



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

The CD came three or four weeks ago in your basic plain brown wrapper in which was smuggled a couple layers of that inflated plastic stuff to keep it from breaking. I love getting things in the mail wrapped in row after row of those little bubbles because I get a such a kick out of busting it and irritating everybody in the home or office. When you learn to snap it properly, you can make a single pop sound like a pistol shot and startle the pants off your domestic peeps or coworkers.

My favorite trick is to snap off like

three or four in a row. POW! POW! POW! and then loudly stomp my feet under the desk to imitate the footfall of a rapidly fleeing criminal in lead shoes. Then I groan loudly to indicate that I am wounded, burp loudly to indicate a last and dying breath, and stomp both feet at the same time to create a monstrous thud thereby creating the impression that I have fallen and probably won't get up. Scream some ketchup under your nose and under your lower lip, roll your eyes back and you can have some fun. Just be sure they don't call 911

before you have the opportunity to explain that it was just a joke.

And even then they are not going to be amused.

Anyway, I was having so much fun with the bubble wrap that it took me a couple of weeks to get around to listening to the CD that was enclosed in the package. As best I recall there was a post-it note attached that said something like, "Enjoy," and it was signed J. or maybe Fred.

And I promptly played the first cut and put listening to the rest on my "to do list." My friend, when we are not brothers (He's far more Republican than I am Democrat) Frederick J. Beste, III, also known in hillbilly circles as FJ #3, lives in Wind Gap, Pennsylvania and he is a highly successful venture capitalist. However, to my knowledge, his only ventures (meaning he provided the cash so make them happen) into the music business has been to finance some live recordings of a Gathering of Writers who also play music we've had a couple of times at his place (near Allentown) and my personal covers of a bunch of John Prine.

Merle Haggard, Tom T. Hall etc. songs, dutifully recorded on CD, that it would be illegal to sell even if anybody wanted a copy. Suffice to say that Fred has not made a lot of his money in the recording industry.

In the case of my own CD, not a penny has been generated in sales.

But if Fred has a vested interest in the CD he sent me and that I finally got around to listening to at least a dozen times last week (it's playing in the background even as I write) his fortune in the music business is on the verge of greatness.

In short the best country band, recorded in Nashville, that I've heard in at least a decade is made up of young musicians, born, raised and trained in classical (can you say or spell Tchaikovsky?) music and they are from Russia. And I am absolutely gripped with the sound they generate and the feeling they capture. There's not a song on the CD that is

less than excellent, including one sung in their native language.

The band is called Bering Strait but less forgot about spelling and pronunciation Russian last names and simply talk about the music and the way they make it. The lead singers are two girls who haven't been speaking English all that long but sure know how to sing it and you'll be reminded of the Dixie Chicks and Martina McBride and Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn and Emmy Lou and Jerry Douglas and Alan Jackson and Ricky Skaggs and the list goes on and on. You'll hear a bluegrass lick here and a rock lick there with no apology that it was snatched from a loved one. Loved ones being the hero individual singers and bands that influenced Bering Strait into developing a sound that is both homogenous and, at the same time, perfectly unique.

I promise you faithfully that if you purchase the album entitled "Bering Strait" and listen to these two cuts: "I Could be Persuaded" and "I'm Not Missing you," you will keep the CD on your player and you will set it to play those two songs over and over again. You will not only be listening to some of the best music recorded in Nashville in many years, but you will be fondly reminded of how honest and unpretentious country music

can be when it is sung from the heart and soul. Believe me, these Russian kids do it a lot better than anything else on the so-called Country Music scene these days.

The only way I know to get their music is online. The Bering Strait Album is available at amazon.com. The band also has a website with complete bio-sketches of the band and samples of the music. Go to beringstraitonline.com. And if that fails, just look them up with your favorite search engine. You will not be sorry you did and you will be saying to yourself that I'd should write about music more often than he does soup beans. I already know that so you need not write a letter to the editor—



T.J.'s Journal

by: Tonya J. Cook

Sometimes in life we all stop to reflect on where our lives are going and the various paths we have taken to get to where we are today. In the road of life, we can expect the unexpected. We can't always predict what our life will be like in ten years, five years, or even one year. We may think we know what will be happening in our life just a few months away, but can we really? I know you're probably like me and there are thousands more just like us living the same old routine in our daily lives that we have for years. We get up at the same time, go to work, do the same household chores, see the same people, entertain ourselves in the same fashion, sit on the same pew at church, and go to bed at the same time. We even go to the same old places for vacation. Just how many trips to Disney World, Gatlinburg, King's Island, or Myrtle Beach do we need to experience in a lifetime?

A very wise person once told me that everybody you meet has an impact on your life. This impact is either positive or negative, so therefore, try to be impacted by those who will have a positive influence in your life. Kids, this is why parents are so selective about the friends you have now. Friendships forged in the adolescent years set the pattern for the life many years ahead of our adulthood. I firmly believe that by the time one is eighteen or twenty years old, one's lifestyle and habits have been determined and will rarely change. We all need to get the negative influences out of our lives and surround ourselves with more positive influences.

There is a cliché that says when God shuts a door, He always opens a window. My personal interpretation is that from time to time, God chooses to close a certain chapter in our lives only to begin a new chapter possibly with new people and a new setting. For those of us with a few years to our credit, we have seen many chapters come and go in our lives.

These chapters usually occur after a major change in our life such as a graduation, marriage or divorce, the death of a loved one, a new birth in the family, a new job, or a move to a new household. The older you are, the more chapters you will have.

Today I was just reflecting on the chapters in my life God has written for me this past year, and the win-

dows He has opened. One chapter was very sad. The death of my mother, occurred in March after a long illness. That ended that chapter in my life. Only twelve days later, God opened a window and started writing another chapter in my life when I married my husband, Stanley. Although I still have the house in London I shared with my mother, I now live primarily in Mt. Vernon, another chapter and window in my life.

At this time last year, I couldn't have imagined in my wildest dreams that all of these changes would have occurred in only a year. It was August first of last year when Stanley and I went out for the first time. Of course this was after I had known him for about twenty years. I guess he had a positive influence on me back then and still does.

It has been only a year but I can remember that first date like it was yesterday. We went on a picnic to Levi Jackson State Park. I took meatloaf, potato salad, and baked beans. For dessert, I prepared peanut butter pie. Stanley said that I baited my hook with the meatloaf, and set it with the potato salad and baked beans, but reeled him in with the peanut butter pie. He says that if I had served some of my chicken and dumplings with that meal, we would have had to sleep that very night. After that night, he was at my house for supper at least five nights a week. Even today, he still hopes that the men at work don't find out what he ate for breakfast for fear of causing marital discord. He fears all of B&H Tool Works would be at his house for breakfast. I guess the fastest way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

I had no idea I would ever marry again. The thought was very remote. I was so certain of this that I didn't have but one single plot at the cemetery. Like I said, it just goes to prove you can expect the unexpected. This year has brought about the most changes I've ever experienced so far in my life. Some changes were for the better, and some were for the worse. This next year I'm going to try to put the bad chapters of my life in perspective and begin writing new and positive chapters as God opens new windows for me. Let's all try to get started writing positive chapters as the windows open in our lives.

Fun Horse Show

Sunday, August 3, 2003

1 p.m.

Little World's Fair

Brodhead, Ky.

Mount Vernon Signal

PUBLICATION NUMBER 366-000
Periodical Postage Paid in Mt. Vernon, Ky. 40456
606-256-2244

Published every Thursday since November, 1887. Offices in the Mt. Vernon Signal Building on Main Street in Mt. Vernon, Ky. 40456. Postmaster, send address changes to P.O. Box 185, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky 40456.

James Anderson, Jr., Publisher Executive Richard E. Anderson, Editor

Patricia M. Anderson, Managing Editor

Patricia Benge, Advertising Manager

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In County - \$16.75/Yr. Out-of-County In State - \$21.75/Yr.

Out-of-State \$30.00/Yr.

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Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

I thought Bush had already reached the bottom of the dumb pit until he released those pictures of Oday and Qusay's. Teddy Roosevelt almost got inched for having his picture taken standing on a dead buffalo he had shot.

I had known for days that the Hussein brothers were negotiating for their surrender, but obviously, Rumsfeld and Bush prefer their high profile prisoners in a more honorable position. Without any regard for international law.

The Navy trained us to rescue our enemy from the sea, and treat them well. Is there a line in the sand somewhere that Bush supporters say this is enough? Is this it?

I have written before that Reagan ran up more debt than the sum total of all presidents before him. Bush is exceeding that. No "end game" for him. Without money "trickling down" from the fed our country officials have my sympathy. I don't envy what is ahead for them.

Jim Norton



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