



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

Three hours ago I started writing a column which I finished an hour ago. I was well pleased with my work and I may try to recreate it because, dear reader, if you persevere that's the only option. In the process of cutting and pasting it to email so that I could send it to your favorite weekly paper it simply disappeared. I've spent the last hour trying to figure out what happened and find my work to no avail. And it would not be healthy for Bill Gates to be in the same room with me right now. Suffice it to say that I would make every effort to stick the box and the disks that contain Windows 98 far into the furthest recesses of a particular part of his anatomy that most editors won't let me describe to a readership of easily shocked elderly ladies and adolescents who only read my column to see if I've used a bad word anyway.

I hope they split Bill's company into a million baby Bills and they all go bankrupt in the first six months. In the meantime I have to start over and as far as I'm concerned old Bill deserves the blame.

Anyway, I was musing about pipes and the gist of that follows.

When most folks walk into my office for the first time or into the parts of my house where I have a little say about the decor, they are apt to take notice of the racks and stands that contain dozens and dozens of old smoking pipes that I have sitting around on book shelves, desk tops, clothing chests and like that. They will generally offer a compliment. "Nice pipe collection," they may say, or "Ahh you're a pipe collector I see."

Wrong on both counts.

I am a pipe accumulator which, as I will explain later, is vastly different from being a collector. In addition to the hundred or so that I keep on display, I have boxes containing twice as many in my garage where they are waiting for the tendrilitis in my right arm to heal to the point that I can grip anything with that hand. They all need a couple hours each of attention and exertion that involves sand paper, steel wool, alcohol and paste wax.

I know several pipe collectors and occasionally I'll across a pipe that I may sell to one of them for as much as \$250.00. Sometimes they snicker behind my back because they got a pipe for say, a hundred dollars, that is easily worth twice that amount. Most of the time I got it for less than a dollar so I don't know why they're laughing.

I accumulate pipes off internet auctions, at yard sales and lots of folks just give them to me because they have no use for them. I enjoy refinishing them and making the grain of old briar roasts from which they are carved pop out in nice relief because it is one of Mother Nature's finest artistic endeavors. Most evenings I will tump a generous measure of Captain Black into one and let the smoke chase away mosquitoes as I

make use of a front porch swing and meditate on the miracle of being alive.

Pipe smoking and meditating go hand in hand like they were made for each other and I firmly believe that God would've "have come up with the Mediterranean Briar if he hadn't intended for some of us to smoke pipes. I admit that I have friends and even close relatives who wonder why I have to indulge in "that stinky old pipe" and I have long since given up trying to explain it to them. I have lived long enough that I have no patience with people who seem to have nothing better to do than worry about or advise me about dying of cancer.

Pipe collectors pay out the big bucks for pipes that were made by particular manufacturers in particularly rare shapes with unique trade marks and other minor features that generally have nothing to do with how well a pipe smokes. I accumulate pipes that nobody else really want and make them appeal to my own sense of beauty and distinction and I don't care much who made them. When I have one that is worth 50 bucks or more, I generally sell it because I figure the guy willing to pay that much for it is going to howl it off the way I would and that's really all I want to accomplish in the first place.

Collectors generally have big egos and they look for bragging rights about having something that nobody else does. In theory their collection will appreciate in value over the years so they consider it a form of investing.

I get my satisfaction out of turning something that was probably headed for the garbage dump back into a self-satisfying piece of art. It's sort of like running an orphanage on one hand or an old folks home on the other. Most of my pipes don't have any other place to go. Occasionally someone will give me a pipe because they don't want to toss it and then, after I do it, they want it back. If they tell me it belonged to a father or grandfather and they promise to put it on a mantle or book shelf where it stands some chance at becoming the subject of conversation, I'll generally give it back. Sometimes one of my buddies will offer to pay for a pipe to smoke and I'll give them one after they swear an oath to keep it cleaned up and give it back if they ever feel like they can't take care of it.

After all, I suppose, the highest compliment one can pay a pipe is to use it for its intended purpose.

The older I get, the more I realize that the ultimate luxury in the human experience is to have some sense that one is serving one's purpose here on this earth. It just happens that one of my purposes is accumulating old pipes that someone down the road may really appreciate if members of my family don't sneak them into the coffin when it comes time to plant me.

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



Greetings

Good morning Ike Adams, and greetings from the "other, belly-acher" of problems we were not responsible for, stacking up into problems we are responsible for, and must attend to if we are to exist in peace and comfort.

Since we have never met, but I do read your column and usually enjoy what I read, I think we should get together and compare our problems. That, I think, would make a tremendous article that would probably cover a whole page in the Mt. Vernon Signal. (Guess they already do.)

Now my problems are of a different sort. They are those of an aging woman, (whose children has forbidden her to climb ladders) unable now to hang curtains, put in a new bulb in a ceiling light or dust the cobwebs off the ceiling. Or fix a simple leaking faucet or keep the toilet from overflowing. When I called the plumber to fix the leaking faucet in the kitchen, he replaced it with a new one. A trip to the basement revealed a pipe leading to the kitchen needed to be replaced. Later when he was called to fix the over flowing toilet, and bath tub filling up with sewer water, and after he used all the means of clearing it up with no success, he said a new sewer pipe from the house to the street would have to be re-

placed which called for the yard to be dug up by a contractor and the root clogged pipe replaced by a root proof one by the construction company. That caused a problem in the yard where the excavation had left roots and rocks exposed. Guess who had to clean it up? Who picked up, piled up, and bagged up, those rocks and roots that had been an eye sore in my front yard. This had to be done before I could sew grass seed on the open scar by my driveway. Now Bobby, has a bigger territory to mow, but in time will be a much smoother one.

Seriously, Ike, I enjoy your column, and would like to meet you. I think we have a lot in common and both could benefit from an hour or so over a cup of coffee. I would like to hear your ideas on ecologs strip mining, mountain removal, water shortage, cause and remedy. My well of interest and knowledge of such things is running dry. Only people with like interest can awaken, or renew the urgency of doing something about the outrages committed against the mountain people in Eastern Kentucky by destroying the Mountains that have shadowed them since their birth, and by so doing destroyed their water supply.

I could go on and on about this but maybe another time huh?

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