Sweet and Sour By Zi Graves



When fate gives you lemons, make lemonade. I should be able to make pretty good lemonade by now since fate keeps dumping such things as lossof oness livelihood by slorm damage to the trees supplying it. Leveling the home place on the farm by fire temporarily out of my home because of fire and smoke damage; that is, if things like these are related to lemons.

My column, "Sweet and Sour," retty aptly covers the subject. The mons in my life have been dealt the Sometimes with tears, often with. Some with. Sometimes with tears, otten frustration, frequently patience and impatience view for space to be heard and listened to. When I lost several acres of timber, ready for harvesting, and the Lord Taketh, Blessed be the name of the Lord. "Maybe he has a better use for this land he just cleared by wind. The very next year another violent wind leveled another section including large casks close to the house and worry about losing my liveli-mod began to take precedent over patience. One more spring with its strong winds, followed the next winter with the worst ice storms to ever this har are particularly destroyed all timber left on our farm. It was when ation, frequently patience and I was driven through a scene of intri-cate ice covered trees, the beauty of which could be likened to fairyland, then onto my property, where the devastation of the ice storm was evident in acres and acres of pines, the trees that had escaped the windstorms broken down and uprooted by the broken down and uprocoted by the weight of the ice, my prayers of thanks for Your Blessings turned to one of, "What have I done God to deserve this?" His answers was, "Lo I am with you always."

Since I don't have the patience of Job, nor his faith, the next blow hit me the hardest of all, when Polly and Chuck told me early, Sunday morn-

ing, September 20, 1997, my house on the farm was burned to the ground. I tasted the bitterness of a green lemon rind. The timber Mat treasured and had watched grow to maturity was gone. The home we built and raised our three children in was gone. The home away from home for any and all relatives and friends who came, year after year, to partake of the hospitality of, Mat and Zi's home, where they know the welcome mat always greeted them, is gone. Those days are my exterdays.

The last kemon dealt me by fate is the one! I'm makine into kemonade.

the one I'm making into lemonade, with both the "Sweet and Sour" of my title column used. This episode of my losing a bout with fate began in my kitchen when I forgot to turn off the burner under a pan with a small amount of cooking oil in it. When I returned from the mailbox the kitchen was in flames.

oil in it. When I returned from the mailbox the kitchen was in flames. Now where does lemonade fit into another dissater in my life? Well, enough is enough, so I again asked of do?" Now what do I do?" The answer was clear, "Look around you and see what is there."

What I saw was neighbors, one calling the fire department, one calling the fire department, one calling the fire department one that the common univoking my Jawn hose to spray on the outside of the house until the firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen arrived. Then the arrival of fire trucks with volunteer firemen and doing a wonderful taking over and doing a wonderful job of extinguishing the fire before it reached other rooms or the roof. I was already beginning to make lemonade out of these lemons fate had dropped from the lemon tree. If my fate v be one of losses there surely had to be a message hidden somewhere in the a message hidden somewhere in the wreckage and here it was, in the smoke filled house 1 have called home for ten years, "If life deals you lemons, make lemonade.

I had been dealt the lemons, now where could I find the sugar to sweeten

it? It was then I began counting my blessings and not only found sugar aplenty but a big pot of honey to give additional sweetning and the extra flavor of honey for a bonus.

When the fire machines pulled away and I was told it was O.K. for me tog bo bed, in my first concern was for my treasured antique book cases, vanity, and china cabinet. And surprisingly, they had not been touched by the fire or water. The only visible damage was smoke-which was extensive, but could be taken care of by expert hands. It was then the better tests of elimon rind gave way to the peace of knowing God had blessed me by not allowing everything to go up in smoke and new I not only had a few pieces of treasured furniture left, I had friends and neighbors oftering a kind of concern and love that I had friends and neighbors oftering a kind of concern and love that I had friends and neighbors oftering a kind of concern and love that I had friends and neighbors oftering a kind of concern and love that I had friends a time to discover before. hadn't taken time to discover before So, Bea Hensley, Becky Hammons so, bear rensely, beety raininous, both made emergency phone calls, Alta Bullock, Jewell Alan, The Renners - all close neighbors, the firemen who protected the furniture, yet extinguished the fire quickly, all share in my thanks and the beginning of the "Pitcher of Lemonade" I am

making from the tree of lemons fate has harassed me with. Each of these neighbors offered for me in their homes. There were sincere offers of love and kindness. Sweetening for the lemonade. Folly and Chuck, being old hands and the second of the companies of the companies.

Polly and Chuck, being ofth hands adding sweetening ton my life, came to my rescue quickly and took control of things. Her home was my abode for several days, then a few days with Verna, my sister-in-law, "another cube of sugar in my lemonade," brought the reality of where do I go now? I can't keep going from place to place looking for a place to sleep? Even though I knew I was welcome to stay as long as I liked at either place, or goto Bessic Cromer's, my dear friend whose invitation to come and stay as long as I liked, with come and stay as long as I liked, with her had come as soon as she heard about the fire, was seriously consid-ered before I decided I needed a place I could call mine, whether it be my house on Tevis St. or a room in a motel. Bessie has sweetened my life with her love and kindness for 50 years or so. But right now in all the turmoil and decisions on where do I sleep tonight, I decided on a motel room. Thanks Bessie, your offer did add another spoonful of honey to my drink

Often there are people behind the scenes of everyday life who contribute to changes in a person attitude of which incident, or tragedy to some have time (always have) pelny of it) was a lemon or a chance to make with the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when the cally of the motel toom at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when the cally of the steepless when the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when the cally of the steepless when the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when the cally of the steepless when the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when the cally the steepless when the steepless when the steepless when the motel to steep the steepless when the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent at the steeple steeple steepless when the motel room at Kastle Inn was spent at the steeple steepless when the steeple steepless when the motel room at the steeple steepless when the steeple steeple steeple steepless when it is steeple steepless when it is steeple steepless and the steeple steepless when it is steeple steepless when it is steeple steepless and the steeple steepless when it is steeple steepless with a steeple steeple steep on the steeple steeple steeple steeple steeple steep motel room at Kastle Inn was spent steepless when her eality of the situation dawned on me, life I had no place of my own to lay my head. It was then depression rearred its ugly head and thought of Dr., MeElswain and his experience of the complete of house later I was sitting in his office, my distress viden, his smile and welcome greeting immediately ealming my irragined fears of homelessness and therefore the necessity of, by a quirk of face, spending my immer temporarily in a motel was not the worst thing that could happened. Yes, Dr. McElwain, I have, respectedly read the "Book of Job." Also the life of "Jesus Christ," His birth, His death. They all have my own problems - Huh? Your kind alk-strengthened my latih, yet I have my own problems - Huh? Your kind alk-ing too and reasoning with me, then ing too and reasoning with me, then including me in a casual and personal conversation cleared my thinking and ng to the big

added more sweetening to use one container of lemonade. I am making from the fruit of the lemon tree and sweetened by human kindness. Vicki, you have also contributed to that refishing drink. Your duties as a "perfection

freshing drink. Your duties as a "per-fect" mure has gone beyond that and has become to me, the attention of a friend. Your invitation to have dinner with you and Chelsea the other night, a daded a big spoonful of honey to it. Now that I am at peace with mys-cif, at least temporarily, I'll get busy with other events shaping my future. Thave no idea what is going on in the over to the clean up crew (but please hurry up). I am in a clean comfortable room with excellent service all the way

with excellent service all the way from the office where Larry Carter is supervisor, probably owns, the mo-tel. Hot coffee is available till 11:00 a.m. and I enjoy a cup along with a pleasant and beautiful walk when I can enjoy the scenery and watch the constantly moving traffic on I-75 as I

constantly moving traffic on 1-75 as I get my needed exercise.

By mid morning maid service is busy cleaning up the mess left by occupants of the night before, I haven't met a one I wouldn't gladly

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where the wattresses sit at break time.
This finally broke the ice between an old lady eating alone and several waitresses keeping busy (or loafing).
So now I never feel alone, there is a comradeship building that I liken to a grandma - looking over a bunch of happy grandchildren - doing their daily chores.

I felt their love and care the other night when they had responded to an invitation to "come see my pretty Christmas tree Polly gave me." One of the maintenance men, Tim, had of the maintenance men, Tim, had moved a table under the big window and set it up that morning. And it was too pretty to keep to myself. The multicolor lights flashing as the col-ors on the tree changed from green to red to purple to yellow was sharing with others whom I had only recently part. They came the tree and generamet. They came, they saw a

ciated the invitation to do so enough till in a few minutes when I heard a commotion outside! took a peek and here was five or six young folks deco-rating the outside of my window with big red bows and tinsel ropes. That act of responding to an old lady who wanted to share some of the beauty in wanted to share some of the beauty in her life brought tears of happiness that bonded us into a family like relationship. Enough so, that a huge Christmas stocking with, Granny Graves on it is hanging with the oth-ers on the counter they are using as a

ers on the counter they are using as a mantle.

Those who decorated my window were David and Tammie Jamison, Felicia Cameron, Kandice Jamison, Felicia Cameron, Kandice Jamison, Sendi Cameron, Kandice Jamison, Cameron, C

that has hounded me when there is so much love being converted to sweet-ening for it and I appreciate all the sugar and honey available.

The others taking part in my new family and friends, beerclore helping with my lemonade stand are from the restaurant. Mark Thomas, Janet Robinson, Ruby Mink, Jill Davidson, Melissa Miller, Kathy Brown, Angle Abney, Burn Powell and Heart Rigsty. From the motel, Louise, Charles, Kenny, James. If I have misseed any one I am sorry. My brain space for new names and faces is out of order. "Perhaps I ran out of Chads."

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