

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



The Great Fish Tale
When I was a kid, about 10 years old or so, my folks loved to go fishing. All summer long, most evenings and especially on the weekends we would all jump in the Trail Duster and go dip our lines in a creek or river, or head down to Oakland to the lake. My dad loved catfish, so it was always a good fishing day if we caught several of those to put in the freezer.

We kept a big deep freeze out in the garage, and that is also where dad kept all of our fishing rods and cane poles. He would store them up in the rafters overhead so they didn't take up space when Mom wanted to have garage sales and stuff.

We lived down on a little street in Tuscola called Timmons Drive. It was a long street that curved on both ends with a deep ditch behind our house. If it rained hard for a couple of days, the ditch would get full of water and it was like our own little swimming hole. Kids from all over the neighborhood would put on their swimming suits and slosh around in the hip deep water behind our house. My dad didn't like that his garden got flooded about every summer, though.

Well, one Friday night after one of our fishing trips, we got home really late. It was after midnight by the time we had packed it in and came home, and everybody was dog tired. But we had caught a big ol mess of fish, and most of them were catfish. My dad was tired and didn't feel like cleaning all those fish then, so since it had been raining, and the ditch was full of water, he said,

"Shoot, I'll just dump the fish out there and catch 'em with a net tomorrow morning and clean 'em then."

So, that's what he did, and we all went to bed.

I woke up from the noise. It was early, around 7:00am, I think. Too early to be up and at 'em after getting home late from fishing in the dark. But something was going on outside of our house. I followed my ears into the kitchen where I saw my mom and dad peeking out the kitchen window into the backyard.

I asked them what was going on, and my dad said there were a bunch of people out back on the street behind our house. A BUNCH of people! He got dressed and told mom and the rest of us to stay put. Then he went out back to talk to somebody.

My mom continued to watch out the kitchen window, and she kept muttering to herself "Oh my God... Oh my....Oh my..."

I heard a lady with a high-pitched voice shrilling and screaming, so I ran and peeked out the back door.

There was our neighbor, mean old Mrs. Maleblochevic (or something like that, I called her Mrs. M) was yelling and pointing at the ditch, grabbing a man by his shirt sleeve and dragging him along the road with her. There were people taking pictures of something in the ditch full of water. There were a couple of police officers, some men wearing hardhats, some of the neighbor kids in their swimming suits, I think even the Mayor was out there. Mrs. M was screaming louder now! "They're coming up from the river! See! See! Something

needs to be done!!!! Do you see this!!!!"

My dad came back in the house after talking to several people and told my mom what was going on. Apparently Mrs. M was walking her little white poodle when the dog started barking at the fish in the ditch. Mrs. M had been complaining to the city for years about the flooding problem in our part of the town, and when she saw the fish, she just about had a heart attack. She called the Mayor and the chief of police and the newspaper editor and everybody came to see what was going on.

The city workers and water works engineers could not understand how fish were making their way into the drainage ditch but there were some serious changes needing to be made. I guess it even made it into the newspaper.

Of course, my dad had sworn us all to secrecy, lest any ill feelings should come of it. But not long thereafter, our drainage problems on that end of town did get work done and did improve for a while. I kind of missed swimming in the ditch with the neighbor kids.

So, I said all of that to say this; always suspect something fishy until you have proof otherwise. And the obvious, expected answer isn't always the true one. Never stop thinking.

Hook, Line and Sinker



With Tony Hooker

Growing up in the seventies in the river city, the pickin's were slim when it came to winning for the two teams that hold most of the locals' affections.

The Cubs were mediocre at best, finishing the decade with an overall record of 785-835. There were a few bright spots, as the Pride of Decatur, Illinois, Bill Matlock, won batting titles in 1975 & 76. I remember watching in awe as Dave "Kong" Kingman both hit moon shot home runs and struck out at a prodigious rate in 1979. Either way was must see tv for this baseball crazy kid.

The Cardinals weren't much better, in reality. Their record for the decade stood at a middling 800-820. There were bright spots for the birds, however, and most of my grade school friends and I were and remain to this day, diehard fans of the team with the birds on the bat. There was Joe Torre winning an MVP in 71. I was only seven, but I remember my dad talking about the year he had, hitting .363. In 79,

Keith Hernandez split the MVP vote with Willie Stargell after hitting .344 and playing gold glove level first base. The truth is, both teams spent most of the decade chasing the Pirates and their magnificent teams, never quite measuring up.

However, there was one constant source of excellence roaming left field at Busch Stadium for the entire decade, Lou Brock. The fact that my redbirds acquired Lou from the Cubs in what is widely regarded as one of the most lopsided trades ever only sharpened my delight at watching him play.

Lou was my favorite player as a kid, as he was for most of my friends. For the decade of the seventies, he batted over .300 eight times. Of course, in 1974, he pilfered what was then a major league record 118 bases while batting .306. There was a quiet excellence about him that stood out, even to a knucklehead teenager like me. He never acted flamboyantly, like Reggie "the straw that stirs the drink" Jackson, and

he wasn't as hip as the "we are family" Pirates, but he was always there, a steady presence.

It wasn't until much later in life, when I got to meet him, that I realized that he was the same way off the field as he was on it. Even in his seventies, there was something regal about his demeanor, and his true spirit shined through when he befriended a young Vill Grovian who only wanted to watch baseball and not get caught up in all the hoopla that surrounded the hall of famer. His friendship with Jake Eversole, a VGHS senior, and his grandfather Jody continued unabated through the years, and it was special for me to be a witness to.

Lou Brock, the "Base Burglar", passed away last week at the age of 81. For me, a piece of my childhood went with him. I am grateful that I got a chance to meet him, and I'm even more grateful to know that my childhood idol was as great a man as he was a ball player. RIP Mr. Brock. Thank you.

Sidney Village Board Discusses Shed Ordinance

September 8 Village of Sidney Board of Trustees Zoning Hearing Meeting Coverage - by Ann Rhoton SCCT News

Correspondent

The Village of Sidney Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, September 8 in the Sidney Community Building meeting room at 6:30 p.m. to consider amending the current Village of Sidney shed ordinance. Village of Sidney President Jason Arrasmith brought the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. with trustees Dan Gadeken, Tyler Bickers, Matt Laurent, and Brett Harris, present. Village of Sidney Clerk Maggie Fish was also in attendance and all practiced social distancing.

President Arrasmith asked trustees to look over the existing ordinance and to discuss changes and told them that they could vote on amending the ordinance with changes during the 7:00 p.m. Village of Sidney Board of Trustees regular meeting.

The ordinance was discussed in great detail as con-

cerned where shed or other structure property lines need to be. Property lines between properties were discussed and trustees felt that the existing ordinance needed to be amended by requiring sheds and other structures to be 5 feet off of the property line between properties and 10 feet from the center of alleys.

The existing ordinance requirement of 25 feet from the center of the road to the front of property on major and minor roads and the 10 feet requirement for side yards will stay the same.

The Village of Sidney Board of Trustees zoning hearing meeting was brought to adjournment at 6:48 p.m. following a motion from Trustee Tyler Bickers and a second by Trustee Dan Gadeken.

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