

WISE AND OTHERWISE

By Kent A. Stock



THE YELLOW LINE

Graduation season is upon us and it is time for those who have achieved an intellectual, professional, technological milestone in their life to do something special. That is to toss on a big gown, slap a funky flat hat on your head, attach a dangly tassel to it then march about to Pomp and Circumstance all dressed up. It might look a bit goofy but maybe it should - for as a ceremony it represents something you only do once or maybe twice in your life - might as well make it unique.

In my opinion, you remember more about the graduation ceremony as a member of the audience than as a participant. At my own high school graduation, I remembered much more the events before and after than I did the ceremony. I could not hear my classmates

give the Valedictory and Salutatory speeches because we were seated behind them and I could actually hear back then! An excellent choir otherwise, we sang the song "Do You Remember" and it was very much "Please, Don't Remember Us Singing This Song!"

All graduations though offer a time to look back and reflect. I was pleasantly surprised just a few years ago to hear someone mention "the yellow line" on the playground at my Elementary School in one of the speeches. It made me smile to think that such a tiny part of our attendance at school here in my hometown made such an impact. A small part of our shared past as alumni would involve a very bright, no more than two inch yellow stripe painted on the black asphalt of the playground at the elemen-

tary school. It would be a unifying symbol and one that others thought the years recognized. Who knew!

Here is the background; the playground at the grade school was divided into three "kingdoms" each with its own rules and regulations. The far north was Tiny Kingdom overrun by K - 2 children who ruled the roost up to the sidewalk. At the sidewalk grades 3 - 4 took over in the "middle kingdom." Unlike the soft, cushy cedar chips there now we played on hard black asphalt and we liked it, dagnabit!

No matter what the surface, the fourth grades and under side stopped at the two inch bright yellow line painted across the playground. It did not go into the grass but we all knew where it extended - we did not dare go across. The yellow line might as well have been the Berlin Wall or lined with razor wire like a maximum security prison.

Oh, we tried to cross now and then but the teachers, our guards, were watching and a sharp tweet of the whistle quickly brought us back to the north side of the barrier. If the ball during kicker (or kickball as the rest of the world knows it - does anyone else besides Arthur call the game "kicker?") went over the line we had to ask permission to get it.

One warm, sunny late spring day we were **Cont. on pg. 10**

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



More Than You Are Looking For

I love blueberries. They are so expensive when they are in season at the grocery store, I usually just buy frozen blueberries, and then, only when they are on sale. I have always wanted to grow my own, though. Like anything else from my own garden, I bet they would taste far better than store-bought.

On my husband's day off, we went on a quest, in search of garden plants, tomato cages, mulch, and seeds. Home Depot, then Lowes. John is a very good list maker and planner. Like most men, he doesn't browse. It is hard for me to shop with John at times. I get distracted by things I want to look at, but if it is not on the list, he gives me that look like I have gone insane for even suggesting we venture beyond the aisle we are in to look at something not on "the list." If we leave the store with only things on the list, and nothing extra, I feel as if I have passed a grueling test and should be rewarded. Again, John doesn't see things my way.

As John stood looking at and comparing small shrubs for 20 minutes, I walked to the end of the aisle and I ran right into a rolling tall shelf of blueberry bushes! I yelled over to



John, as he did write down blueberry bush on his list. He quickly joined me, and we studied the different breeds of blueberries we had to choose. Apparently we needed to get at least 2 different species in order for pollination to take place. As I browsed up and down the shelves, I found a match that would work with the one John had picked. But as I turned the pot around to check for fullness of the leaves, I noticed something really strange about the plant. There was this brown thing

in the middle of it, it looked like feathers. I nervously said, "John, look at this..." as I gently tapped his arm, not taking my eyes off of the blueberry plant. I slowly kept turning the plant around and realized there was not just feathers in it, (or a dead rotting corpse of a bird that I feared I would find), it was a complete bird. It was a real bird, alive and well, and inches from my face! I thought to myself, "nobody moves, nobody dies."

John **Cont. on pg. 7**

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e-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com
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