

July 27, 2004

Back after a break

After a brief layoff, made necessary by some eye problems, the Northwest Corner returns today. I have missed this twice weekly contribution and I hope the feeling has been mutual with you. Now, barring complications (which are not expected) it's back to what passes for normal in this business. Good to be among you once again.

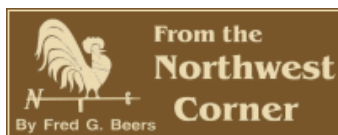
I promise not to bore you with details of my recent problems, but just so you will know, I had an onslaught of problems caused by cataracts and macular degeneration. These are commonly found among my age group and apparently they are brought on by the process of maturing.

Other types of problems also occur among my contemporaries but I will not go into them. Suffice it to say, "I hurt, therefore I am." Is that reassurance good enough? For me, it is.

When I became acutely aware that I could no longer read any kind of printed matter, I checked in with my local specialist and was referred on to someone at a higher clinical level. One thing led to another, and we soon discovered that surgery held out the only hope of improvement. That was good enough for me, so the cataracts in one eye were surgically excised and the macular condition was temporarily put on hold. Getting rid of the cataracts restored my sight in that eye to 20/60, as opposed to 20/400. That is a much greater improvement, but not a phenomenon. For me, though, it was several steps above the highest expectations. And the prospect is there for even greater improvement in the future. I'll keep you posted.

So, to sum it up, I now have one "good" eye (the right one) where cataract surgery was performed, and one not so good eye, the left one, which has macular degeneration and a cataract, which can safely be removed in due time. One good eye is more than I had a week or so ago, and I am thankful, even though I may never again have two good eyes.

In the meantime, I must thank you folks for the prayers and good wishes that have meant so much to me and to my family. My loved ones could not have been more caring during this relatively brief period, and I am especially appreciative of them. It was not a life-threatening experience by any standards and many of you have gone through much worse trials. This, however, was mine, and it renewed my awareness of why we love this little city and its populace here in the heart of Oklahoma.



July 30, 2004

I know you like them. You've told me they are amusing and I agree. Here are some more of the funny lines provided from time to time by a reader who lives in another state. Thanks to that person for the contribution. Here we go:

There was a man who decided to write a book about the different churches in the U.S. He flies to San Francisco and begins taking photographs of the very large Grace Cathedral. Suddenly he spotted a golden telephone in a wall. A sign above it reads "\$10,000 a minute." Intrigued, the writer seeks out the priest who explains that the golden phone is, in fact, a direct line to Heaven, and if he wants to he can talk directly to God. "Thank you very much," the man says, and continues

on his way. This research takes him to Milwaukee, Chicago and New York. Each time he notices the same type of phone with exactly the same sign. Each time he seeks out the parish priest, and each time he gets the same answer - it is a direct line to God. He thanks the priest and continues on his way.

This continues through many other states and finally he arrives in Texas. Upon entering a small rural church he is about to pass by the same golden telephone with the sign above. It grabs his attention. This time the sign reads "Calls 25 cents." By now he is fascinated. He finds the Pastor. He says to him: "Sir, I have been in cities all across the country and was told that it was a direct line to Heaven. And that I could talk to God. But in all of the other churches it was \$10,000 a minute. Your sign reads 25 cents. Why?" The Pastor smiles benignly and says: "Oh my son, that's easy. You're in the South now. It's a local call."

Enough for one day. Let's meet here again very soon