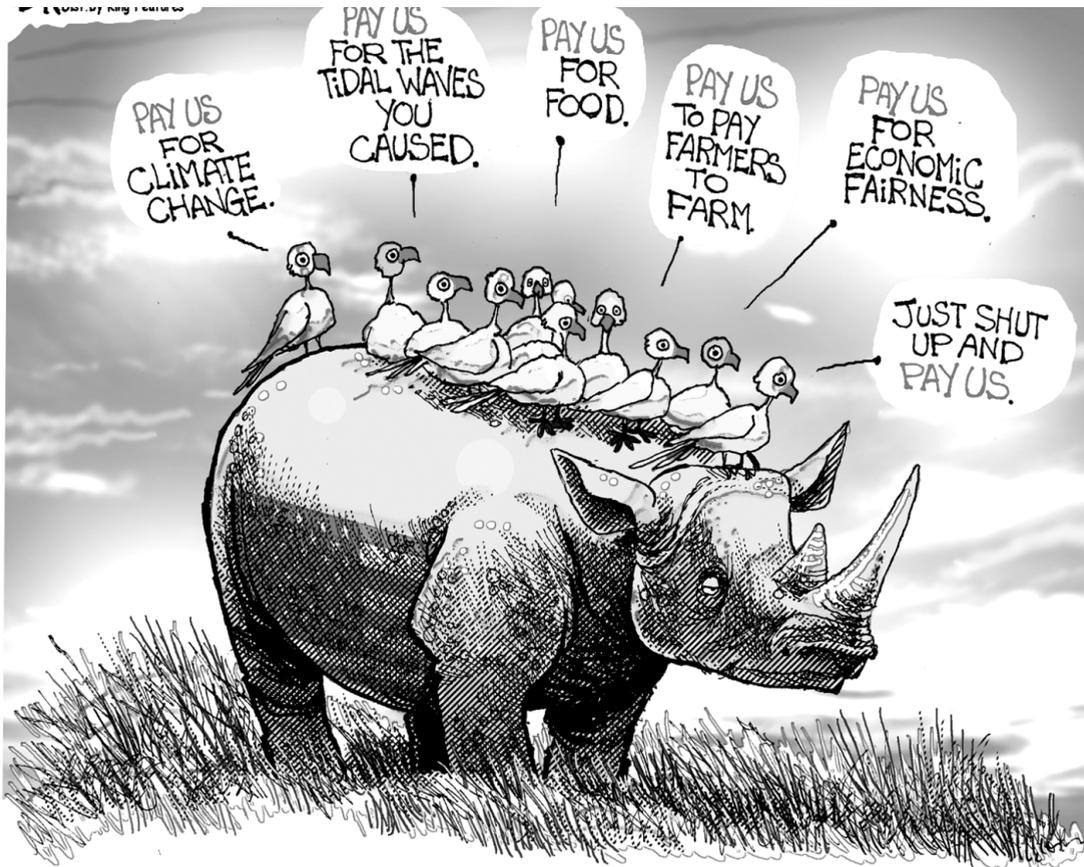


Sunday's

Editorials, Columns & Letters

P.O. Drawer 1272 409 W. Hill Email: ads@brownfieldonline.com Phone: (806) 637-4535



HOW THE UNITED NATIONS REALLY WORKS.

Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

Wow! What a week! After the unbelievable events of last Friday in Connecticut, I have asked God all week long, what on earth to say this week. I have had several thoughts, but nothing seemed quite right. But today, as I yet again visited with God about what He would have me write, He spoke very clearly to me. I was standing at the sink with my hands in the dishwasher and He said, "Just speak from your heart." After much time in prayer for those hurting across our land and those even here at home whose hearts are so heavy this Christmas season, I have come to the conclusion that my heart wants to say what God's heart has always said, "Those who are far from Thee will perish, But as for me, the nearness of God is my good. I have made the LORD God my refuge, that I may tell of all Thy works." These are actually words from the Psalms where the writer is listing out

all the things that are going wrong around him, but in the end, he recognizes who has it all under control. I love that he says "the nearness of God is my good." Sometimes we look around us and wonder where the good has gone. Well, the Psalmist is telling us where the good is. When we hold our God as near to us as He holds us, the good is there. As I write this today, we are having a terrible sandstorm. But this morning, if you were paying attention, the sunrise was absolutely beautiful. We all knew what the forecast said, but it was if God was saying, "Don't worry about the forecast, whether it blows or doesn't, I've got you right here with me. Don't wonder about where the good is. The good is with Me."

As we are just days from Christmas and on the heels of such unspeakable grief as a nation, may we take time to remember where the good is.

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord... And suddenly there were with the angels a multitude of heavenly host praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace among men of good will." (Luke 2:10-14)

When you gather with your family in the next day or two, say a prayer of comfort for those hurting families in Connecticut, as well as those around you, then say a prayer of thanksgiving that God is still in the world in the form of the Savior who came to set us free from our sins. Then offer God the prayer of a willing heart, ready to be the one that will show that Good to the rest of the world. It will make a difference.

Country Dog...City Dog Sawyer Adjusts
Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

Recently, we gave up the river house in Central Texas to move close to our son. It's one of those things that people of advancing age have to face sooner or later, figuring that getting older means more health challenges. All of that points toward a day when our offspring have to make a decision about driving an aging parent who requires fairly continuous care to a facility equipped to do that.

Seeing as how driving one or both of us to such a place would've required a five-hour-plus drive one way for Son to chauffeur us to the old folks home, we opted to move to the city where he lives, so his trip would be a mere five or 10 minutes. Considerate, huh?

Of course, giving up the house on the riverbank meant abandoning the home that Sawyer, heretofore known as The Famous River Wonder Dog, had and requiring him to adapt to city yard living.

Regular readers of this weekly missive may recall that Sawyer had an "idyllic" country place there on the riverbank to develop a whole bunch of bad habits. Since our river house had a fenced yard that abutted the black-topped county road on which we lived, he could put a bit of a scare into those just ambling by and enjoying that beautiful countryside.

He'd come bounding down the stairs from the front deck and into the yard, racing along the fence a mere 12-15 feet from a bike rider, milk truck, farm equipment, or slow-moving car, emitting his "ferocious" bark. Regular commuters learned his name and would call out to him. Any time he hears his name, it sets off a tail wagging that tells one and all there may be a bark, but chances of a bite are twofold — slim and none.

On occasions, when I take him somewhere with me, people stop and ask if they can pet him. He's a friendly, happy little animal

who loves people, so he's in dog heaven when that occurs. And, I've found, he's the lone reason young women and girls will stop and speak to an old geezer like me. Life Mate isn't too thrilled when I refer to him as a "chick magnet."

Sawyer's exposure to passing traffic is now limited to his looking out the two of the front windows or the two narrow areas, fenced from either side of the house, that offer a view of the street on which we're located. Actually, it has pretty much ended his chasing and barking at passing vehicles.

But, it's opened up another world of adventure for Sawyer in his new domicile/yard.

Three sides of the back yard are enclosed by a tall wood privacy fence. A burgeoning population of squirrels taunt Sawyer by racing along on top of the fence and into the trees. All he can do is run along by the fence or around the trees, bark and leap at the squirrels.

He did get a major surprise recently when a young possum made the mistake of hitting the ground within the confines of the back yard. Sawyer corralled the critter, and the possum, well, uh, played "possum" (acted dead).

Wonder Dog came to get us, to show us, how well he was protecting the back yard, and when we followed him out to where he'd left the possum, voila, the rodent had come to life and found safer climes. "The Puppy," as he is sometimes called, made lots of quick, almost comedic, head turns with this quizzical look as if to say, "I was brave, captured it and (he thought) killed it, so where did it go?"

Now, the possum(s) run along the top of the fence, totally frustrating Sawyer but not dampening his lust for the chase and the "treeing."

Willis Webb is a retired community newspaper editor-publisher of more than 50 years experience. He can be reached by email at wwebb1937@att.net.

Paper 'n Ink:

Christmas stories...

By Lynn Brisendine

Thinking of Christmas stories always has me recalling the first time I saw Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer cartoon narrated and sung by Burl Ives. I was in my mid-teens the first time it aired and while I was too old probably to be watching such a show, the music and the story intrigued me. I can still laugh when I hear Yukon Cornelius yell to Hermey the renegade elf and Rudolph when they were attacked by the Abominable Snowman...Hermey called out, "what do we do?... and Yukon loudly advises..."douse your nose and run for your life." I think it is a modern Christmas classic.

It joins so many others that our grandchildren, children, us, our parents, grandparents and generations for centuries have enjoyed both hearing and telling.

Before the Rudolph cartoon was the now famous Frank Capra film, starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore, *It's a Wonderful Life*. It was made the year I was born in 1946. And at the time, it was critically panned. But over the years, it has become one of the main events on television in the holiday season.

Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings, we are told. The story evolves around a man who considers himself a failure, only to learn, with the help of a bumbling angel apprentice waiting for his wings, that his life is a meaningful one which makes his world revolve. Of course (spoiler alert, now seven decades later) a character in the ends rings a bell giving the inept angel his wings.

It is, well for lack of a better adjective, wonderful. These stories go back as a Texan who was incarcerated in an Ohio prison became a famous author of his day and he too pens an unforgettable Christmas tale, still worthy of reading. *The Gift of the Magi*, by O. Henry was published in 1906. It is a tale of irony about two young lovers who sacrifice their most cherished possession in order to buy their mate the perfect gift. Again, if you haven't read this short story then it is a Christmas season must-read.

Along about the same time comes a tale from one of America's most prolific and loved authors of the 19th century, Mark Twain. *A Letter from Santa Claus* was a short item written by Twain to his daughter who suffered from several illnesses. It is considered a classical read.

And even earlier ... in December of 1843, one of the all-time Christmas classics was first published. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens weaves a tale of a miserly man being visited by three Ghosts of Christmas. In between the visits of these supernatural visions is the story of a poor family with a young boy dying from a medical condition. The family is too poor to seek a cure. Again (spoiler alert) in the end, Scrooge is turned into a real believer and he sets his world aright. It, too, is a wonderful story and a Christmas must for a family to read or see.

All of these tales revolve around a special time when families gather, gifts are exchanged, feasts are partaken of, and a general feeling of awe and wonder fill the spirits of the youngest to the oldest.

As magnificent and touching as any of the above can be, it continues to be the original story that truly offers inspiration, hope and peace.

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child. The real Christmas story is a complicated set of circumstances that celebrate the birth of a child, one so special that we began our calendars by observing his birth now 2,012 years ago.

Christ was born, according to the Bible, in a manger surrounded by farm animals, shepherds tending their flocks and the visit of three wise men bearing gifts.

They all were led to the town of Bethlehem by a star, which stood over and lighted the scene in the cool glow of its light. The historical implications of the Christ child's birth and life continue to involve more than a billion people these 21 centuries hence.

The story is one of high drama, some sacrifice, some intrigue and one of heart rending circumstance.

And as classical as all the stories of the special time of year have become, none are more deserving of being retold than the original. Hallelujah, the baby Jesus is born...

Merry Christmas... from me and mine... to you and yours.
Lynn, Linda and all the Brisendines

Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1272 Brownfield, Texas 79316

Sign and include your address and phone number...

You may also send your letter via the Internet.

E-mail it to publisher@brownfieldonline.com

The News requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

Thanks for reading...

the Brownfield News
and brownfieldonline.com

Remembering Unwrapping the Perfect Gift...

By Brian Brisendine

I would imagine that most folks, if they think long and hard enough, can remember unwrapping that perfect Christmas gift as a child.

That one present that can be remembered many years later, as the other presents — though well intentioned and appreciated at the time — have faded into memory.

I'll be the first to admit that my sisters and I were spoiled by our parents and always were on the receiving end of more gifts than we deserved (especially my sisters).

But one gift I received as a youngster stands out above all the rest.

I was 12 years old and enjoying working my way through the mountain of presents in front of

me.

Just as I unwrapped the final box in front of me, one more package appeared from behind my dad's chair.

It was wrapped in red paper, but I knew instantly what it was without having to open it first.

I had been asking, begging and pleading for a BB rifle for several years, all to no avail.

I knew the long, slim box my dad was holding was either my BB gun or a very cruel hoax, which would be uncharacteristic for my gregarious parents around the holidays.

I tore the paper away with zeal and proudly eyed the box with a photo of its contents — the Crossman Airguns PowerMaster 66 pump-action BB rifle, complete

with the optional (but absolutely necessary) 4X15 scope mounted on top.

This was more than a BB gun — it was a symbol.

I was a man and I was armed. I could bring down game and put food on the table.

I could protect my family and our home from dangerous enemies — like those pesky sparrows perched on the power lines in our alley.

But before I could achieve official Rambo status with my manly new weapon, the first step was obvious.

I had to sight in my high-powered scope which sat impressively atop my high-powered BB gun.

The book that came with the BB gun was titled Having Fun and

Staying Safe With Your New Rifle.

I liked the fact that they called it a rifle and not a mere BB gun.

I flipped past Chapter 1: Important Safety Tips and went right to Chapter 2: Hitting Your Target.

The book suggested the best way to sight in the scope was by utilizing the Crossman Airguns official shooting targets, available at a retailer near you.

But if they weren't available, it said to position a soda can and aim for a specific spot, like the loops in the can's lettering.

I quickly found an empty Coca Cola can and placed it prominently atop my dad's backyard grill.

I turned and took 20 paces in the opposite direction before reversing to face my prey. I licked

my finger and held it in the air to gauge the speed and direction of the wind — any sniper's biggest hindrance.

It was calm and quiet as I took dead aim at the O in the Cola toward the bottom of the can.

I closed one eye, exhaled slowly and squeezed the trigger.

I almost expected the can to explode in a great ball of fire and prisoners of war to rush forward and thank me for freeing them.

Instead, the can didn't move an inch (that pesky O was still intact) and I heard the unmistakable sound of glass shattering.

My dad's grill had a window across the front of the lid to allow a clear view of whatever was cooking.

One shot from my "rifle"

turned its window into a vent — tripling the cooking time for the duration of its grilling life.

This, I knew instantly, was going to be bad.

I had visions of myself, blindfolded with my hands tied behind a pole, requesting one last smoke before the BB gun firing squad put me out of my misery.

Daddy was pretty hot, but I escaped the executioner — although, it was Easter before I saw my Christmas present again.

Here's hoping the present you want is under the tree this year.

From my family to yours,
Merry Christmas.