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From matches and cake to cellphones and sushi

Back when I turned 12, my mother made me a chocolate cake, stuck 12 candles in the icing and painstakingly lit them one by one as I licked my lips, waiting to dig into that chocolate goodness.

As you would guess, given my advanced age now, she used regular matches to light the candles, meaning she could light about four candles before the flame burned fingers.

“Come on. Light it already,” I protested after the second match, watching some of the already lit candles go out, only to have to be lit again.

Back then the big lighters, like the ones you use to light your grill now, were for the rich families. We were strictly a paper match family. We couldn’t even afford the nice wooden ones.

Anyway, after what seemed like forever, the 12 candles were lit and it was time

to have at it.

“Wait!” she snapped as I puckered up and prepared to spray my germs all over the frosting. “We have to sing Happy Birthday first.”

I rolled my eyes as my mom (my father never sang happy birthday because it wasn’t manly to do so) and some of my friends that gathered sang the familiar song, off-key I might add. Then, finally, it came time to blow out the candles. Now, for a 12 year old it’s a badge of honor to blow them all out at once. Failure to do so would have made me look lame in front of family and friends. So, I huffed and puffed and lit into them, extinguishing them all like a hurricane wind – except for one single candle that continued to flicker.

Darting my eyes to see if any of my

school friends gathered around had noticed my show of weakness, I blew again. The candle went out but then flamed back to life, almost as if by magic. Again and again I tried.

“What the ...” I began only to hear a chorus of laughter over my shoulder.

“It was a trick candle,” one of my friends roared, the Eddie Haskell wannabe nearly doubling over at the sight of my face turning red trying to blow out that single flame.

Of course, the only proof of the event that exists today is an old grainy black and white photo of me in a goofy party hat blowing on that candle.

Why are you talking about your 12th birthday, Duane? Because this week was



THAT NEW GUY
by Duane Sherrill

my son Henry’s 12th birthday. Before you ask, I didn’t pull the trick candle prank. I’m saving that for when he turns 13 so keep it hush hush.

Unlike my party where only one grainy photo still exists, there are tons of pictures of Henry’s 12th this past weekend as everyone pulled out their cellphones and shot away and then posted it to their Facebooks and Instagram.

Along with that, there was one other thing that stuck out in my mind about his 12th birthday opposed to mine. When we asked Henry where he wanted to go eat at, he didn’t hesitate.

“I want sushi,” Henry replied.

Sushi and cellphones. Times have changed since the days of paper matches and trick candles.

Contact Duane Sherrill at news@smithvillereview.com

April showers Concerns raised about forum

The month of April is very well-known for its many showers of rain, and of course it is said that April showers bring May flowers. In the middle Tennessee area, there is normally four inches of rain and an average of only 16 days of total sunshine in April. This is significant because the total amount of rain for the entire year in middle Tennessee is only 10 inches. All this talk of rain reminds me of something that happened in the days of Elijah the prophet.

At the time that Elijah was a prophet in Israel, Ahab was the king in the land. Ahab was an evil king, and we are told that Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger Him than all the kings of Israel that were before him. He and his wife Jezebel made a good pair, because she was the most evil queen of Israel ever. So God sent Elijah to give a Ahab a message.

Elijah told Ahab that there would be no dew or rain for the next few years unless he said so, and it turned out to be three and a half years before it rained again. God instructed Elijah to go into hiding because Ahab would seek to kill him if he could find him. Elijah first went to a brook near the Jordan River, and there God sent ravens to bring him bread and meat every day until the brook dried up. Then

God sent Elijah to a nearby town.

God told Elijah that when he arrived there he would meet a widow, who would take care of him while he was there. When Elijah saw her, he asked her for water and a bite to eat, but she told him all that she had was a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil. Elijah told her to prepare him a cake first and bring it to him, and then make one for herself and her son. He promised her that if she would do it, the meal and the oil would not be used up until the day that the Lord would send rain on the earth. The widow followed his instructions, and she and her family had enough to eat for many days. God rewarded her for putting her faith in Him that He would supply her needs until the famine in the land was ended. Likewise, God will do the same for all of His followers who put their faith in Him.

Eventually, God sent not just a little shower of rain, but an abundance of rain, just like one day He will abundantly reward all who are His faithful followers.

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 lrstef-fee@n@yahoo.com.



GUEST EDITORIAL
by Larry R. Steffee

It is with deep regret that I think I should respond to last week’s coverage of the *Smithville Review’s* Candidates’ Forum. One of my responsibilities as Chair of the DeKalb County Democratic Party is to inform candidates about events that might be relevant to their candidacy.

In February, Mrs. Angie Meadows, Editor of the *Smithville Review*, informed me about the possibility of a forum and what the layout would be. I stated at the time that I was hearing a lot of concerns from Democratic candidates about having all candidates, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, participate in the forum before the Democratic Party primary had ended. The last day for voting in the Democratic Party Primary is May 1. The Republican Party had already completed its candidate selection with their caucus held earlier. It was my suggestion to Ms. Meadows at the time that she consider having a forum for the primary and later a forum for the General election which is scheduled for August 2.

Another concern that was expressed to me by some of the candidates was that they had been told that the plans for the Forum involved drawing questions for the candidates from a fish bowl.

Given the fact that there did not appear to be a plan to inform candidates about the nature of the topics to be asked, some candidates expressed some uncertainty about the Forum. In addition to not knowing the topics of the questions to be asked, some candidates expressed concern that during the Forum, individual candidates might have questions targeting individual candidates.

My suggestion to Ms. Meadows was to have topics for questions provided in advance in order that candidates would not be caught off guard.

I reached out to the Chair of the DeKalb County Republican Party, Ms. Mingy Bryant, a few days before the Forum was scheduled to ask what type of responses she was getting from the Republican candidates. Ms. Bryant stated that they were not happy about the Forum but thought that if they did not attend, it would possibly be held against them.

On Monday, April 9, the week of the Forum, I had a chance encounter with Mr. Duane Sherrill at a local restaurant. Mr. Sherrill was the moderator of the Forum and is an employee of the *Smithville Review*. When I inquired about the

questions to be asked of the candidates, he said that he was planning to use a lot of the questions that had been used at the Warren County Forum the previous week. I began to hear from some of the candidates that the Warren County Forum had been poorly managed and that it had gotten out of control with some people in the audience becoming very disruptive.

Another matter that was of some concern was the result of a phone call to one of the Democratic Party candidates saying that they had been informed that their opponent had already received questions to be asked at the Forum in advance. My suggestion to the candidates was simply not to attend unless their opponent(s) would be attending. However, I did say that ultimately it was her/his decision about whether or not to participate in the Forum.

Out of 11 County Republican candidates only two attended. Out of 29 County Democratic candidates, only five attended. Out of two Independent candidates, only one attended. This was not a partisan decision. It was a personal decision made by each candidate to participate or not based on the knowledge each one had and what each one deemed best for their respective campaigns. In addition, some people were simply not available at the particular time the Forum was scheduled.

On April 11, the day before the Forum, I received a very rude, so it seemed to me, phone call from Mr. Sherrill trying to convince me to change my stance on the Forum. He stated that my decision and the decision by the candidates not to participate in the Forum would be reflected in his writing to appear in the *Smithville Review* the following week (the edition that was released April 18).

This leads us to the reason I feel strongly about writing this response to correct the record as presented by Duane Sherrill. Perhaps, in the future, if the *Smithville Review* would like to host a political forum, it will consult with the leadership and candidates of both parties to make the event better for everyone instead of presenting it as a mandate and promising retribution if it is not attended.

Regards,
Jordan Wilkins, Chair
DeKalb County Democratic Party