

the product and encourage dad to place orders for stocking it on the shelves. We thought they would be a big hit.

At home, dad would draw up the weekly grocery advertisement for the newspaper. I remember helping him pick several items to include in the sale ad. I believe my artistic creativity was fostered by encouragement from dad and mom.

My granddad, Dorsie Sooter, owned and operated the OK Barber Shop, which was located next door to Sease and Veasman's Drug Store and across the street from Blanche Barnett's store. Dorsie's shop had an old furniture sized vacuum-tube radio. The huge round dial on the front had the names of distant countries on it.

When waiting to get my haircut at the barbershop I always liked reading Grit, especially the cartoons. In the 1960s, Grit was published as a tabloid newspaper. Advertisements in comic books encouraging young boys make "big cash and prizes" to sign up to deliver Grit to subscribers. I dreamed of winning the brand new bicycle printed on the page as one of the prizes. Additional reading material included Life, Look, and other magazines and newspapers.

Dorsie would have musical jam sessions in the back room of the barbershop. He played guitar and sang. Many years later, when I worked at KJPW Radio, granddad brought a couple of reel-to-reel audio tapes he had recorded to the studio while I was broadcasting. I aired one of the songs he wrote about his mother and I still have those tapes today.

Barnett's Store sold clothing, shoes and other dry goods. On the counter was a cardboard display featuring a photo of actor Jerry Lewis with slots to donate coins to Muscular Dystrophy. A gumball machine and toy capsule machine sat next to the cash register. I still have a little Wheaties plastic charm that came in a capsule from that toy machine for the cost of a penny.

During summer, the school sponsored Saturday morning ping-pong games inside the junior high gymnasium. At one time it had been the old high school gym. The sandstone rock and concrete building didn't have any air conditioning. The doors were left open to allow for a small breeze to run through the building. A dozen or so ping-pong tables were set up inside the gym. Big Train Jackson and others helped instruct us on the rules of the game.

Organized basketball games took place every Saturday morning in the elementary school cafeteria. A photo timer with a loud buzzer kept track of the time for each quarter. We played on teams along with dozens of other boys from town. Sometimes we had to play shirts vs. skins.

We never went to school until after Labor Day. Fourth grade was the last class of the elementary school. That year our teacher read Old Yeller and Charlotte's Web to us. Chuck Baker and I would trade baseball cards. Of course, we bought baseball cards for the gum. No telling how many Nolan Ryan cards were used during the next year because pitchers always went on the bike spokes first.

Art and Mary Jo Clark ran Clark's Drug Store, one of the gathering places on the downtown square. A Rexall Drug Store sign hung from the corner of the building. A metal sign on the side of the building advertised Dr. Pepper. As you walked in the front door there was a dial payphone on the wall to the left. Glass cases with jewelry sat in front of a greeting card rack. Over the counter medications lined the shelves leading further

into the store. You could drop off film for processing at the front counter. Processing took only a week or two. Behind the counter were new Kodak camera kits and accessories including flash bulbs, film and lens attachments. A candy rack full of sugary treats sat between the front counter and the soda fountain. A Coca-Cola calendar hung on the wall above the

cash register at the soda fountain. You could sit in the orange vinyl booths or on a stool at the counter to get a nickel Coke from the soda fountain, a pizzaburger and French Fries or a Treat. A treat was an ice cream concoction that had marshmallow cream on the bottom, a layer of chocolate syrup, hand-dipped ice cream, another layer of marshmallow and chocolate topped off with ground peanuts, walnuts or pecans. This was in the early days of soft-serve ice cream and most places still dipped their ice cream for cones, milk shakes or malts. We liked to dip our French Fries in ice cream. Lots of people put peanuts in their Coca-Cola.



Van & Billy Dean Beydler

Sid and Faye Snider had all the first run films from Hollywood at the

Dixon Theatre. Admission to the Saturday afternoon movies, which were always a double feature, was 25 or 35 cents. With a dollar, you could buy a soda, buttered popcorn and several kinds of candy and still have money left over. Theatre candy came in huge portions, too. You could choose from Necco wafers, Sugar Daddys and Sugar Babies, Chuckles, Butterfinger, Baby Ruth, Snickers, Chick-O-Sticks, Dots, Mike and Ike, 100 Grand Bar, Chiclets, Zagnut and jawbreakers, just to name a few. If you were first in line you could get in the movie free by being the kid to put theatre show bills under the window wipers of cars parked downtown.

The Western Auto store was located next to my dad's grocery store. They carried bicycles and bike parts. I remember buying a bell and streamers for my bike. You would attach the streamers to the back of your bike seat. The streamers were made of plastic strips with big pieces of glitter embedded in them to catch the sun. My sister had a wide tire girl's bike and one of us had a bike with raised handle bars and a banana seat. I remember they carried Captain Action figures and accessories. Captain Action had a variety of costumes allowing him to become Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, Flash Gordon and a host of other characters. Western Auto also sold the James Bond and Oddjob action figures from the movie Goldfinger. Oddjob came with an accessory lethal flying hat called a deadly derby. Most of us boys in town had G.I. Joe action figures including the storage case that looked like a military locker.

Many a kid would roam around town picking up empty soda bottles because they had a deposit fee. You could get 2.5 cents by turning in empty bottles at the grocery store. At 2.5 cents, you had to turn in two bottles to make it an even nickel, otherwise you only got 2 cents for a single empty bottle. I remember picking up soda bottles around town with my friends Herb Colley, Randal Hayes and Jesse Vance. We would get enough cash to go to Duncan's Dime Store to buy a

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