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Award-winning cautionary tale

Editor's note: Seeing I'm the editor, I wrote this note. This past week I learned one of my columns, written last year while I was working at the paper down south, won best in the state at the Tennessee Press Association awards. Now, I'm not one to recycle columns but in this case I thought I would share the state champion column, especially since it is very timely since most of us are involved in Bible School at our churches. The column was inspired by real events that happened last year during VBS at my church. Along with a few chuckles, you may use this as a cautionary tale.

Last time I checked, Bible school wasn't supposed to leave marks. However, thanks to a shortcut in filling water balloons, some of us may be sporting a couple of bruises.

Knowing it would take hours to fill water balloons for wet night, we got those quick-fill balloons you put under a tap and fill up at once. The problem was there were no directions on how much to fill them.

So, the water balloons start flying as the kids threw them with ferocity at one another. What fun. However, only moments after the melee began I noticed a 6-year-old crying, holding his head.

"What's wrong?" I ran over to him.

"I got hit with a water balloon," he said through sobs.

"Let me see it," I said, wondering why the kid was crying over a water balloon. It's just water. Right?

I patted him on the head and told him to get back in the fight. That's when I saw the little girl crying. I walked over to her.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"He hit me in the face with a water balloon," she said, accusingly pointing a finger at another child like she was identifying a bank robber.

"It'll be OK," I reassured her. "It's just water."

I shook my head. It must be true about

what they say about millennials being soft. These kids are whining about being hit with water balloons.

I turned to see another kid, this one clutching his back. "That hurt," he said about being hit by the balloon.

"Kid," I said. "It's just a water balloon. They can't do ... BAM!"

Out of nowhere something hit me under my eye. It was like someone had thrown a rock.

I looked around, rubbing my booboo, ready to scold whichever kid had thrown the rock when I realized ... it wasn't a rock that hit me ... it was one of the water balloons. They weren't bursting until they hit the ground.

What had I done? I had inadvertently armed the Bible school kids with bone-crushing missiles they were happily hurling at one another, yelling and laughing in the same breath. I must have under-filled them, leaving the balloons much

harder to bust. Sure, they'd bust when they hit the ground but only after they delivered bone-jarring impact on their target. Let me put this in Bible school terms – if David had one of these water balloons in the sling-shot, he wouldn't have had to find a stone to slay Goliath.

"Kids!" I yelled. "Be careful. The water balloons aren't ..." I stopped in mid-sentence, realizing there were about 15 kids, all armed with water balloons, walking my way in a skirmish line.

You wouldn't think kids would be good at organizing but they must have been listening when they learned the Bible story about Gideon that week because they were like Seal Team Six, locked and loaded.

Come on guys," I begged as they unleashed a volley of those killer balloons at point-blank range, the impacts feeling like I was being hit by wet rocks.

Note to self: Next year fill the balloons until they are about to burst.

Contact Duane Sherrill at news@smithvillereview.com

Amazing youth

In June, 1944, 15-year-old Joe Nuxhall became the youngest person to pitch in Major League Baseball. During World War II it was common for adolescents to fill in for big leaguers fighting overseas. President Roosevelt encouraged baseball to continue, in order to give people enjoy themselves after working long hours during the war effort. More than 500 big league players enlisted after that, including many baseball stars. Nuxhall rejoined baseball when he was 23 years old and pitched 15 seasons.

Likewise, as we saw at the recent Fiddler's Jamboree in Smithville, Tennessee, there are a great number of young people who played all kinds of musical instruments, sang solo gospel songs, and danced.

They truly are the future of the Jamboree for many years to come.

In the Bible a number of individuals served in important positions, such as 7-year-old Joash, who became king

in Israel. He was spared from death when he was hidden in the Temple, where Jehoiada the priest helped to prepare him to become king. At the right time, the priest brought him out before the people and placed a crown on his head, while the people shouted, "Long live the king."

At age 11, God called Samuel to be a prophet in Israel.

Samuel was dedicated to the service of the Temple by his mother because God had answered her prayer to give her a son. Up until that time she

had been childless, but according to I Samuel 2:21, God gave Hannah three more sons and two daughters.

In II Kings 5 there is a story of a little girl who was a servant to the wife of Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was afflicted with leprosy, and the little girl told her mistress about the prophet Elisha. She believed that Elisha could cure Naaman of his leprosy, and it turned out that she was correct.

In I Timothy 4, the apostle tells a young pastor named

Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth,

but be an example of the believers, in word, in conduct,

in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity."

Paul planned to visit him in the near future, and told him that until he arrived, he should read the Scriptures,

encouraging those under his care, and

teaching the Word of God.

Paul encouraged Timothy to not

neglect the gift that God had given him to serve as a pastor,

a gift that was confirmed by the leaders of the church where he served.

God still uses both young and old today in the service of His kingdom. Why not give your life in service to Him regardless of your age?

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 lrsteffeet@yahoo.com.

WORDS FROM ABOVE

by Larry R. Steffee

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Destroy-It-Yourself

W

hile I was traveling, my contractor worked on my house. I was a little nervous about letting him do it all without supervision, but since I don't even know which end of a hammer is the one you pound

in screws with, I'm not sure he needed any of my helpful advice anyway.

When I got home, I was pleasantly surprised to find he had done everything I had asked for -- and more. For instance, I didn't ask him to leave a big pile of scrap lumber, pieces of drywall, empty paint cans and soda bottles on the front porch, but he did it for no extra charge! I don't know if he does it for all his clients or if he just took a special liking to me.

That's just the way he is. I'd like to call him and thank him, but the number I have for him is out of service. Maybe his voicemail is full.

I've been sending him text messages, but that mailbox seems to be full, too.

One thing I thought I could tackle was painting. How hard can that be?

But at the counter, they started asking questions. Did I want matte, flat, eggshell, satin, semi-gloss or glossy? What? No, I want paint. The kind that comes in a can. What am I going to do with it? I'm gonna paint! Why are you making this so hard?

Some people are just so impatient. Painting calls for zen-like concentration and focus. One little mistake, and -- see, that's just what I'm talking about. I shouldn't have left the open can on the floor in front of the door I was painting. I should have known my neighbor Ralph would barge in and start yelling about

him.

What do I know about fixing a house? Sometimes I want to open the window and scream. Like right now. Except this stupid window won't open. That's funny, it opened before I painted it.

I have no idea what's wrong with it. I guess I'm gonna have to call a plumber and have it fixed.

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

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