grandfather tend the plants.

We spent many evenings walking barefoot in the soil to pick veggies for dinner—most memorably for my grandmother’s legendary soup. We picked snap peas fresh from the vine and snapped off sticks of crisp rhubarb to munch on while we played and picked veggies. Our grandfather hosed our feet off before we came inside to help set the table for supper.

When we finally had a house and a yard of our own, my husband and I sectioned off a portion of the backyard where we could plant our first garden. I made many phone calls to my grandfather that winter and spring, asking a multitude of questions to prepare and ensure our success. My grandfather offered advice on when and how to plant the vegetables, how to care for them, and which ones needed more sunlight than others. His advice and infinite wisdom were invaluable.

One day, I came home from work and discovered a brown paper bag stuck between the screen door and our front door. I opened it up, and inside found a bounty of green onion starter bulbs. I smiled. My heart warmed at this thoughtful gift I knew must be from my grandfather. He had a decent drive from our home, and the kindly gift was something I could never express my gratitude for merely in words; the gesture moved my heart so. I called him that evening to thank him for the onions.



“You’ve got a green thumb, just like your grandpa, Gwen. I know you will have a bountiful and successful garden this year,” he reassured me, as we prepared to plant over the weekend.

And he was right. We had quite a success with our first garden and continued to for years.

Learning and working with my grandfather all the while, we made our efforts at different vegetables, herbs, and even some fruits. This was what I looked forward to when I got home from work throughout the warm-seasoned months. Tending to the garden, and inevitably calling my grandfather if not just to chat, with questions and seeking advice about our vegetable garden.

A rough couple of years spanned our lives when we lost both of my grandparents; my soul and my heart needed healing. It took me four years after losing my grandfather to even think about planting and managing a garden again. I remained hesitant and oscillated on whether I was ready to take a garden that year.

I was out playing with our hound dog in the backyard

one sunny day. Regardless of my indecisive commitment to a garden that year, it was still far too early to begin planting, for nightly freezes still held strong in Colorado despite the lovely, sunny days. As I threw the ball for our furry bundle of energy, I noticed something out of the corner of my eye. Upon walking closer to our garden area—still quarantined off by a small fence—I saw a few sprouts of green popping up. I inspected them and hesitantly smoothed my finger over the bold green shoots and dug up one. By golly, if a baby green onion hadn’t started to grow.

My mouth gaped open in shock, for we hadn’t planted or grown anything for four years, but somehow had a little group of green onions sprouting in the garden my grandfather had guided us through for so many years. As I incredulously watered the small plants before dinner that evening, I took heed of my grandfather’s message and began to plan out our garden for the upcoming season. I still felt insecure to take on a garden without having my grandfather to mentor us through it all. But his spiritual presence had made itself clear, and I knew he would guide us through this, and any of our future gardening quests. We may change up the spread of fruits and veggies we plant in our garden each year... but one item we *always* have an abundance of is green onions. ♦

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FROM THE EDITOR

CHARITY BISHOP

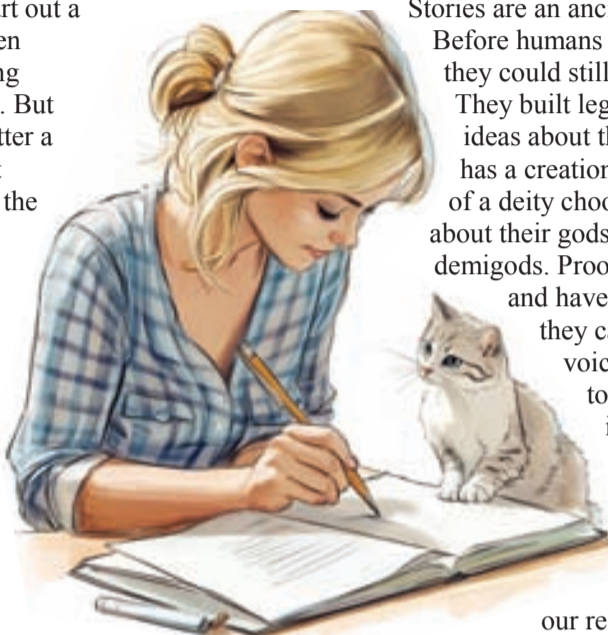
The Power of Stories

October is my favorite month of the year, because it's so colorful and the air smells different. Crisp and clean and like the mountains even if you're on the plains. It's one of my favorite times to write, because takes of derring-do and kidnappings and cattle rustlers come into my head.

I am sometimes asked how to become a writer, and I respond—practice. You start out a beginner; you put in your ten thousand hours of improving practice, and you get better. But there's a downside. The better a writer you are, the harder it gets, because you know all the ways your story, plot, or characters are going wrong in the first draft. Then you must sit them down and give them a talking to, and inform a few of them they were exciting ideas but aren't pulling their weight ... so you're going to write them out.

Characters hate hearing this. They get offended or want revenge, because you breathed life into them and now want to take that away from them. Some of them get to be such powerful personalities, they talk to you when you're busy doing other things. You stand at the kitchen sink, up to your elbows in soapy water, and one waltzes in and starts telling you about his history, or what she intends to do, uninvited. All of them live rent-free in your head and when the book is done, they're gone. Their story is complete. And you miss them.

Characters feel like friends. They come and they go; they are meaningful for a time and all I think about, and when their book is done, I get restless and lonely for a new set of friends.



The best stories focus on the fun of something, rather than the bare bones details. A good story makes you feel like it's Christmas in the middle of July, or shiver as you trek across a barren wasteland with a group of explorers, or gives you anxiety as the rescue dog gets stuck in a narrow tunnel for a few pages.

Stories are an ancient form of communication.

Before humans could write things down, they could still tell stories around the fire.

They built legends. They came up with ideas about their origins. Every culture has a creation story, a flood story, a story of a deity choosing their people, stories about their gods, mythological heroes, and demigods. Proof that humans love stories

and have always tried to explain what they can't understand. We give voices to the wind, personalities

to the seasons, names to invisible forces (Mother Nature, Father Time).

Stories are how we are "higher" beings. And we're all in the middle of one. The story of our life,

our relationships, our adventures;

what does it tell us about our self and what does it tell others about us? What is the story our life is telling? Is it a good one or a bad one? The stories we absorb... are they making us better or giving us hope or changing us in ways we don't like? Are they making us crueler or crasser or adding positivity and joy to our life?

Some of you dream of being writers. Life is short. Pick up your pencil and write something. Write about the day you've just had, what that chipmunk is thinking, about how you feel as the seasons change. Just write. It's a journey that will take you places you never imagined. ♦



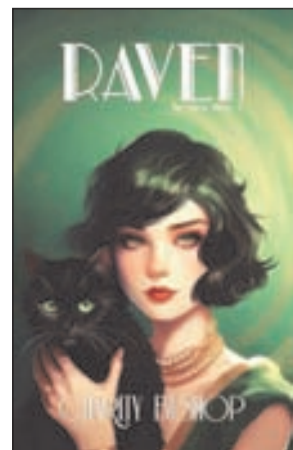
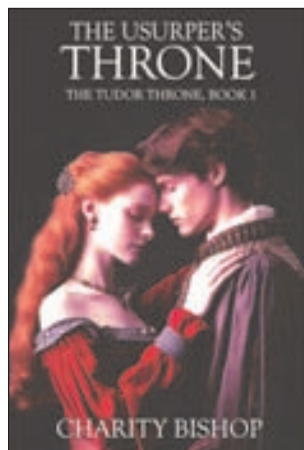
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Happy Halloween!

Suzan L. Wiener

One Halloween, my brother's friend Georgie was throwing a Halloween party for their class, but Petie didn't seem thrilled about it. He moped around the house every day, not playing catch outside, or playing his favorite video games.

"What's wrong, Petie?" I asked, getting concerned about him.

"Oh, I need a costume for the Halloween party, but Mom said we don't have any extra money to spend on it." I thought I almost saw a tear in his eye. Normally, we weren't that close, but now I felt terrible for him. What we could do to make him a costume?

I couldn't come up with anything until one night they had a television program with a pirate in it. Then it hit me. Petie could be a pirate. All he needed was an eye patch, a big earring on his left ear, a bandana and a pirate's hat. He could wear regular pants and a shirt. Certain I could find something for him, I told him about it, and he got excited! It made him cheerful again, which made me happy.

That night, I found the items I needed in his closet and bought an eye patch and a hat for a dollar. I thought Petie looked great! He seemed elated, too. The party was two blocks away, but I walked him over there. I wanted to see how the other kids dressed. Some of them had really terrific costumes. One was Captain Kirk, and one went as Pinocchio. Brilliant outfits.

The party ended at 11 pm. I couldn't wait until he came home to tell me how it went. He burst inside and said, "Guess what, Susie, I didn't win the big prize, but I won honorable mention for having the most creative costume! They gave me two Mars candy bars, my favorite. One for me and one for you!" He even hugged me, which surprised me a lot. I was so pleased he won something. It showed us all you need is a good idea to be a winner. It doesn't need to be expensive! ♦



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Fighting Like the Flowers

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The housewife, as common as the yellow dandelion, her hands immersed in the hot soapy water, hummed as she cleaned away the crusts of breakfast. Her day held nothing grand or exciting, only an aroma of calm, and the steady beat of cyclical chores.

Wait. Why is Freya out? she thought, as her youngest and smallest brown hen passed the window, head held high and on alert. *That's not good.*

Dripping soap and barefoot, she hurried out the back door, her chest tight with fear. Freya clucked with worry as the housewife scooped her up in one arm and turned to the run.

Empty.

Not a brown hen to be seen. Not in the run, not in the yard, not in the trees, not on the fence, not in the coop. No Sigyn, Astrid, or Sif. No clucking, no arguing, no dust bathing, no scratching. Empty. The lightly secured run door hung askew. Still without shoes, the housewife rushed across the yard, Freya held close.

In the grass lay Sigyn, a mottled snake wrapped tight around her.

The housewife ripped open the door and side of the small run. With only a passing thought of whether the snake might or might not be venomous, she grabbed its tail. It continued to wind around the inert Sigyn. Catching up a nearby stick, the housewife—still holding Freya and still barefoot—walloped it. She smacked any part of the snake not wrapped around her beloved hen, and it changed its proposed lunch plans with finality.

Freed from the tightening coils, the housewife scooped the limp Sigyn up and rushed to the coop. She set Freya, utterly silent during the snake's condemnation, inside the coop and laid Sigyn inside, securing them both. Desperate and terrified, she spun around, searching Astrid and Sif. *Where are they? Are they hurt?* They had to be scared. *Where did they go?* The endless possibilities of places to hide in a neighborhood overwhelmed her.

The number of other predators more than willing to take on a young hen knotted her stomach. Images of blood and feathers flashed through her mind.

Then she heard their call.

The noise they made when they were separated and afraid, that asked, "Where am I and where are you? Help me!"

The housewife rushed out of the backyard gate, berating herself for leaving it open. In the driveway stood Astrid and Sif. She approached them with a calm she didn't feel and gathered them close. Back at the coop, Sigyn stood, Freya beside her. All four hens were safe and sound. The snake learned the hard lesson many had learned before—she may only be a dandelion-housewife, but she will break through rocks and concrete for what she loves... or pick up a stick and beat you with it. ♦



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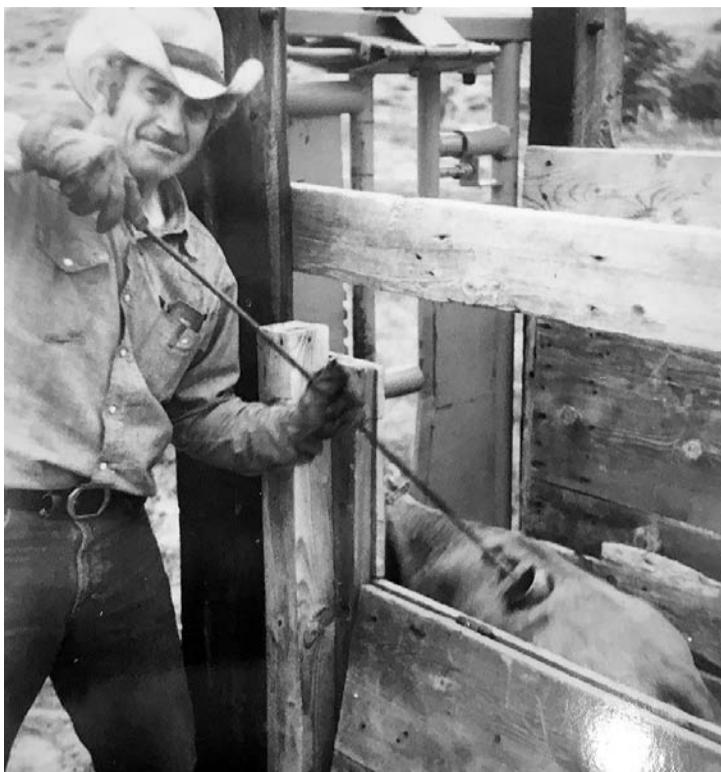
Memories of My Dad

Jerry Bishop

I love October. As I look out the window, I can see the beautiful red, gold and yellow of the trees and shrubs in all their autumn splendor. It also reminds me of my Dad who had an October birthday.

My cowboy father, "Buss," came from the hardy stock of a pioneering family. His parents migrated from Missouri and set up a homestead in eastern Colorado a few miles from where I live now. Buss learned how to ride a horse about the same time he learned to walk. He was

involved in one of the last big long distance cattle drives in Colorado. His formal schooling was sketchy at best, but he could handle a horse with his hands tied behind his



back. Dad told me about a school he had attended as a child called the "Lost School." He said it was so "lost" kids seldom found their way there. He was an avid reader, and years later passed his high school G.E.D. with flying colors. The teacher who administered the test told him she'd never met anyone with such a good grasp of history.

Besides having an eye for beauty and a love for nature, Dad was a terrific judge of character. I didn't always listen over the years whenever he cautioned me to be careful about trusting certain folks and I had to pay some pretty big prices for my deafness. He taught me "talk is cheap," and the best way to tell if someone is trustworthy is to

look at their track record. Sometimes it takes some real detective work to find that out.

"People get in the habit of lying or of telling the truth," he said. "Lying comes as natural to some as telling the truth does to others. Beware of the person who tells people what they want to hear and is afraid to stand up for something unpopular. Sometimes being popular doesn't mean it's right and, believe me, there are some things that are just plain right. For example, slavery was very popular at different times in history, but it's never been right."

Buss and I became really close friends later in his life. Early on, he was busy providing for our family and I was a child. As a teenager and young adult, I already knew everything, so there wasn't too much I could learn, but when I got older and made big mistakes and got into real messes, I discovered my dad's fountain of wisdom



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and spent many an hour learning while helping him with chores on his ranch.

Buss was an optimist who believed in taking responsibility for our own actions. He believed in a helping hand, but not a handout. Dad told me that true happiness doesn't depend on our circumstances, but on our attitudes. He taught me attitude is a choice. We can decide what kind of attitude to have each day. Obstacles filled Buss's life. He spent his childhood working to help support his parent's family instead of getting an education and having fun. He started his married life with very little finances before the days of easy credit. His second daughter was handicapped and had special needs.

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There were the perpetual challenges of weather, cattle and crop prices. Yet he persevered and left a legacy of love. In his 70s, he read the Bible in the new modern translation and developed a strong faith. One of the last conversations I had with Dad was about religion. It was on our way back from The Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo in Colorado Springs. He said, "Most of my life I've thought religion was about keeping rules and do's and don'ts. It's not. It's about trusting Jesus and I know I can because of his track record."

The next day, Buss was gone from this earth. He passed away out on the prairie with his boots on, getting ready to swath hay—just the way he would have wanted it.

Happy birthday, Dad.

I'm thinking about you and look forward to being together again someday. ♦



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A Clothesline View

Pamela Gilsean

Recently, I received the opportunity to hang my laundry out on the clothesline again. I am almost old enough to have BD (before dryers) stamped after the year of my birth. You might also remember hanging out clothes in the fierce winter winds. It is always colder when your hands are wet. Maybe there were years you even spent the entire day each week doing laundry. It was tough compared to today's laundry, which almost cleans itself.

Today's temperature is mild, a slightly breezy day, with no birds or bugs are in sight. It is pleasant to be outside and will only take a few hours to dry the clothes. Since I've started "clothes lining" again, I can brag that my clothes have hung in at least eight states. That means I'm not at a loss for new conversational material at social gatherings. I can relate to theories of hanging all the socks headed in the same direction and with their mates, blue jeans hanging from the waist or cuffs for faster drying and, of course, hanging the "undies" between lines of sheets so as not to give the neighbors a fright.

Pity the poor folks who live in subdivisions where they can spit and hit the next house. Not so many people hang their laundry anymore, but it brings back pleasant memories for those who once did... the smell of freshly dried bed linens and small children playing on swings near the lines. Among the most disliked reminders of drying laundry outdoors are careless birds and the cold winter winds that redden your face and hands while chilling you to the bone.

Clotheslines sound wonderful so far, don't they? They save money on your gas or electric

bill and are good for the environment! There is one major, well maybe two, outstanding drawbacks to using a clothesline over a clothes dryer. It's darn hard, time consuming, inconvenient WORK! Hauling and bending and stretching and lifting. It's reaching and clipping and pulling and pushing ... repeatedly.

And an excuse to never take an exercise class. Since I started hanging out my clothes again, one of my children remarked that the ugly fat (bat wings she calls it) on the backside of my upper arms is toning up. I think that is a back-handed compliment—sort of. No one is volunteering to help hang the laundry... not when the dryer sits so close to the washer... it defies youthful logic.

I get a bit of extra time to think because hanging out the laundry is basically a mindless chore, isn't it? There is no electronic noise by my clothesline, no whirring, no buzzing, no binging and no telephone ringing. Electronic gizmos bring convenience but also too much racket ... too much noise. It is hard to hear yourself think.

I have a couple of loads of towels to hang. My mind wanders back a 100 years. I wonder about my great grandmother hanging out clothes on the prairie for her family. She had to make the clothes and the soap. Haul water, heat it, and then scrub the clothes on a washboard. After that, the clothes had to be rinsed and wrung out. Only then could she haul the laundry out to hang it on the clothesline. I merely pull the clothes out of the washer into a basket and carry it down the short walk to the clothesline. I don't remember anyone saying my great grandmother got "stressed out," either. She always had so much work to do that she never got done. She had to make choices about what was most important to her and her family.

I am getting close to being done with my laundry chores and my musings when a kid's voice brings me fast forward 100 years. "MOM, I want to be at the library in an hour!" I wonder as I pin the last towel if great grandmother had taxi chores, too.

Let me see now, in an hour's time I can "zap" some leftovers in the microwave for a snack, put



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dinner in the crock pot, put a load of jeans to soak in the washer, start the dishwasher, set the coffeepot for dinner brew, and program the oven to come on at 6:30 p.m. to bake a late evening dessert which I need only to take from the freezer and out of its commercial wrapper. Times have changed.

Sometimes I envy great grandmother; she had such a simple life. But then maybe she would envy me when she found out it was going to rain tomorrow and I plan to soak those blue jeans overnight in the dryer. ♦

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Richard B. Whitaker

Faith Preceded the Miracle

My wife and I have faced many severe trials in our marriage, but the one that worried us the most came when Cheryle discovered a lump. Her mother passing away from breast cancer a few years earlier heightened her concern. After listening to her concerns, Dr. Jones suggested an ultrasound and a biopsy to remove tissues for testing.

As she squeezed my hand, I watched her lower lip tremble. "That would be fine," she replied.

Two weeks later, as she sat alone in our Las Vegas home, she received a telephone call from Dr. Jones.

"Cheryle, I'm sorry to share this with you over the phone, but the mass contains cancerous cells. I need to schedule you for a follow-up appointment. I will be more specific about what I found and we will discuss your options in person. Is that okay with you?"

A wave of numbness flooded over her like a tsunami rolling in from the sea. As she sat curled up at the end of the couch, she did her best to control her emotions. "That would be fine," she replied.

After she hung up, Cheryle burst into tears. After a good cry, she called me. As soon as I picked up my cell phone and said, "Hello," I knew something was wrong. Struggling to get the words out, Cheryle said, "Dr. Jones just called. I have breast cancer."

Unable to speak, I formed in my mind the words, *Oh Heavenly Father, please don't take her now. Please, Father.*

After repeating those words to myself more than once, I suddenly felt an overwhelming warmth flow through my body, from my head to my toes, followed by a feeling of peace. I knew everything would work out.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart, but everything will be fine."

"I'm scared, Richard."

"I know. I'm coming home. I'll see you in about 45 minutes."

A couple days before the surgery, I asked Cheryle to join me upstairs in my office, preparatory to me giving her a special husband's blessing. After seating her in a chair, I took my position behind her and placed

my hands gently on her head. I relied on the Spirit to place words in my mind that a loving Heavenly Father would have her hear. As silence filled the room, I waited.

As the words came to my mind, the blessing flowed. Cheryle was told many things only she and the Lord knew. She knew with faith sufficient and prayers offered, the operation would be successful and the cancer permanently removed. It promised her total recovery and a return to excellent health. She heard the Lord had more for her to accomplish and much of it would be in my company. I closed the prayer by stating, *"Cheryle, these promises and attendant blessings will occur, of that I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen."*

On May 13, Cheryle underwent surgery. After chemotherapy began, it wasn't long before she began losing her hair. Undeterred, she made a brave decision. On June 11, she asked a son-in-law if he would shave her head. Like a good soldier, he sat her down on a stool in our bathtub and in minutes she was as bald as a billiard ball.

As chemotherapy continued, her baldness became a way of life and she refused to wear any type of head covering. She felt having her head shaved clean would speak volumes to other women agonizing over the same decision.

To show my support, I devised a game. Dressed in our Sunday best, we drove to one of the Five-Star Hotels on the Las Vegas Strip. With nothing covering her shaved head and with me donning my Aviator sunglasses, we walked into the hotel and rode the escalators.

Up and down we went, watching the faces of the other guests as they tried their best to identify the beautiful bald lady and the silver-haired dude hiding behind the sunglasses! While these trips took great intestinal fortitude on her part, nothing could equal the courage I saw when she told our youngest son Scott that he didn't need to delay his wedding until

mom's hair grew out.

On October 18, 1997, Scott Whitaker married Corinna Schimek and Cheryle made sure she didn't get excluded from any photographs!

Three years before her treatments, a doctor had told Cheryle not to worry about her lump. Over time, she realized her feelings of animosity were weighing heavily upon her. In



her heart, she knew she needed to not only forgive the error, but to put the experience behind her and concentrate on the positive aspects of healing. Since it was not her nature to hold a grudge, she placed herself on a path of accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative in all aspects of her life. She also identified three words that helped her stay on a positive course. They were, *"Don't Condemn, Don't Complain, and Don't Criticize."*

She wanted to do all within her power to help others and share with her four daughters the importance of regular self-examinations and the need for a mammogram and even an

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ultra sound every year. As time passed, the ability to share her remarkable story increased. She never hesitated to talk to others about the process of healing which included her faith in God and the power of friends and family in the journey.

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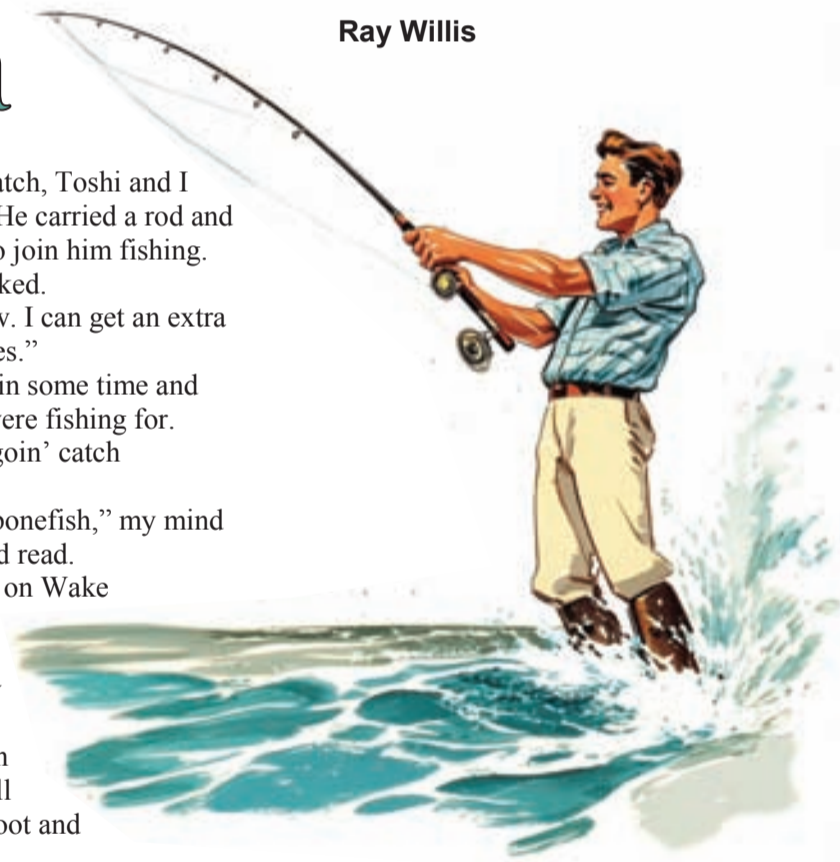
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Bonefish Bonanza

Ray Willis



Another summer is winding down, and I still haven't gone fishing. How I long to be sitting in a rowboat on a quiet lake at dusk with my spinning gear and trusty old Jitterbug. To listen to the "glub, glub glub" of that surface lure while waiting for a largemouth bass to break the stillness of the lake when he charged at it would be sheer pleasure.

My father allowed me to subscribe to *Sports Afield* magazine as one of my few teenage luxuries. I'll never forget an article I read by Jason Lucas, the fishing editor, about the fine art of bonefishing. He implied it would be nearly impossible for the average fisherman to catch bonefish. He wrote that the fisherman should be in shallower water and have the use of a stepladder and a flashlight. And you had to be around warm ocean water.

While stationed on Wake Island in 1965 as one of a six man Coast Guard Search and Rescue Center, I made friends with Toshi, a Japanese friend from Hawaii. One morning,

after I got off a midnight watch, Toshi and I crossed each other's paths. He carried a rod and reel and asked me I'd like to join him fishing.

"When? Right now?" I asked.

"Yeah, bruddah, right now. I can get an extra pole for you in a few minutes."

I told him I hadn't fished in some time and asked where and what we were fishing for.

"No worry, bruddah, we goin' catch bonefish."

At the mere mention of "bonefish," my mind skirted back to the article I'd read.

Toshi led me to the dump on Wake Island and rummaged through the trash. I dared not question him. He finally picked up an old high work shoe and happily waved it in the air. Then he cut off small pieces of leather from the boot and handed me a few.

"Are you nuts?" I asked.

"Heck no. These suckas will bite at anything."

We walked out onto a reef with shallow water. I stood a few feet away from Toshi and cast out my line with the piece of shoe leather attached to the hook for bait. It no sooner hit the water when I felt a sudden yank upon it! It felt like a six-pound bass had hit. The fish tugged violently some more and broke the surface a few times.

My arms were tiring, and only a minute had passed. I finally reeled the fish to within ten feet of me when it again broke the surface, still moving in all directions. Right as I was about to raise it out of the water, the thing swam behind me and encircled me with my own fishing line!

After what seemed like forever, I reeled the monster to my feet. When I finally lifted this savage, fighting bonefish from the water, I marveled in a state of disbelief at the nine-inch wonder.

It was a fishing adventure I'll never forget. Toshi and I caught several more, each fish putting up the same unbelievable battle. Toshi would later give me some fishcakes he made from the bonefish.

Jason Lucas has passed on, but if he were alive, would I have a thing or two to tell him about the fine art of catching bonefish! ♦

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The Price of Shade

Susan Davis

It was a gorgeous fall day in Kansas. The conditions were ideal for gathering the multi-colored leaves. My husband, Ben, and I were doing just that, hoping to have our yard cleaned up before the colder weather of the next season took over.

As Ben raked the scattered leaves into a big mound, he surprised me when he said, "We're paying the price for all that shade."

He was right. It was a lot of work. The amazing thing was each fallen leaf weighed next to nothing. However, when many of them were gathered together, the stack soon became too heavy to move easily.

It was then time to pick them up. After we bagged the bulk of the leaves, the brittle pieces had to be raked up again. While Ben and I had worked for hours, we still had plenty of leaves covering up our lawn. Worse yet, there were still a few leaves clinging to the trees' branches. We knew they would fall shortly after we had put our rakes away.

During the summer, our trees were loaded with healthy green leaves. They had created a natural umbrella over our house. They did a good job of filtering out the summer sun. I stopped raking for a moment and looked up at our stately, full-grown trees.

The previous owners had planted them. They had done a good job of caring for them.

The strong trunks of our trees were straight. However, the more flexible tops of them leaned northward. They showed the effects of the strong, south winds that often blew by them.

Just looking at our curved treetops got me to thinking about my grandpa's favorite saying about them. When I

was still learning from my parents and

other adults, I

heard him

say,

"You

can



bend a tree when it's young, but no longer when it gets too big."

Even though I was young, I understood the

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depth of my grandpa's tree example. He was really talking about children. Grandpa was actually saying, "Parents can teach a young child who is doing wrong up to a certain age. If they do not do it then, the day will come when it is too late to 'straighten up the problem.'"

Fortunately for me, my parents were there to "straighten me up" if I needed it. They gave me a solid foundation, which I rely upon daily.

As for Ben and my trees, we are glad they still have plenty of good years of shade left in them. However, there will be a price to pay for it. We will have to trim their branches when they need it and, of course, rake up their fallen leaves. ♦

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Isabelle Farnham

Speaking of Angels

On a dark and stormy night, the battery of my car died at Monaco and 14th St. in Denver. "What now?" I thought.

There was no answer. What I knew about batteries was less than nothing. What I thought I knew was I must look under the hood.

Because the mist had clouded the windshield and had turned into a drizzle, I pawed through my handbag in search of my rain bonnet. Most of the time, I left it home in the closet. Luckily, I found it in the bottom of the bag where it belonged.

In no time, I had it tied firmly under my chin. Buttoning my sweater up around my neck, I pulled the hood release lever, opened the car door, and went around to the front. Lifting the hood, I peered into the dark recesses of the engine. What was I looking for? I wasn't sure. Hadn't I heard something about the little green light on the battery? Or was it a red light? No matter. As far as I could tell, there was no light at all.



I was getting wetter by the minute, so I hurried back to the front seat. Turning the key did no good. The battery was dead.

"You can think yourself out of this," I told myself. "What can you do about a dead battery?" I thought and thought, but no solution came.

I tried to remember a time when I lived in Lakewood, and something like this had happened. Had that been a dead battery? I tried matching up all the details of the event. They were all there except the chilling drizzle. As I recalled, someone used a jumper cable. It ran to a live battery in someone's car, and the electricity transferred from one battery to another.

Simple. Except that here I was on Monaco with no idea where to look for a jumper cable and a live battery.

"Heaven knows where I can find help," I thought. "Maybe my best bet is to let help find me."

With that, I curled up on the seat, having locked all the doors. Within half an hour, a brisk knocking on the front window let me know I had been discovered. I sat bolt upright. Sure enough, outside was the welcome sight of a policeman.

"Having trouble, little lady?" he asked as I rolled down the window. I explained my problem. "I do not know where to go for help. Can you help me?"

"I can get you a mechanic with a jumper cable. Just roll up your window and wait."

With that, he took off, and I did what he said. I waited. A short time later, a tow truck pulled up ahead of me and a man in a mechanic's uniform came out and tried the handle. He was carrying a jumper cable. I opened the door.

"You must be my customer," he said, sliding in beside me. "You're right," I replied. "And you are an angel from heaven."

"I wouldn't say that," he replied. "I'm from the Conoco station on Colfax." It seemed no time at all before he had my engine running. The bill was less than I thought. I thanked him and used the wise crack I like to spring on people: "I'll do something for you some day."

"I'll be waiting!" He laughed and went on back to his Conoco Station. I turned on my windshield wiper and headed for home, convinced on this dark and stormy night I had most certainly had been touched by an angel. ♦



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The Marble Box

Bill Bean

Grandpa Bean put magic into my childhood.

When I came home from school, I found Grandpa sitting on the front porch, waiting for me to tell him about my daily adventures. It was great to have his full attention. I followed him around wherever he went. Seven-year-olds have problems that don't seem important to grownups, but Grandpa always noticed and came up with a solution.

With the coming of spring, the second grade boys brought marbles to school. We made a circular hole in the ground like a small bowl about the size of your cupped hand. Whoever could shoot their marble closest to the edge of the hole but not into it got to play first. The idea was to knock everyone else's marbles into the hole and win those marbles. I never was very good at it. When I got home from school, I usually had only a few in my pockets, or none. Grandpa would read my face to see how I felt that day and say to me, "I guess it wasn't a good day for playing marbles."

One Saturday morning, Grandpa said, "Come outside. I've got something to show you."

Adjoined to the back of our house was an open air shed with no door or windows between it and the house.

Beside that was the closed shed where Mom's cook stove and canning supplies were.

The rest of the closed shed was

room for an

old but

serviceable

pool table

where

Grandpa spent

much of his

time.

Grandpa led me to a place behind the open air shed where Mother could not easily see. Mom allowed no smoking in the house, but Grandpa smoked a cigar outdoors now and then, so he had cigar boxes. He placed one of them on the ground. The box, constructed from wood and paper, was both solid and durable. It had a square hole in the lid, a little bigger than a marble. He told me not to tell Mom or anyone else about this box. I didn't know why, but whatever he came up with was fun, so that was fine with me.

After giving me a handful of marbles, he told me to put my toes near the box, hold my hand at belt height, and drop the marbles through the

hole. I knew Grandpa well enough that when he was telling me to do something, there was a good reason for it, so I didn't ask why. He said, "Now you just keep dropping those marbles until you can put them through that hole every time."

I dropped the marbles Grandpa gave me. Every one of them hit the box and bounced off. This would not be easy. It would take hours of practice. But I did what Grandpa said because it always turned out to be exciting. Besides, I loved to earn his praise and approval.

I practiced behind the open air shed and I didn't tell Mom about the new game. Day after day, I practiced until a few marbles fell into the box. One day Grandpa came out behind the shed, watched me at my practice,

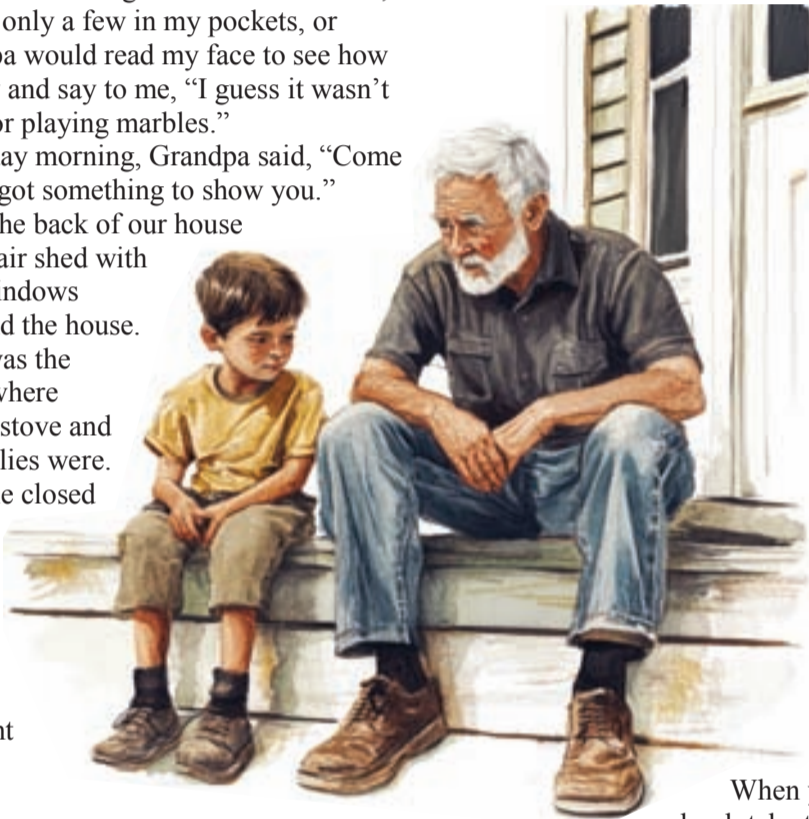
and said, "You're doing very well." Then he went on about his business. I worked even harder after that. My accuracy improved until I could put a marble into the hole almost every time I dropped it.

When I got great at it, Grandpa said, "Okay. Here's what you do.

When you go to school, take this box and the marbles with you. When you get there, show the boys how easy it is to drop a marble through the hole. Then they can try to hit the hole with their marble. They have to keep their arm at belt height and their toes near the box. If they hit the hole, you give them back their marble, or any marble, and another marble, so they end up with two marbles in their hand every time they put one through. When they miss, their marble is yours. You make all that clear to them and you show them how easy it is. Let's see how that works."

I took my box to school and couldn't believe my success. I had kids surrounding me six or seven deep, waiting to try out my box. Soon I had pockets full of marbles. By the end of the first day, I had filled all my pockets and my box with marbles I had won. I felt elated!

I came home to Grandpa sitting on our front porch, watching me walk down the street. When I got sixty or seventy feet away from him, he studied my face intently. He could see me beaming all over. By the time I reached the porch, he knew that his marble box had been a success. He wanted to know all the details, how the box worked, what the kids said, and everything that happened. It



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delighted him. I can still remember the sparkle in his eyes. His enjoyment was worth all the hours of practice.

I stashed most of the marbles in my room and took the box to school again. On the second and third days, I came home with all of my pockets and the box full of marbles—and enjoyed Grandpa's delight every day.

By the second day, imitators were bringing boxes to school. One boy brought a Quaker Oatmeal box with a hole in the top, but it was so tall it was much easier to hit. Some brought boxes with holes too large and easy to hit. Others offered three marbles if you put a marble through the hole. I was the only one with a cigar box. Only Grandpa had made a box of the right height with a hole of the right size. I told Grandpa of these developments and he advised me to make no changes. I was the first and I should keep it the way I set it up. It was good advice. My box became the favorite.

The fourth day of my marble venture started out well. I won pockets full of marbles in the schoolyard, below the principal's office window, surrounded by kids waiting to drop marbles into my box. It was a blast. Then I heard someone shout my name. On my knees next to the marble box, I didn't know where it came from and looked around. I heard my name again, called loudly and with determination. I saw the kids looking upward, so I followed their gaze and found the principal leaning out of his window, looking down at me. He said, "Bill Bean, I want you up here immediately!"

I hurried into the building and up four flights of stairs. Marbles were falling out of my pockets and noisily bouncing down all those steps. I tried to bend over to pick them up, but the principle said, "Never mind those. Get up here—now!"

I don't remember exactly what he said—

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The Marble Box,
Continued

something about gambling. He was furious and gave me a note to take home to Mom.

I shuffled home with the box, unsure of what I did wrong. Why was it so wrong to win and lose marbles by dropping them into a hole in a box if it wasn't wrong to win marbles by shooting them into a hole in the ground?

Grandpa sat on the front porch, waiting for me. He saw me in a funk and asked me about it. I told him what had happened, then went indoors to give Mom the note and change my clothes. I went looking for Grandpa, but couldn't find him anywhere.

I learned later he had gone to the school and talked to the principal. Grandpa wouldn't let me take the blame for his idea. He stuck up for me.

That was the end of my wonderful marble box. I returned to school the next morning without it and never again heard a word about the issue from the principal or anyone else. I found it distressing that I couldn't bring my marble box, but my competitors brought theirs for two or three days, until the principal got the entire gambit expunged from the school.

The marbles I had won lasted for years. And Grandpa continued to be my hero, my mentor, and my champion. For all of my childhood, I looked behind the mischievous glint in his eyes, and found the magic he kept there just for me. ♦

Confined and Defeated

Don Boyer

When you are fourteen years old with a paper route, making your own money, you're on top of the world.

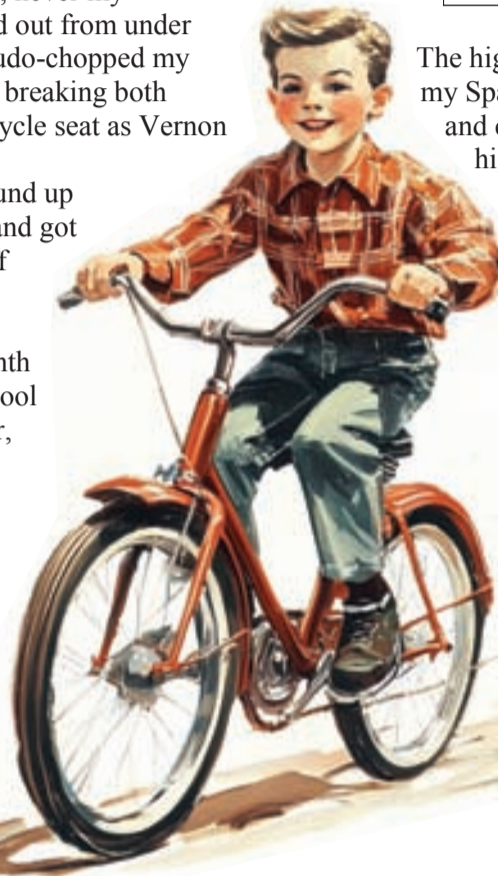
Especially when you are riding your very first used bike on a warm spring day. My friend Vernon strolled beside me as I showed off my newfound skills. I skidded down the brick pavement at top speed, about to execute a ninety-degree turn by leaning into the curve.

I blame the sand on the bricks, never my recklessness, as the bike skidded out from under me. As it came down, the seat judo-chopped my left leg above the ankle, cleanly breaking both bones in my leg. I sat on the bicycle seat as Vernon pushed me and the bike home.

A visit to the doctor and I wound up wearing a large cast on my leg and got a warning to keep my weight off the leg for at least a month. I couldn't go to school for the remaining two months of the ninth grade. Good news? No. The school admin assigned me a home tutor, my Spanish teacher—the one I wasn't so crazy about.

Ninth grade had just enough homework to irritate a high energy boy confined to the sofa all day. Plus, there was all the reading in the textbooks. This was in the mid 1950s and the only things on television were soap operas and game shows. The radio stations carried the latest farm reports, local news and "grownup" music. The good stuff didn't get played until evening when the kids got out of school.

The worst part of my confinement was the weather. It had to be beautiful—no rain, no cloudy days, no cold spells. The perfect conditions for running and playing. I fantasized riding my bike at top speed over hill after hill with the wind pushing against my face. Then I would feel a pang from my leg and crash down to earth and reality.



The highlight of my day became the visit from my Spanish teacher, who went over my lessons and corrected my mistakes. It was not a highlight, simply a distraction. My mother was busy all day, my siblings were away at school (having a wonderful time, I suspected) and I was stuck right here. He turned out to be not so bad after all. With so few other distractions, I learned a few things from the textbooks. My grades improved in every class except Spanish. I never learned that language. School ended for the year. I couldn't attend the graduation, but I recovered some of my freedom until my mother caught me riding my bike wearing my cast. She made me sell the thing before I

broke the leg again. I reentered purgatory for the duration, hoping some day to run again, healed and free. ♦

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ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS

Judy McMillie

I dearly loved teaching one-room schools. A one-room schoolteacher has so much freedom to teach. The second-graders get the same lessons as the fifth-graders, if they pay attention. That's accelerated learning at its best.

My schoolrooms always had plenty of group activities. For instance, we had art on Friday afternoons. Our art projects decorated our classroom and our entryway. These homemade pictures and craft projects from each week's lesson created a very festive atmosphere, one the students looked forward to all week and one that each child could be proud of and could share with his or her parents. Selected ones were displayed proudly at the county fair each year.

One Friday, I took my popcorn popper to school, and we spent the entire day using popcorn as a learning tool. For Social Studies that day, we studied all the states that grow popcorn, the harvesting process, the types of popcorn, etc. For Science that day, we studied the elements that make the kernels swell up and pop, and the nutrition that each bite brings. And for Math that day, we studied the different weights and measures of several varieties of popcorn, field yields, etc. During the afternoon, we popped the corn and used it as our art project. The fluffy kernels became clouds in a crayon picture, bunnies in a watercolor picture, snow in a pen-and-ink drawing, and so forth. What fun that was, and

the students ate all the popcorn they could hold!

One-room schoolhouses usually had a propane or kerosene heater upon which we put our lunches to keep them warm until noontime. We teachers rarely had to do our own housekeeping. The same goes for the schoolyard. Parents delivered their children in the mornings, then retrieved them in the mid-afternoons. Sometimes there was a bit of carpooling going on, but seldom. If the road to the schoolhouse got muddy or treacherous to drive, parents would offer me a ride to the school. One spring morning in my memory, the final three miles of Sandhills trail road was alive with Sandhills cranes. It fascinated me. I crawled



Veteran's Day in our school yard using musical instruments from home. When none were available, we made our own. We made mosaic pictures out of tiny Chiklets gum to celebrate Easter and lavishly decorated Christmas stockings out of burlap.

One of the best investments I made one October was to buy a bushel of nice red apples from the apple truck at the sale barn. They smelled so good and were so appealing, a wonderful addition to an otherwise severe classroom. The first thing we did was lay the apples out on the floor and count them, first by twos, then by fives and finally by tens. It was a great lesson for even the younger children.

As Halloween approached, we incorporated more and more projects with the bushel of apples projects like slicing one open, looking at the seeds inside and the core, studying the varieties available and the properties of each variety (science activities). We looked at places on the map where apples grow well, places like Japan (Social Studies) and had spelling contests where the winner received an apple. We read about Johnny Appleseed and we wrote stories about kids who dream about apples (Language Arts).

Our Halloween party came on the last Friday before October 31, and everyone wore a costume. We drew pictures of ourselves in our outfits. The students' mothers brought treats for our party, which took up the last two hours of the day. We played games and bobbed for apples. We had a ton of fun in those weeks leading up to Halloween. The following week, each of us ate an apple a day until they were gone and studied the nourishment that made our bodies healthy (Science).

That year I carved two pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns for decoration. The children showed little interest in them until they got moldy inside. The older students studied the pattern of the mold and attempted to identify what kind it was. Then the pumpkin faces caved in and the younger students became interested. We talked about it as a science project, not magic. I finally threw the whole stinky mess in the garbage barrel outside.

My days as a schoolteacher in Nebraska's historic one-room schoolhouses are long past, but the memories remain vivid and pure. My kids, as I called my students then and recall them today, are mostly successful civic-minded adults. I hope I had a small part in shaping those kids' good lives. ♦

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along and the cranes ambled out of the way of my car. They stood tall enough and were close enough to my car that they peeked in the windows as I drove by! I'll never forget that unique experience.

We began our morning ritual by raising the American flag on the flagpole. Each student learned how to fold and unfold the flag each day and raise it up the pole. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang "God Bless America." Those ideas seem a little foreign today—it doesn't happen like that anymore.

A bookmobile visited the rural schools every few weeks. They came from the county libraries and it was no doubt the highlight of our school year. We needed those books to broaden our students' education. Every holiday got planned weeks ahead and celebrated in grand style. We had a parade to mark

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B. B. Bunting

THE POOR FARMER

Ethel arrived on her Uncle Dick's farm late in the day. Auntie Betz handed her down, and she looked in amazement at the huge clapboard house, the enormous barns and buildings, and the endless open space.

"Get inside with you," said Auntie. "There's a meal to get ready and I daresay you're old enough to help with it."

Ethel had come from the city and the home of her other aunt, Carrie. Most of her life she'd been shuttled between Carrie's tiny place and another relative, Rodge. They had shared her since her parents had died, which had happened before Ethel could remember.

Now six years old and having gone to school during her stay with Aunt Carrie, the time had come for some other relatives to share the burden of this skinny, undersized wench. At least Dick and Betz could feed her up. They might even get her some clothes.

"Eat up, then," urged Aunt Betz. "My, you surely eat like a mouse."

The offerings of baked ham with fresh-cooked vegetables had been more than enough for the skinny child. Auntie urged her to pack away an enormous slice of deep-dish fruit pie dredged with thick cream. It was more than she could have imagined.

The following morning, after a thick wedge of fried bacon with eggs and homemade bread, they put her to work. All day her aunt found jobs for her, more than any servant had to do in the city. She fell into bed exhausted after supper.

She quickly learned the routine. It was a mixture of hard work and simple pleasures. She rarely left the house, so she wondered how far the farm extended. If she slaved hard enough during the summer holiday, perhaps her aunt might keep her. She'd hated the first year of school in town. The other kids had laughed at her, teased her about her only dress and sockless feet. They had bullied and hit her. Friendless, she ran back to her Aunt Carrie, who provided soup and water for supper. Hungry and tired, she'd faced the following days.

Now hard work seemed no problem, considering the wonderful food and lack of enmity. "Auntie, could I look around the farm, please?" she asked the week before school started again.

"Why sure," answered her aunt. "Just be back to help with the cheese making."

Ethel scampered off, eager to be free. She ran, skipped and idled to the brow of the hill marking the farm's perimeter. She wandered past a stand of oaks on the neighbor's property. From behind her, a voice called, "Hey. Are you the Duckham's new kid?" and she turned in surprise to see a boy her own age peering from the thicket.

"Look out for the snake!" he yelled, and she spun round to find it. He laughed. "The only snake here is this one," he said, and pulled a thick bull snake from his pocket and tossed it at her feet. "I'm George. Who are you?"

"Ethel. I'm staying here for the summer." She smiled, thinking how nice it was for someone to greet her without scoffing.

"Where'd you get that sun hat?" he went on.



But they didn't seem inclined to explain why Ethel shouldn't mix with them. Ethel didn't see George again before the semester began. She had pleaded in vain to be allowed to stay on the farm.

"How much time d'you think we've got to look after you?" Betz had said. "But if you're still livin' with yer family in the city next year, we'll take you in agin," and with that half-promise, she'd survived the year.

Next summer arrived and Aunt Betz collected her niece. They followed that routine for years until Ethel left school at twelve. She took a sewing job in the city. Time passed and, to her surprise, George arrived one Friday at the end of her workday. "Hey," he joked, "are you making straw hats?"

They renewed the friendship from its slender thread of long ago. George was working as a salesman, since they'd lost his grandpa's farm. They dated for a while, usually not spending money, and rarely eating out.

"I'm selling my own ideas," he told her. "Grandpa had made a hay-lift that works like this. I think it's wonderful and cheap to run. I remember tossing hay bales up to the stack, and how tired I was. This idea lets electricity do it just by pushing a button."

He showed her a metal pipe big enough for a bale to slide into. A steel plate fit into the pipe, with a rubber stop at its top end. Plugging it into an electric outlet, the hay bale shot out of the top of the pipe. "You can make it shoot as far as you like," George told her. "Grandpa said it could even send a rocket to the moon."

"Well, as long as you don't want me to go on the rocket, go ahead," laughed Ethel.

"To be truthful, I would like you to go on a moon with me," he retorted, and more seriously, "at least, a honeymoon."

The wedding was a quiet affair. Neither the bride nor the groom had many relatives, and money was worse than scarce. As years went by, George produced many inventions. Almost none of them ever made money, and Ethel provided much of the family income from straw hats. The one invention George succeeded with was a machine to add hatbands to straw hats. Yet a happier family it would be hard to find. ♦

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"I made it," she responded. "Aunt Betz showed me how. She made my new dress, too."

"I could make a nicer sunbonnet than that. Want me to show you how?" They spent the rest of the afternoon making straw garments, straw and hay animals, and figures.

"Gee, you're clever," she said.

"You'd better get back home," he told her, "or you'll probably get a whupping."

Her aunt got angry upon her return, but not because she was late.

"It's not right fer you to mix with the sort he is," she warned. "Him and his family'll likely be gone by next time you come."

Uncle Dick chimed in, "They're a worthless set, him and his grandpa. Late with their plantin' and harvestin' and always muckin' about with some stupid invention or other."

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THE WEST OF YESTER-YEAR

Rachel Kovaciny

Lulu Mae Sadler Craig

Has an Oscar-winning movie director ever filmed your birthday party and turned it into a documentary? When Lulu Mae Sadler Craig turned 102, Harry Belafonte Enterprises sent Richard Kaplan to film her party and interview her and her family. The resulting documentary, *Happy Birthday Mrs. Craig*, has been a staple of classes on American women's history, African-American history, and Western Expansion history ever since.

Lulu Mae, often called Lula, was born in 1868, only three years after the Civil War ended. Her parents were former slaves living in Missouri; her father fought for his freedom with General Sherman's forces. When Lulu Mae was four years old, her family moved west in search of better land and freer living conditions. They were among the earliest groups of former slaves to move to Kansas.

In 1878, when Lulu Mae was ten, the Sadler family moved to the new all-black town of Nicodemus, KS, which formed as part of the widespread "Exoduster Migration" that involved thousands of black pioneers. At first, you couldn't really tell Nicodemus existed because the settlers all built dugouts to live in, rather than building houses above the ground. All you could see were the stovepipes sticking up out of the prairie. Dugouts were easier to build on the open prairie, where trees for lumber were rare. They provided excellent shelter from the snow and bitter cold, but they were by nature hard to keep clean. Don't imagine a hobbit hole, imagine a root cellar with a few boards and poles here and there to stabilize the roof, and a single cast-iron stove to heat the dugout and cook on.

Thanks to their determination and ingenuity, plus contributions of food from local American Indians, the residents of Nicodemus survived the winter and started farms in the spring. Many of these pioneers had no plows, so they broke the land with hoes and shovels when necessary. This was a hardscrabble life indeed, but they persevered. By 1880, there were over four hundred people living in and around Nicodemus. They built houses above the ground, along with stores and churches. Much of what we know about the history of this community comes from Lulu Mae's memoir, *A History of Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas*.

At fifteen, Lulu Mae began attending one of the first schools in Kansas. The famous scientist George Washington Carver was among her classmates and became her lifelong friend. Lulu Mae graduated from the State Teachers College in Emporia, KS, and returned to Nicodemus to teach grades one through eight there. Like most frontier schoolteachers, she had few books, slates, or other supplies, but she educated class after class of children there.

Lulu Mae Sadler married Sanford Craig in 1886, and they farmed near Nicodemus for nearly thirty years. They had nine children, seven of whom lived to adulthood. Their longest-surviving child Merido passed away not so long ago, in 2007. Besides raising their children and helping on the farm, Lulu Mae



was active in community life. She even served on the Nicodemus Election Board in 1914, which was a rare accomplishment for any American woman at that time.

Unfortunately, the railroads never built a line that came close to Nicodemus, and the town slowly faded away. In 1915, Lulu Mae and Sanford Craig left. They moved to Colorado and filed a homestead claim in an area called "The Dry" near Manzanola. Once again, there was little lumber available for building a house, so they initially lived in a dugout.

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While Sanford farmed, Lulu Mae taught at the one-room Prairie Valley School from 1916 until it closed in 1933. Many of her students graduated from local high schools, which pleased her tremendously. Lulu Mae started a literary society and a Sunday school in Manzanola, and she kept in touch with George Washington Craig, who sent her advice on what crops to grow in such arid land, as well as

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information on "dry-land farming" methods. She shared these with others in the Manzanola area, helping the community thrive.

Sanford Craig died in 1941, but Lulu Mae continued to live on and work her farm with help from her children. In 1970, their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren gathered at Lulu Mae's Colorado home to celebrate her 102nd birthday. Richard Kaplan and his film team captured the event on film, and took that opportunity to preserve the reminiscences of Lulu Mae and her family and friends. She passed away two years later, at 104. Her book and the documentary about her life continue to be important windows into the history of the American West for all of us. ♦

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Stay Away from the Well!

Berene H. Ingram

“Don’t get too close! Stay back!” Mom cautioned me, and my older brother and sister, after we dragged the heavy cement lid off the porch well opening. The cement cover stood above the back porch surface of the farmhouse back porch. We leaned over the edge and saw circular well walls lined in sealed brick, and dark water a long way down below the opening. “Move away, move away! You’re too close.”

Several times that morning, the slender gray metal tube bucket, taller than my four feet, slipped into the water attached to a long rope. A second rope pulled the bucket closed, and Mom lifted it out of the well. She released the stopper, and the water emptied into the ten-gallon milk cans Dad placed beside the back door before he went to work. We repeated the steps until both cans were full. We used it to drink, mop floors, wash hands and dishes, clean, flush the toilet, and cook. The well water came out clear, cold, and tasted fresh, unlike city water, which tasted salty or chlorine-like.

After I almost fell into the porch-well, it terrified Mom to draw water from it. That day, Mom opened the well, and I ran up the steps from the yard onto the back porch. “No-o-o-o!” A frightened, tormented scream ripped miles through the air toward me. Breathless at the back door, I looked at Mom’s distorted face, and my heart hammered. How did I get in trouble? The porch-well scared me after Mom explained, “Your left foot landed a fraction of an inch beside the well opening. You could’ve fallen sideways, hit your head and knocked yourself out, and you’d be unconscious in the water.”

If I’d fallen in, how could Mom get me out of the well? If she lowered the long water bucket, could I have held onto it long enough for her to pull me out of the well? We had no tall ladder and no telephone. The nearest neighbor, if home, lived two miles away. Dying didn’t relate to me. Mom never took the lid off the porch-well again.

My near-fall into the well scared Mom and Dad more than me. In bed that night, I heard urgent, subdued, and forceful murmurs downstairs, between Dad’s deep rumble and Mom’s higher pitch. Two clear sentences penetrated the bedroom floor, which served as the living room ceiling. “I won’t open that well again. You’re a plumber!”

At least once a week, unless we washed clothes, we filled six 10-gallon milk cans in the back of the truck with city water at the one gas station in the nearby town. On the day we washed, we filled the cans twice. Dad received permission from the owner for us to access the water. Dad did a year’s worth of work on our water system in several weeks. He hired a company to dig a deep well in alignment with the porch-well and installed the pump on the wellhead. He built the pump house around the well with a cement floor, installed cold and hot water storage tanks that stood as tall as the pump house inside, and attached the electric wires to run the pump. The next step included plumbing the house with faucets in the kitchen, tub, sink. He plumbed the cattle tubs and the barn sink. The cows didn’t have to rely on the muddy creek for water. Best of all, we had a flushing toilet upstairs inside the farmhouse. The outdoor toilet near the barn evoked scary scenes of me falling into a bottomless and foul-smelling dark pit. The pump air horn screamed when we turned on the faucets, filled the bathtub, flushed the toilet, or cooked our meals. The scream resulted when the pump pulled water up from the well to keep the pressure and priming in place.

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At least once per year, no water came through the faucets unless the pipes froze. The pump didn’t scream. Dad knew how to repair everything. The foot at the bottom of each well pipe needed servicing. We waited for the temperature to rise for the pipes to unfreeze in the winter.

Dad anticipated these weekend jobs, and we kids helped. He disconnected the electrical wiring from the pump and unscrewed it from the well head. Dad lifted the heavy pump and laid it in our red wagon. As each foot of the black pipes attached to the pump were lifted out of the well, we pulled the wagon away

from the pump house until the entire 200 feet laid across the lawn. Dad rested a few times during the hour as he pulled the pump-pipes out of the well. He examined the foot of each of the black pipes. Sometimes, stones got sucked up and damaged the foot filters, or they broke, and needed to be replaced. The pulling and repairing process took all day, sometimes. Dad drove to the hardware store for the parts, and if not in stock, drove an hour to another town to purchase the parts. The well gave water every year and season. The pump screech added another level of sound that blended with the farm equipment, the family, and the steady parade of heavy vehicles that pounded the county road in front of the house. Faucet water became an invisible expectation, and we didn’t think about the porch well. ♦

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Charles Oz Collins

The Hog Father

There is no question in my mind but that Dad liked hogs and enjoyed having some on the farm. We always seemed to have a bunch of sows, and a fence jumping or gate-lifting boar. I enjoyed the litters of little pigs best. I spent a good deal of time watching their antics. A favorite strategy was to throw just a tasty morsel of something (a chunk of cantaloupe or watermelon rind) into a pen of eight or ten pigs about a month old. The hog that grabbed the prize first seldom got to enjoy it but became the object of squealing pursuit by all his or her siblings.

One afternoon I spent five minutes watching half a dozen tiny pigs attempting to carry off a sugar beet top I threw into their pen. First one, then another, latched onto the beet top stem and tried to drag the treasure away. Then a brother or sister would seize a different stem and a tug of war ensued. At one point, there were five diminutive porkers, each attempting to haul the beet top in a different direction. None was old enough to eat the leaf, stem, or sugary beet crown: they were just being pigs.

They say there is no fight like a family fight. It's certainly true of young swine. One afternoon, I became the sole spectator of a titanic struggle. Two piglets, a week old, were locked in mortal combat. The cause of strife was not apparent to me. One moment all was familial bliss and the next moment these two were head-slugging and tusking each other in the classic porcine manner. Evenly matched, the tiny white gladiators raised a considerable dust in the middle of the arena. At one point exhaustion took over, and I watched the sworn enemies lean heavily upon one another, lest one or both fall. Their savage mouths were wide open and their sides heaved, each fully committed to a soon resumption of this fight to the death.

I left my ringside seat when it appeared there was imminent danger of each combatant failing asleep where they stood. Other chores demanded attention and when I returned to check on the progress of the battle, I discovered one mighty warrior unmoving but for the gentle rise and fall of her rib cage. It seemed unlikely

she would die of her wounds, since there was not a mark on her. Her attacker, who had retreated to rest himself against the sizeable stump of a dead sunflower, opted instead to scratch his tiny rear on the rough stem and now leaned back heavily on this support with his lethal head drooping toward the ground and slumber.

Baby pigs are appealing creatures, at once hilarious, pathetic, brave, and ornery. But as they grow into hogs, many of their winning ways disappear. Once they are of a size needing to be chased, caught, sorted, held, and loaded, they become hogs. But none of this occurred to my young mind when Dad asked me if I wanted to raise a litter by hand.

One sow had died shortly after giving birth to a litter of five. Since sows do not adopt strange babies, the small litter needed to be hand-fed with a bottle. I agreed to take on the job. Any pigs I salvaged would be mine. I little appreciated what that would come to mean.

Dad checked with the local vet who said commercial milk-replacer for hogs was available but that some folks bottle-fed baby pigs with a mixture of cow's milk and Karo syrup. We had milk cows and Karo in Mom's cupboard. I made the obvious choice, but that was the last "easy" part of this rescue mission.

The tiny orphans huddled in the middle of the birth nest. I had to try my best to get warm nourishment down their little throats. Though I worried about the "right" mix of milk and Karo, and the temperature of the formula which I tested on my wrist as instructed by Mom, my abiding fear was the babies were too weak to eat and might die of starvation. There couldn't



be much reserve of strength in such wrinkled little bodies. The good part was each pig was an easy handful so I could lift them up and hold them at an angle that made sticking the baby bottle nipple in their mouths convenient.

My hope and prayer was that not having eaten for several hours, the baby pigs would immediately take to the bottle. Wrong. I touched the nipple to the small, soft pink nose, thinking this might trigger an instinct. It didn't. Cold rubber didn't feel like warm udder. I pried the mouth open and pushed in the nipple. A slight shaking of the head protested the foreign intrusion. I waited, hoping for spontaneous sucking. None occurred. Cradling the piglet under my left arm, I reached up and wrapped my fingers around the muzzle and began a gentle and rhythmic squeezing. All I got at first was the discouraging sight of a trickle of milk at one corner of the miniature mouth. I felt no swallowing, no response of any kind. Even the slight head shaking had stopped. What if some of the milk got into those new lungs?

For an eternity, I stood in that hog shed cuddling that piglet. I could think of no option to what I was doing, no "better" way to nurse this young orphan. Then I felt a gentle movement of the head and what I hoped was swallowing, not drowning. More squeezes of the muzzle and this pig swallowed again. Then it happened! Instinct kicked in. The head raised slightly and as I loosed my grip on the snout, the jaws moved. It wasn't a lot, but this hog wanna-be was responding to the warmth of the liquid in the strange udder.

I took the piglet in my hand and lowered it to the floor of the pen while keeping the nipple in place. I hoped this little fellow would feel natural standing to eat, four feet firmly planted.

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Many times I had watched newborn pigs attack the mother, grabbing, rooting, bracing their feet and pulling with all their might. This miniature roter was far from that stage. I supported him with one hand under his stomach, his feet touching the floor, and the nipple between his jaws. A few weak and trembly sucks was all he managed before stopping.

I reasoned it was enough to warm him up and give some needed strength. I didn't want to over-feed him and cause the scours. Besides, there were several others that needed their batteries charged.

It was amazing how feeding time progressed from a delicate operation filled with concern and tenderness to a fight for survival. For a few days, feeding still required me to hold the piglets, but soon they caught on to my routine and got strong enough to cause me problems. Several times a day, I approached the pen armed with the bottle. By now, the orphans could stand on their own feet to nurse.

First there was the problem of four mouths and one nipple. The pig that grabbed it first got assaulted by the rest. The others would try to root the sucker's mouth away from the coveted nipple. An alternative involved sticking one's snout under the diner's belly and heaving, hoping to upset him or her. The most effective technique was to crawl atop the head of the sibling attached to the nipple and let your full body weight detach this glutton from his lunch, hopefully attaching yourself at the same time. Incessant, high-pitched squealing accompanied these tactics.

To avoid this, I would hoist up a desperate young swine and let it have a go at the bottle. In a matter of minutes, I gave them all they

needed, though less than they desired. The piglets at my feet squealed, rooted at my boots and pant legs, and tromped back and forth, on me and on each other. It didn't take long before they tried climbing my legs and standing there in full voice, deploring the unfairness of my attempted motherhood. Being pigs, they then started biting my pant legs and occasionally the hide beneath.

The trouble was, they all looked alike and I couldn't tell them apart once I put one or two of them down. I don't believe I neglected any of them or double fed others. Judging by their high-pitched protests, they held a different view of the situation.

To reduce the degree of mauling, I tried standing outside the pen, reaching over and snagging each pig in turn. They wiggled and squealed as I lifted them, never able to understand why it took me so long to get that nipple in their mouths. Wiggling and squealing increased when I tried to lower them back into the pen. They were growing day by day in weight, strength, and in decibel level. It would have been possible to build another pen, to stand between them, and to keep filled pigs sorted out from empty pigs. Or I could have made four crates and solved the "fairness" problem and damage to my lower quarters, but when pigs start causing you a lot of extra work, they are well on their way to becoming hogs. I wasn't ready for that yet.

Over the years, hundreds of hogs survived on our farm by learning to eat and drink on their own. They seemed to have a knack for it. It was time for the orphans to learn a lesson.

Pigs have a talent for overturning water and feed troughs, so all of ours were well-braced and heavy. I selected a broad pan with low sides. After all, the pigs in my herd were short, and I wanted them to see that their cherished milk was right there in front of them. The broad pan would give them all ample room to eat at once. Great! No lifting, no waiting, no sorting issues, no squealing. Just sink their little snouts into the warm mixture and suck.

As I approached the pen, they made no distinction between a bottle and a pan. They stood on their hind legs, looked upward, and did their darndest to deafen me. I did some fancy sidestepping, trying to find an empty piece of ground where I could set the pan. Everywhere I moved, four upturned heads moved with me. I tried to hold the pan level while scooting small starving hogs out of the way with my feet. It was like trying to kick a hole in water. Finally, I faked left, moved right, spilled half the milk, and shoved the pan onto the floor of the pen. They all stood in it while gazing beseechingly up into my face. I learned it is easier to train a hog than to untrain it.

I discarded the pan in favor of a worn out tire cut along the middle of the tread, which created two short round shallow troughs low enough the pigs could easily reach their snouts into the bottom. If they desired, and



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they soon did, they could scramble across the tire and eat from the other side, where the milk is sweeter and more abundant. Even half a tire was too heavy for these young porkers to upset.

I threw the tire into the pen first. The pigs ignored it, unable to take their eyes off me. I climbed in, holding a small bucket of milk aloft. Pigs surrounded me; we moved across the pen as one. It might be difficult to get the milk into the tire without spilling it and before the biting began. Hard as it is to make a pig look down, it is no easier to pour milk around or between them. Part of it got to the tire.

I grabbed a pig and tried to bend its head downward so it could see the milk and stick its nose in it, and found out the harder you push down on a pig's snout, the harder they push upward, even a little one. An hour later, after trying everything I could think of, Dad came to my rescue. "Son," he said. "Those are hogs. Put the milk in and leave. They'll figure it out pretty quick."

So I left. After what seemed like a long time, I stuck my head back in the shed and found some of the milk gone and considerable dirt kicked into it. After a week, the pigs caught on. Their heads and voices still came up when I entered, but as soon as I got the milk in the tire (a challenge all its own), they forgot about me. They all tried their hardest to intercept the milk on its way to the trough and to catch it in mid-air. I soon learned to fill half a tire with half the milk, then the other half while they were slurping in the first tire.

Eventually, my "pigs" forgot me as they learned to be "hogs." But they taught me many lessons, as did every other farm animal I raised. I just wish I could forget what the chickens taught me! ♦

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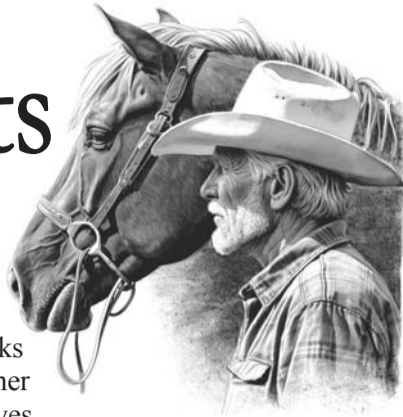
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Prairie Parson

Fleeting Moments



The good Lord blessed me with the best kind of a woman for a wife. She's patient and kind and has her own walk with Him that comes first. Every evenin', she takes her house cat out for a walk around our big yard fence on the ranch. I told her that cat will be fine, she could let it out and sit on the porch and it would come back for dinner and she could take it inside, but she gave me one of her patient little smiles and said, 'No, the walkin' is when I do my prayin'.'

The other evenin' was so pleasant, I sat on the porch and watched her do her walkin'. The cat took a fancy to a vole hole near the fence, and crouched there in the long grass for about half an hour, waitin'. My wife sat down on an old stump a few feet away and also waited. She didn't have her phone or any distractions, she just sat there prayin' and thinkin' and enjoyin' being with the cat, who made her laugh after a while with its antics. She sunned her face, and the wind blew her hair, and enjoyed the quiet.

My wife is one of those rare souls who ain't addicted to her phone. She uses it to text her grandchildren, and that's about it. Sometimes she goes off and I can't find her, cuz the phone is laying on the kitchen table. That forces me to go out and holler, to find her in her veggie patch or the barn. But I notice she don't miss much. She doesn't take photos of sunsets, she sits and

enjoys 'em. When she talks to you or anybody else, she looks at you with her big brown eyes and listens and asks thoughtful questions. Kids love her, because no matter what she's doin', if they barge into her presence, she'll put it aside to talk to or hear them. They'll grow up havin' felt heard and important.

I didn't realize how rare a treasure my wife gave me until I took her to an appointment the other day. She went into the back room and I sat in the waiting room for a bit. I had nothin' to do but people watch and look through a few magazines, and after a while, a family came inside. A woman about my wife's age had a little boy by the hand, as a younger woman (his mother, I reckon) went into the back room. Grandma held the toddler in one hand, and scrolled on her phone with the other. That little boy is gonna grow up to be a politician, because he tried everything he could think of to get her attention, and finally started going after the phone—the object of his coveted grandma's eye. She idly bounced him on one knee, and pushed the baby's hand away, her eyes glued to her "feed."

It made me sad, but not as sad as my wife when she came to sit with me for a few minutes while waiting for her bill and noticed it. She went out to the truck shakin' her head and said, "They're only that age for a short time, and Grandma is missin' it."

She taught me a lesson that day. I turned off my cell phone, stuck it in my pocket, and drove home with her, with the windows rolled down so's her hair could blow in the breeze, the radio off, and our dog happy in the back of the truck. We talked, and smelled the crisp autumn air, and admired the mountains, and enjoyed each other.

Try not to miss the little moments, because they're often the most precious. In twenty years, what you saw on your "scroll feed" this week won't matter; but you will treasure all of the memories you made with your loved ones, the two and the four-legged kind. Happy October. ♦

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Juanita Preston Sparks



A Woman of Courage

My mother was a woman of courage.

Oh, I'm sure she felt scared many, many times, but she never showed it. Her courage was most clear during the years of the Great Depression. My father was an attorney, and fees for attorneys in those bleak days were few and far between. If someone needed a lawyer, he didn't have money to pay. Sometimes fees got paid with a sack of potatoes or a live chicken.

My mother's courage showed itself in her ability to feed and clothe the five of us when few resources were available. No matter how scarce the fare, we always ate at the dining room table, which she covered with a white tablecloth. We used cloth napkins. It took courage to figure out how to make the food stretch, and also to wash and iron a white tablecloth and napkins. Until the mid 1940s, we didn't have a washing machine.

At one time, we lived on the outskirts of town and Mother had to carry water from the well in the backyard and heat it on a coal stove in the kitchen to do the laundry. She ironed the tablecloths and white cloth napkins with an old-fashioned iron, which she heated on the coal stove.

She made all our clothes, even my father's shirts. Mother had an old treadle sewing machine she peddled way over its 100,000-mile warranty. She called it a creative outlet for her, but I'm sure sheer necessity played a part in that.

My mother loved pretty things, but I wonder how many years it was between a new coat, dress, or shoes. I'm certain she hurt inside, but her courage always showed through.

The ink was scarcely dry on her marriage certificate before her young husband left for France to fight in World War I. One son served in the Army in World War II, and two grandsons served in Vietnam. During those years, she received strength and courage through prayer, as have mothers from the beginning of time.

My mother lived until I was seventy-five. She accomplished many things during her lifetime and mine, but I will always remember her for her courage to hold her head high and keep her ideals through hard times and adversity. ♦

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Front Porch Memories

Diane Parker

In June 2001, I took my fifteen-year-old granddaughter Tave' to Valentine, Nebraska to see the old house I lived in that held so many wonderful childhood memories. We moved to the old two-story house on Hall Street in my twelfth year. Formerly, it served as a funeral home which didn't bother me, but Mom admitted years later she hated going to the basement alone to stoke the coal furnace. When I ventured down to the basement with her, I could empathize; the ugly, huge monster furnace sitting in the middle of the floor with all its scary metal tentacles crawling to the heat ducts in the floors above was rather intimidating!

The front of the house faced west toward the sunset. A wooden porch cloaked the entire front, reminding me of an old lady with her best Sunday--going-to--church-hat on. I can remember all the warm summer evenings and Sunday afternoons when Mom and Dad sat quietly out on the porch. Mom would usually crochet, her wooden rocking chair creaking each time she rocked back and forth. A handy fly swatter sat on the floor beside her rocker with a glass of freshly made lemonade or a cup of hot coffee on a small wooden table between her and Dad. He listened to the radio through the open front living room window. The white lace curtains in the living room windows blew gently in and out in the breeze.

The white house had a green roof. On the north stood a detached garage. As I wandered around as an adult, I saw the owners had torn down the garage and grass and bushes overflowed the driveway. The Spirea hedges in the front yard were gone. Dad kept them neatly trimmed because Mom liked to see out onto the street.

When we lived there, our vegetable garden dominated our huge backyard. Mom's garden may have been the most unique garden in town, perhaps in the entire state. Colorful artifacts of wood and rocks she hauled back from our many vacation trips to the Black Hills lined it. So one of us could complain we couldn't find a certain vegetable, or proclaim innocence of hoeing out anything but weeds, Mom made little wooden crosses at the end of each row identifying what grew there. She carefully painted each one a certain color and printed what was in each row with different colors... light green for peas, dark for green beans, red for the strawberries, etc.

There was now nothing left of the garden. It saddened me to see junk and trash dumped in piles in the backyard. A couple of old rusty

vehicles sat abandoned and bleached lumber lay in haphazard piles. Trees no more than sprigs when Mom lovingly planted them were now overgrown. Broken lower branches hung from the trunk, looking like broken arms. Upper branches were dying.

The new owners had added a room to the back. I wondered if anything had changed inside. I remember a sizable foyer when entering the front door. The wooden stairway with its ornate banister lay to the left and led to the rooms upstairs. I took the room upstairs on the front of the house as my bedroom. An enormous cottonwood tree stood outside the south window that shaded the room in the afternoon. My double bed had a soft blue chenille bedspread. We repainted the old woodwork with fresh white paint and Mom made soft blue dotted Swiss tieback curtains for the windows. I filled my bed with my many friends. My collection of stuffed animals sat in special places. Their smiling faces and friendly, soft, beaded eyes kept me company.

When we moved in, the first thing Mom and Dad did was strip all the oak floors on the main floor. Mom kept these floors shiny with wax. It was heck staying on your feet where the throw rugs lay! I once saw Dad ski on his bottom into the kitchen. After that, I stepped with care. Mom could never invent something to put underneath the rugs to prevent skating on them. My dog Cindy more than once got her paws caught up in a rug. Fearful of being left behind, she dragged it along until one of us took pity on her predicament and helped get her free. She showed her gratitude by trying to lick our faces with her warm, wet tongue!

Mom claimed the old sitting parlor off the dining room for her workroom. On days she was in a good mood, the door remained open. We heard the old treadle sewing machine whirring. I listened to her hum along with a favorite song on the radio or when she put a Glenn Miller 78 record on the player. When she closed the door with the "Gone Fishing"



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sign hung up, it meant knock before entering. The closed door showed she wanted to be left alone. Dad and I learned to respect that sign!

Mom decorated her workroom with dotted Swiss yellow tiebacks and colors of lavenders and purples. Her rag rugs added color on the oak wood floor. The old woodwork glowed with pastel yellow. She loved those three colors and used them in their bedroom. I asked Dad one time how he slept in so much yellow, lavender, and purple and he told me he could sleep anywhere with Mom beside him.

Today's homemaker would think they had died and gone to heaven if they had Mom's kitchen. I have never seen another one with so many cupboards and windows. Sunlight streamed into the cheery room. Curtains of white with red cherries adorned the windows and backdoor. The cupboards were white and Mom removed their doors. Dishes and such sat on the shelves giving it an at-home look. Splashes of bright tomato red knickknacks sat on the countertops. Mom had a dozen Rooster and Hen salt and pepper shakers. A terrycloth toaster cover blended with the curtains. Every thing in the kitchen went together and had a specific purpose. In those days, kitchen appliances were white. The secondhand gas range possessed two ovens and a top broiler. Winter baking was a pleasant welcome to help heat the kitchen ... but not in the summer!

On another wall stood the old Frigidaire refrigerator with its whirring motor on top. That frig kept milk the coldest of any I ever drank! The kitchen sink, with its hot and cold taps, could have served as a second bathtub. It was a deep ocean of white porcelain with an attached drain on one side.

Mom had an old table and four chairs she refurbished. The oblong table and chairs matched in white paint. She tied cushions of bright tomato red patterned with white and black ladybugs to the seats of the chairs. Dad had a hard time sitting in one when he first saw them. Other than that, everyone who came to our house commented on how cute they were!

Taking a last look at the old family home, I turned away and headed down the street with my granddaughter. I didn't look back. It made me sad to see the house in its present condition. The thought of wanting to see the inside had passed quickly. I decided I was better off not to. I didn't want to spoil my wonderful childhood memories. They would forever live in that house. ♦

Unforgettable

Pauline Artery

It's the time of year when businesses and agencies are soliciting names of teachers who have made a difference, those who are, or have been, unforgettable to the students they teach. Each of us can recall at least one teacher who fits that description. One night last week, when I made a dash through the doors of our local Wal-Mart, a sign asking shoppers to submit the name of their favorite teacher caught my eye.

As I walked the path to learning, there were many guides along the way. Some good, some not-so-good, and a few who changed me forever because they opened my mind. The sign got me thinking, but not just about the teachers who have influenced me. It made me think about the students who passed through my classroom.

During his/her teaching career, every teacher meets more than a few unforgettable kids. Some are kind and creative; others are noisy and obnoxious; some tug at our heartstrings while trying our patience, and some defy description. Most teach us more than we could ever learn from books. When I think back over my career, one girl comes to mind.

She wore dirty clothes; it was hard to see through the layers of grime on her skin to tell whether she had a fair complexion to match her dark blonde hair. For most people, dish-water blonde is simply an adjective, but with her it was true, and the water had washed many, many dishes. She was likable enough. Most mornings she came in with a smile, was a willing worker, and I never knew her to cause a disturbance. That's why telling her she smelled bad was the hardest thing I have ever

had to do.

It was not the first time I had noticed an unpleasant smell in her vicinity, but that morning it was the eye-watering, gag reflex kind of smell. It was just before Christmas break, and we were getting ready to play a communication game in class. A slow-moving circle of students filed by me, each one pausing long enough for me to pin a label onto the back of a shirt. I'm not sure that I really noted a gap between her and the next student, but when she came within my breathing area, it took everything I had not to gag.

The object of the game was for students to find out what was written on their label by what others said and how they were treated. She was one of the last to sit down

because no one could stand to get close enough to say more than a few words to her. As soon as they were reasonably sure of their label, they were to sit down in a prearranged circle of chairs. I wound up sitting directly to the right of her; there were two empty chairs on her other side.

I left it that way because I just didn't have the heart to insist that students sit close to her. I held my breath as much as possible and prayed for class to end. As she was about to leave the room, I gently called her by name and asked her to wait for just a moment. I needed to talk to her. She was a head taller than me, so when she

turned, she looked down expectantly, a question in her blue eyes. Again calling her by name, I stammered, "This is the hardest thing I've ever had to say to anyone, but do you think you could go to the locker room and take a shower because," I felt tears stinging my eyelids and there was a definite crack in my voice, "because I don't want to hurt your feelings, but you really smell bad."

She got angry. Not that I blame her, but her reaction was not what I expected. "I took a shower this morning," she said defiantly.

"Then maybe it's your clothes. Do you, by any chance, have to sleep with a little brother or sister who wets the bed?"

"No, nobody wets the bed. I don't know what you think you smell, but it's not me!" Even with her protests, I think it was a relief to have someone confront her, but she didn't



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During that time, our girl's P.E. teacher, the counselor, the home ec teacher, and I put together a plan of action and a care package for her. We included shampoo, deodorant, soap, toothpaste, a toothbrush, the stuff that most of us take for granted. We visited her home and realized she was simply bringing the smell from home to school. Piles of dirty clothes littered the floor and animals relieved themselves in the house at will. We found no broom, no mop, none of the tools of cleanliness in her home.

Whenever anyone noticed the odor, we

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agreed she would go to the girl's locker room to take a shower and wash her hair. We collected a set of clean clothes and kept in them the gym teacher's office, and told the laundry person to wash the dirty clothes.

The plan did not meet with her approval. What prompted her to speak to me again was the home-ec teacher insisted she shower before she came to class one day. Instead of going to the locker room, she stopped by my room, called me out into the hall, and told me Mrs. Frieauf was being mean to her. I assured her Mrs. Frieauf just didn't want

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**Sheri Nordloh
Rood**

Granddad's Driving

Unforgettable, continued from page 20.
people to make fun of her, and that I, too, thought she needed a shower. Finally, still protesting that it wasn't her we were smelling, she went to take a shower.

Slowly, we noticed a change. Some days, her hair had a shine to it. Her clothes were less dirty. One day she told me proudly she had learned how to wash clothes at the laundromat.

She finished out her year in eighth grade and went on to the high school. From time-to-time over the next year, she dropped by to say hi. Then one evening when she was a junior, she called me at home. It took only a moment for me to place her when she said, "Mrs. Artery, you made me learn about taking showers. Do you remember me?"

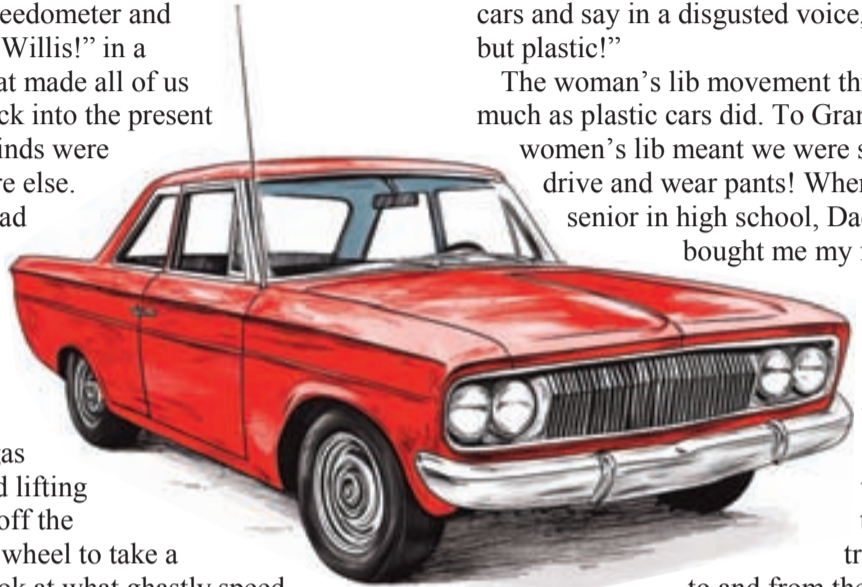
"Yes, I do. How are you?"

"I'm fine," she said. "I just wanted to let you know I joined the job corp, and I leave next week for training. Mrs. Artery, thank you for caring about me."

I still get tears in my eyes when I think about her. She was my student. More than that, she was my teacher. She taught me that most of the time I do not know my students. Unless they invite me into their lives, or unless something happens that makes me push my way in, I don't know how they live or who they are. When I get a glimpse of who a child really is, he or she becomes unforgettable. ♦

Driving to work the other day, an image from the past flashed into my mind and I remembered riding in the car with my grandparents and my mom, coming back from Denver to their home north of Strasburg. Grandad drove with a lead foot, with his mind somewhere other than the immediate circumstances. All at once Grammy would look over at the speedometer and shriek, "Willis!" in a voice that made all of us jump back into the present if our minds were anywhere else.

Grandad would say "Huh?" while taking his foot off the gas pedal and lifting his arm off the steering wheel to take a quick look at what ghastly speed he was traveling this time. We'd go about 45 MPH for a while until his speed would slowly creep back up again, only to have the entire scene repeated. Usually, one trip to Denver was good for two or three instances each way. By the time we got home, I felt like I had ridden on a roller coaster ride!



especially if Grammy got upset.

Grammy didn't drive unless absolutely necessary, and Mom didn't learn until she married my dad. Grandad saw a lot of change in transportation in his lifetime, from the horse and buggy to cars and trains, then airplanes and jets. He seemed to handle it all pretty well until they started making cars out of fiberglass. He'd look around the inside of one of his new cars and say in a disgusted voice, "It's nothing but plastic!"

The woman's lib movement thrilled him as much as plastic cars did. To Grandad, women's lib meant we were starting to drive and wear pants! When I was a senior in high school, Dad went out and bought me my first car for \$100—an old Plymouth Valiant. I went to boarding school at the time and had to have transportation to and from the orthodontist.

He only let me drive it to my appointments and home on the long weekends we had every six weeks.

Grandad would ask me, "Did you take the back roads or the freeway?"

I'd answer the same. "The freeway, Grandad. I don't know how to go on the back roads and if I have a flat, I know someone will stop and

Grandad won a safe driving award as a senior citizen and we all got a chuckle out of it. We surmised it was really a tribute to his guardian angel. They didn't see the big hole in the garage door or the side of his pickup where he'd scraped it while pulling in and out with his car. Backing up wasn't Grandad's strong point. I winced every time we'd pull out of a parking space because he'd nearly always tap the bumper of the other car. He'd say, "I just nicked it a little. That's what bumpers are there for!" He got a chuckle out of it,



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help me if I'm on the freeway." That seemed to pacify him a bit, but I knew he didn't approve of women driving.

I suppose I deserved his apprehension though, because the first time I drove a car at 14 I took out the telephone pole holding the sign to the entrance to his farm! After a year of Driver's Ed and a few backing incidents of my own, I learned to drive because I inherited my share of stubbornness and independence from Grandad... along with his lead foot. ♦

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AND THE WINNER IS

Jean Davis

It happened my junior year at a high school in Rock River, Wyoming. My mother had a restaurant. I worked there helping her whenever I wasn't at school. A young man who came to eat there often had been asking me to go out with him.

On this night, he asked me to go to Elk Mountain with him to a dance. I loved going to Elk Mountain, a beautiful place about fifteen miles south of Medicine Bow. A little pioneer town sits at the base of its northeast corner. The big attraction to the area at the time was the old, unique dance hall, a large building mounted on railroad springs! This takes dancing to a whole different level. You only noticed the springs if you made a misstep and the floor was coming up when your foot was coming down.

I declined the date, saying I needed to fix my hair. My real reason was I knew he drank a little and I didn't want to be around him. My brother overheard the conversation and stepped in, saying, "Oh, come on, sis. I'll go with you and you will be okay." Since I didn't think I could get out of that one, especially after my proposed date promised me he wouldn't drink, I agreed to go.

We started on the trip to Elk Mountain—about forty miles away, with my brother driving and my date sitting in front with him, while I sat in the back. My date kept his promise to not drink. Instead, he poured it down his throat. He was soused by the time we reached the dance hall.

This was right about the end of World War II. It was customary for the big name bands to send their second strings all over the country to play for community affairs, while the lead bands played for the military. Elk Mountain figured into this arrangement and during the summer, they had all the big name bands playing for them. I don't remember what band was there that

time, but it was superb.

Upon arriving at our destination, I found one of my dear friends, Judy, and her husband, Dean, had already arrived. After two or three dances, they announced over the loudspeakers that tonight was the night of the annual beauty contest and for us to



line up.

I felt my hair was a mess, so I decided not to enter. Judy stepped in then and said, "Oh, come on, Jean. Let's do it. If you get put out, I'll go out, and if I get put out, you can go out. Okay?" I agreed with her plan and we got in line, Dean holding Judy's hand as they went around the circle, and my date holding mine. Judy and Dean were the couple directly in front of us. As we went around, I noticed one of the judge's daughters was also a contestant, and she wore a white satin two-piece dress exactly like mine.

After circling the hall several times, a judge came over and removed me. Judy stayed in, despite her promise! They made a few more trips around the hall before the same judge came to me and apologized. He said I wasn't supposed to be disqualified. I got back into the

lineup. The contestants made another round or two before the judge's daughter got eliminated. She never spoke to me again, other than to write me a nasty letter soon afterward.

I won first place in the beauty contest, and Judy won second place. My prize was \$25 and the best drinks on the house. We went to the adjacent bar and ordered our drinks. I gave my drink to my brother, but I kept the \$25.

Elk Mountain was always special to me, but from that date on, it held a really special place in my heart. The memories of that night will never die. ♦

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 Franktown
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For Sale: 2000 Fleetwood Southwind 36 ft. Exc cond for its age. 28k miles. \$22,000 OBO 303-243-0488

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For Rent in Elizabeth: 2 bdrm, washer/dryer, security system, across from park and close to town. \$1250.mo. 1st and last + \$1500 deposit. 303-646-0872

For Sale: 4/x ft trailer \$500 OBO 303-243-0488

For Sale: Snow blower, Ryobi, used last season, 40 volt battery. 24 inch, 2 stage self-propelled. \$800 303-570-9213

For Rent: 27ft. x 50ft. Steel Barn for work shop/ Hobby shop/ Storage. Heat available. \$990 mo. Plus deposit. Available in November. John 720-231-1612

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<p>Elbert Women's Club -DINNER & BINGO- 1st Monday of the month Dinner (6-7) Bingo (7-9) -MONTHLY BREAKFAST- All you can eat Every 4th Sunday thru Oct. 8am-Noon Adults: \$12.50 Children \$6.25 3 yrs old and under free</p>	<p>Russell Gates Mercantile Comm. Hall 24223 Eccles St. Elbert. Questions: Wendy 303- 243-1308</p>
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SNOW! – What You Need To Know

Snow Removal Priority System

To provide efficient and effective snow removal on County roads, priorities are assigned to each road. These priorities are determined based on several factors. Some of these factors include roads requiring specialized equipment, logistics, timing of the storm, and the availability of resources.

Priority 1 – Arterial

Arterials are major roadways which provide for high traffic volumes over medium to long distances.

Arterials are used for interregional, inter-county, and intra-county travel needs.

Examples: Co Rd 166, Co Rd 13, Co Rd 158, Co Rd 21



Priority 2 – Collector/School Bus Routes

Collectors distribute traffic between arterial and local roads, serve as main connectors within subdivisions, and link one subdivision to another. Collectors generally do not provide direct access to private property.

Priority 3 – Local Roads

Local roads provide for low to medium traffic volumes within subdivisions and provide direct access to residences or private property.

Priority 4- Cul-De-Sacs

These are short local roads with no outlet that provide access to residents within subdivisions.

Snow Removal Response

The time required to clear snow and ice from roads varies depending on the following conditions:

- Snowstorm Intensity
- Snowstorm Duration
- Wind Velocity
- Temperature
- Traffic Condition
- Time of Day

All routes will be plowed and treated as quickly as possible. The conditions above will determine when we arrive to plow and treat your road. Snow removal crews are dispatched to work any time roads get slick from snow and ice accumulation. Priority 1 and 2 roads are plowed and

treated in preparation for morning and evening rush hours. Once these roads are cleared, crews move to Priority 3 and 4 roads.

General Information

- Roads are treated once snow starts to affect driving conditions on roadways. When there is sufficient snow accumulated to warrant removal, plowing begins.
- Subdivision roads cannot be plowed if parked vehicles or other obstructions interfere with the safe and continuous operation of snow removal equipment. Equipment will return to plow after parked vehicles or obstructions have been moved.
- Roads will be widened as conditions warrant. For major storms, cleanup operations may last three to four days after it has stopped snowing and/or blowing.
- Mailboxes should be installed away from the edge of the roadway to reduce the possibility of damage from snow as it is discharged from the plow. Homeowners should check their mailboxes to make sure they are firmly attached to the post. Posts should be in good condition and securely set in the ground. Postal regulations require residents to clean snow in front of mailboxes to allow for mail delivery.
- In winter, the freeze/thaw effects on pavement can rapidly cause potholes to form in roadways. As weather permits, crew will be dispatched to repair potholes as they are reported. Because of cold temperatures, temporary patch materials must be used in winter months and may need to be replaced periodically.

Public Works Administrative Operations

- 7:30am – 5pm Mon—Thurs, excluding holidays.
- Questions and/or concerns can be made through our website at https://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/road_and_bridge or by calling 303-621-3157.
- If County Offices are closed due to weather, the main line listed above will not be manned.
- Calls made to Public Works inquiring the estimated time of arrival of snowplows will not be returned. Roads will be cleared as outlined above.
- If you have an emergency, call 911.
- Our administrative staff provide support in the Elbert County Emergency Operations Center during major events such as the Bomb Cyclone and will monitor voice messages as time allows. ♦

Photos provide by Elbert County Public Works. Bomb Cyclone event 2019.



2024 Elbert County General Election Important Dates

- Oct 11: Mail Ballots mailed to active voters.
- Oct 21: In-Person Voting Center opens at the Samuel Elbert Building (downstairs). 8am – 5pm Mon—Fri. 8am—noon Sat, Nov 2.
- Oct 28: Last day to request a mail ballot.
- Nov 5: ELECTION DAY! Two additional In-Person Voting Centers open at Elizabeth Town Hall and Spring Valley Golf Club from 7am to 7pm.

Ballots must be received by 7pm Nov 5, 2024.

Returning your ballot:

Elbert County drop boxes are located at:

- 440 Comanche St., Kiowa
- Elizabeth Town Hall
- 41082 Firehouse St. (Behind the Firehouse), Parker, CO

To return by mail, apply postage and mail by Oct 28. Please sign and return the envelope with your name on it. Signatures are checked against the signature on your voter record.

If you receive a ballot for someone that does not live in your house, write “Return to Sender” on the envelope and return it via USPS.

Confirm that your ballot has been received by contacting us or checking on GoVoteColorado.gov. Track your ballot, sign up or manage alerts at elbert.ballottrax.net

In-Person Voting:

Be prepared when you arrive. The elections office cannot explain ballot measures or give guidance on how to vote. You can find information on ballot measures:

- In the Blue Book – this has been mailed to all households, and can be found at: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bluebook>
- Political parties have recommendations on their state and local websites and many organizations have voter guides for measures and candidates.
- View sample ballots at GoVoteColorado.gov. You may select your choices, print and bring with you to use as a guide to fill out your ballot.

For more information:

Visit GoVoteColorado.gov to register to vote, update your registration, check ballot status, or view your sample ballot.

Visit our website at <https://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/290/Elections>

Contact the EC Elections office at 303-621-3127 or elections@elbertcounty-co.gov

CodeRED: Emergency Notification System Test: Oct 9, 2024 at 9 AM

The Elbert County Office of Emergency Management will be conducting a test of the CodeRED emergency notification system on Wednesday, October 9, 2024, at 9 AM. The purpose of this test is to ensure that the telephone numbers in Elbert County’s emergency notification database are accurate and up to date. No action is required if you receive the test call.

The Caller ID for this test will display 866-419-5000, and the message will state: “This is a test of Elbert County’s CodeRED Emergency Notification System. No action is required; this is only a test. If this were an actual emergency, you would receive important information from your local public safety officials. Again, this is only a test.”

This test will help improve the efficiency and speed of the system when it is used during a real emergency.

Elbert County residents and businesses are encouraged to visit <https://www.elbertcounty-co.gov/177/Public-Emergency-Notifications-CodeRED> to sign up for CodeRED notifications or update their contact information.

This includes adding additional phone numbers, email addresses, or making updates if your phone number or address has changed in the past year. Those who use unlisted numbers, cellular, or VoIP phones as their primary contact should ensure their information is current in the system.

The CodeRED system allows Elbert County to provide registered residents with timely public safety information via phone calls, text messages, or emails based on their registered location.

For questions regarding the CodeRED system or this test, please email oem@elbertcounty-co.gov

We kindly ask that you do not contact dispatch to verify the test or inquire about your registration. All questions should be directed to the email above.

Thank you for your cooperation as we work to keep Elbert County safe! ♦

Join CodeRED to stay up to date on emergency services. →



Elbert County Tax Lien Sale:

Tues Nov 19, 2024, at 9am.

215 Comanche Street Kiowa, CO 80117 in the BOCC meeting room. Registrations forms and delinquent list will be available on the Treasurer’s website in mid-October. Please pre-register and send all forms to sherry.hewlett@elbertcounty-co.gov. Delinquent publication will be advertised in the Oct Ranchland News. Please feel free to call our office with questions 303-621-3120.