



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

There are few things that I enjoy less than being in a motel room in a strange place where I don't know anyone after the sun goes down. Which is not to say that I know a lot of folks in Oak Ridge and Maryville before I checked in at the Comfort Inn during daylight, but even those scant few tend to wish me well an hour or two before dark and go home to take care of husbands and wives and children.

They recommended places to eat that do not have chain logos and they will gladly join you for a drink around nine, but basically you're on your own there for a few hours unless you want to come home with them and help do the laundry, clean out the cat box, and provide harmony when they yell at the kids.

If I put up every acquaintance from out of town who shows up in Richmond or Berea, Kentucky on business or pleasure, I'd need a building something along the size of Bloomingdale.

I don't have any kids at home any more who need a reprimand every few minutes to embarrass me. The laundry is not a big deal anymore and we don't invite anybody home if we figure they can't help with the dishes. I have a spare room still

decorated with cheerleading trophies and numerous stuffed lions that daughter, Jennifer, accumulated when the room was here, but we celebrated her 25th birthday last weekend and she vacated the room when she was 20. She simply didn't take a lot of that stuff with her and I damn sure have no intention of moving it myself.

She's married now, teaching school, and has a husband pursuing a great career. They have a new home in an upscale subdivision in Richmond, but I still tell folks when I invite them to spend the night, that they'll have to sleep in Jennifer's room.

And, frankly, it's going to be Jennifer's room for a long time as far as I'm concerned. What happens to be unoccupied but it is well furnished. Best bed in the house. Best view from the windows. Big ole room too. Knock the stuffed Golden Lions (Garrard County High School mascots) out of the way and you'll feel right at home. But don't knock them too far and be gentle when you do because sometimes I go up there and pretend that my baby girl is still at home. It's a daddy thing—and one day I'll get over it.

Sorry Comfort Inn room here in

Oak Ridge tonight is costing me \$65.00 when you add in the tax, \$65.00 more that we charge for Jennifer's room and it doesn't even have lions. There's a sign outside that says, "welcome home." And they do bend over backwards to make you feel at home. You can walk down to the lounge and help yourself to the fridge and the coffee maker and all that. It's the cleanest place in town and inn-keepers from all over the country should come here to learn the definition of hospitality on a low budget.

The furniture is made out of real wood instead of glue and sawdust. The bed is big enough to play football basketball and the mattress just right for bouncing up and making two-hand dunks if the ceiling was 8 feet higher and we had a basketball behind the headboard. But I will sleep good. The coffee maker is loaded to go off tomorrow morning with half a dozen cups of oh-so-fresh, prime, gourmet, rattle-your-brains Colombian beans; coffee and I know coffee well enough to know, just from the smell that this is the good stuff.

Breakfast is also free downstairs tomorrow morning if I can make it work without eggs. Not a bad deal, all things considered.

In the meantime, I'm hold up for the night in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and I'm being treated like I'm royalty. The mountains are stunningly beautiful. Not a strip mine in sight. The roads are clean. The desk clerk just called and told me she noticed I was still up at midnight and reminded me that the stuff in the lobby was still there and she'd be glad to make any other pot of coffee before the left if I thought I needed it, but she had to hold her in five minutes. She was not monitoring me from the front desk.

I'm simply sitting at a desk, with the widow open and she couldn't help but notice that I had my chin propped up in the palm of my right hand staring at a computer monitor and she walked by the window, arm in arm with husband. Almost anywhere else in the world that simple little observation would be called "invasion of privacy." In Oak Ridge, Tennessee on a Monday night in February, it is a gesture almost totally lost to anyone else in this country. And it is meaningful to me, at least.

I could get up to this Tennessee hospitality. If I wasn't so grounded in Puka Lick, I could get up to eat Tennessee. The Comfort Inn suddenly feels a bit like home.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

This letter is actually directed to Dowell & Martin Funeral Home whose kind remembrance on the first anniversary (Feb. 26) of our son Ronny's death was so much appreciated. How could you possibly have known what your thoughtfulness would mean to us at this most difficult time?

If this is a customary business policy to help bereaved families get through their first anniversary heartache, we want to assure you that it is a gesture of kindness that is beyond the call of duty.

Having never suffered a personal loss of this magnitude before, we were totally unprepared for the way this anniversary date would hit us. After all, how could one day be more painful than another? Perhaps it is because you deal with parents like us so often, or perhaps you have had your own personal loss that lets you know there are certain times that a kind word or two makes a world of difference. Whatever the case, our family would like to thank you for what shall be ever grateful. Thank you again.

God bless you all.

Sincerely,

Mt. & Mrs. Ivan McKinney
West Chester, Ohio

Dear Editor,

I recently wrote a letter in the January 17th issue of the Mt. Vernon Signal criticizing the Rockcastle County Sheriff's Department. In that letter I stated that if anyone had the right to share about the service the Sheriff's Office provides to the community "Good or Bad" they should do so. I am a man of my word and feel it my responsibility to do what I encourage others to do.

In the past week we have had to call on the Sheriff's Department at least six times. I want to thank the Sheriff's Department for the way they have handled these calls in a

House approves mail order drug option

A bill that would create a mail order drug option for state employees passed the Kentucky House of Representatives 94-4 today.

House Bill 369, filed by Rep. Mary Lou Marzian, D-Louisville, would allow the state to offer employees in the state health insurance group the option of obtaining a 90-day prescription of maintenance medications, such as blood pressure medicine, for a two-month co-pay.

The legislation is expected to save the state \$3.2 million a year.

"As we mandate health benefits, we're always having to balance what that new mandate costs consumers," said Marzian. "For once, we can say we've passed some legislation that did not increase your premiums."

Marzian said most Kentuckians with private health insurance have had a mail order drug option for several years.

In response to concerns that local pharmacies may be disadvantaged by the mail order option, the bill requires that insurers charge the same co-pay for drugs whether they are bought at a retail pharmacy or by mail order. The mail order option would not cover Oxycontin and other Schedule 2 drugs which, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, have a high risk of abuse.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

professional and courteous manner. Sheriff Smith, Officers Konitz, Roark, Joe Rush, Trevor Hensley and some officers I don't even know their names have been very helpful

in these situations as well as the staff as 911. As I said in my previous letter, it is important to give credit to a job well done.

I thank the Sheriff, his deputies and everyone else who has helped us through a very trying week.

William Moss, Sr.
Mt. Vernon, KY

SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS



BY JACK FARIS

2002 Will Test the Mettle of Small Business

While small business scored a number of major legislative victories in 2001, don't expect 2002 to be a cakewalk. America's small-business owners may be breathing a sigh of relief now that the challenges facing Main Street's entrepreneurs are no less serious today than they were before September 11.

Small business won some hard-fought victories last year, such as, providing major tax relief, rolling back the ill-conceived ergonomics regulation; expanding the number of businesses that can use the cash accounting method and helping elect five more pro-small-business candidates to Congress. But we cannot rest on our laurels.

We must be alert to efforts by those who would expand the government involvement in our businesses. There will be attempts to raise the minimum wage. There is new talk about Clinton-era solutions to the health-care dilemma. All of this will play out even as Congress and the administration must devote considerable time and attention to matters of national security.

We must keep our small and independent businesses running with maximum efficiency to do our part in maintaining the strength of our nation's economy. At the same time, we must step up our efforts to convene Capitol Hill, that small business will thrive and grow only if it is spared further government intrusion.

Expect 2002 to be a year of diversion, distraction and disruption. It is a congressional election year and the partisan posturing has already begun.

Fortunately, small-business owners possess an amazing ability to focus intently on things of importance. The challenges we face in a sluggish economy and a troubled international environment offer a unique opportunity for us to offer assistance and guidance to our elected leaders. By stepping up our political grassroots activities, by getting more active in key election campaigns, by showing our strong support for those who are staunch defenders of free enterprise, we can serve our nation and preserve the principles we hold dear.

National security must be first and foremost in the minds of everyone, whether a one-person business or serving as the CEO of a major blue-chip corporation. No one sector of our economy or society comes ahead of protecting our country.

We as business people have an obligation to continue to produce the goods, deliver the services and create the jobs so critical to America's economic well-being. To do that we need to help our lawmakers find solutions to the problems that plague us, such as the skyrocketing cost of health-care coverage for small firms and the burdensome bureaucracy that saps the vitality out of our ventures. That means speaking up at every opportunity to remind our elected officials of the limits to government's role in a free-market economy.

We recently rediscovered a fundamental truth about the American spirit. When men by the most severe measures, we rise, we respond, we prevail. As small business prepares to face the challenges of 2002, we can find strength in the knowledge that as living examples of the American Dream we give guidance to our leaders and inspiration to our fellow citizens.

Jack Faris is president of NFIB (the National Federation of Independent Business), the nation's largest small-business advocacy group. A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB represents the consensus views of its 600,000 members in Washington, D.C., and all 50 state capitals. More information is available online at www.nfib.com.

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Yes - I have 17+ years experience and received training as a trooper in Criminal and Accident Investigation

Yes - I was born in Rockcastle Co. to Lela Hysinger Hammons and after high school I joined USMC and was Honorably Discharged. I am married to Julie Ann Hammons and we live in the Ottawa Community and are raising our Grandson, Mary Hammons, age 10. My wife and daughter Vickie work at the nursing home. Vickie is married to Michael (Murphy) Alcorn and they live in Rockcastle Co. I am a member of the Northside Baptist Church.

Yes - I will keep well trained working deputies and respond to your calls.

Yes - I appreciate all who gave of their time and effort in the last election and ask for your continued support. Your vote does make a difference. I ran second behind Sheriff Smith last election.

Paid for by Bill Hammons

No - I am NOT withdrawing from the race.

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