



October 1, 2005

I have just about had it with those sales and marketing people who call our number about the time we sit down for a meal, or prepare for bed, or otherwise do not care for a telephone call. I'm not talking about those men and women with legitimate surveys to be answered, or otherwise have a real reason to be calling. But those tape recorded hucksters who usually begin by saying they are calling to tell me that my account is OK, no problem there, but to let me know that we can increase our use of their credit card.

It matters not to them that we do not use their card, and they do not even have the courtesy to use a tape that allows us to respond. So, I usually just hang up on them, knowing full well that someone else will call with the same pitch the next day. Maybe if I could just breathe a bit of fire they would understand better. For now, the best I can do is a gnashing of teeth and a bit of rude language, which so far has not discouraged them.

The PHS Alumni Association dinner last week was a smashing success, any way you look at it. All but one of the living, original inductees were here for the charter meeting and each one seemed genuinely honored to be chosen. More of them will be added each year, and the Scholarship Fund will benefit accordingly. That should be a story by itself, but you need to know that many Perry students have been truly blessed by receiving financial aid from this worthy group. The annual dinner would be an excellent format for a yearly meeting of all graduates and others who attended Perry schools in their younger days. The handsome new Christian church Fellowship Hall is a fine place to have these things. And those church ladies know how to cook and serve it up.

The entire Cherokee Strip celebration was one of the best ever, with colorful floats in the parade and great individual participation. Let's do some more of these. Congratulations to the Chamber of Commerce workers who put this year's celebration together.



October 5, 2005

One of the purposes of a column like this is to help people remember the joys or woes of their childhood. When that happens, readers will be reminded of good and bad times that they experienced, and often they will share those moments with the rest of us. One such regular contributor is a gentleman named Don Stoddard, who now lives in retirement at the Perry Apartments. I knew him from another age, when he played football at PHS for Coach Hump Daniels during a time of special interest to many of us because we were either in high school or military service during World War II. A few days ago we wrote about something that had to do with the scrap drives that took place during that period as part of the war effort. Don has shared some of his memory about that, and now I pass it on to you. Nothing earth shaking, just some recollections of "how things were," back then.

Don writes: "I was watching a tape of 'The Little Rascals' and 'Our Gang' comedies the other day and in one segment 'Our Gang' was collecting scrap material for the war effort during WWII. That brought back memories of the scrap drive we had right here in dear old Perry, Oklahoma, U.S.A. during that same period.

"I was a member of a Boy Scout troop back then and Ed Malzahn was the Scoutmaster. I remember we met at the old Presbyterian church building. I recall one time that we had a big paper drive. People would bundle up all types of paper products and set it out near the curb for the Scouts to pick up. I remember my troop getting a truck load and taking it to the old feed mill that sat on the northeast corner of Fifth and Delaware street, where it would be weighed. Part of that old mill is still there. I recall also an area that was fenced off on the northeast corner of the Courthouse Park. All types of aluminum pots and pans and what have you were put there.

"When a load was collected, a truck would load it up and haul it off. One time our troop camped out under the stars at the old rock structure on the hill on the east side of the CCC lake. I can still remember how brilliant the stars were that night as we lay there and caught glimpses of shooting stars as they streaked across the sky. I miss those "good old days."

Nothing spectacular. Just a few memories of days long ago.

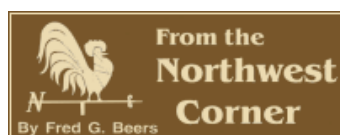


October 15, 2005

Long-time friend Manuel Terronez and his lovely wife, Glenda, have returned to Italy for an extended visit with their son, a regular Navy officer, and they have promised to bring me some more copies of the daily armed services newspaper, *The Stars & Stripes*, the paper I worked for in the Pacific area during the waning years of World War II. An issue is still printed for U. S. troops in the Mediterranean. Scanning the first copies they brought me was an interesting experience recently. For one thing, it enabled some comparisons between now and then in production of the paper. The people who do that now have several advantages, including a central page formatting facility (probably in Washington D. C.) plus some editing assistance that was not available to us in the Pacific during WWII.

Also, I noticed right away that the present Italian edition is sold for fifty cents per copy, and each copy apparently includes about fifty-six pages. By comparison, our version, printed during wartime shortages of just about everything, including money, sold for two cents per copy and the usual number of pages was about ten or twelve. We accepted no advertising, while the current Italian edition apparently sells advertising space to anyone. Times, and regulations, have a way of changing. Anyway, thanks to Manuel, and Glenda for letting me look over the Italian version of today's military newspaper. I owe a great deal to that paper, and it is fun to compare today's version with the one we produced during the Big War in 1945-46.

Incidentally, the S&S reunion association, composed of writers, editors and printers from all editions, will have their annual reunion later this month in Bloomfield, Missouri, where the paper began. CBS' Andy Rooney, a WWII writer in Europe, will be keynote speaker. I will not attend because of a previous commitment, but my bound volumes of the Pacific edition, all produced during that great war, will be donated to their museum in Bloomfield later this year. More about this later.



October 19, 2005



LETHA PROCTOR and Fred G. Beers (pictured above) did this tableau when the Pioneer Woman statue was first displayed in Ponca City, around 1932. This was a performance for the Progress Club that year.

Mr. Wayne Proctor was our registered pharmacist at the City Drug Store (643 Delaware) when the World War II clouds were hovering over Perry. That would be around 1935 or a little beyond. He came here at a time when our family was still mourning the 1931 loss of my Dad, Fred W. Beers, and my mother was still coping with the intricacies of operating a retail drug store business with absolutely no preparation. The law required that the registered pharmacist must have a degree, and Mr. Proctor had one. He was part of a succession of hired pharmacists who kept our store afloat, but he was one of the best. He spent only a couple of years here, but he was a friend of many Perry area residents during his brief tenure.

This is not to put down the others. Some of them were Arthur Reed, a rotund little Republican who ordered most of his meals from the Kumback menu; and Bill Good, a very likable and friendly person who had personal problems. Heading the list, probably, would be the late Merrill Hamous, a Perry-grown pharmacist who worked for our family before he joined Charlie Watson's crew at the Brownie Drug, and, later, his own store in the Masonic building. It was called Hamous & Hopper Pharmacy.

Then, of course, there was my cousin, Fred W. Beers, who came here when my Dad died and served as manager of the store until leaving Perry in 1939. He was not a registered pharmacist. Mr. and Mrs. Proctor had no children but they sort of adopted me and my sisters, and we thought of them as a kindly aunt and uncle. The city employed her as librarian and she was active in many roles. When the Pioneer Woman statue at Ponca City was being dedicated, she and I did a tableau with that theme. I was just a punk little kid, about ten years old, but we had fun.

Looking back, those were mostly good days and I know I learned a lot from the people who went out of their way to be helpful. I miss them all.

October 22, 2005





THIS WAS THE CITY DRUG STORE on the north side of the square all dressed up for the Rexall One-Cent Sale in 1936. Wayne Proctor, the store's pharmacist, is second from right. Others from left, Bailey Render, store manager Fred W. Beers, Jeanice Beers Wade, Fred G. Beers, Gloria Mae Beers, Glen Taylor, next one unknown, Sidney L. Wade, Mr. Proctor and the store owner, Mrs. Ivy Beers. Except for Fred G. Beers, all are now deceased.

Wayne Proctor came along too late to receive the accord he deserved. He was a pharmacist at the City Drug Store, 643 Delaware Street, on the north side of the Perry square. He landed here in the heart of the Great Depression, around 1935, not a good time for anyone to display his character or other good traits. My Mother employed him because we were required by law to have a registered pharmacist on the grounds or available to call at all hours of the day or night, holidays not excepted. Otherwise, my cousin, Fred W. Beers, would have satisfied all the requirements for a pharmacist. He could read every doctor's handwriting and he knew the limitations of most of the drugs that our store dispensed. And, the cost of most of the prescriptions filled in our pharmacy was, at most, about \$5 or \$6. Things were low-cost then, friends, but so were wages.

Anyway, Mr. Proctor was a good man but it was a bad time. He was treated roughly, like everyone else, although he deserved much better handling. As our druggist, he was someone for my two sisters and me to look up to. He had a gentle smile that told you everything was OK in spite of the climate that day. As children of the owner of that poor store, we knew he did not earn a big salary. He spent only a year or so in Perry. During that time period, we came to know and love him.

Mr. Proctor's wife, Letha, was a fine lady. She was more outspoken than he was, but it was always in a friendly fashion. After his death, she called on our store as a pharmaceutical representative and she visited in our house when time made that possible. While she lived in Perry, the city council hired her as librarian, and she did a fine job at Perry Carnegie Library. She also let me know that she didn't think much of the literature offered in our Rental Library at the drug store. That was, after all, only a money-making device, so we never had much discussion on the subject. Mr. and Mrs. Proctor had no children, they treated the kids in our family very kindly and offered words of encouragement when they believed that was necessary. We loved both of them.

Some of the other pharmacists who labored at the City Drug Store also were memorable, but none quite like Mr. Proctor. We'll have some more of the depression-era recollections in a few more days.



October 29, 2005

Several good and caring folks have asked about our most recent trip, which by the way was our first experience on a Caribbean cruise ship, so let me share some of this with all of you. First, it was our No. 1 experience on a cruise, and second, we had beautiful weather for the most part. We were one day ahead of the storms being forecast for that part of the world, and we thank the Good Lord for that. Also, it was the first time we had the opportunity to share an entire vacation with one of our daughters and her husband, and two of our granddaughters. One of the latter celebrated her 16th birthday on the trip. She was certainly the No. 1 attraction for the occasion. Their uncle in Oklahoma City has dubbed the two of them as "Angels," and we agree with him wholeheartedly. If you have grandchildren, you know what I mean.

All that we heard about cruises vs. other modes proved to be true. We were regally treated, accommodations were extraordinarily good, great food was always available, the staff was anxious to provide every necessity, and there is certainly something good to be said about not packing and repacking endlessly. I'm not that wild about traveling of any sort, but this kind has great appeal for several reasons. We won't take time to go into that today, but it is something to keep in mind. The restaurant staffs, particularly, were helpful and always cordial. Even when they knew a storm was brewing, they kept a stiff upper lip demeanor for the rest of us.

So, that it is, in a nutshell. We had a good time, it was fairly relaxing, and the weather played a big part in our enjoyment of the time. Everyone was cordial, and, as usual, they were surprised and pleased to meet some people from the state that inspired a musical play like the Rodgers and Hammerstein production of the same name. Made us even prouder to call ourselves "Oklahomans."