



T.J.'s Journal

by: Tonya J. Cook

Today as I cooked breakfast, I noticed that the windows were steamed over. The temperature outside was cooler than the temperature inside. This allowed condensation to form on the windows. This is a rare occurrence for this time of year. We can expect condensation until at least early spring.

As I looked at the steamy windows, my mind raced back to the days when I was only a young girl, and I started to remember the steamy windows, the cozy fires, and the delicious aromas that drifted from my Mom's or Grandma's kitchens. There often would be snow on the ground. I'm certain it used to snow more years ago than it does now.

There was usually a cozy fire crackling in an old coal or wood-burning stove, or in the fireplace. There was also a distinct aroma of woodburning and a sooty smell drifting throughout the whole house. Just add the aroma of apple pie, homemade yeast bread, or a hearty stew coming from a kitchen. Let the cozy steam go up with an air freshener like that. What would they call it? "Down On the Farm"? If they could bottle this, a lot of old-timers like me would buy it and try to re-live our childhood.

My generation and the generations before me were very fortunate to have grown up when we did, especially if we were blessed to live in a rural area. The families worked the land, and we had many state and national parks, but none of them live up to the camping and hiking adventure we recently experienced in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The camping area we selected had to be reserved a couple of weeks in advance due to its popularity. After arriving at the camp site we found out quickly that it was so popular. The beauty of the magnificent mountains, the cool lush white water streams with their large granite boulders diverting the cascading water and the deep green hemlock-laced forest with its superb hiking trails made it worth the trip. But this was only the appetizer.

My son discovered the camping area was located near a gorgeous meadow region with miles of large rolling fields nestled between three mountain ranges called Cades Cove. The scenic area had been a small cattle ranch, but it was a frontier settlers' through out the 1800's. Some of the original log cabins and barns still remained in tact and several were completely restored which added to the mystique of our stay.

One of the first Cades Cove attractions we visited was an original, fully operational mill that we observed grinding corn, into meal. The mill's large stone grinding wheel was nature-powered by a bustling mountain stream that flowed adjacent to the mill. The rustic mill gracefully overlooked a historically majestic, two-story log house that resembled the stately old Walton's house from the 70's TV program. The house was roofed with wooden shingles and furnished with antique furniture of the 1800's era. Later that afternoon while picking up a few supplies in Townsend; the closest town to the camping area, we ran across a small restaurant called Smokey Joe's. To our surprise the no frills place served the best smoked, pulled pork barbecue that ever twanged my taste buds. My whole family fell in love with Smokey Joe's.

Later that day after returning to the camp site with our supplies, we were ready to explore the cove in more detail, which turned out to be the high point of the trip. That evening we were excited to sit upon the abundant variety of wildlife that inhabited the area. As we were surveying the outskirts, our adrenaline rose as we witnessed a rare red wolf in search of prey. We stood large numbers of whitetail deer grazing on the rich vegetation of the rolling pastoral landscape and we observed in a

childhood occurrence only immediately family would have known: The businessman played along and acted as if he knew the two helpful young men as he tried desperately to place who they were, and how they knew him.

After they ate, the two young gentlemen took the businessman back to the airport and gave him a little more pocket money and dropped him off at the entrance to the terminal. He thanked them for their kindness. He still had almost an hour to wait, and the temptation to drink overcame him, so he thought he'd go have a drink at the bar in the terminal. He got inside the bar, and was about to order a drink, and who should appear but the same two young men who reminded him that he was a recovering alcoholic. They accompanied him to the ticket counter, and stayed behind him until he bought his ticket. After buying the ticket, the businessman turned to thank the two young men again, and all of their help. They were gone and nowhere in sight. He asked a lady who had been standing behind him at the ticket counter where the two young men had gone so quickly, she told him that she hadn't seen anyone fitting that description. No, this is not a story from the Twilight Zone; it's just a reminder of whom we may entertain unwares.

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They called him by name, and already knew his situation. They offered him some money for a ticket, and since the plane wasn't to be leaving for almost four hours, they took him out to eat. As they drove, they talked as if they had known the businessman all of his life. They knew

Elijah Oliver's Paradise

By: Carl Edward Harris

I guess I have always enjoyed the great outdoors. As a youngster I remember spending a lot of time in the forest with nature. As an adult my family has visited many state and national parks, but none of them live up to the camping and hiking adventure we recently experienced in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

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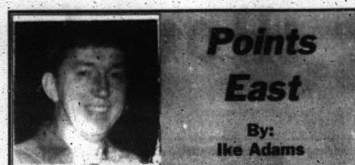
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wooded area spanned with large red oak trees a milder black bear and her three cubs cackling on a stump before she abruptly rushed her cubs off to safety from the increasingly curious crowd of onlookers. The next morning we planned a hiking trip that led us to stunning Abrams' Waterfall. The plunging overflow gushed into a cool, clear mountain stream teeming with brown-spotted trout scurrying through it. From there we hiked to a rustic, superbly well-preserved five-room log cabin named after the original frontier owner Elijah Oliver. During our observation of the scenic cabin we suddenly noticed one of the largest male black bears I had ever encountered ease out of the forest to within



Points East

By: Ike Adams

'He was some mother's darling, some mother's son. Once he was fair and once he was young. Some mother nursed him, her darling to sleep, but they left him to die like a tramp on the street'.

Those are the chorus lyrics to an old traditional hymn that we sing in the old churches here in the mountains of Kentucky and they bring a tear to my eye to every eye in the house because we all know someone among us who died like that.

"Like a tramp on the street". Out of luck. Out of money. Out of hope. Nothing left here but the land and it is way beyond being over the river, worn-out or not. The good earth is mostly washed away; at least the good-growing topsoil which the lies plundered along the deltas of the

Ohio and Mississippi rivers and it would be the perfect growing medium if not spoiled with the ever-present chips of petroleum, chemical-bearing coal that ruin its potential to grow a vegetable fit to eat.

Not much legacy left here in the hills as the mountaintops are pushed with huge earth-moving machinery to topple down around us or those we love. No more good moonshine in Bell County. No more crops of tall, white-Hickory-Cane with the big ears and huge grain that made such fine bread crumb and even more wonderful mass for the still--and don't forget about the fodder. No more milks or milk cows or hogs to winter-feed with the fodder--so let it rot

in the field, if you grow it at all, for old times' sake and maybe the deer or coons will eat it. What a waste of time.

The kids and nest of kin all moved away to industrial mid-west cities in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Dayton, Columbus, Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and a zillion little towns scattered in between the major cities. A bunch of us moved here from the mountains to the low-lying countryside of Garrard, Lincoln, Casey, Pulaski, Madison, Rockwell, Laurel and surrounding counties.

"Down in the country" we called it years ago. The ultimate escape from the caving-in mountains where we used to farm.

Over the last few weeks, Elaine Adams, who lives on McWhorter Road in Laurel County, and I have caught up with each other. I used to live within a couple miles of Elaine and her parents in Letcher County. But they sold out there and moved to what I believe to be a better land. I'm serious. If farming is in your nature and you live up in the hills, it's probably a little late to look for a place "down in the country". In the

(Cont. to A-6)

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e-mail address - mvsignal@usa-spot.com

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

I have had letter to the Signal, since my last great folks donated clothes, food, toys and some food toys or whatever is needed still for Christmas baskets. We are still a long way from filling all the baskets -- we still need help.

We feed people all year long as most of you know and any amount of money can help with food toward feeding and clothing folks on need. We can't do it if we don't have it. We are hoping to have a trailer put out here for the mission to serve every-thing when they need us; regardless of who they are and no matter what time of day it is.

But, friends, it takes a lot of money to do this. We wouldn't ask for your help if it wasn't needed. I ask at this time that local businesses and churches support us in our effort to serve those in need.

Please call or write us: May God bless you for caring enough to help us help others.

Sincerely,

Kathy Breitz

P.O. Box 490

Mt. Vernon, Ky. 40456

758-4203 or 758-8546

Dear Editor,

Printed Minutes on TV now every few minutes now. Big, Big trouble in Iraq, as a guy plowboy stumbling around in the Navy, I rubbed elbows with the Kennedy. Assigned to the mighty communications ship USS Mont McKinley AGC-7 we would provide the "red phone" for these Presidents when they traveled to foreign countries. This way they could avoid the nuclear missiles on a few seconds notice ending the world. Often we would leave six weeks early and have a little fun along the way. When Eisenhower visited Valparaiso Chile in 1959 we left Norfolk early. First stop, Port-A-Prince Haiti. Interesting place as you could still buy a banana on the street for a few bucks. Big green flies were blowing everything.

And as bad as I needed it I was afraid to drink beer. But the girls were beautiful. I settled for a "wooden" shrunken head, named after my X. It sets here now. Next we made it through Panama Canal and stopped a few days in Panama City. Another environmental disaster. Women threw the dishwater and potato peelings from stories above to the streets. More big green flies than

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