

THE POSTSCRIPT

A better way

By CARRIE CLASSON
Columnist

"You'll never guess what I did!" my husband, Peter, announced.

"You're right. I won't."
"I microwaved the masking tape!"
I can't tell you how pleased he was with himself.

My husband has a hack for everything. When I buy a roll of masking tape that is good for nothing but causing intense frustration, I am willing to give it up, toss the tape, and call it a lesson learned.

"Next time, I'm buying the expensive kind!" I said to Peter, after the tape shredded into itty-bitty bits just trying to get a few inches out to secure a box.

I was packing away the last of the holiday stuff—rather late—as I am supposed to be packing for Mexico. We are leaving next week and, so far, the packing has all occurred in my head. I know what I am bringing, more or less. Meantime, Peter has all the items he plans to pack laid out in a line that fills most of his office (aka "the brooding room") and new unidentified items are arriving in the mail daily.

"What is that?" I ask, concerning the latest mysterious package.

"It's a battery phone charger."
"For when there's no electricity?"
"Yup!"

"When will there not be electricity?"

Peter has some sort of plan in mind, and I will not be at all surprised when his battery phone charger saves the day. Peter is always thinking of a better way to do things, which brings me back to the masking tape.

"You microwaved the masking tape?" I said, not quite sure I'd heard correctly.

"I did!"
"And?"

"And now it works perfectly! It was just old. I microwaved it for 15 seconds and now look!" Peter grabbed the roll of tape and effortlessly pulled off several inches—just for fun.

"Wow." It was impressive.
"I think you should go back to the hardware store and tell them," Peter said. "A lot of customers could be spared frustration if they just put their tape in the microwave!"

I considered doing this for exactly two seconds, and rejected the idea. I think the guys at the hardware store might think I'm a little odd already. This would seal the deal, so to speak.

But it's nice to have a husband who is always thinking of everything. We have every imaginable form saved to the cloud. We bring our own knives and kitchen odds and ends so we can cook wherever we are. Peter uses our departure on an extended trip as an opportunity to update his end-of-life instructions, should we both suddenly die or disappear in Mexico.

"I don't plan on dying this trip," I informed him.

"You should have seen how out of date the document was!" he marveled, ignoring me.

I used to think of myself as someone who was reasonably well-prepared for whatever life threw at me, but it would never have occurred to me to raise a roll of masking tape from the dead.

Today, I need to start packing. So far, my focus has been on whether I am bringing enough warm clothes to wear inside as we will start out in the mountains, there will be no central heating—and it can get chilly at night. Peter is not concerned about keeping warm.

"I'll wear my raincoat!" he tells me. And I know he will.

Peter will keep warm and he will make sure we have what we need. After a life of mostly taking care of myself, it's nice to rely on Peter to figure out a better way to do everything.

Till next time,
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir is called "Blue Yarn." Learn more at Carrie-Classon.com.



Back in the Day

100 years ago this week

John W. Callaway was the successful candidate in the election last Friday to name a successor to S.H. McLendon, deceased, as chairman of the board of commissioners. The vote was 616 to 282.

The Kiwanis Club is sponsoring a huge two-day meeting of all the farmers in the county to discuss ways to cope with current farming problems and to restore profitability. There will be special speakers on the subject of the boll weevil, and in addition talks on finances, book-keeping, marketing and all subjects that will make for a profitable operation.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Jackson have taken an apartment at the home of Mrs. Kathryn Hill on East Main Street.

Mr. and Mrs. John Allan Callaway are receiving congratulations on the birth of a son on January 23 at their country home near Rayle. He has been given the name of Adolphus Sanford Richardson for his maternal grandfather.

75 years ago this week

Those who attended the Roosevelt birthday ball gave a total of \$130.30 to the endowment of the Warm Springs Foundation.

Margaret Walton, age 15, died

here early Wednesday morning after a brief illness. Superintendent H.M. Tarpley announced that the high school body will attend the funeral service at the First Baptist Church. Dr. D.V. Cason will officiate, and Mrs. C.I. Reynolds will arrange the music.

Wilfred B. Smith has become manager of the Curtis Funeral Home following announcement of dissolution of the Curtis-Sturgis partnership. Charles V. Curtis will continue the business under his direction. He announced free ambulance service to and from the hospital in the city and county. • Friday evening, Coach Albert Simpson will bring the Augusta Junior College basketball team to Danburg fully expecting to get even with the Danburg girls for their defeat in a hard-fought game a year ago. Officials expect the game to be a sell-out.

60 years ago this week Messrs. Jack Wynne, Ed Leard, Henry Shook, Comer Randall, Latham Wright and Sam McGill motored to New Orleans for the New Year's Day football game.

Roy Bradley says that with the opening on Saturday of his vending machine stand, a dream will be fulfilled. The new place of business will be located on the east side of the square next to City Hall. While compact, the store will be modern in every detail. It will be known simply as "Roy's." 1140

The main topic of conversation at the Lions Club meeting last week was the possibility of a Lions Club house. Though the matter is merely in the talking stage, the group seems determined to find a way to secure its own facilities.

Gilbert Maxwell was called to Washington from his home in New York last week by the critical illness of his mother, Mrs. Maude G Maxwell.

50 years ago this week Patty Singleton has been named Washington-Wilkes High School's Betty Crocker Home-maker of Tomorrow for 1972.

Congressman Robert G. Stephens Jr. has announced plans
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Contour Coke Bottle

By LORAN SMITH
Columnist

Owing to the generosity of one Fred Butler, the Coca-Cola impresario in my neighborhood, I got to enjoy the six and one-half ounce Coke in the traditional contour bottle at Christmas. It made my holidays.

I drank the "contour" Coke for lunch and supper with whatever was on the Home front menu. However, as much as I enjoy Coca-Cola, it is not the best drink accompaniment for eggs and bacon.

If you have experienced enough birthdays to have earned senior citizen status, you likely remember the days of the contour Coke bottle in ice boxes at every corner grocery store in your town.

Remember the pretty models with million-dollar smiles posing with the contour bottle. I remember a robust and rosy cheeked Santa Claus

swigging from the contour bottle. I remember, too, saving enough pennies to purchase a nickel's worth of Coke in the contour bottle.

My favorite time during the recent holidays were the evenings when I grilled a Bubba Burger, then raked mayonnaise across a soft bun, added ketchup, lettuce and tomato and took my burger and my six and one-half ounce bottle of Coke to my favorite chair by a full bodied and agile wood burning fire—the best meal(s) of the holidays.

It made me wonder about the possibilities of making a deal with my friend, Fred Butler. If I cut his grass each week, would he pay me in 6 and one-half ounce, contour-bottled Cokes?

You may have brushed up against the story of a long-time friend by the name of Earl Leonard, who was an executive with Coca-Cola. He was attending a reception at the White House and was summoned to the Oval Office by President Ronald Reagan who was an avid fan of the world's most popular soft drink.

The former President wanted to know why the six and one-half ounce bottle of Coke tasted so much better than in a larger container.

Earl explained that "Coca-Cola" was designed to be consumed ice cold. "In a larger container, it takes longer to consume a Coke and it begins to warm up in your hands or while sitting idle on a table or desk top," Earl told our 40th President. This led to the UGA-educated Earl Truman Leonard arranging for a routine shipment of Cokes to the White House.

After much frustration at the outset, the contour Coke bottle became iconic. In its early days, Coca-Cola had to fight off intrusion from knock-off and outlaw operators whose bent was to confuse consumers. It took years to bring about control.

Leading the effort to give bottlers a "distinctive package" for Coca-Cola, was attorney Harold Hirsch, for whom the University of Georgia law school building is named—Harold Hirsch Hall. Hirsch was a long-time benefactor of UGA and was the man who propped up Georgia football in financial hard times. One of his major efforts was to create summer employment opportunity for Bulldog players.

One of his efforts during those "knock-off" days was to send UGA

footballers to places like New York for the summer. At the time, fountain sales were the backbone of Coca-Cola's business.

Often when you ordered a Coke, unscrupulous drug store and café owners would have brought to your table a drink that might have the appearance of a Coke and a similar taste but was a cheap knock-off. The "Bulldog detectives" had a pouch in the vest pocket of their coats and a straw which they used to siphon a sample from the drink served which was sent to Atlanta where chemists would examine the contents. If it were a knock-off, they would then initiate legal action against the proprietor.

A former player, Harold Ketron, is the reason Charley Trippi became a Bulldog. Ketron was the Coca-Cola bottler in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., eight miles from Pittsboro, Trippi's hometown. Ketron gave Trippi his own Coca-Cola route. Trippi made more money as a part time Coke employee than his coal mining father made full time in the mines. Early on, Ketron got a commitment to play for the Bulldogs from Trippi who never wavered, even when Notre Dame came calling. A great day for Georgia.

Book Review

By MORRIS BRANSON
Staff Reporter

The Sympathizer

By: Viet Thanh Nguy

Published 2015, winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Literature

Although centered around the end of the Vietnam war and the fall out afterwards, "The Sympathizer" is in no way a typical spy thriller or war novel. The reader is introduced to the protagonist, who is an agent working for the South Vietnamese military and by extension the US Government. He is also a communist sympathizer and mole working for the North Vietnamese as a spy. One of the things that is compelling, as well as disturbing, is that it is difficult to dislike this character. Often, I found myself laughing out loud, although equally appalled at the situations he finds himself in. Nothing is presented as black and white or good guys vs bad guys. The sympathizer of the title is at times a subversive, a murderer, a college student, a bastard (his words not mine), a film consultant and a POW. He is of mixed-race; the product of a French Priest impregnating his mother at 14. She is a very loving mother; however, his father never acknowledges his existence. His fractured loyalty makes him perfect to see and narrate from many sides. His sympathies are so split that it ultimately becomes difficult at times to determine which side he is on.

The protagonist/narrator's name is never revealed to the reader, although he is referred to as "captain." This is also true of most of the other major characters. At most they are given a first name or a descriptor such as "The General" or "the crapulent major." (Crapulent used to describe his enormous appetite for food and drink) I interpreted this to represent their lack of a place in the world, most of them having become virtually invisible once they reach the United States. The novel begins with the fall of Saigon. The General, for whom the protagonist is working, has to acknowledge, although begrudgingly, defeat. With the United States withdrawing its military, along with it their financial support, The General, who is the leader of the National Police force in South Vietnam has to plan a hasty evacuation for himself and his extended family. He assigns the captain to prepare a list of those who will be evacuated in the illegally obtained aircraft which has a capacity of 92 people. He prepares the list observing that:

"Every stroke of my pen through a name felt like a death sentence." He knows that those left behind are most likely to be killed. The ambivalence with which he makes life-and-death decisions underscores his complicated sympathies. The story continues with his life in the United States and the continuing split-personality he exhibits as he continues to serve The General all the while corresponding with an "Aunt" in Vietnam to whom he passes hidden messages. He signs on as an advisor to a filmmaker (only referred to as the Auteur) who is making a film based on the war. This is a very thinly disguised reference to Francis Ford Coppola and Apocalypse Now. The experience is extremely disheartening and almost gets him killed.

The General has a plan to send men back to Vietnam to continue to fight against the communists. Even though those plans are impossible and pathetic, they put together a band of fighters who set out to Thailand to cross borders and meet up with resistance fighters. In order to be able to join this group the captain has to complete a task that he has no stomach for. Once in Vietnam he is captured and put in a "reeducation" camp. The first part of the story is told through his "confession" to a commissar of the camp. He struggles to find the words that his captor wants to hear in order to gain his freedom.

This is no doubt a very important, extremely well written book. I have never read one that presents the perspective of the refugees from Vietnam as effectively. Although a work of fiction, the situations are based on real-life events. The author himself fled Vietnam with his family in 1975 after the fall of Saigon, although he was only four years old. That being said, I didn't get pleasure out of reading this. There is so much violence, all of it senseless, as well as double-crossing, lying and twisted sexual references making it difficult for me to finish. Last year he published a sequel "the Committed." I have it in my pile of books but I'm not sure when I'll be up to reading it; however, Nguyen is such a talented writer that I will not put it off for long.

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