



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

It may be snowing where you are right now and if it isn't, it may be by the time you read this, but I'm sitting here grieving because I have to write a column when I'd rather be outside playing with Lovely June and taking advantage of the warm weather we're having here in the Paint Lick Valley, in the middle of January.

Fifty-five degrees may not meet your definition of balmy, but the weather forecast, for anybody who has any confidence in the meteorologists, calls for thunderstorms later in the night. My position on that possibility is let her rip. Every thunderstorm we get in January could very well have been a blizzard and I prefer my precipitation fresh instead of frozen.

I didn't come home until well after dark tonight and the moon is casting

enough light to sort of tell what is going on. And what's going on is the beavers. There are four beaver dams on Paint Lick Creek between here and Berea. There are still some local folks who maintain that the dams were secretly constructed as practical jokes by some local teenagers.

First of all, as you know, beaver branches and saplings that have been chewed on the ends. Teeth marks are also conspicuous on stumps on both sides of the creek for several hundred feet in either direction of the construction sites. Finally, there are no teenagers with either the architectural talent or old fashioned ambition who would get out of bed in the wee hours of the morning and sneak around to build wooden dams in waist deep water in the dead of winter. They might stay up late to see if they can electronically break into your computer files, but they would not put as much effort into something as these dams have obviously required.

All of which is beside the point because I have personally seen the beavers, several of them, with my own eyes three times over the last five days (twice in broad daylight) busily repairing the damage that high water did to them last Monday night. The fact that they have become brave enough to work, even when automobile traffic is passing by, less than a hundred feet away, has to be a sign of something and I am terribly disappointed that the press is not speculating on whatever looming disaster the beaver activity may bode.

I did not personally stock up any extra stuff in anticipation of Y2K, though I must admit that I went to the bathroom shortly after midnight to see if my toilet paper had rolled back to 1900 and turned into a Sears & Roebuck Catalogue. But I don't know about this beaver business and I truly

believe that someone with more time on his hands (i.e. big city journalists) should be investigating. Somebody is missing a golden opportunity to turn this phenomenon into the first big scare of the century.

In the meantime, it is supposed to pour the rain here in a bit so I need to get a gas can and go back to town. When the aforementioned big rain hit last week, thank Heaven it did not involve much thunder and lightning, else I would have been up the proverbial creek without a paddle. More accurately, I would have been up to my underpants in the basement with a bucket trying to keep my house from floating off its foundation.

The rain fell for just over two hours as hard as I've ever seen it rain and then stopped around midnight. During the course of the storm I heard the sump pump kick on a couple of times which meant that more water was running in than the floor drain could handle. Around 3:00 a.m. I was awakened by the kicking on and off at 15 second intervals so I figured the gizmo makes it work in the first place was stuck.

I finally got out of bed and went to the basement where water was running in faster than the pump could get it out. My HVAC unit was in imminent danger of being flooded. I pulled the breaker to the pump and finally figured out how to disable the switching gizmo so that the pump would run full time and even then it barely kept pace with the inflow. I don't even want to think about what would have happened if the power had gone off which normally happens if lightning even fizzes, much less strikes.

I have a Homelite gasoline pump on the ready now, but I used up all the fuel I had in stock making sure it works. Apparently the drought has caused cracks in my basement walls and the limestone that surrounds them and it took several hours for the rain to soak down enough to cause my basement to flood. All I know for sure is that water was still gushing in at noon the next day.

If any of you readers know anything about water proofing a basement without digging ditches around the house give me a call. Ditching is not an option because of the limestone situation. I need to figure out a way to seal the sucker from the inside. Believe it or not, I wouldn't even quarrel about the price if I could rid myself of the worry that every little rain is going to cause me until the problem is solved.

The number to call is 606-925-2105 or email me at ikeadams@aol.com.

Until next week, keep your powder dry because I may need to borrow from you. Mine's mildewed.

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



A Tribute to
Ishmael Lynn Tackett

My Big Brother

On September 27, 1913, I entered the world by special delivery. When a midwife and grandma finally coaxed me into letting go of the security of my mother's womb and I leave the warm nest I had been cuddled in for nine months, I grudgingly came forth and took my place in the family. I was the fifth child, and as it turned out later, the middle one of nine.

Ishmael, the brother who was four months older than I, had to give up his place and let this new arrival take his place in the bed and mom's arms. Knowing him so well later in life I can almost see the quiet little toddler slipping up to the bed and tipping so he could get a better look at the little creature that was taking his place. A special bonding took place with the first peak and his love and care overshadowed my life till he passed away on December 21, 1999.

And not only I, but the whole family felt this special love he was capable of showing to one and all.

My very first memories of him being my protector was when I was about two years old and Dad put the wool of us on the back of a young mare he had just brought home. Ish in front and me clinging onto him with all my might. As dad led her to the barn, we

passed under a tree with limbs just low enough to sweep us off her back, but neither was hurt, for my big brother was still holding onto me.

And it was he and I that watched mom milk the young mare after she brought forth her first colt. Another old time remedy, perhaps handed down from mom's Indian heritage, was that milk from a mare with a young colt would protect children from whooping cough or at least make it a light case if one was already exposed. So, mom, who her ease full of growing kids, and knowledge handed down from her ancestors, took no chances, she milked the mare and we drank the milk.

I guess Ish must have been the one with most of mom's Indian genes flowing through his veins for it was he that searched the woods for, wintergreen, Indian turnips, buck-eyes, birch bark and a pocket full of anything else that interested him. Wintergreen grows close to the ground, with shiny dark green leaves and red berries in the winter. The leaves and berries are edible and had the flavor of cherry chewing gum. A pocket full would always be taken home for others to enjoy. We called it mountain tea, for one could also make delicious tea from it.

The Indian turnip "Jack-in-the-pulpit" had one large root that resembled a turnip but to unto the person that tried to eat it. One touch of the tongue to raw section of it would set the tongue on fire, or rather the peculiar and unusual sight or burning sensation would sear the memory of it into your mind till it was never forgotten. It also had medicinal qualities. Old timers knew about them and used the wild turnip frequently for poultices when mixed with other compounds, and placed them on the chest to relieve the symptoms of pneumonia. Mom made cough syrup by scraping the bulb, as one would with an apple, add a spoonful of scrapings and a dash of cider vinegar to a quart jar of honey and the syrup couldn't be beaten for relieving coughing and congestion. The tangy sting of the Indian turnip added an unusual but pleasant flavor to it.

Somewhere in my rambling I left Ish in a place he would rather be than anywhere else; searching for herbs and artifacts on the hillsides and hollows of the country he loved so dearly. But my memories didn't stop there.

There was the little boy from Irondale, Ohio, pulling a wagon that gave him for Christmas, loaded with the "Cleveland Plain Dealer," a daily paper delivered by train to the local station, and met by the little boy who could never be idle, and delivered faithfully to his customers, rain or shine. Even on Sundays, when the load was twice as big, he never faltered. As a ten year old boy he was given an award for his faithfulness to his job. And there was the little boy with a mischievous streak that could not let an apron string or dress sash, stay tied. He would invariably catch me, or anyone with a bow tied in the

back busy, with both hands full, slip up behind and with one quick jerk the boy would be two limp stang hanging down one side or an apron lying on the floor. Or it may be teasing with the tip of a wet towel used to flip us as we passed by. That could bring forth a loud reprimand from the one being flipped for it often left a sting that couldn't be forgotten easily. He was a tease and loved to play pranks on his siblings. At the same time he was the gentle one that smoothed over the rough spots of living in a family of

rambunctious kids. The older siblings respected his ability of caring for the younger ones and the younger ones looked up to him to do it. Mom often said Ish was the one child she never worried about and had never given her one moment of trouble. And Dad loved to tell of how they got along when he was no more than a baby and went on an overnight trip together. It was a cold blustery night and Dad carried him from the depot to their lodging and when they arrived dad gave the shivering little boy a sip

of his hot toddy. That was when dad would always say with a twinkle in his eye and warmth in his voice, "and the little guy looked up and said, 'dads dood poppy'."

In school Ish was a model student and by being so, won the honor of being appointed monitor of the halls during the changing of classes. Yet, even though his grade and ability to learn was on the honor roll he quit

(Cont to A8)



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