

Sterling Siren

February 2024 Issue 44



Tidbits of History by Bob Erickson

Here is a story about one of America’s greatest roadside advertising signs. Not the six “Burma Shave” signs, not the “See Rock City” barn signs, not the McDonald “Golden Arches”, and not the “Stuckey’s” or “Cracker Barrel” billboards.

This is the story of Holiday Inn and their famous roadside “Great Sign”.

It starts with Kemmons Wilson, a Memphis resident and developer, taking his wife and five children on a road trip to see the sights of Washington, D.C., in 1951. The trip was marred by the poor quality and selection of roadside accommodations, and it



An image of the Great Sign of Holiday Inn

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Editorial Comment: Please note the listing of Bob Erickson as co-editor. He has become a regular contributor to this monthly newsletter and is deserving of the promotion.

Erratum: In issue 43 of the Siren Jenine Steele’s last name was misspelled on the credit caption on her humor piece. In the list of the Independent Residents’ committees, Bob Steele’s phone number was incorrect. Apologies to my neighbors. Ron Lewis, Editor

got Wilson thinking about what could be improved. Get rid of the high-priced, uninviting cramped quarters, and eliminate the added charges for every kid and every amenity.

Back in Memphis, he began pulling his thoughts together.

His idea was to have a set of standards for cleanliness, uniformity, family friendliness, and accessibility to road travelers. He wanted every room to be air-conditioned, have its own phone, and have a swimming pool and restaurant on-site. In addition, the kids would stay for free. Also, he wanted a Bible in every room.

Wilson’s architect, Eddie Bluestein, came up with the name “Holiday Inn” as a humorous reference to the 1942 musical film of the same name. The first hotel/motel opened in August 1952 in Memphis, and was named “Holiday Inn Hotel Courts”. It was on the major road going between Memphis and Nashville, U.S. Highway 64/70/79. The place was an immediate success.

Wilson then got together with Wallace E. Johnson, a home builder and construction company owner, to build properties on the other roads leading into Memphis, and added three Holiday Inns in 1953. By 1957 they had built 30 Inns and started marketing the chain as “Holiday Inn of America”. The early motels were usually “U” -shaped, one or two-story structures, with the swimming pool in the courtyard.

Wilson and Johnson began franchising their idea in 1957. The concept caught on, and there were 50 locations by 1958., 100 in 1959, and 1000 by 1968.

But what about the “Great Sign”? While the first Holiday Inn was under construction, Wilson went to Balton & Sons Sign Company and told them that he wanted a 50 foot-tall sign that would be visible from either side of the road. The sign also had to have a marquee where groups of people or individuals could have their names posted.

The design for the sign was created by Gene Barber and Roland Alexander for a cost of \$13,000.

What they came up with was a sign that had white neon script letters saying “Holiday Inn” on a dark green background attached to a red pylon with a yellow starburst on top and with neon “bursts” around the star. Attached to the sign was a yellow arrow with flashing orange lights that pointed to the motel’s check-in office. In total, the Great Sign had 836 feet of neon, 4450 lights and weighed 14,000 pounds. The look reminded some drivers of a movie theater marquee. Others thought it was like something you would see in Las Vegas.

The sign was meant to say, “This is a fun place to stop and rest for the night with your whole family”.

The one thing that was missing from the Great Sign was a vacancy/no vacancy notice. Wilson wanted the desk clerks to assist travelers in finding acceptable lodging if no rooms were available in the motel. To simplify future room bookings, Holiday Inn (with the help of IBM) introduced the Holidex reservation in 1965 and the 800 toll-free reservation number in 1967. These improvements put constant pressure on their competitors to keep up with their innovations.



Holiday Inn sign in the Ford Museum



Kemmons Gravestone in Memphis

Over the years, the Great Sign of Holiday Inn became an icon across America.

However, by the late 1960s and 1970s, advertising signs became more simplistic. The font types were changing and the color tones were becoming more subtle and reserved. People began to see the Great Sign as somewhat tacky and garish.

In 1979, Wilson retired as CEO of Holiday Inn of America and left the Board of Directors entirely in 1982. After his departure from the Board, almost all of the Great Signs were taken down and demolished. Kemmons Wilson called the loss of the Great Sign the biggest mistake Holiday Inn ever made.

Today, there are a couple of Great Signs left, they’re just not in front of Holiday Inns. One is in the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati and one is at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.

Kemmons Wilson died in 2003 at the age of 90. He’s buried in Memphis’s Forest Hill Cemetery Midtown and his headstone is an easy one to find. It’s the one with an engraving of the Great Sign reading, “Founder,” in the marquee area, and the arrow pointing to his name.

Sources: RandyPreising.com, Stuckeys.com, Wikipedia.com, signofthetimes.com, Salon.com/andrewnelson.

Welcome New Neighbors

by Gail Watson

Phyllis Waddle – Stratford 2105



Phyllis has moved over to Sterling Estates from the Marietta Country Club Estates. Originally from London, Kentucky, she attended the University of Kentucky and graduated with a degree in Education. She married an electrical engineer in 1957 who worked for Norfolk Southern Railroad, and she taught fifth grade in the school system. Her husband was promoted, and they moved to Atlanta in 1964. After he passed away in 2022, she decided to move in 2024 to Sterling Estates. She has two daughters, one in Powder Springs and one in Cumming, plus six grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Food for Thought- The Cultural Diversity of Food
by Ron Lewis

I am going to digress from talking about a type of food in this month’s column and instead discuss in this essay how we are endowed with systems of evaluation of our food for its good use for us, and when it might be a danger to us.

Those systems are called the gustatory (taste), olfactory (smell) and part of the somatosensory system (touch or texture, as it relates to food- detected by mechanoreceptors), as well as pain, and temperature). These first three systems determine flavors of food and other substances in the oral cavity. Other factors involved in appreciation of flavor are “coolness” (such as that of menthol) and “hotness” (pungency, which had traditionally been considered a sixth basic taste) by chemesthesis. Another chemesthesis sensation is a tingling numbness caused by spices such as the Sichuan pepper. In 2015, researchers suggested a new basic taste of fatty acids called “fat taste”.

I am going to concentrate on taste (the gustatory system) and what this means for appreciation of the food that we eat. Taste is the perception stimulated when a substance in our mouth reacts chemically with taste receptor cells located on taste buds in the oral cavity, mostly on the tongue. The gustatory system senses both harmful and beneficial things, as well as gauging foods’ nutritional value, producing caution or craving. Two examples of this are sweetness which helps to identify energy-rich foods, while bitterness warns people of poisons.

Taste perception fades with aging as tongue papillae are lost. Humans can have distortion of tastes called dysgeusia. All of us are familiar that one of the side effects of the COVID diseases was loss of taste. Not all mammals share the same tastes; some rodents can taste starch (which humans cannot), cats cannot taste sweetness, and several other carnivores, including hyenas, dolphins, and sea lions, have lost the ability to sense up to four of their ancestral five basic tastes.

The tongue, mostly on the front and back, is covered with thousands of small bumps called papillae, visible to the naked eye, and within each papilla are hundreds of taste buds. Some of the filiform papillae on the tongue do not contain taste buds (they are the most numerous on the tongue) and are responsible for the sensation of touch. The tongue contains between 2,000 and 5,000 taste buds; other taste buds are located on the roof, sides and back of the mouth, and in the throat. Each taste bud contains 50 to 100 taste receptor cells. Taste buds are able to tell different tastes apart when they interact with different molecules or ions.

The sense of taste is conveyed via three of the twelve cranial nerves: the facial nerve (VII- which carries tastes from the anterior two-thirds of the tongue), the glossopharyngeal nerve (IX- which carries tastes from the posterior one-third of the tongue), and the vagus nerve (X- which carries some taste sensations from the back of the oral cavity) . Substances such as ethanol and capsaicin cause a burning sensation by inducing a trigeminal nerve reaction with normal taste reception.

If asked in the early 1970’s what were the classifications of taste, you would have answered four- sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. It wasn’t until the 1970s that another taste classification entered our vocabulary, and that was umami (from the Japanese- and translated as “deliciousness”, “good flavor or good taste”), or savory. These five taste categories are unique tastes that cannot be created by mixing other tastes.

Salt and sour taste mechanisms detect, in different ways, the presence of sodium chloride in the mouth, which plays a critical role in ion and water homeostasis in the mammalian kidney as an osmotically active compound which facilitates passive re-

uptake of water in the blood. Because of this , salt elicits a pleasant taste in most humans. As many chefs and cooks know, salt added to food enhances flavor. Acids are also detected and perceived as sour. Sour taste is detected by a small subset of cells that are distributed across all taste buds. Salt and sour

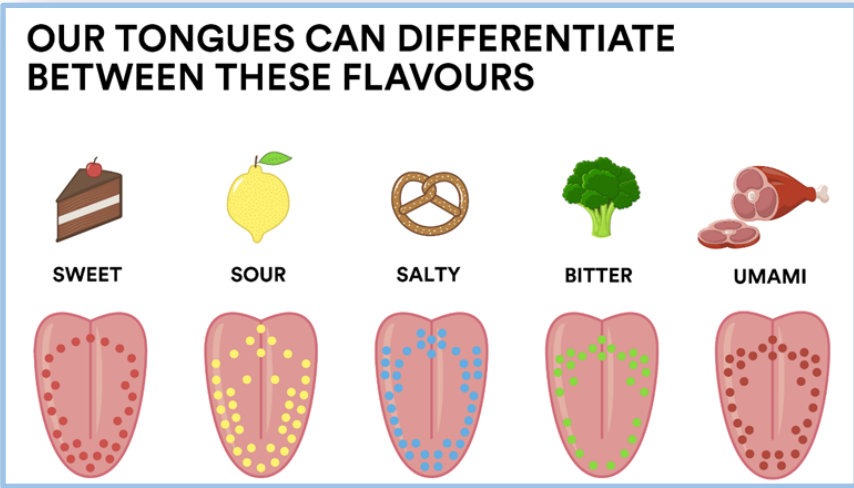
tastes can be pleasant in small quantities, but in larger quantities become more unpleasant to taste. Salty taste seems to have two components, a low-salt signal and a high-salt signal, the former causing a sensation of deliciousness and the latter causing a sensation of “too salty”.

Sweet taste signals the presence of carbohydrates in solution which are desirable to the human body. Carbohydrates are used as direct energy (sugars) and storage of energy (glycogen). Many non-carbohydrate molecules trigger a sweet taste, leading to the development of artificial sweeteners, including saccharin, sucralose, and aspartame (it is still unclear how these substances activate the sweet receptors). At least two different variants of the “sweetness receptors” must be activated for the brain to register sweetness.

Bitterness is one of the most sensitive of the tastes, and many perceive it as unpleasant, sharp, or disagreeable. Common bitter foods and beverages include coffee, unsweetened cocoa, some varieties of cheese, members of the Brassicaceae family (mustards, crucifers, and cabbage family), and the ethanol in alcoholic beverages.

Umami, or savoriness, is an appetitive taste. It can be defined as the taste of glutamate inosinate and guanylate, which serves as a signal to the body that we have consumed protein. Sensing umami triggers the secretion of saliva and digestive juices. The presence of this taste allows for less salt to enhance a food. Three characteristics of umami are spreading across the tongue, persistence and promotion of saliva.

Umami is considered fundamental to many East Asian cuisines. It dates back to the use of fermented fish sauce in ancient Rome and “ge-thcup or koe-cheup” in ancient China. It was first studied in 1907 by Kikunae Ikeda, a Japanese chemist. He isolated “dashi” taste which he identified as the chemical monosodium glutamate (MSG). MSG is a sodium salt that produces a strong savory taste, especially combined with foods rich in nucleotides such as meats, fish, nuts, and mushrooms.



Book Review and Essay by Ronald Lewis

Almost 15 years ago, I read a book entitled *Liberty of Conscience- In Defense of America’s Tradition of Religious Equality* (Perseus Book Group, 2008) by Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher at the University of Chicago. In it she traces the idea and history of separation of church and state from the beginnings of our country. Early on in the colonies and in the formation of a new nation, some of our founding fathers stressed the need for this separation, reflecting on Puritan rigidity and the dangers of a state religion that were present in so many European nations at that time.

Rarely does a book affect me so much as the book above and the one I am going to write this quick review and essay about. The book is entitled *The Kingdom, The Power, and The Glory- American Evangelicals in an Age of Extremism* by Tim Alberta (Harper, 493 pages, 2023). I, a main-stream Christian Protestant, have always had an ecumenical attitude regarding those of other faiths and sects. I have had no understanding of the right-wing evangelical Christians, but after reading this book I now understand the history of this movement and how it has moved to Christian Nationalism.

Whether you are a follower of one of the three religions in the Abraham tradition, a non-believer, or a member of some other religious persuasion, this well-written book is a “must-read”. The author, a Christian evangelical, is a journalist and a staff writer for The Atlantic. He grew up in a conservative evangelical church where his father was the minister. In his opinion, as stated in the epilogue, “Christian nationalism is a contradiction in terms.”

The book is divided into three parts and includes a prologue, an epilogue, and 21 chapters with subtitles of the name of a city and a verse quoted from the Bible. Four of these chapters are a microcosm of the theses of this book, two each from Brighton, Michigan (chapters one and seven) and Lynchburg, Virginia (chapters three and 21). The first of these venues is the hometown of his father’s church, and the second the setting for the Falwell’s Liberty University.

The stories that emanate from his hometown in Michigan are centered around the struggles of the replacement pastor for his father’s church after the death of his father. The replacement suffers an initial migration from his church to a more conservative “politically-correct” megachurch, but finds himself successfully remaining faithful to conservative non-political preaching to re-grow the church.

The Lynchburg chapters give a detailed history of Liberty University from its founding to the third Falwell, who eventually takes over. Woven into this story are the history of how the largest Christian University in the world became dominated by three generations of Falwells and how it became linked to the Republican political party. We are also given glimpses of two figures who fought the departure from true apolitical Christian values, a

fired, but very popular, School of Divinity faculty member, and a bright more liberal student campus leader.

The development of the evangelical church towards becoming a right-wing of one political party is well spelled-out, first led by powerful multiple church leaders throughout the book. Billy Graham was one leader who grew suspicious of partisanship and distanced himself away from this concept (page 221).

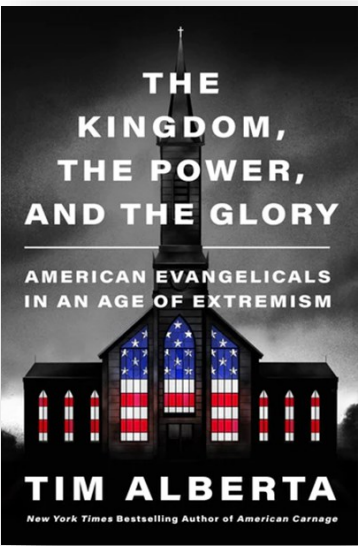
Other megachurch evangelical leaders, however, did not. Some of these leaders gained large followings, built huge temples, but many have been plagued with scandal. Some of these scandals result in official church leaders hiding or defending some abusers. With the closure of worship at churches during the COVID pandemic, a reinforcement of ideas prevalent in the evangelical church, that the deep state and the far-left in this country were trying to eliminate Christianity in America, further pushed evangelical people into politics..

But, there are stories in the book of steady evangelicals that fight this main street leaning, which gives hope for returning to the true and only leader of the church, Jesus Christ. One of these is Russell Moore, one of the former leaders of the Southern Baptist Church (his story well told in chapter four and entitled “Atlanta, Georgia”); Rachael Denhollander, a victim of sexual abuse herself and an attorney who comes to represent the clergy sexually-abused individuals; and a Christian journalist, Julie Roys, who herself was censored when she discovered stories swept under the rug of abuse in the system. All three suffered ostracization from their faith-based groups.

Chapter 16 is entitled “Kennesaw, Georgia” and is the story of Herschel Walker, his rise and fall from grace over the issue of abortions which he participated in, while attempting a United States Senate position from the state of Georgia. Chapter 12 is the only one titled outside the United States and is entitled “Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, France. In it is a brief discussion of the Russian Orthodox church’s intervention in supporting Putin’s two Ukrainian invasions and the story of inter-religious infighting, war, and “ethnic-cleansing in the old country of Yugoslavia. The author reports on how these stories reflect the conflict of religion and politics playing out in our own national setting.

Tim Alberta brings alive the history of the evangelical church’s merging into the political arena. He warns that this often arises from **fear**, establishes certain men to an almost God status, and is often based on one idea, such as abortion, ignoring the many other areas that Christians should be engaging in to solve other rampant social problems. His biblical quote for chapter 3, says it all: **“Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is Gods”** from Jesus’ teaching in Luke 20:25..

The book has been reviewed in the New York Times Book Review section on January 14, 2024, by Jennifer Szalai in an article entitled, “Religious Fervor”. But this review does little to reflect the depth of this work.



Humor by Carter Miller

This morning on I75, I looked over to my left and there was a **WOMAN!!** in a brand new **MOUNTAINEER**. With her face up next to her rear view mirror she was putting on her eyeliner. I looked away for a couple of seconds and when I looked back she was halfway over in my lane, still working on that makeup. As a man, I don’t scare easily. But she scared me so much I dropped my electric shaver, which knocked the donut out of my other hand. In all the confusion of trying to straighten out the car, using my knees against the steering wheel, it knocked my cell phone away from my ear which fell into the coffee between my legs, splashed, and burned Big Jim and the Twins, ruined the damn phone, soaked my pants, and disconnected an important call. **Damn Women Drivers!**



My Story- A Testimonial by Greg Mikkelsen

In the second and third quarters of 2022, I began to experience symptoms that I could not explain. Let me explain. I was pulling into parking spaces and my wheels were slightly over the white line. I couldn't seem to pull the car straight into the garage like I used to. I was veering a little to the left when I was driving. I shared these things with friends who assured me "we are all getting older and this stuff happens from time to time, just slow down and take your time." I wanted to believe that was true because for intents and purposes, I felt perfectly fine.

However, after my daughter witnessed me walking right into the couch, without the ability to explain why I had done that, my family convinced me to make an appointment with my primary care physician. On the way to that appointment I had a "fender bender" at the intersection of Main Street and Church Street in Jasper, Georgia, driving at a very slow speed. This was hard for me to understand as I've always been a very good driver and never had difficulties; another red flag. We continued on to the appointment with my internist and explained what had just happened. The doctor decided to refer me to a neurologist to see if further testing was necessary.

At the urging of my family and in an effort not to waste any time finding answers, I went ahead and scheduled an MRI of my brain so I would have those results in hand when I went to see the neurologist. During the 4th week of January I went in for the MRI at which the technician told me I would have results within 12 to 24 hours. The next morning, I was attending my Friday morning men's fellowship when I received a phone call from my doctor's office which truly was a life-changing conversation. My primary care physician advised me that I had a mass on the back of my brain and needed to see a neurosurgeon immediately to have it removed.

Upon the receipt of that news on a Friday morning, my daughters shifted into high gear and arranged for me to be admitted to Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NEGA) in Gainesville, Georgia, that evening. A good friend of my daughter, Natalie, happens to be an ER physician at NEGA and arranged for me to be admitted on an expedited basis of needing an MRI with contrast immediately. Saturday morning my soon-to-be neurosurgeon, Dr. Arun Jacob, came into my room to see me. Dr. Jacob confirmed that I had a glioblastoma, which is a very aggressive brain cancer. The mass needed to be removed as soon as possible and he offered to perform the surgery that Monday.

I will forever be thankful for the way my case was expedited and the phenomenal job Dr. Jacob and his team did in removing over 95% of the tumor. It was truly the best news we could have asked for, but this was just the beginning of my journey. The treatment plan following the surgery was for me to have 24 radiation treatments in combination with oral chemotherapy pills. This treatment plan went reasonably well and I only experienced mild side effects. Joan and I lived with Natalie and her family in Gainesville while I completed my treatment plan.

Upon completion of radiation treatments, we decided the best thing for Joan and me was to move closer to one of our daughters. Their requirement was that we be within 10 minutes of one of them. With the assistance of our entire family, we were able to identify a senior living community in Marietta, Georgia, which is located only one mile from our oldest daughter, Krista. This has truly been a godsend as I progressed through additional treatments. We identified a very qualified neuro-oncologist to supervise my treatment plan

moving forward. This plan includes MRIs every two to three months accompanied by chemotherapy infusions that are now on a frequency of once every three weeks.

The initial reports from the MRI indicate that the chemotherapy treatments are holding the cancer in check. I would describe this as somewhat like the goal-line stand in football, trying to keep the other team from scoring. I am extremely thankful throughout this process for the support, kind words, and prayers I've received from family and friends across the country. People often ask where is God during hard times? Where is the Holy Spirit? Well, I can tell you from my own experience, God is with us and so is the Holy Spirit.

I attended church two weeks following my surgery at my youngest daughter's home church in Gainesville Georgia. It was during that service that I truly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as I sat in that service among a body of believers. This brought me a peace that I've never felt before. I attended church the following Sunday and had the same feeling. The Holy Spirit was surrounding me and I was in good hands.

I have become comfortable with my decision that my life is in God's hands and I need to continue to give Him thanks every day for my family and friends. I remain faithful in my treatment plan and continue to do the very best I can for all of those that I love that surround me.

I was encouraged by one of my neighbors in Sterling Estates to share my story last year. I have to admit that I was probably the prime example of typical male behavior in practicing denial rather than accepting something was wrong. My encouragement to all of you is that if your body sends you signals that you cannot explain, get checked out. Don't ignore what could be a warning sign because you feel "fine". Monitor your health very closely and make sure you take someone with you on every single doctor's appointment. Too much information is usually presented which can make it difficult to digest and follow when you're by yourself. I consider myself extremely fortunate that the steps that were finally taken led to a successful surgery.

I have just passed the year anniversary of my surgery, which is a major milestone when dealing with this kind of cancer. My oncologist is very pleased with how I have progressed, especially experiencing no side effects. I cannot deny that the cancer and the treatment plan have altered my life as I knew it before. I am no longer able to drive a car, hit a golf ball, take 2 ½-mile walks, or do the other things that I used to enjoy every day. While I miss those simple things, I am thankful for each and every day.

I would encourage each of you that, if you have not developed a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you do so now. Do not wait! He is your strength, He is your healer, He is the best friend that you will ever have. Once again, I can't overemphasize how thankful I am for the medical team that has treated me over the past year. When I think about where God is in my life, I only have to look around at the health care team that has surrounded me. My neurosurgeon was raised in India as a Hindu, came to the United States, and converted to Christianity. My radiation oncologist had his bachelor's degree in physics and his master's degree in divinity from Wheaton College in Illinois. My first medical oncologist was an immigrant from Lebanon, who also has accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. This is not a coincidence. This is the plan that God had in store for me, I believe that with all my heart.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5.

love them and you're praying for them. It will bring joy to their life as well as your own.

Editor's Note: Glioblastoma is the most common primary brain cancer with around 12,000 cases diagnosed in the United States each year. It is a very aggressive cancer. They can occur at any age, but they tend to occur more often in older adults and more often in men. Treatments slow cancer growth and reduce symptoms. Glioblastomas often grow into healthy brain tissue so that it might not be possible to remove all the cancer cells by surgery; hence, further radiation and chemotherapy are necessary.- Ronald W. Lewis, M.D.

Out of the Mouths of Children by Joan Hargrove

1984- While walking my daughter to kindergarten during the first week of school, she told me she wanted to quit school and go to work at MacDonald's. I asked her why she thought she needed to do this and she stopped walking, turned and looked at me with hands in the air and said, "I just can't comprehend all the stuff they are trying to teach me!"

1985- Steven came to my Kindergarten class daily from the bus. He put his book bag away and asked permission to go to the bathroom. (This class had been formed late in the school year due to the continued enrollment in Kindergarten that year. Our new class had been set up in a room upstairs usually used by older children and had no bathroom).

After several days of noticing this behavior, I pulled Steven aside and told him that he should try to go to the bathroom by the stairs before coming to the classroom. I explained that he was missing a lot of things in the morning by being in the bathroom, such as the school song, pledge, and morning announcements. He said he understood but the very next day he came to school, put away his book bag, and asked permission to go to the bathroom. Thinking that maybe he really did need to go, I said yes. Almost immediately the announcer on the PA asked the students to stand for the pledge of allegiance. As we started saying the pledge, Steven rushed back to the classroom, one hand in his unzipped pants, waving the other hand, and announced loudly, "Don't worry, Mrs. Hargrove, I'll pledge with this hand."

1987- A young first grader informed me that she wasn't coming to school the next day because her mommy was taking her somewhere to take a smart test. (Turns out it was an IQ test to see if the child was gifted) When she returned to school I asked her how the test went. She told me that her mommy said she was gifted but she wasn't allowed to use it until she was in 6th grade.!

One year a mother introduced herself to the teacher and me by telling us

her IQ as her way of letting us know how smart she, or maybe the family genes, were. This was the mother of the boy who glued his chair to the floor!

1993-While standing next to a group of children in a line that had been in my class the year before, one child said that I looked different. Knowing that I had returned to school that year with more weight than when I had left , I thought surely she was going to say that I was bigger. Instead she said that it was my hair that was different.... that it looked gray. (That summer I had put some highlights in my hair for the first time to try to hide the gray). So I said "No, no, Mrs. Hargrove paid a lot of money not to be gray." Another young girl, also standing in line quietly said, "It didn't work."

2002-Sarah, a precious little girl that I had become attached to that year and had worked with a lot, told me she could learn a lot more if it was just me and her in the classroom. She also said it was easy to figure out what a dime looked like because it looked like her daddy. I heard her several times during Math, while learning about money, refer to it as her "daddy" coin.

Sarah also was the first child to invite me to her birthday party. It was a Princess party and everyone would be a princess for a day. Since I decided to go, I decided to dress the part by making myself a princess-like skirt (tu-tu) and go to the party. I also made wands for all the little girls (since they were all in my class). (By the way, I looked like a giant cotton candy ball in my 8-yds of pink tulle skirt, but had a great time kissing frogs. I even sat on a large pillow with a tennis ball under it to see if I, indeed, was a princess!)

While teaching 1st-graders how to write numbers one day, I found myself singing number songs to them; such as The Ants Go Marching, Five Little Monkeys, and Ten Little Indians etc. When I couldn't think of any more songs, I asked the children if they could think of any song about numbers . Without even looking up from writing his numbers, a little boy began singing, " ONE is the loneliest number that you'll ever see".... in perfect harmony, and would have made Three Dog Night proud!

2003-My first year as a pre-school teacher, I had a little boy who thought

he was a dinosaur and told me his name was Chomper (the little dinosaur in the movie "Land Before Time"). I said OK, and from then on the class and I called him Chomper. He even started signing his name Chomper. The entire year he constantly reminded us that his name was Chomper.

On St. Patrick's Day, when I told the children we were all going to be leprechauns, Chomper said, "I'm not a Leprechaun. Thinking he was going to say Chomper, he said, "I'm a penguin!" Go figure!

My sister came for a visit in the spring of that year and came to my classroom to help me at school. Each day as she would read to the children, one little girl would sit in her lap and became very attached. One day, this little girl pulled out a shiny apple and gave it to me saying, you and Mrs. Yang (my assistant) can share this. Since this was the first time she had brought an apple to the teacher, I thought 'how sweet' until she went over to my sister and gave her a larger apple and said, "Here, Mrs. Petty, this one is just for you!"

Bennett came to preschool that year talking in first person and calling everyone including the teacher, Honey.

To be Continued in March, 2024, Siren issue 46.

