



Arandall Goforth

son, Ralph assumed ownership of The Dixon Pilot and The Richland Mirror. Ralph was one of 10 Goforth children born to Arandall and Bessie, and at one time they all worked in newspaper. You could say the whole Goforth family has worked in various fields of communications. The older generation worked in newspaper, and the younger generation worked in radio. The Goforth kids were also avid baseball players and had a team ready anytime. Skip's dad, Ralph, played semi-pro baseball but came back to Dixon when his dad died.

Skip's Aunt Fern (Goforth) Hart won a Pulitzer Prize as a reporter with the Kansas City Star for coverage of the Hyatt Regency walkway collapse that killed 114 people in 1981. (Fern was on scene when the tragedy happened.) Skip's Uncle Harold Goforth was the last American hand-set printer. His Uncle Ross Goforth set up and transferred molten lead into type. The Goforth's had people employed to work for them as well. Some had the title of "Printer's Devil" which is an apprentice to a Printer, and that goes back as early as Benjamin Franklin's time.

Hand set printing was a meticulous art, and a "makeup stick" was used to set every type print. After the type print was set, the worker dreaded the next risky step of carrying the print to the rollers. The print easily collapsed when moving it, and that would mean starting the whole process over! Another disappointing snag occurred when the rollers crumpled or tore the paper. The ink they spread on the rollers came in 5-pound cans and had the consistency of butter. When the old iron press ran, it loudly rumbled and sounded like a locomotive coming through the building. The Dixon Pilot press was located on 2nd Street in Dixon in the present Full Belly Deli building, and no doubt the people in town heard when the paper was being printed!

Ralph Goforth ran The Dixon Pilot from the 1930's to World War II, and for another period later. When Ralph went to work on the atomic bomb at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, he leased the paper business to Mr. Zeveli. The bomb project was super secret, but Evelyn was allowed to join her husband living there. After the bomb fell on Japan, Skip's parents returned to Dixon and wanted to resume ownership of The Dixon Pilot. When Mr. Zeveli resisted, Ralph started a rogue newspaper and then Mr. Zeveli relented to let them take back the family paper.

"A small town paper should print small town news," was the driving principle of Ralph Goforth. He said if people want national or world news, they need to read a St. Louis Post Dispatch. Skip's mom wrote The Dixon Pilot news, but his dad used a strategy of handing out stationery to townspeople and requested they submit what they saw going on in Dixon (this was a grapevine type of reporting). Evelyn used the information to write some of the news articles.

Another significant family member in the business was Scotty, Skip's brother. Scott became their father's business partner through the 1950's and 1960's. Scott Goforth further went on to teach printing in the Waynesville Vocational school until recently.

Skip was acknowledged as the youngest columnist in America at age six when he wrote a column called, "Skippy's Tidings,"

wherein weekly he described the world through the eyes of a child. With a grimace (or was that a smile), Skip said he took an awful lot of ribbing from his peers for that piece of work. However, elders in the community seemed to enjoy it.

Every Wednesday night was the busiest paper night. While other families were gathering at a table for a meal, his family was gathered around the table to fold each newspaper for distribution. They used an "addressograph" to post subscribers' addresses, and stuffed the papers into elephant gray mail bags and took them to the Post Office. If they didn't get the newspaper out on time, they would lose their license. He knows now that was why Wednesdays were so stressful for his father.

It was the golden age of the newspaper – the primary source where people got their news (Internet did not exist). And the mail was delivered three times a day!

Skip is a 1969 Dixon High School graduate (and with pride he noted, "When Dixon won the State basketball championship!"). In the 1970's, Skip was a professional drummer in Kansas City and a member of the Professional Musicians' Union. He also did "voice-overs" for television commercials as an occupation there. Having had his feet in both worlds, Skip prefers work in radio over television broadcasting. Most of his adult career has been as a radio announcer (D.J.) in St. Robert, MO. Skip's air time is 6:00 p.m. to Midnight on KFBD 97.9 FM.

In contributing to this article, Skip said he hopes somehow this honors his parents. They gave their blood, sweat and tears to The Dixon Pilot – they loved it so. Skip is glad that his parents spent their lives together in their work. His mom would say that she would rather be married to his dad than anything on earth.

Ralph Goforth and Evelyn Scott started their endearing relationship when she walked past The Dixon Pilot on her way to work as a Telephone Operator with Erma Durtschi. Evelyn, a pretty blonde, lived near the Dixon cemetery, and Ralph was a fit semi-pro baseball player with a little money in his pocket. In those years, Mr. Murphy started the phone company in Dixon where Evelyn and Erma were employed. The ice plant was another business in Dixon and Freddie Ellis' father owned it. The ice from the plant in Dixon was of such great quality that chefs had it packed in saw dust and hauled by train to St. Louis for their sculptures.



Ralph & Evelyn Goforth

Apart from working on the newspaper together, Skip said his family also took trips to St. Louis on the Pullman car for shopping and breakfast at Union Station. He was impressed by the coachmen in crisp white uniforms who asked his dad if he needed a pillow (and called him "Sir").

On Wednesdays, Skip's dad would give him a dollar. That was just enough for Skip to take the train ("alone") to Crocker and back to Dixon -- .25 cents each way, and .50 cents for the milkshake at the Crocker drugstore! Train and a Milkshake – you can't beat that for a buck!

Trains go back a long way in Skip's best childhood memories, and hearing their enchanting sound is an ongoing enjoyment for him living in Dixon.

