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# When am I no longer that new guy?

I've been here right at seven months now, the first half as a contractor as I was running an unsuccessful and ill-advised campaign for office in Warren County and the second half as your full-time editor here at the *Smithville Review*.

Not to suck up to you or nothing, but I really like it here. I have my own office and my own bathroom, the latter of which might could use a good scrubbing since I don't think it's been cleaned since Bush was in office – the first one. The folks are nice here and it's a pleasant little community with plenty of news and events to keep me busy.

With that being said, there may come a time when my present column name becomes antiquated. When I came up with the title "That New Guy" I've got to admit I didn't know if I'd be staying.

Actually, I thought I'd win the election but as we all know, that didn't happen as I simply found a novel way to burn a few thousand bucks and have nothing to show for it.

So, my question is, since I plan on staying, when does my column name become outdated? After a year, two years or five? Some folks say I'm from here anyway.

"You talk like folks do here and act like them too," Barbara Ann, our executive assistant here tells me. "So, you're from here."

For years and years I wrote a column called "Taking a Stand" when I worked at the newspaper to our south. It wasn't exactly a humor piece like I generally right today. Actually, it was quite the opposite. It was an

opinionated, muckraking, hard-hitting column dealing with politics and controversial matters that tended to stir up the masses. I look back on some of my old columns now and can hardly believe that was me being so judge-y about other people.

However, after 15 years of writing my scathing column I actually sat down and read what I was writing, trying to pick out stuff to enter in the newspaper contest. I went through week after week, reading the same old drivel and then I suddenly realized something – my column stunk. It was practically unreadable and a rehash of the same old stuff week in and week out. I had to change.



THAT NEW GUY  
by Duane Sherrill

So, like a smoker throwing the half-full Marlboro pack away, I decided to go cold turkey on the political and ideological mess and I'd try something new – humor. I'm a funny guy. And, sure enough, it caught on. I was so different that the editor there even changed my column name without telling me, changing it to "Family Man," since I wrote so much about the funny things my kids do. The sad part is it took me over a month to realize the title over my column had changed.

To read my stuff now you'd never think I was such a jerk back in the day. It's refreshing to get to write happy stuff. There's already enough bad stuff going on without having to read more on the editorial page.

Contact Duane Sherrill at  
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# A talking donkey

In October 1961, a TV show about a talking horse named Mr. Ed debuted. The idea of a talking horse came from a series of short stories for children appearing in a magazine in 1937. The author of the series also had a series of children's novels called Freddy the Pig.

Long before this, a story appeared in the Bible about a talking donkey. It talked to its owner when he was riding it to a place God didn't want him to go. The donkey's owner, Balaam, was asked by the king of Moab, Balak, to curse the people of Israel because he was afraid they would overtake his land and his kingdom. God told Balaam not to do it, because the people of Israel were a blessed people. So Balaam said that even if Balak gave him a house full of silver and gold, he would not go against what God wanted him to do.

God then told Balaam that if the messengers of Balak came back to ask him again, he should go with them. However, Balaam should only say what God would tell him to say. The very next morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and began to go with the messengers, but the Scriptures don't say anything about them asking him to go. In any case, God was angry with Balaam, and God sent an angel to stand in his way to stop him.

The donkey saw the angel standing in the way with a sword in his hand, and so it tried to go around him. Balaam did not see the angel, and struck the donkey with his sword to get it go straight, because he was riding between two walls. The donkey again tried to go around the angel, and ended up crushing Balaam's foot against the wall. The angel then moved to a place where there was no room to go around him, so the donkey fell to the ground under Balaam, and so he struck the donkey with his staff.

Then God opened the mouth of the donkey so that it spoke to Balaam, and asked him why he kept striking it. He told the donkey it was because it had mocked him, and that if he had a sword he would kill it. Apparently Balaam had dropped his sword when his foot was crushed against the wall.

God then opened Balaam's eyes to see the angel, and told him that if the angel had not stopped him, he would have been the one to be killed. So the talking donkey had spared his life. So what does it take to get us to listen to what God says?

Larry R. Steffee is pastor of the Center Hill Brethren In Christ Church on Miller Road in Smithville. Everyone is welcome to attend. For information, you may email lrsteffeetn@yahoo.com.



WORDS FROM ABOVE  
by Larry R. Steffee

LETTERS TO THE  
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# Who needs \$530 shoes?

A high-end retail chain is selling what looks like a pair of used tennis shoes that have a large strip of tattered duct tape across the toe -- for \$530.

Poverty Chic.

They're shabby on purpose, so you'll look as if you don't have \$530 to your name. I'm pretty sure there are cheaper ways to look as if you don't have any money. I'm sure your pool boy would be willing to part with some old clothes for a lot less than \$530.

Some people think this is outrageous -- the most fortunate trying to appear less fortunate -- but it smells like an opportunity to me. I've got a pair of sweatpants with holes and stains that I'm now thinking of putting on eBay. Only \$260!

Wealthy people dressing down is nothing new. If you look at news photos from the late '60s, you'll see college kids at Yale and Harvard wearing inexpensive clothes they bought from Army surplus stores.

But even the wealthy aren't stupid. No one with old money is buying dirty, duct-taped sneakers. And probably no one with new money is, either, because stories like this are all about getting publicity. How many pairs of these \$530 tennis shoes are available for sale? Ten? Twenty? Are they selling? It doesn't matter. The store just got thousands of dollars of free publicity, which is why I'm not mentioning its name.

But that's the thing: You will never see these shoes advertised. Why? Because you would think it was a joke. But as a

"news" story...

Wearing brand-new shiny cowboy boots might brand you as a city slicker in Texas, but in New York City, new boots could be the latest trend. The cover of an early CD by punk/country singer Hank Williams III was a close-up of a pair of well-worn cowboy boots patched with duct tape. It just screamed, "This is the real deal. I'm not some suburban dude singing about hauling my pontoon boat to the lake with my pick-up truck on the weekend." There's a famous scene in the movie "The Philadelphia Story" where old-money Katharine Hepburn's new-money fiancé shows up for a fox hunt wearing brand-new riding "pinks." She tosses him on the ground and rolls him in the dirt before any of her friends catch him wearing shiny new clothes. It simply isn't done, dahling.

Sometimes I see men dressed in camouflage prints shopping in big-box stores, and I wonder if they think that I can't see them. If the purpose of camouflage is to blend in and be unnoticeable, it's not working. Camouflage in a big-box store would mean looking like all the other customers: T-shirts, jeans and a confused, yet exhausted, look on your face. I know from experience that those make you completely invisible. At least to the staff.

Wearing taped-up tennis shoes? Most people won't even look at you. But a whole roll of duct tape only costs about \$4. Go crazy!

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VILLAGE IDIOT  
by Jim Mullen