

Columns

A fitting tribute on a warm Spring day

The mercury was inching upward toward 90 degrees on the last day of May, and many who gathered for final remembrances inched toward the shade of the old oak trees near the grave site.

It was a simple ceremony, filled with biblical verse and grace. The road leading to the quiet country cemetery was lined with the cars of those who had come to pay their respects, the surest sign of a life well lived.

She had been born in Douglas County during the great depression, and as far as I know, never left. She spent most of

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



her life helping her husband raise crops, along with 4 kids, on the family farm. Like most ladies of her era, she crocheted and cross stitched and could sew just about anything, because growing up when she

did, families had to make do. I can't say for certain, but I'd almost bet that she had sewn and worn clothes made from feed sacks or flour bags. The Devil may have worn Prada, but if he did, it wasn't in Hugo!

As Pastor Ted said during the service, she was from the 'greatest generation.' They grew up tough because they had to, and as such they cherished what they had instead of coveting what they didn't.

I didn't really know Clara Mae, but I am friends with two of her children and one of her grandsons. They too are a testament to the kind of woman she was. Hard working and kind, to a fault. I can only imagine that her four children, seven grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren were her most prized possessions.

I can't help but believe that the manner in which she was laid to rest was exactly as she would have wanted it to be. A short, dignified ceremony on a warm day in a small country cemetery not far from the farm, surrounded by family and friends along with friends of the family.

As I listened to the eulogy, I was struck by the intimacy of the moment. There's just something so serene about a funeral in a country cemetery. It's as though nature herself takes a pause to pay respects to someone who respected her so. The sunlight, the cacophony

of birds. The hint of breeze, whispering quietly through the trees. Perfection, even as those in attendance mourned our loss.

I haven't really thought about it before, but it occurred to me that one could do worse than being laid to rest under those idyllic conditions.

As for me, I'm leaning toward something a bit rowdier, like \$50 in the jukebox and an open bar at JR's, my favorite watering hole. I hope you can make it, in 30 or 40 years.

Killing the Police – National Police Week

Some of my favorite people are police officers. Like every occupation, there are a few bad apples that should never have worn a badge, but for over 30 years I had the opportunity to work with local, state, and federal police officers and I have found that the vast majority of police officers are dedicated professionals who want to do the best job they can to keep the public safe. I am always a little reluctant to publicly say "Thank You" to Police Officers because I don't want to embarrass them or bring unwanted attention to them. But during National Police Week in May, I ran into an Illinois State Trooper at Dairy Queen and summoned up enough courage to tell him, "Thank you for protecting us." He turned to me with a big grin and replied, "You know, I never tire of someone saying that to me. I really do appreciate your thanks." From May 14-20, the U.S. celebrated National Po-

lice Week, but despite the fact that National Police Week has come and gone, it is always a good week to thank your local police officers for the job that they do.

The history of National Police Week started in 1962, when President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation that designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as Police Week. Currently, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world converge on Washington, DC to participate in several planned events that honor those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

National Police Week also offers honor, remembrance, and peer support, while allowing law enforcement, survivors, and citizens to gather and pay homage to those who gave their lives in the line of duty. One such law enforcement officer was Tommy Mar-

tin, the Chief Deputy for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, who was shot on June 21, 2007 and died of his wounds on July 17, 2007.

Statistics show that being a police officer can be dangerous. The FBI released its annual report on the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line-of-duty. The National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) reported that Officers are always susceptible to life-threatening attacks and therefore must always be vigilant and maintain the highest level of situational awareness. In most cases, officers are able to quickly assess situations, recognize threats, and take adequate defensive actions. Tragically, not every threat can be seen or mitigated.

The FBI released its annual report on the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty during 2022. The FBI recorded 118 offi-

So there I was

By Pete Buckley



cers killed in line-of-duty incidents. As the FOP noted, in most cases, officers are able to quickly assess situations, recognize threats, and take adequate defensive measures. Tragically, not every threat can be seen or mitigated. Perhaps most troubling and worrisome are ambush-style and other calculated attacks on law enforcement. Premeditated ambush-style attacks are particularly disturbing. These types of attacks are carried out with an element of surprise and are intended to deprive officers of their ability to defend

against the attack. Premeditated attacks contribute to a worrisome desensitization to evil acts that were once largely considered taboo except by the most deprived individuals. Twelve (12) ambush attacks occurred in 2022 which resulted in officers' deaths. These 12 ambush attacks are a 33% increase compared to the eight ambush attacks in 2021.

In addition, a total of 331 cops were shot across the country in 2022, a 6% increase from 2020, according to a new accounting from the National Fraternal Order of Police. Firearms were used in

81.7% of the felonious deaths in 2022, with 59.2% of the type of firearm used not currently reported. The leading circumstances surrounding officers' deaths included activities related to ambushes on officers, investigative/enforcement activities, unprovoked attacks on officers, and responses to disorderly/disturbance calls.

I like to believe that mankind is basically good. However, my 30 years of law enforcement experience has revealed that evil exists in society and the police officer is often called upon to bring the evil doer to justice, even though the threat of violence against the officer is present.

So, although National Police Week is officially over, I would ask that you consider thanking your local police officer for the important (and sometimes dangerous) work that they do protecting all of us. As that trooper told me, they really do appreciate our thanks.

Observations while shopping for clothes and groceries

I drove up to Champaign last weekend and was shocked at the lack of merchandise in two of my favorite stores. When I walked into the big department store I wondered if it was going out of business. I have never seen the handbag department and the women's clothing departments so sparsely stocked. My surprise continued throughout both floors. For once in my life I actually came out of the store empty handed.

This has to be the first time a men's department was better stocked than the women's wear and I decided to inquire of a sales person as to the reason behind the obvious shortage of women's clothing. After searching for employees, I asked three clerks and the answer was the same; we are selling more online. Wow, I knew online sales had increased but not to this point.

I have also been somewhat dismayed at the continued shortages in the grocery stores. Apparently the pandemic shortages have still not been satisfied and suppliers continue to have problems. I guess we are pretty spoiled here in the USA but I do find it somewhat irritating to have to drive from store to store just to grocery shop for us especially with Mom having a special diet now. At 97 years of age she does not understand why it is necessary to find alternative products to those she has bought for years. Even at my age being used to certain products and having to shange brands is challenging. Spoiled? Yep!

As I mentioned, there did not seem to be a problem for

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



Father's Day shopping in a couple of the stores I visited. I did notice stock in traditional gifts; ties, dress shirts and cologne was not as plentiful as before but that could be because so many men are working from home now. Dress codes have changed for many businesses as well and as I looked around at the men I saw working in the shops I only spotted one man out of about twenty, who was wearing a tie. I know times have changed and I am probably still stuck in "retail past" but I still like to see sales people dressing nicely in better shops.

We do not have any fathers, grandfathers or father-in-laws in the family any longer but as an old retailer I still enjoy browsing the men's departments if only to keep abreast of new fashions. I was joking with my son the other day and I told him that he was a "fur-father", since they have so many cats and kittens, so he should expect a "fur-father's day" gift this year. That wil give me the fun of buying a Father's Day gift as well as the enjoyment of shopping in a pet store.

Who invented Father's Day? According to "Thoughtco" web site <https://www.thoughtco.com/>: "While there are at least two or three different people credited with that honor, most

historians consider Sonora Smart Dodd of Washington State to be the first person to have proposed the holiday in 1910. After hearing her pastor give a sermon about the newly established Mother's Day, Sonora Dodd suggested to him that there should also be a Father's Day and proposed that the date be June 5, her father's birthday. However, her pastor needed more time to prepare a sermon, so he moved the date to June 19, the third Sunday of the month".

A bit of Father's Day trivia: from "<https://www.theholidayspot.com/>"

"In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge made Father's Day a national event".

"In 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the 3rd Sunday of June as Father's Day".

"The necktie is the most popular and number one of all Father's Day gifts according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Hammers and golf clubs are also popular presents for the day".

Wel I, for one, have to confess that I bought my share of Father's Day ties and some of them were pretty ugly as I look back on my purchases. My Dad always said he liked them and wore them too. I am so sorry that I must have embarrassed

him to no end with my choices. My favorite Father's Day purchase was the first year I had a job and I bought Daddy his own shoe shine valet stand. It was a large wooden box with a foot stand on the top and a door that opened on the side. The box was filled with brown and black shoe polish, various brushes and soft cloths for polishing and buffing. I know my dad liked this gift because he kept it for years until one day the box was so old it fell apart.

My Mom always made Father's Day special by cooking a special meal and making Daddy's favorite desserts. My dad was a Hershey's cocoa, chocolate cream pie fan and most Father's Day dinners would conclude with some sort of chocolate cream pie, cake, pudding or Mom's invention of smores made with

chocolate cream filling. I will most likely bake a chocolate cream something for my son this year.

Happy father's Day!

Note: Thanks to Melissa for pointing out my typo in our May 24th paper. She noted I wrote "I have lived here since 1997" when in fact it should have read 1967: she checked with the cookbook I published a couple years ago before emailing me.

Hershey's Chocolate Cream Pie

1 pie crust 9-inch baked pastry shell or crumb crust, cooled
1/2 cup HERSHEY'S Cocoa
3 cups milk
1 - 1/3 cups sugar
3 Tbsps all-purpose flour
3 Tbsps corn starch
1/2 tsp salt
3 egg yolks
1/3 cup butter or margarine
1 - 1/2 tsps vanilla extract sweetened whipped cream

Open House at Astronomical Society

Venus has been in our evening sky since the beginning of the year. You can see it tonight in the western sky after sunset. It's the brightest thing there. Venus reached its greatest separation from the Sun this past weekend. That means the planet will slowly seem to head back towards the Sun when it will eventually pass between the Sun and the Earth. This week it sets at 11:45pm but that set time will get earlier. We'll still be able to see Venus into August. Keep an eye on it and its position in the sky.

The CU Astronomical Society will meet tomorrow night at the Staerkel Planetarium at

In the night sky

By David Leake



7pm and John Richmann will give us a tour of some other things we can see in our late spring skies. If those skies are clear this Saturday, the CUAS will bring telescopes to the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve near the Activity Center where there will be an 8pm talk. Then we'll check out the

dark skies from the states first and only "dark sky park" Join us at both events if you can!

David Leake is retired Planetarium Director of Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College and co-founder of the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, Inc.