

# IN THE SHADOW OF HOGAN'S MOUNTAIN

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## Requiem for an Old Dog

Last week, my 16-year-old dog made his way to the beagle graveyard on the back Hollar hill. He was the last of the many beagles I had during the bygone days when the chasing of rabbits and the baying of hounds was a major recreational activity for men in the area. One of my first retirement activities was to build a dog lot around my farm pond to protect a good neighbor reputation. Otherwise, my gang of beagles would have made short work of the cats in the neighborhood, created trash can havoc, or dragged all types of dead and decaying trophies on to our back porch. My last two surviving beagles were males and lived like two old bachelor brothers with a whole

litany of behaviors that would make most pet owners cringe. They loved to dig out of the lot and made it a game with their owner to find the location of their latest great escape. Whenever some animal invaded their territory, the urgent barking coming from the lot was sure to wake not only their owners, but also the surrounding neighbors. I had no other choice but to get out of bed, find my flashlight, and go deal with the latest invading critters. Four dog lot incursions of note included raccoons, cats, or opossums on the fence post, the yearly visit of Myrtle the snapping turtle that usually wound up bitten fast to a dog, and the deer in the lot that kept lapping the pond. The final

incursion --the spraying skunk which caused both old dogs to reek of sulfuric skunk scent created the most consternation. After several odorous experiences, I found that a mixture of a quart of hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup of baking soda, a small amount of liquid soap, and a quart of water did the best job. Good latex gloves and old clothes that could be disposed of were necessary. Oh, and don't put the mixture in a closed container or you may have an unexpected volcano.

As the old dogs aged, their vision, hearing, and arthritis became issues. The next to last old dog lasted to the age of 14 when the ravages of cancer caused him to pass to the great beyond. My

nephew buried him in the beagle graveyard while we were away on a trip. The remaining beagle went into mourning which included a desolate howl that resulted in allowing the almost blind and deaf old dog with cancer to sleep on the porch. As his condition worsened, I decided it was time to dig a grave for him in the beagle graveyard. While I was digging the grave, the old dog shuffled his way to where I was working and sniffed around the grave of his old bachelor brother. He then came over to where I was digging his grave. He looked down in the grave and then looked at me with a dog expression that said, "What the heck are you doing?" He then proceeded to not just walk, but run back to his place on the porch, and returned to more regular eating and movement. The old dog would make a wide berth of the beagle graveyard any time he accompanied me to my irrigation pond on the back of my property.

His nose still worked even if he was almost completely blind and deaf. On several occasions, he would disappear for more than a day. The first time he disappeared, I searched all over the neighborhood only to return disappointed about not locating him. It was hard to suppress my aggravation as he exited from under the deck, stretched and stiffed the air to see if I was nearby. One of his final disappearing acts lasted four days. Both my wife and I figured he had gone to find a place to die. Being a regular Facebook user, my wife posted a picture of the old dog and made nice statements about how loving he was to our grandchildren and faithful to follow me to the garden, farm pond, and ride on my ATV near the end. Well with the luck of a centenarian in dog years and the information network created by Facebook, we located him almost a mile from home on the porch of a Good Samaritan fourth-grade boy who was providing him excellent care. When he smelled me, he knew it was time to head back to Hollar town and say so long to his new young friend. The old dog stayed near the house for about a week and again disappeared. This time the disappearance was final. And yes, I did find the body of my constant companion of sixteen years. You guessed it! I found his body near the beagle graveyard. As I buried him in his previously prepared grave, the memories of his lifelong escapades tempered the sadness of the loss of an old friend. I still miss seeing him at his appointed place on the porch and having him get tangled in my feet as I put on my garden boots. I am sure there are many others reading this column who also miss deceased pets who occupied special places in your hearts.

## Bethlehem Business Association:

### What is Community Development?

Community development is a process where community business leaders come together to take cooperative action and create solutions to common problems. Community interests like economic, social, environmental, and cultural, often develop from this type of collective action being taken at a grassroots level. This kind of development ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large projects that may involve a broader objective. Effective community development should be a long-term endeavor, well planned, initiated and supported by community leaders, businesses and local government leaders, and most important be of benefit to the whole community. Successful community development is a process which community members become more responsible and are willing to organize together to develop healthy options that are important to all. This kind of development seeks to improve quality of life, creating employment and economic opportunities. Often when we think of "community", it tends to indicate geographic terms, but the reality is that our community is the village, the city, the neighborhood where we live and associate with one another on a regular basis. Community development is a tool to bring more people together to create a better community. The term "development" may not always mean growth, but it will always imply change. One of the primary challenges of community development is to balance the need for long-term solutions with the day-to-day realities that require immediate decision making with short term action. Regardless of how big or small the initiatives are it will require dedicated people and businesses to participate together. The Bethlehem Business Association was organized January 26th 2017 to bring Bethlehem businesses together to build a better community. The next meeting of BBA will be at PJ's Steak & Seafood on August 10th at 6PM "Meet & Greet" prior to 6:30 Dinner Meeting. All Bethlehem business owners are welcome.

## Things you Might Do to Help Your Child with a New School Year

The beginning of a new school year was one of my favorite times in the 41 years I served as a teacher, school administrator and professor. Children arrived in new clothing, great expectations of new friends and new teachers, and the reset that came with the new year.

Parents continue to have a crucial role in getting children off to a good school year. Maybe my 41 years provide me the opportunity to offer "sage" advice about creating an environment for a smooth and productive opening. Many of the following suggestions are geared toward younger children, but are applicable to older students as well.

A multitude of parental advice gives Ivies in our world. Parents must develop their own confidence level to chart a path for intellectual, social, and moral development of their children. The following is a supermarket of ideas for the re-start of a new school year.

1. Provide a positive mind set for the new school year. Take advantage of any "meet and greet" programs provided by the school.
2. Be aware of any negative interaction issues with other children in the neighborhood, child care settings, etc. These issues that might impact class placement should be discussed with a counselor or principal before the school year begins. Don't wait until student assignments are set. Class rosters are set using a variety of factors that make it very difficult to make changes in class assignments once they are set.
3. Establish a clear plan for after-school care and communicate these plans clearly to the school. Investigate school, community-based, or individual care programs well-in-advance of school opening.
4. Design a distinct plan for after-school activities that provides a set time to do school-related assignments and homework. Don't over program your child's after school enrichment activities. Many young people are programmed with activities 3-4 afternoons per week. It is easier to program less in the beginning of the year to establish the time needed to meet school-related assignments, homework, and programs. The schedule may be tweaked as the year progresses.
5. Make the school aware of any changes in family demographics - divorce, death, etc.
6. Establish playdates with two or three of your kids' friends or new classmates to rebuild existing social ties. Most class rosters are posted at school.
7. Get your kids involved in programs that they can do after school to keep them active and moving - scouting, dance, karate, sports, etc. Too much sedentary "screen time" negatively impacts the wellness of children.
8. Establish a bed time schedule in advance of school opening. Enforce bed time during the school year.
9. Encourage your kids to read at least one book before the school year begins.
10. Review the school calendar with your children that they will use to manage their activities.
11. Parents should become familiar with daily planners and communication methods used by their child's teacher. For children who are less schedule oriented, you might also review some apps like iHomework or MyHomeWork to help your children organize assignments. Egg timers or clocks on I phones are helpful with homework doodlers. Establish an "official" homework area in your home - table, student desk, etc.
12. Make school or homework assignment sessions manageable in length. Don't expect most children to sit for two-hour homework sessions. Break up the tasks with short breaks - snack break, bathroom break, taking pet out for bathroom, etc. Easily distracted children should have tasks broken into small parts. Praise the completion of the

small parts. Learn how to use positive phrases to motivate homework completion.

13. Set up a specific time on Sunday to review a child's upcoming weekly schedule with time needed for activities, academic assignments, extra-curriculars, family activities, etc. A family calendar either using scheduling apps or a white erase board posted in a kitchen or high-traffic area of the home is helpful to track everyone's activities and commitments. Very important to establish time requirements to complete school assignments. For example, don't wait until the night before to try to finish a major project.
14. Establish some family time management rules for children - screen time (I Pads, computer games, etc.) for the school year and create a daily "family time" for oral sharing (not texts, twitter, or Facebook posts). It could be at dinner or before bed.
15. Teach children how to prioritize with simple "to do" lists. For those with cell phones, use the meeting reminder function to help parents and children remember important school assignments and even the start of homework time.
16. Take your kids shopping using the lists of school supplies, books and technology needs from teachers. Many teachers will post these on school web pages. You might even consider buying a little extra and giving them to your child's teacher. Let kids see what supplies they have from the past year.
17. Back pack purchases are usually a social statement. Make sure the back pack fits your child. Google sites that provide information on successful parent/teacher conference such as: <https://www.care.com/c/stories/3268/strategies-for-a-successful-parent-teacher-co/> and <https://www.care.com/c/stories/3267/parent-teacher-conference-8-steps-to-take-af->. Use some time management tools to help relieve the "get them to school on time stress factor." Some ideas include putting out clothes for the next day before they go to bed, checking backpacks for notes to avoid morning surprises, establishing a morning bathroom use schedule, loading school back packs at night and placing by the door, making a parent in-box for parent for things like permission forms, creating lunch box rules if carrying lunch, or google for other ideas. Discuss the different pros and cons of bringing versus buying school lunches and get school menus in advance to discuss lunch choices.
18. Set your clocks up 5-10 minutes to aid in being on time.
19. Have a talk with children before school opens about making friends, bullying, riding bus, and make positive statements about their ability to be successful at their new grade level.
20. Talk to your child each day about what he or she is doing in school and discuss what he or she learned.
21. Remember that everything does not have to be perfect in your child's life. It is important that children learn how to deal with difficulties successfully. Every parent must address the most effective ways to help children with their moral development in an imperfect world.
22. Parents should remember to build a little "me" time in their lives.

Again, this list is only a supermarket of ideas that may assist parents with the start of a new school year. Relax! In all my years, I had very few students who had major difficulties adapting to a new school year. Children are more adaptive to change than most adults.




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