

# Perspective

TUSCOLA REVIEW EDITORIAL BOARD:

— Email: [publisher@tuscolareview.com](mailto:publisher@tuscolareview.com)

David Porter,  
Jennie Porter,

Mike Carroll,  
Bill Englehardt

## Anniversary remembrances

As my 44th wedding anniversary is fast approaching, I look back and think how naïve I was when I got married. For example, tradition dictates that the groom-to-be ask the bride-to-be's father for her hand in marriage prior to any formal proposal. I didn't know this protocol and never did ask my father-in-law for permission to marry his daughter. He never mentioned the fact that I never requested his endorsement, but I am sure I hurt his feelings, which was unintentional... I just didn't know better.

I was in the Army when I purchased Cathy's engagement ring at the Post Exchange, known as the PX, located at Ft. Ord, Calif. I didn't have much money and I saw a ring that was within my limited budget and I ended up paying \$100 for a

### So there I was

By Pete Buckley  
[pete.buckley@tuscolareview.com](mailto:pete.buckley@tuscolareview.com)



diamond ring.

Jewelry, especially rings, are one of many subjects I know little about. I never gave it a thought that rings come in different sizes. I purchased the ring in the display case and assumed it would fit Cathy... and I lucked out because it did fit.

It is difficult to explain to you how small the diamond on this ring was. I mean, this diamond was so small, that

years later our house was burglarized and the thieves stole TV sets and other electronic goods as well as jewelry. When I arrived home to survey the burglary scene, I noticed that Cathy's jewelry box was open and the crooks had taken much of her jewelry, but left the engagement ring. I was very angry that our home had been broken into, but I was humiliated that even burglars recognized

that the engagement ring wasn't valuable.

Two days before the wedding I flew back to Illinois from California. The night I arrived in Illinois, I was the guest-of-honor at my bachelor party held at my best friend's apartment. We may have over-indulged with adult beverages and gotten a little loud because the police arrived and suggested we quiet down or leave the apartment complex. It was decided to leave the apartment and drive to another friend's residence.

I was in no condition to drive, so I was riding in the front passenger seat when the driver crashed into a bridge railing. I woke up the next day, the day before I was to be married, laying in a strange bed in the hospital. My chest was hurting so badly that I thought I was

having a heart attack.

I hit the hand-held call button for the nurse, explaining to her that I thought I was having a heart attack, but she assured me that I was not having a heart attack, but instead had severely bruised ribs. When I informed the nurse that I had to be released immediately from the hospital because I was getting married the next day, she said, and I quote, "My, you are in a pickle."

I had to demonstrate I could get out of bed and walk before I was released. While masking extreme pain, I gritted my teeth and managed to walk the number of steps required in order to convince the doctor to release me.

My punishment for attending a bachelor party only two days prior to my wedding came about immediately. Cathy picked me up from the

hospital in her dad's pick-up truck (with no shock absorbers) and I felt excruciating pain every time Cathy drove over every pothole and bump-in-the-road between Chicago and Bloomington... ouch. I'm not sure, but I believe she may have been aiming for those potholes.

As you know by now, despite the problems I caused myself, the wedding went off without a hitch. Cathy was stunningly beautiful that day (and every day afterwards) and I keep a photo of her wearing her wedding dress as the screen-saver on my cell phone.

I try not to look at photos of myself on my wedding day, as I am reminded of my bachelor's party each time I gaze upon our wedding photos which show me smiling... with a nice red scratch across the middle of my forehead.

## Summer memories of a city girl

It's summer again, though you wouldn't have known it from the weather last week. But it's come. Kids are out of school as of last Thursday, the pool opened its garage style doors, T-Sno is serving up sugary dreams one cup at a time, and the sound of motorcycles are filling the air.

There's something very television-like for me when summer comes in Tuscola. You see, growing up in the inner city of Chicago, I have different memories of what a classic summer looks like.

It seemed every summer of my childhood had a theme. One year, all the neighborhood kids were obsessed with kickball. We didn't have a real diamond to play on but there was an empty lot behind the apartment building that I lived in and everyone would converge on it after lunch for a game.

Thinking back, I'd never let my kids play in that lot. There were broken beer bottles, random trash, and sometimes even a junk car parked there. Us city kids didn't care, or didn't know better.

Then there was the summer of soccer. My yard, which was really just another empty lot with a couple of trees, was per-

### Margie's Mess

By Margie Carter  
[margie@tuscolareview.com](mailto:margie@tuscolareview.com)



fect for soccer. Between the brick wall of our building and the chain link fence, I learned how to angle a shot to ricochet a pass to a teammate. That year was when the local boys realized I was a very decent soccer player and actually started asking me to come play.

I'll never forget the summer I got rollerblades. My best friend was a natural in them and I loved watching her spin in place or try to beat her best time down the block. I'm certain she used my blades more than I did.

One year, before my mom and dad split, a bunch of the adults on our block decided to have a water balloon fight. I still remember helping fill at least a hundred balloons. Our building staged anything that could hold water on the front

steps and packed them with balloons. The building across the street did the same.

They threw balloons at each other for a good hour. My favorite memory of that night is a vivid picture of my dad taking one of the buckets of water after we ran out of balloons, running across the street and dumping the water on one of our neighbors.

That's one bit of a Chicago summer that you'd only get if you lived it, and I'm certain it would never fly anywhere else.

When it got so hot it was unbearable we didn't have a city pool to retreat to. Instead, someone would crack open one of the fire hydrants on the street corner. They would put a couple car tires round the base and use a wooden plank to redirect the water. The result

was a makeshift splash pad on the street. In Spanish we called it "La pompa," the pump. One kid would come running down the street yelling "La pompa is open!"

Now thinking of it, I'm not even sure I owned a swimsuit as a child. We would run down to the corner in shorts and T-shirt. Taking turns running into the water or cooling off in the huge puddles in the street gutters.

Eventually, someone would call the city to report it because having the hydrate running causes the entire block to lose

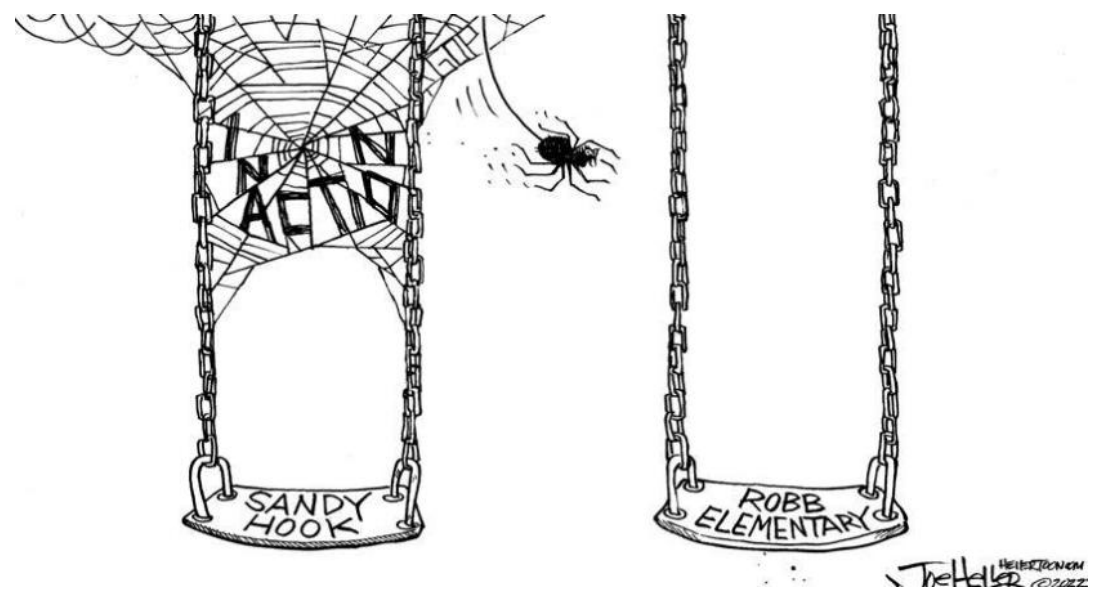
water pressure. A fire truck would come around and turn it off and we'd all scatter.

There were several years when I'm sure someone had acquired the specialized tool for opening the hydrate because it wasn't long before the water was running again and we'd hear "La pompa is open!" once again.

In no way do I regret raising my own kids in a small town. The safety and community can't be beat. My girls will look back on their summers with just as much fondness and their memories with be of

water balloon fights with the neighborhood kids, that time our neighbor tried to save the fish that got stuck in the ditches between our houses, when they finally all learned to ride their bikes, and even the year the whole world shut down and we learned to keep our distance.

I once saw a saying about only having 18 summers with your kids and making the most of them. It's a great reminder and an awful realization but so important because these memories are what they'll hang on to forever.



## Making stuff is satisfying until it's not

In some respects, newspapers and printing are considered to be manufacturing. It makes sense; we're taking one product and turning it into another product and thus increasing the value. Theoretically. Hopefully.

Most of what I do is on the newspapering side, which doesn't feel that much like manufacturing. That's probably because most of the physical transformation takes place somewhere else.

All the pieces of the puzzle are fun. I do some of the writing and photography and most of the layout, which literally is a puzzle each week. But when I get the chance, I love to watch the pressmen work.

Huge rolls of paper are attached to several different printing units. Combined, the machinery is called a web press probably because the continuous rolls of paper are vaguely comparable to a spider's web.

The layout that I design is transferred to metal plates that are wrapped around large

cylinders. Each ink color has a separate plate. The ink is smeared onto a table in front of the plates that then spin rapidly, picking up ink. All of the colors on the page are made from just four ink colors: cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

A combination of water and ink combines in a way that I can't fully explain to transfer the ink to the paper that is threaded through the press units. The pressmen hustle from unit to unit turning knobs to make adjustments as the paper whizzes by.

At the end, all of the pages come together and are machine folded and trimmed. The resulting newspapers are deposited onto a conveyor belt that stacks them up.

On a smaller scale, we do commercial printing, which I occasionally get to help with. Unlike the offset printing of the web press, our commercial printing, or job printing, is done on digital laser printers, but the four-color process is the same using cyan, magenta, yellow and black toner.

We have a variety of equipment to produce many different products. We have a large, industrial paper cutter, a folder and a saddle stitcher that produces staples from a reel of wire. Smaller, more manual equipment will do spiral binding, perforating, padding, etc.

Our largest printer could be coupled with accessories that would fold, trim and staple automatically. But those accessories would cost \$40,000 or so and would require a larger space. So, we use older equipment that requires each function to be completed separately.

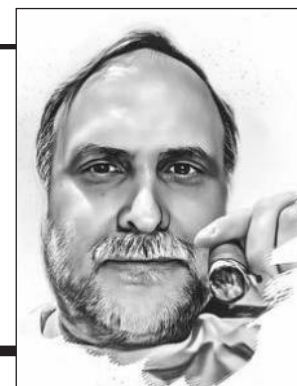
There's a lot of satisfaction when completing a printing job like a booklet. Maybe it's because of the manual labor that our equipment requires, but there's a proud "I made this" moment at the end of it.

I found out tonight that there's a limit to my manufacturing joy.

I was working on a pretty big job. It wasn't a complicated job. Just a flyer, 11 by 17 inches, printed in color on both

### Ramblin' Man

By David Porter  
[porter@ramblinman.us](mailto:porter@ramblinman.us)



sides and folded. But there were more than 5,000 of them ordered.

My role was pretty simple. Take the printed pages from the printer over to the folder. Load them into the machine that folds them and counts them.

You could train a monkey to do the job. I know because I was the monkey doing it.

I underestimated the time that it would take to print them. Our machine is normally pretty fast. But it has to print one side, turn it over and print the other side. Watching the machine print was like watching a pair of snails in a sack

race through a field of molasses.

The printer is in one room and the folder is in, gasp, another room. So most of my job was walking from one room to another. For six solid hours.

I was also watching the counter and boxing up the finished product for multiple end-users. That was the most complicated part of the job.

After 4,000 copies, I started hating the printer.

It wasn't the printer's fault. It was the concrete floor. My legs started complaining to my spine, which then complained to my brain. And my brain took it out on the printer.

It was actually a bit of relief when the paper tray was empty 11 times and the toner cartridges had to be replaced twice. Those interruptions provided some variety to the monotony of walking from the printer to the folder and back again.

Probably the biggest downside is that it's illegal to smoke a cigar in a commercial building, and nobody wants their printing to smell like cigar smoke and anguish. So I just powered through.

But I got done and there was that familiar satisfaction that I'm not just a newspaperman. I'm a manufacturer.

I still had a column to write before I could call it a night, but at least I can do that from home with a cigar in my hand. Thus, I've decided: I like newspapering better.

© Copyright 2022 by David Porter who can be reached at [porter@ramblinman.us](mailto:porter@ramblinman.us). If my columns start stinking of cigar smoke, I don't know what I'll do.