

February 2 , 1995

You remember my recent mention of Dr. Stewart Beasley Jr., one of our native sons who now is a counseling psychologist in Edmond? I related how he often appears on all of the Oklahoma City TV stations, commenting on bizarre crimes or situations with some out of the ordinary aspect. Since then I have heard from Dr. Beasley with a little background which I thought you might also find interesting. He writes as follows:

"It's funny, but my television spots come at odd times. Usually, I get a call from one (or all three) television station asking me to do an 'on-camera' interview about some off-the-wall topic. I guess they know I'm good for a 10-15 second sound bite on nearly anything! I've commented on everything from Susan Smith in North Carolina who confessed to murdering her two little boys to why football is so important to Oklahomans. NBC even sent a reporter from Los Angeles to interview me when Barry Switzer left his head coaching job at OU!

"Some of my friends and acquaintances in Perry may not be aware that I host a weekly radio talk-show, 'With You in Mind,' Sundays from 8-10 p.m. on KTOK radio in Oklahoma City (1000 on the AM dial) ... My show is a call-in psychology talk show and I have fun with it. I hope you'll listen if you get a chance."

I did not know about the radio show until now, but I'll be tuning in to see if it's anything like Dr. Frasier's version each Tuesday night on NBC TV. It was good to hear from our friend Dr. Beasley. You'll probably want to check out his show, too.

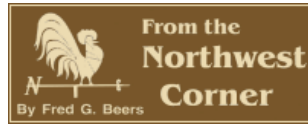
I keep bringing up my fascination with music of the Big Band era, but I may not have mentioned that my personal favorite is Glenn Miller. That should come as no big surprise because he probably holds that special distinction with a majority of all the old duffers who, like me, still cling to those musical memories.

Recently I took inventory of my Miller album collection and learned that it now includes 398 selections in 20 albums - 33 and 45 rpm vinyls, plus tape cassettes and CDs. That does not include video tapes of the only two full-length Hollywood movies which featured the Miller band and their director as an actor, another tape of the MGM movie based on Glenn Miller's life with James Stewart in the lead role, and two PBS specials showcasing the band.

Alphabetically the tunes range from A ("Adios") to Y ("Yuletide Medley"). I'm not bringing this up to brag, just to show you how far overboard I have gone on this subject. Someday it would be nice to have all 398 of those songs transferred to one reel-to-reel tape, or better still to a single digitally recorded compact disc, but there are several problems with that. Mainly, no ordinary tape reel or CD could contain that many tunes. But if you like that style as much as I do, wouldn't it be great to have that unique, beautiful sound uninterrupted for whatever length of time it might take to play 398 renditions by the Moonlight Serenaders?

As you may have read, the 50th anniversary of Glenn Miller's death during World War II was recently observed, but today his estate is still earning as much or more as the original band did in the pre-war era. A legally franchised Glenn Miller band still tours internationally and plays to sold-out audiences here and abroad. It is especially popular in Japan. And, Reader's Digest has just issued a CD box set of 60 Miller recordings taken from RCA Victor and Bluebird master discs, cleaned up by modern technology. Wow.

That makes me think. It's time to start my 1995 Christmas wish list.



February 4, 1995

January and February sound like a great time of year for visiting Florida, so Laura and I chose last week to accept an invitation from my cousin, Fred W. Beers, to spend some time with him at his home in West Palm Beach. We've done this before so we pretty well know the type of clothing to take along. As you have probably already guessed, we were wrong this time. Oklahoma was warmer than Florida for at least part of our visit, but we enjoyed the trip just the same. Florida is a beautiful state.

Cousin Fred lived in Perry for ten years, during the decade of the 1930s, but since then Florida has been his home for something like 45 years. Despite that long gap, he has a great fondness for the friends he made here and the time he spent in Perry.

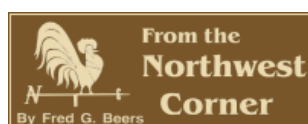
In recent years he has had successful surgeries for abdominal cancer and cataracts on both eyes. Before that he suffered a stroke which left him weak but not paralyzed. His wife of nearly 50 years died five years ago after a lingering illness, and he will be 86 years old in June. His marvelous bass singing voice is no longer dependable and it is difficult for him to play the piano now. Despite all that, he is a positive thinker, cheerful and well informed, and able to live alone. Although he is focused on today, his recollection of people he knew here and events that transpired while he lived here is just remarkable. I frequently call on him for help when researching local history.

Super Bowl XXIX was played in Miami, just down the road from West Palm Beach, while we were there. Since the game was widely expected to be strictly no contest, we had an idea that tickets would be readily available at the gate. It was just a thought and we made no effort to test it out, thank goodness. The cheapest advance regular admission seats were \$200 each. By game time, they were being offered at prices ranging from \$700 to \$1,200, and eager fans were snapping them up. We're glad we settled for the TV version. South Florida enjoyed a significant economic boom during the week because of the hyped-up game, but we didn't contribute much to that.

Across the waterway from West Palm Beach is the elegant community of Palm Beach, the location of some of the most palatial homes in the U.S. Adding to their classic architectural beauty is the unparalleled natural flora of that area. Graceful palm trees, year-round green lawns, flowering shrubbery and all kinds of bright blossoms in carefully tended bedding, plus the mighty Atlantic creating its own type of majesty in their front yard.

Many notables maintain homes there and their number is growing almost daily. Donald Trump has purchased one of the largest estates in Palm Beach for his own home and is attempting to convert part of the property into a private, high-dollar club, over the objections of some in the community. The fabled Kennedy estate, familiar to all of us as the locale of Willie Smith's gambol with a local (Palm Beach) girl, is for sale but there is talk of converting it into some type of national historic site. The Kennedys are not of one accord on that project.

Cousin Fred has driven, alone, from West Palm Beach to Perry on more than one occasion in recent years, but his health may not permit that this summer. He is not fond of flying because he likes to see the countryside while traveling. He was a gracious host while we were there and we wish he could find a way to make the trip. In the meantime, he asked us to convey his greetings and best wishes to his friends here in Perry.



February 8, 1995

Hal B. Sherrod used to be a teacher and, I think, principal at the Perry elementary school back in the mid-1930s when I was in the student body there. Only a few of you may remember him at all. He moved on to a larger school system but as far as I know the field of education remained his life work.

Mr. Sherrod, and all his former students would address him as "Mister," for reasons you will soon understand, was a tall, slender man with slicked-down dark hair. He usually wore a three-piece suit, as did most of the men teachers in those days. Except when his dander was up, he had a pleasant smile which exposed a nice set of even, white teeth.

Youngsters in his class were about 10 years old, an age when many boys were just beginning to assert their independence, or rather to test their elders' patience by attempting to do so. Mr. Sherrod was from the old school and he tolerated no breach of discipline, period. This was made clear in his annual opening statement to all his students at the start of each new school year. The thing was, he really meant it.

Mr. Sherrod taught mathematics and some of his charges found the subject boring. There is not much any teacher can do to dispel that notion and Mr. Sherrod made no attempt to do so. He simply expected you to study the textbook, listen to his explanations, ask questions, and then be prepared for the weekly test. Foolishness in class was strictly forbidden at all times.

To enforce that policy, Mr. Sherrod had a habit of drifting to the back of the classroom and then gliding stealthily and silently up the aisle, between rows of desks, always carrying an unsharpened pencil in his right hand. Whenever he observed a student whispering to another, or doing anything besides the assigned class work, the pencil would be applied to the offender's rib cage in a swift jab. Yes, I can still feel the pain.

If that sounds like cruel and inhuman punishment, let me just say that it worked wonderfully well. Mr. Sherrod's unique method encouraged many boys and girls to apply themselves, even to tasks they didn't care all that much about. And what do you know, he was well-liked by the kids, too. We respected him, and not altogether out of fear of that dreadful pencil jab. Perhaps we knew he was trying to help us be the best we could.

The Sherrods lived in a small house on an alley between Delaware and Elm streets until they built a modest new home in the 1100 block on Delaware. Soon after that they left Perry, and I have not heard of them in many years. Then last month in an obituary column in the Daily Oklahoman I read of the death of Mr. Sherrod's wife, Laura Mae, at the age of 86, in Oklahoma City. A photo accompanying the story showed her to be a very pretty lady. The article said she was a retired teacher, of Oklahoma City public schools, and that she was preceded in death by her husband and a son, Hal Cornish Sherrod, among others. A daughter, Ann, of the home, is among the survivors.

I don't really remember Mrs. Sherrod or the children, but I am sorry to learn of her passing as well as the belated news of her husband's earlier death. He was a stern teacher, but one who will be remembered by most of his pupils all their lives. He and his pencil really made a lasting impression.



February 9, 1995

I saw a note in this newspaper the other day about Bertha Busse celebrating her 90th birthday by having pizza with her niece, Carolyn Chopp. Several years ago, Miss Busse was *The Journal's* news correspondent for District 76, a

community southeast of town where she lived at the time. One of the things I most remember about Miss Busse is her extremely neat handwriting. She had many other good qualities but that one was important because our typesetters worked directly from the written pages sent in by correspondents. Once in a while it was tough to make out items submitted by those dedicated ladies who covered their communities for us, but Miss Busse's news was never like that. Well-written, legible and newsy. We were always happy to see her envelopes arrive.

Back in those days, perhaps 25 or more years ago, *The Journal* had quite a corps of community correspondents. All of them were women and most of them really seemed to enjoy their work. They must have, because their compensation had to be very modest. They were called "stringers," a term derived from the fact that at the end of each month they would send in clippings of the items they had written, all fastened end to end in a sort of string. Their payment was based on the number of inches included.

Community news consisted largely of personal items about people visiting or being visited, plus reports of club meetings, school literaries, and other matters of general interest. Once in a while there would be a fire, a death, or some other spot news to report by telephone, and the ladies did a good job of rounding up the information they knew we needed.

Their items appeared in the newspaper as space allowed. The columns were headed only by the name of the community, like "District 76," "Fairview," "Orlando," "Antelope Valley," "Bressie," "Billings" and "Three Sands," to mention just a few. I don't remember the names of all of the reporters, but a few that come to mind are Mrs. A. A. Wieland in Red Rock, Mrs. A. L. Herde in Billings, Mrs. Alfred Graves in Antelope Valley, Mrs. O. H. Clark in Mulhall, Mrs. Orrin Condit in Bressie and Mrs. Amy Snyder in Lucien. Of course there were many others. Sorry I've left some out, and I apologize to all of them for that, but perhaps they understand that it's just due to the passage of time.

The writers also were given bylines under the heading, and in some cases their telephone numbers were listed for the benefit of their readers who had news to turn in.

Every year or so *The Journal* would conduct a day-long school for our community correspondents to help them with their news-gathering techniques, but usually most of them had been on the job longer than those in charge of instructing them. But, it was a good excuse for getting together for lunch and small talk, and from such affairs a sense of family developed. All of those correspondents were dependable ladies who derived some personal satisfaction from their work, more than the monetary benefits.

When rural communities became less distinct and fewer families lived on the farms in Noble county, there was less need for that kind of reporting. Few newspapers have community stringers any more, and even the metropolitan dailies have eliminated local correspondents in favor of their own regional news bureau. It seems a shame somehow, but I guess we have to view it as changing times.

The photo of Miss Busse accompanying the item about her 90th birthday shows her to be about the same neat lady that I remember from those days a few decades ago, and I'll bet she could still fill a column of personals and news briefs if she wanted to do it. Anyway, happy belated birthday, Miss Busse.



February 11, 1995

Two important elections await the decision of Perry voters this spring - one to choose a mayor and other city officials

and the other to make sure our local schools have the money they need to operate and to choose a school board member. The school election is first on the schedule, coming up next Tuesday, on Valentine's Day, and somehow we traditionally seem to forget about it. Tie a string around your finger right now and go vote next Tuesday.

Yes, the school election is important even though it may not have the fire or drama of a good political fight for city offices. The annual vote next Tuesday on millages and candidates for school board in all county districts comes with a real sense of urgency nonetheless. We have this tendency to neglect our duties as good citizens at school election time, and that is a shame because so much is at stake.

In our democratic society, we vote to tax ourselves a certain amount in order to fund public schools. Every year you see or hear horror stories about districts where millages are not approved, usually because of a local problem, perhaps a personality issue or some petty controversy which brings about a negative vote to disapprove the millage.

Thank goodness we don't have that to wrestle with in the Perry district, but that does not mean your vote is unneeded. Millages still must be approved, as they always have been here, so please don't stay home next Tuesday. Go to your regular polling place and cast a vote for the school board candidate of your choice and to insure adequate funding for our public schools.

Perry has an enviable tradition of unfailing support for its schools and because of that we have developed an excellent school system. That can only be continued if we stand by our students, educators and administrators and provide them with the funds needed to keep the school doors open.

Who can vote in a school election? Any registered voter, 18 years of age or older, who resides in the Perry school district. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

These are the issues at stake in the Perry district: A ten-mill local support levy, five-mill emergency levy and the five-mill building fund levy. All three are for the regular operating budget and are the same that have been approved here in the past. Note this: Approval of the three levies will NOT result in a tax increase for support of local schools. Also at stake is a five-year term for office number five on the Perry board of education. The two candidates are Mike Dvorak, the incumbent, and Kenneth Frank.

Your enlightened vote is important on the millage questions as well as representation on the school board. Be sure to do your duty next Tuesday: Vote. Then we can begin concentrating on the April 4 municipal election. That always brings out a lot of, uh, discussion.

This year's municipal elections have a new twist. A bumper crop of candidates is in the running, and all in all we can look forward to a lively campaign. For the first time, candidates for city council, mayor and other offices will not run as Republicans or Democrats, thereby eliminating the need for a primary election. One election settles it. The winners on April 4 will be declared duly elected and ready to assume duties.

In some years past we saw some folks changing their party registration so they could support the person of their choice in a primary, then switching back again after the general election. No need to go through that process now. All candidates are running on a non-partisan basis, neither Republican nor Democrat. Spirited contests are guaranteed, and that will stir things up.

Of course, non-partisan elections are not exactly unheard of here. School board candidates have run that way for many years, and most judicial offices also have been non-partisan affairs for some time. So we're familiar with the concept even though it's new for the election of a mayor, councilman and other offices in this city.

So mark your calendars for two elections, not one, in Perry this spring. The first one is next Tuesday, for school millages and school board candidates, and the second is on April 4 for city elective offices. Both are important. Be informed and vote both times.



February 14, 1995

An old friend just stopped by to wish one and all a happy Valentine's Day. In the process, he unloaded a few philosophical reflections which you might find interesting. Lend an ear and see what you think. His ruminations follow.

Commenting on our modern society, he noted the obvious: a lot of couples just find it difficult to stay married these days. Many don't even bother with a legal or religious ceremony in the first place. The institution of marriage, under assault for some time now, seems to be diminishing at an alarming rate. Even those who do choose to take out a marriage license are finding it easy to dissolve the relationship by going to court.

One of the most popular grounds for divorce is something called "irreconcilable differences." In one of the recent "Shoe" comic strips, the Perfesser says irreconcilable differences is a legal term used in divorce, meaning "girlfriends." You read a lot about that. Unlike the "Shoe" comic strip character, my friend doesn't know exactly what the term means as it relates to married couples, but he says he has served a lot of them very well when they decided to split the blanket. (Someone needs to research the origin of THAT expression, also.)

My friend says this subject came up for discussion one evening in casual conversation which consisted mostly of small talk among a few friends, all of them married couples. With after-dinner coffee cups still in hand, one after another joined in the dialogue.

One of the men stated his personal observation: "You take most people who are about to get married, and see if they don't come with ready-made, built-in irreconcilable differences." Glancing at his wife across the table, he continued. "I know we did. She was a member of a mainstream religious denomination; I was from a very strict, conservative church background. She was from a family of liberal intellectuals who were politically active, while my folks tended to be on the conservative side. So in that regard, ours was one of those Maria Shriver-Arnold Schwarzenegger kinds of thing.

"She was a blonde and always had been. I had black hair at the time. Never mind what you see up there today. She graduated from a big city high school with an enrollment nearly as large as the population of Perry, and I was one of a handful of graduates in a small rural school. She liked light chocolates, I liked the dark ones. Her mother sliced sandwiches diagonally, but they were cut straight across at our house. We were real opposites, as you can see. But, opposites attract.

"So, we decided to get married in spite of all that, and you know, it's worked out okay for more than 30 years now. She's still all of those things and so am I, except my hair is mostly gray now, what's left of it.

"We never thought of those differences as irreconcilable anyway because we were too busy starting a family. Then our kids grew up, went to college and eventually each one chose attractive mates who made us proud. All of them launched upon successful careers, and in due time they produced some really extraordinary grandchildren, and I

guess we just forgot about those basic things that once seemed so different between us. They must have become 'reconcilable' at some point without our ever noticing it.

"Would you have guessed at the outset that we would have a successful marriage, knowing all those differences? I don't think so. But becoming a grandparent, all by itself, just has a way of bringing old married folks together, even if there is some kind of fundamental difference at issue. When you see those charming baby eyes beaming, those disarming little smiles, and gasp at their first steps, realizing all the while that you don't have to potty train them or even change too many of the diapers, just spoil them rotten if you can, it does something to smooth out any other problems in a couple's life."

Turning toward his wife again, he said, "Works for us, so I guess we recommend it for everyone else. Don't we dear?" She nodded in agreement, along with all the others. Each had been listening intently. What they were testifying to was the need for a degree of tolerance for each other's peculiarities.

But, more than that and also implicit in each concurrence, was another element of a successful marriage: A foundation of love and respect for each other. I'm sorry, but it probably won't work without that. I'm not being judgmental. Each of us does what we have to do in the light of our individual circumstances.

Each of those at the table could have told a story very similar to the one sketched here. Perhaps you could, too. Sadly, all of us know some dear friends who have experienced heartache because they were not so fortunate.

But I appreciated my friend's thoughts on the subject. From me as well as from him, happy Valentine's Day to all of you.



February 16, 1995

A couple of items caught my attention the other morning while page-surfing the *Daily Oklahoman*. One was on the Fashion page and dealt with what they called "a new agenda for corporate wardrobes." In other words, casual dressing. The gist of the article was that modern businessmen and women are rapidly converting to casual attire as a new dress code. Dressing down, or causal wear, is catching on everywhere for both men and women. Neckties are out.

As most of us here know, that has been the policy at our biggest industry, Ditch Witch (the Charles Machine Works, Inc.), since day one. None of the men there wear neckties; casual clothing is encouraged for both men and women, and always has been. The late Harold Chesnutt used to prowl the CMW office areas each day looking for unsuspecting new male employees who may have shown up wearing a necktie. Armed with a sharp pair of scissors, Harold would snip the tie off just below the knot and hand it to the startled victim. That was to impress upon him that such airs were not acceptable, and it pretty well worked.

At the other extreme, IBM's male employees for years have been easily identifiable in their dark business suits, white shirts and dark neckties. IBM's women were similarly attired in corresponding feminine apparel. Now IBM has relaxed its rules and allows its working people to wear comfortable casual clothing. The company's conversion to that point of view made national news.

The other story of interest that day in the *Oklahoman* was in the Weekend (entertainment) section and had to do with Louise Mandrell's date with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic last week. Louise, of course, is the younger sister of

singer Barbara Mandrell, and she is a very popular entertainer in her own right. Tickets for her performance with the "Philharmonic" were priced from \$27 to \$12, and they had her booked for two shows.

What makes that interesting is, again, that our own industry giant, the Charles Machine Works, Inc., once more beat other folks to the draw. Louise Mandrell, her backup dancers and six-piece band were the entertainers for the annual Ditch Witch family Christmas party held for CMW employees last December at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

And the ticket price for the Ditch Witch folks was very reasonable, i.e. free, thanks to the company's generosity. Miss Mandrell did indeed provide a fabulous evening of entertainment, including an impromptu number featuring Perry's own Jim Edgar, the former Roadrunner, who for several years now has been a loyal Ditch Witch employee. His display of talent that night was equal to any of the other professionals onstage with him. He most definitely impressed Miss Mandrell.

So, the emergence of casual wear in the nation's offices and the appearance of bigtime entertainer Louise Mandrell in Oklahoma City certainly are newsworthy events. It's nice to see the rest of the country trying to catch up with the pacesetters herein Perry.



February 18, 1995

Someday, when you're feeling low and worn down by life's little tribulations, take a trip to the Noble County Family YMCA on south Seventh street. Mingle with the folks you find there and see if that doesn't brighten your outlook pretty fast. Some of the most courageous people I know are among the regular patrons of that facility, but perhaps you don't hear a lot about their tenacity and will power. Especially, you won't hear it from them.

Stroke victims, arthritis sufferers and others with varying degrees of disability -- including those with newly achieved senior citizen status -- battle their adversaries at the Y each day in the weight room, gymnasium, swimming pool and/or spa, sweating and straining, hoping their bodies respond to carefully planned rehabilitative efforts. They, of course, are in addition to the Perfect Physical Specimens who also use the Y to stay that way. The impeccable pecs, abs and buns on those folks are to be admired, but they are not necessarily for everyone.

I don't mean to imply that a majority of the Y patrons are searching for the fountain of youth. But many of the town's physically disadvantaged do work out there each day to recover losses sustained in disabling illnesses. Others are doing their best to prevent the onset of such crippling ailments by flexing their muscles in disciplined workouts. Still others are hoping to recover their former state of fitness.

Whatever motivates or drives them, you have to admire them. I have come to know some of these people through my own more or less regular visits to the Y for walking and stretching exercises in the gym, and I am amazed at their determination, not to mention their skill levels. Each one is there for his or her own individual reason, and some are waging intensive warfare to prevent their limitations from making further inroads.

Knowing the pain some of them must be enduring as they walk, jog, swim, pump iron, sweat, pedal bikes or do aerobics especially designed for their particular needs, smiling all the while, you just have to be impressed. Personally, the closest I have come to macho jockdom is a chronic case of athlete's foot. But I try to walk about 15-20 laps in the gym each day (15 laps = 1 mile), and when I start congratulating myself for that I look up and see some of

those sweet ladies and grimly determined men, some of them stroke victims, doing so much more, it makes me cringe. I don't know if many of us could match their perseverance.

At other times of the day or night, you also will find younger generations having fun at the Y in programs created just for them. You have seen or heard about the wide-ranging scope of activities provided for every member of the family by this wonderful place.

We are living in an age of national fitness and health awareness, perhaps as never before. Many of us have to struggle diligently to shed the old lethargy, the product of our earlier indifference or lack of consciousness about our well being. But many others now find themselves the unwilling victims of some affliction which they did not ask for, and so they are fighting back to recover at least a few of their physical losses. The YMCA gives us the tools and a blueprint to help us find the way to those goals, plus the added bonus of providing young people with a wholesome area of Christian family values where they can develop both physically and spiritually.

Isn't it great that we here in Noble county have a facility like the Perry YMCA, along with its dedicated staff of helping professionals and volunteers, to advise and assist us as necessary? Where else would you find that?



February 21, 1995

Nancy Hasenfratz, who was born and reared in Perry, has just been named Kingfisher's Citizen of the Year on the basis of her lengthy record as a civic worker and booster in that community. Nancy's husband is Wayne Hasenfratz, another native Perryman, who retired not long ago as president of a Kingfisher bank. Nancy's parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. Bob Coyle. Wayne's mother, Mrs. Mary Hasenfratz, still makes her home here.

A mutual friend sent me a copy of the front page of the *Kingfisher Times & Free Press* with an article about the honor bestowed on Nancy by the town's Chamber of Commerce. A photograph of her accompanies the story. I'll mention just a few of the points made in the citation: volunteer work at the local hospital with the community outreach program, member of the Kingfisher Regional Hospital board, Auxiliary volunteer, various tasks at Kingfisher Federated church including Meals on Wheels and baking communion bread, serving on the church board, member of women's association, various youth activities, keeping the flower beds up, making and taking gifts to shut-ins at Thanksgiving, Christmas and other holidays, chairing the Community Challenge which raises money for the hospital and the Chamber of Commerce, Kingfisher County Cancer Society fund drive, member of PEO and Kingfisher Study club, avid golfer, loves to travel and play bridge, spends time with her family and friends, gardens, plays tennis, and bakes wonderful goodies. Quite an impressive list.

Wayne and Nancy left Perry 30 years ago when Wayne and Otto Cowell, another native of this city, established a new bank in Kingfisher. Otto was president of the firm until he retired, and Wayne succeeded him. Wayne and Nancy still visit friends and family in Perry quite often. So do Otto and his wife, Vayenne, who are parents of local optometrist Dr. Scott Cowell. Vayenne's parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. Worth Roberts.

We raise good people in Perry and export a few of them to enable other communities to grow, too. You're welcome, Kingfisher.

Jim Standard's recent column in the Sunday Oklahoman was a nice tribute to Henry Bellmon. The piece focused on Henry's heroic experience 50 years ago as a 24-year-old Marine tank platoon leader on Iwo Jima, where one of the

bloodiest battles of World War II took place. Lt. Bellmon won the Silver Star in that battle and the Legion of Merit in the landing on Saipan.

Jim, who is editor of the Oklahoman's editorial page, gives a good summary of Henry's war record and credits him with being a modest man not given to talking much about that chapter of his life. The column also covers the high points of Henry's political career as governor and a U.S. senator, but I did notice one rather significant error. Jim credits Henry with being the first Republican elected to either office in Oklahoma. Partially true. He was the first Republican elected governor of this state all right, but the first GOP senator from Oklahoma was J. W. Harreld, in 1920, according to a full-page reference chart I clipped out of the Oklahoman last Dec. 18.

Not being picky, Jim. Just wanted to point that out. Thanks for saying those nice things about Henry Bellmon. The Oklahoman has not always been so kind to him.



February 23, 1995

It's time for a few miscellaneous notes with no particular theme to bind them together.

The former Stillwater Savings & Loan building at Seventh and Elm is now officially known as Bank IV Perry, and they have added an attractive new sign on the west lawn to indicate that. It says simply, "Bank IV," but it has the right colors for this town - maroon and white. Very appropriate, with the home of the Perry high school Maroons just up the street a block or so. Bonnetta Hansing continues as our local manager of this firm.

Another new business sign now appears above the awning at Ace's High on the east side of the square, in their recently occupied building. Again, the sign simply says "Ace's" but it is quite a handsome piece. The entire front of the building has just been repainted in soft earth tones. Looks nice. And out on the west end of Fir avenue, a large new "Day's Inn" sign has just been hoisted at that motel, which formerly was an I-35 Inn.

A recent item on the Women's Page of this newspaper reported that members of the Perry Progress club have just tallied the number of hours they devoted to volunteer service last year and came up with a total of more than 1,500. Considering that this group, one of our city's three federated women's clubs, now has 12 members on the roll, that's a pretty impressive figure. One of the 12 is physically unable to render that kind of service, so the 1,500-plus hours were racked up by 11 ladies. That's an average of more than 136 hours for each one.

Among the most active Progress club members in the area of volunteer service has to be Thelma Bittman, a tiny but dynamic great-grandmother. She spends two mornings each week working with other volunteers who shampoo and set hair for residents of the Green Valley and Perry Nursing Homes. Thelma arrives early and leaves late on those "hair days," and she is known as one of the hardest working members of the crew. The ladies they serve greatly appreciate those weekly visits by the volunteers, as you might imagine.

Wonder if the Rotarians or Lions could come close to averaging 136 hours per member, or even a total of 1,500 hours per year in their community service projects?

Nellie Perkins of Yukon is currently serving as chairman of the executive board of the AT&T Telephone Pioneers, composed of employees with several years of service. Nellie is the daughter of Aley Ashbrook, who lives southeast of Perry. The immediate project being carried out under Nellie's supervision is the installation of bathroom facilities at Camp Dakani, located in the Oklahoma City area but widely used by Camp Fire girls and boys from throughout the

state. Our Perry youngsters are among those who use the camp. Other notable projects carried out by the Pioneers include a \$45,000 park built by the group in Yukon. The organization is non-profit and seeks things to do in the community served by its members. Nellie has been with AT&T for 25 years and she has been in the Pioneers for ten years. Her job is in the former Western Electric manufacturing plant at Oklahoma City.

In a recent piece about the Laird family and the east side drug store operated by Carl and Paul Laird, I neglected to mention one of their sisters. In addition to LeOla Donley, Kathryn McQuiston and Marjorie Bowles, there also was Helen Laird, who married Charlie Boone. She was the mother of Rose Ann Jackson and Betty Taber. Helen, Kathryn, LeOla, Marjorie, Paul and Carl were sons and daughters of Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Laird, Noble county pioneers. Mrs. Boone was the first of the sisters to die when she passed away in 1946 at the age of 48. All are now gone.

Myrna Hamman, the former Myrna Niles of Perry, was scheduled to appear last month in a USA TV network movie, "As Good as Dead," but her many Perry friends were disappointed when it was not shown. I understand the network has now shifted the date to May 10, with the expectation of a larger audience that month. Crystal Bernard, the feisty blond waitress in NBC's hit sitcom "Wings," stars in the movie. Myrna plays the part of Mrs. Connors and has dialogue in a hospital scene with Ms. Bernard. Watch your daily listings in May for the film. Myrna will still be in it.

Which reminds me. Myrna was one of the original members of our Stagecoach Community Theatre back in 1975, and she played the title role in a memorable production of "Mame" the following year. She is perky, petite, sweet and wonderfully talented both as an actress and as a singer, and since moving to the West Coast a few years ago she has managed to land parts in several TV network productions. I am told that she may return to Oklahoma for a class reunion this summer and that means there is a possibility she will be visiting in Perry. Her many friends here hope so.

And by the way, have you purchased your 1995 membership in Stagecoach yet? There's still time to do so. Send it to Box 82, Perry. Memberships start at \$10 and range upward from there. Our little theatre has done some great things, but it urgently needs your financial support. Thanks in advance for your help, and thanks also to those who have already done their part.



February 25, 1995

Basketball frenzy is gripping most of the known world right now. Tournaments are underway at just about every level, from grade school up through the NCAA's Division I. The NBA, of course, plays almost year around but their version of the game is so, well, different, that we won't include them in this.

Perry has always been known as a wrestling town, but that does not mean we can't also enjoy the hoops hoopla that reaches a zenith at this time of year. And we have some stellar players and teams in this area to heighten the interest. A recent prep basketball page in the Daily Oklahoman gave ample evidence of the quality available to fans in this area.

Frontier boys (Red Rock and Marland) held the No. 4 ranking that week in Class A boys with a 23-1 record. Earlier they were ranked as high as No. 2. Jamie Hayton of Billings was ranked 15th in scoring among Class B girls with 368 total points and a 21.6 average. Joline Oldenburg of Mulhall-Orlando was 14th in Class B girls for field goal accuracy, hitting 121 of 205 for 59 percent. On the same team, Jennifer Anthis was 8th in 3-point field goals with 34-82 for 41.5%.

Annie Reim of Billings was 4th in free throw percentage with 66-80 and 82.5%. Brandi Easterly of Covington-Douglas was 9th in steals with 66. Covington-Douglas girls were 5th in team defense, allowing a total of 665 points for an average per game of 36.9. The Billings Lady Bulldogs were 7th in the same category with a total of 656 and 38.6.

In Class A boys, Frontier was No. 1 in team offense with 1,522 points, an average per game of 80. Morrison was 6th in team defense with 532 and an average of 48.4. Josh Regnier of Frontier was 8th in steals with 54. David Hawkins of Morrison was 9th in free throws with 42-55 and 76.4%. Mitch Shiever of Frontier was 11th in 3-point field goals with 23-53 and 43%. David Hawkins of Morrison was 7th in scoring with 254 for an average of 23.1.

In Class B boys, Mulhall-Orlando was 11th in scoring with 418, an average of 20.9. Monty Larman of Mulhall-Orlando was second in free throws with 55-65, 84.6%. Monty Larman of M-O was 9th in rebounds with 223, averaging 11.2 per game. His team was 5th in offense with 1,476 points, an average of 73.8. Covington-Douglas was No. 1 in team defense with 704, allowing an average of 44 points per game.

All of these statistics were for games played prior to the start of district and regional tournaments, but perhaps they give a clue to what's been going on among the smaller schools in our area this season.

It's okay to cheer for your favorites in any sport, be it wrestling, basketball or whatever. Be sure to give the boys and girls and their coaches a pat on the back for their hard work and dedication. They've earned it.

Based on the accomplishments we already know about plus the statistical evidence cited above, we have some pretty capable performers in this area, wouldn't you agree?

And of course that includes our Perry high school wrestling team. The perennial state champion Maroons almost make it look easy, but in truth they work long and hard to achieve their goals. Coach Leonard Shelton, Assistant coach Scott Chenoweth and each member of the squad deserves congratulations for another fine year on the mat. Way to go, wrestlers!



February 28, 1995

The current dialogue now going on about the possibility of Lake McMurry becoming a new water supply for the city of Perry brings to mind an interesting point concerning the many recent improvements already made to upgrade our water processing and distribution system.

Councilman Bob O'Halloran is a hard-nosed, plain-speaking businessman. He is not running for reelection this year, so his thoughts on this subject are not simply politically motivated. But he is proud of the financing method used for the city's new water flow line leading from the Perry Lake reservoir southwest of town to the brand new treatment plant on the old R. J. Huston farm.

The line project was budgeted by the city at \$400,000 and it was completed for just about that exact amount. Bob says, based on an early unofficial estimate, city taxpayers thereby were saved about \$600,000.

How did that happen? Well, several months ago, when a bond issue was being discussed to solve some of the city's chronic water problems, the cost of a 12-inch flow line was calculated to be in the neighborhood of \$1 million,

according to an unofficial but credible estimate. It would have been part of a bond issue package with a total cost of around \$4.5 million.

To lighten the load on taxpayers, the city council pulled the water line out of the bond issue and concentrated on building a new water treatment plant for about \$3.5 million. That's what the bond issued covered.

Meanwhile, funds for the flow line were accumulated by the city from normal revenue and the job was completed for about \$400,000, not \$1 million. (All these figures are rounded off to simplify this report.) No bond issue money was needed for the water line. Bob figures the city thus handed local residents a real bargain

By my calculation, that \$600,000 saving amounts to \$120 for every Perry man, woman and child, based on a population of 5,000. (I don't care what the Census Bureau says.) The checks are in the mail. Right, Bob?

In addition, the city is using regular revenue to pay for a major upgrading of the distribution system all around town to insure better delivery of processed water to city homes and businesses. No bond issue needed there, either.

Thus, we should be able to avoid the traditional July and August water rationing edicts this year with the completion of this important project. The old reservoir southwest of town should remain pretty full, although heavily silted, barring a prolonged drought. The new flow line should handle pressurized delivery of water from the lake to the treatment plant. The plant can process a large volume in fairly short order, and that should enable the storage tanks to maintain line pressure and to hold enough water to satisfy our needs even in the most torrid summer heat.

Almost makes you eager for the arrival of those 104-degree temperatures to test out the system, doesn't it? Or maybe not.

Now we're seeing an even brighter glimmer of hope on the horizon for a long-term solution to the water problem in Perry. If the Lake McMurtry purchase becomes a reality for the city, we will acquire a reservoir approximately two and a half times larger than Perry Lake. The McMurtry property consists of about 3,400 acres, most of it Noble county land acquired by Stillwater in the 1970s when the lake was intended to be used as a water supply for the city of Stillwater. It has never been used for that purpose.

A lot of work lies ahead for our city officials to sort all this out and come up with a reasonable plan of action. Meanwhile, thanks to the work that already has been accomplished, we can feel pretty good about our water system for at least this summer.