

Points East

By:
Ike Adams

There are any number of well-kept secrets to the outside world still prominent in the sacred hills that form the borderlines between dear old eastern Kentucky and the bordering states of Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

And secret though they are, we are not talking about the hand full of aging experts scattered throughout the mountains who still possess the expertise to grow a few rows of white hickory cane corn, let it properly season, grind it into rough nuggets, mix it with ample spring water, yeast and sugar, let it ferment a few days and then distill the resulting liquid into a scant few quarts of smooth, 160 proof, clear corn whiskey that has been proven to cure every thing short of deafness, blindness and a few forms of cancer.

One old fellow, who only lived to be 99, in Bell County, used to tell me that he was sorry he made it because whiskey had killed most of the men in his family. He said that all three of his brothers had died just after they reached 85 and if it wasn't whiskey, it was brought on chewing tobacco that got 'em and he was about as bad as the other.

But as usual, I digress. Don't get the idea that you can go up in the hills and find a reliable source of homemade corn whiskey anymore. In fact, if you get an offer, turn it down because it's almost surely fake. There are no stills in the heads of the boilers, no smoke on the mountains in late November, no illegal homemade whiskey to be had unless you want to use it to preserve a cadaver. That's not to say that it's still not out there. It just ain't to be had unless you are awfully close kin to the maker and even then you need a medicinal rea-

son for needing a quart or two to get you through another year. Thank God I'm a sickly man is all that I have to say.

In the meantime, the next best kept secret happens the first weekend of October. It's called The Kingdom Come Swappin' Meetin' and may well be the most authentic celebration of Appalachian culture and craftsmanship in the region. Don't ask me why it is not better publicized, nor why it has had such scant media attention outside the immediate area but the festival has been going on since the early 60's and those who go once tend to become regulars.

Until my friends, Barry and Judy Leonard, moved to Benham a few months ago (Barry to minister a church and Judy to head up the Development Office at Southeast Community College) I'd never heard of the Swappin' Meetin' and I am ashamed of that because I grew up just across the mountain in Letcher County. Anyway Judy called me up, because we are both in the same line of work, to discuss some incidental matter of business and then she asked if I was coming to the Swappin' Meetin' in a tone of voice that intimated I should be as familiar with it as Labor Day or Christmas or the Fourth of July.

That was about three weeks ago. In the meantime I've spoken with dozens of people from Maine to Miami, Chicago to the Outer Banks, who tell me that the Kingdom Come Swappin' Meetin' is the absolute best festival in the mountains and their

(Cont. to A5)

ramblings

by perline m. anderson

I am a small town girl, born and bred. I am an out of my small town, I am nervous, confused, irritable and whiny. Thus, the couple of days that Allison and I spent with daughter, Jane and family in northern Kentucky (or in southern Ohio as Rick likes to torment Jane) last week, I was all of the above. And then, oh dear, Allison got sick and we had to come home a couple of days early.

The advent of cross-crossing interstates, exit/ramp and six lane traffic came into being and were adjusted to by the rest of the world while I sat placidly in Mt. Vernon. I have managed to conquer Nicholasville Road in Lexington, on a good day, i.e., have come with me to tell me which lane to get into at which time, but take me further north than that and -- you don't want to.

Thankfully, Allison has a good sense of direction and common sense, both of which her father contributed -- she got her looks and her sweet disposition from me -- just kidding she actually an Anderson through and through.

Jane does wonderful with her en-

viros. She doesn't get stressed and can't understand my discomfort. But, she has lived there for many years now and is used to it.

While in "southern Kentucky/southern Ohio" we attended a Reds ballgame at their new Great American Ballpark. We figured out why it was "Great" quickly -- it has got to be the "Greatest" rooftop of fans of baseball in the country.

An ordinary bottle of water that I paid \$1.79 for a six-pack recently at Food World cost \$3.25 each. A soft drink was \$4.00, hotdogs \$4.50 -- you get the picture.

Seats, from which the players looked like stick figures, cost \$14.00 each and parking was \$6 plus \$2 each for the ferry ride to take us across the river to the park where we had to walk completely around the ballpark to get to the window to buy our tickets so we could begin submitting to legal extortion to watch the Reds lose -- again--told you I get whiny.

Suffice it to say that if I had the misfortune of winding up in a big city, I would become a prisoner in my own home or have to depend entirely on someone else to drive me, taxis or buses. It wouldn't be a pretty sight to see an old woman sitting in the middle of traffic crying.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to the letter regarding the game wardens. Those of us who have properties where illegal hunters and poachers go are extremely glad they are here. At least now, my children can safely play outside without guns being fired all the time, or getting a restful night's sleep without hearing guns or continually seeing bright lights shining through our fields.

It's amazing how people are so quick to point fingers at our law enforcement officers when they or their family members break the law but when the same people, or the same family members are in distress, our law enforcement is the first ones they call -- you do the math! Since this game warden came to our county, illegal poaching has dropped dramatically. Not only that, but when half of our police department quit, he was one of the first ones to step up in a time of need when Mt. Vernon only had three full time officers.

So, all I can say is with all these people who disregard the law and want to complain, the game warden must be doing his job. And, for those of us who respect it, we say, "Good job, keep up the good work!" A thankful citizen, Melanie Campbell

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank the following people for helping with the Gancer Survivors Dinner held before the Relay for Life.

Kelly McClure, Tim and Tricia McGuire, Leigh Ann Cox, Danielle Blanton, Aaron Anderson, Megan Anderson, Cindy Anderson, Troy Taylor, Devon Bussell, Holly Childress, Melinda Kincer, Dreanna Crowder, Tammy Cox, Leigh Ann Caldwell, Rachel Killen, Kayla Bryant, Allie Mink, Josh Blair, Cory Childress, Morgan Kincer, Rachel Wright, Amanda Wright, Josh Nation, Jessica Cummins, Meghan Nation, Jerrilyn Smith, Jim Cox and the group Behind the Cross.

A very special thank you to those who donated items and/or gave of their time to prepare the meal. The Breadhead Fire Department, Rockcastle Steak House, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Kastle Inn Restaurant, Town and Country Chevron, B&M Liquidators, Cumberland Valley District Home Health, Pleasant Run Baptist Church, Cox Funeral Home, Citizens Bank, Christine Taylor, Jenna Lee Hansel, Kathleen Staton, Carol Pybas, Jamie Cornelius and Sparks Flower Shop for the beautiful arrangements.

It is very evident that this community truly cares about finding a cure for this dreadful disease and I again thank everyone involved with honoring those who have survived it.

Sincerely, Natalie Taylor

(Cont. to A5)



T.J.'s Journal

by: Tonya J. Cook

How time does fly when you're having fun. Not only myself, but almost everyone that I know must have been having a real blast for the last few years, to make time to pass so quickly.

Recently, I've talked with several people and sooner or later in the conversation the subject of "how fast time is going now" surfaces. These people are from all walks of life and represent a wide variety of society. No, this doesn't include the teens. Most teens are counting the days until when they will be sixteen, eighteen, or twenty-one. I say enjoy the "small-pace" years while you can. After you're twenty-one, you'll not have anything else to look forward to until you're sixty-five. That is, unless you count the various birthdays of thirty and especially forty and fifty when your friends, family, and co-workers laugh, point, and snicker at you while you listen to "You're over the hill" a thousand times.

Personally, I've found a simple solution to time passing: so fast, as many women have. I've been thirty-nine and holding for several years now. One girlfriend of mine, Martha, says that I've just about worn out of the "holding pattern." I've been holding, but everything else is sagging or won't work like it once did. By the way, you would be surprised in listening to the conversation of all the women who are thirty-nine, wear size six dresses, size five shoes, and say, "Yes, it's my natural color."

It seems only a few days ago we were looking forward to the warm days of spring and summer, of enjoying our gardens, getting out of school, and all of the fun-filled summer activities that were in store for us.

Now, summer is almost gone, the gardens are being harvested, school is ready to start, and the summer activities have begun to diminish. Where does the time go? I've always heard that time waits for no man. It must be true.

It seems only yesterday that I was preparing for school to start. I had elementary school, and looked for any excuse to stay at home. As the years passed, I began to enjoy school and only missed three days of school during my junior high and high school years and somehow managed to become an Honor Student. To look back on my high school days, it

seems, they were some of the most enjoyable and carefree days of my life.

I always enjoyed the summer vacations, though. I got a chance to sleep in late, travel, and look for new ways to amuse myself every day. The kids growing up when I did didn't have all the new gadgets available today; so we had to use our imagination. You would be surprised how an old cardboard box that a washer and drier came in can instantly become a fort, a dollhouse, or rocket to the moon. We had plenty of rope for jumping, ropes and inner tubes for swinging in trees, jacks, and my favorite, hopscotch. I still have my hopscotch rock. I was the hopscotch demon of the fourth grade.

Instead of asking parents for money, my friends and I would gather some old, empty pop bottles near the edge of the road while walking, and by the time we got to the general store we had enough bottles to turn in and receive a dollar or so.

At that time, a kid could buy more treats than we could carry home and still have money left over. I haven't tasted candy that good since those days. Collecting bottles not only amused us, it let us use our ingenuity, gave us a feeling of self-worth, and provided the community a service by cleaning the roadside. We didn't even have to be worried about being kidnapped or being sexually molested. Everybody in our little community knew everybody else and their dog, so it was a carefree society. I guess that is what Hillary Clinton was talking about when she wrote her book, It Takes a Village. I guess Hillary didn't realize that those days are gone forever.

Sometimes I wonder what in my life I would have changed, or how I can change my future for the better. Since time is passing so quickly, am I regretting all from each day that I can? Have I made peace with myself, with God, and with those around me before the sands of time are poured through the hourglass? Only each of us individually can answer these questions. It is too late to change the past mistakes, but we can get busy and reap all that we can for today; physically, spiritually, and mentally. Yesterday is gone, time has taken it away, we do have tomorrow, but we do have today.

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/Editor; Richard F. Anderson, Editor

Perline M. Anderson, Managing Editor

Raege Berger, Advertising Manager

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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