



SMITHVILLE  
REVIEW

Established 1892  
Publication No. 499280

106 South First Street, Smithville, TN 37166  
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Published every Wednesday in the year at  
Smithville, DeKalb County, TN Entered at the  
post office in Smithville as periodical mail.  
POSTMASTER: notify publisher on Form  
3579, of undeliverable copies, Smithville  
Review, P.O. Box 247, Smithville, TN 37166.

Print Subscription Rates:  
(DeKalb and adjoining counties)  
\$45 annually · \$27 six months ·  
Senior Citizen \$39.75 annually ·  
\$25 six months  
Elsewhere: \$55 annually ·  
\$38.50 six months ·  
\$50.50 Senior Citizen annually ·  
\$34.50 six months

Online Only Edition:  
\$30 annually · \$17 six months

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# You don't have to floss all your teeth ...

A dental hygienist once imparted a piece of wisdom to me as I was anxiously waiting in the dentist's chair for my mouth to go numb for my first root canal.

"You know, Roger," she says as she taps the side of my puffy-feeling jaw. "You don't have to floss all of your teeth."

Even while dreading the root canal to come, I found her statement somewhat confusing. First off, I go by Duane not Roger but seeing I would have sounded like a drunk with my lip drooping like it was, I let it go. But second, and most extraordinary was that a hygienist, whose job it is to make me floss, would say such a thing to a man about to have the guts of his teeth sucked out and replaced with cement.

I gave her a curious look made even

more curiously by the slobber that was dribbling down my chin from my numb lip.

"Nope. You don't have to floss all your teeth," she repeated for effect. "Just the ones you want to keep."

Boom! Dentist chair words of wisdom. Cue the sound of the drill and the smell of burning enamel and the feeling that the dentist was drilling to the very center of my soul.

That was about four years ago. Since then I've had three root canals, none of which hurt my mouth but all of which hurt my backside where my wallet is kept. Even with insurance, dental bills will hit you where it hurts.

Today, at 2:30 (or as I call it, tooth-

hurty) I sit in the dentist chair again, this time to have a molar removed in preparation to get an implant. It seems my crowns have cracked on the other side so I had to take drastic action since I like to eat and teeth are used in chewing. While my upper teeth are great and give me that winning smile, my bottom teeth, hidden away in the chewing portion of my mouth aren't so good.

So how did this happen? OK, mom and dad, this is where you call in the children for the cautionary tale. First off, I dipped for many years, quitting about 15 years ago. I figured regular brushing would take care of it.



THAT NEW GUY  
by Duane Sherrill

I was wrong. Then, compounding it, I didn't do regular dentist trips until one hurt. Hey, once they hurt, you're too late.

So today, I get my left molar ripped out and a bovine bone put in its place. Then I wait four months before they can put the implant in and another four months before they can crown it. I never realized it took so long. I thought they just yanked the tooth and screwed a new one in. It seems there's science and medicine involved rather than just a pair of pliers and an electric screw driver.

Anyway, if you're thinking of it around tooth-hurty today, say a little prayer for me. And kids, remember, you don't have to floss all your teeth ...

Contact Duane Sherrill at news@smithvillereview.com

# Dead and alive

Back in the days of the Old West, beginning in the 1870s, reward posters were sent to law enforcement officials with the descriptions of man wanted for various crimes. Except in the case of posters for the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, photos were not included until the 20th Century. But the message on the posters has always been the same: "Wanted Dead or Alive". Individuals often made their living as bounty hunters, surviving on the rewards they collected for capturing criminals who were wanted by the law.

Down through the history of mankind, God has been seeking people to become members of His kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. The difference is that God wants people to be both "Dead and Alive". That probably sounds like a contradiction in terms, but we are about to find out otherwise. Most importantly, what God wants involves people continuing to breathe.

When God says in His Word that He wants people to be dead, He very specifically says in Romans 6 that He wants them to be "dead to sin". This is a reference to the idea that when we enter into a relationship with Jesus, we identify with His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. What this means is that we consider His death and resurrection to be a victory over not only phys-

ical death, but also a victory over spiritual death, the death of our souls. When Jesus rose from the dead, He rose to die no more, and death has no more power over Him. In exactly the same way, death has no more power over His followers, because we too can overcome both physical and spiritual death through His victory. Therefore we can say that we are dead to sin, which is to say that sin likewise has no more power over us, because Jesus can help us to overcome sin's control of our lives.

Once we identify with the death of Jesus, we are then able to identify with the life of Jesus. The apostle Paul says in Romans 6:11 that in the same way that we can count ourselves dead to sin, we can likewise count ourselves "alive unto God". Our souls that were subject to spiritual death, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, can be made alive through the power of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In I Corinthians 5:17, Paul says it another way when he says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." This is how God wants us to be "dead and alive."

Larry R. Steffe 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 lrsteffeen@yahoo.com.



GUEST EDITORIAL  
by Larry R. Steffe

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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# This incredibly old house

Every now and then, I'll see a story on one of the home-decorating channels about the 13th Lord Pushface, who lives in genteel poverty in Haughty House, a stately 300-room manor in Somethingorothshire.

He inherited the place from the 12th Lord Pushface, who lost all the family's cash playing craps in Las Vegas in 1973. Lord Willoughby Pushface keeps the place solvent by letting out rooms to tourists and by selling medieval furniture that's been stored in the attic since the place was last renovated back in 1649.

A tweedy old guy with a walrus mustache, Lord Pushface chuckles when he wonders aloud what his more cash-flush ancestors must think now that he has to mow his own 40-acre lawn. And Stevens, the butler, not only has to answer the door, but fix his own lunch, too. Stevens claims not to mind: He calls it multitasking, and says he's treated like one of the family.

"Yes, I don't have any money, either," he says.

To pay to have the leaking roof fixed, Lord Pushface even started letting tourists sleep in the old bedroom belonging to his grandfather, the late Lord Stuff Pushface. The bed could fit Henry VIII and all his wives at once, with room to spare. The tourists expect Stevens to draw their bath for them; they expect Lord Pushface to sit down to dinner with them in the Great Hall and share gossip family stories about the many royals who ate in this very room, at this very table, in this very chair -- as if it somehow makes them royalty, too. Oh, the indignity of it all.

When I lived in a studio apartment, I had no sympathy for the Lord Pushfaces of the world. They may not have had money, at least not anymore, but they did have 299 more rooms than I did.

Now that I live in a big, old, creaky house myself, I'm not so arrogant. I'm trying to think of ways to raise money so I can afford to get the roof patched. I'm not positive, but I suspect that we are the only people in our town who have to give an alternate "rain date" when we invite people over for dinner. It's hard to talk to people over the rain-catching pot on the dining room table. Outside, the paint is peeling in places where it is sunny, and covered with mold in places it isn't. There are saplings growing in the gutters. I'm sure the neighborhood kids think the Munsters must live here.

Everywhere I look, there is something that needs to be fixed, something that needs attention. The windows all need to be replaced, and the plumbing and the wiring both need to be brought up to code. We need a new furnace; we need to call a chimney sweep.

It's hard to imagine having to worry about 299 more rooms when the few we have are wearing us out. If we could afford a butler, he wouldn't be answering the door, he'd be patching the roof and cleaning out the gutters.

I'm thinking maybe we should rent the house out to English royalty. They might enjoy the coziness. Lord Pushface might even be our first guest.

Contact Jim Mullen at mullen.jim@gmail.com.



VILLAGE IDIOT  
by Jim Mullen