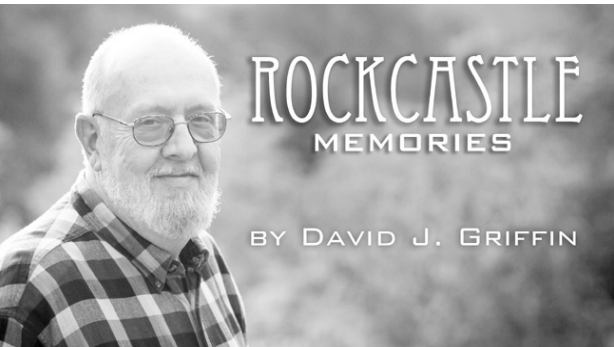




ROCKCASTLE MEMORIES

BY DAVID J. GRIFFIN

My Favorite Chevys

I suppose my love of Chevrolet automobiles began in 1951 when my grandfather (Pop) brought home the first new Chevy I can remember. I was seven years old at the time and was awestruck with the smell and comfort of the new car.

The model was a Fleetline DeLux four-door sedan, which offered a more sleek design over the boxy style of the previous Chevys. The engine was a 105 horsepower Valve-in-Head six cylinder with a standard transmission. As most of car enthusiasts know, a V8 Chevrolet engine was not available until 1955. Pop did opt for the in-dash AM radio, which

picked up countless stations with the antennae mounted on the front left fender. I remember the entire family gathering around the new “ride” and commenting on its fastback style.

The next day Pop took us all for a ride to Renfro Valley, and I got to sit in the front seat between him and Mommie Katie. Pop allowed me to select a radio station for us to listen to on our short drive. The entire experience left an impression on me.

It was Pop’s philosophy to keep a car only until the warranty ran out – then he was in the market again for a new automobile. So every three or four years, up the driveway he would come

with his most recent purchase. Pop’s choices were solely Chevrolets for his entire lifetime. The next time he came home with his new Chevy was in 1954.

The ’54 Chevrolet was one of my favorite cars of our family because it was the deluxe, top-of-the-line Bel Air model. It sported a two-tone green and cream color and had a push-button, state-of-the-art radio. Together Pop and I got out the book and set all of the radio stations we could locate. This was the automobile in which I learned to drive. I was ten years old when Pop purchased the Bel Air and, by the time I was twelve, he was letting me drive the car by myself up and down the gravel road on which we lived. I thought this was the greatest experience I could possibly have.

Pop kept his ’54 Chevy until 1958, when he purchased a new black Chevrolet – which he eventually sold to me when I got my driver’s license in 1960. As most of my weekly readers already know, this ’58 Chevy was the automobile that I loved most in the world. When I took possession of it, there were only approximately 38,000 miles on the odometer. By the time I traded it for a new 1963 Impala Super Sport, the ’58 had more than 125,000 miles. My friends and I spent as many of our waking hours as possible “cruising” around Mt. Vernon and Rockcastle County in this black beauty.

As soon as the car was officially mine, I began to customize it to meet my individual specifications. I removed almost all of the chrome and leaded in the holes so I could re-paint the car. Then I added fender skirts, “flipper” hubcaps, a new AM radio with a rear speaker, split manifold, white walled tires, and roll and pleat upholstery. I kept this car so clean that some of my friends asked if I ate meals off the floor. I suppose I did wash it two or three times each week and probably used a hundred bottles of Windex, which I kept under the front seat for immediate access. If it was clean and a bug splashed on my windshield, I pulled off the road and washed it off. Who wants to drive a dirty automobile?

This was the car I took to UK with me in the summer of 1962. Freshmen at UK were not supposed to have automobiles so I rented a private garage near my dorm and kept it under lock and key. I have to admit that it was very cool to have my car with me at UK. My dates thought so too.

A 1958 Chevrolet advertisement stated, “It’s so quick, agile, and eager that once you take the wheel, you’ll never want to leave it. You’ve got your hands on something really special.” I totally agreed. I almost never wanted to leave my

’58 Chevy.

Chevrolet was on a roll in the early Sixties, and the flashy-yet-classy Impalas were leading the way. In the fall of 1963, Pop and I visited Britton Chevrolet and ordered me a ’63 Impala Super Sport. It was equipped with a 350 cubic-inch V8 engine, dual exhausts, four-speed transmission mounted in the floor between the leather bucket seats, fender skirts, tachometer, padded dash, white walled tires, and metallic blue paint. You never saw a young man so excited!

The age of muscle cars peaked in 1970 and I had to have one. My next Chevrolet was a 1970 Chevelle SS equipped with a hot 396 cubic-inch V8 engine. It too had leather bucket seats, dual exhausts, white lettered radial tires, AM/FM stereo radio, automatic transmission, leather hard top roof, air conditioning, and a positive-traction rear end. That was one of the hottest Chevys I ever drove. It was quick and extremely agile and was a fun automobile to drive.

In 1976 I purchased a Chevy Monte Carlo, which was silver with red leather seats. The V8 engine was more than adequate and the automatic transmission was extremely smooth. The radio was an AM/FM model equipped with a reverberator located in the trunk. The sound from front speakers to the rear speaker was delayed by a fraction of a second; therefore the music was something very special. I will never forget the fun that I had in that automobile.

My last “muscle car” Chevy was a 1978 El Camino SS with the big-block 396 cubic-inch engine. Even though this was an extremely fun vehicle to drive, the single seat design was not very convenient. It was finally traded in for a Chevy SUV, and I have purchased these four wheeled vehicles since. My variety of Chevrolet automobiles were awesome and exciting to own. If I had it to do all over again, I would make no changes. Their slogan at one time was “See the USA in your Chevrolet!” And, buddy, I did.

“ramblings” (Cont. from A2)

on those millions?

I don’t even like the one year rule. If you’re good enough to play in the pros straight out of high school then you should get to play and not have to spend a token year in college.

But, I’ll survive the season. The main loss is not having any interest in the NCAA tournament -- except to root against Louisville. I know, mean, mean, petty, petty.

Yards to Paradise

By Max Phelps

I am honored to have written a landscaping column for the *Mt. Vernon Signal* for the past twelve years...about 200 topics have been covered on various subjects pertaining to landscapes.

What I want to address is that the hearty folks of Rockcastle County dream of the finer things just like the rest of the world does. Sometimes they will even go to Fayette County and hire a big company to come in and landscape their place. It's bragging rights "Well, WE hired Hillenmeyers to do OUR yard" kind of thing. In that scenario, there seems to be no problem with quibbling over the cost. The same can be said of a new bass boat, a new 4-wheeler, a new fifty-thousand-dollar sport utility vehicle.

But when it comes to hiring a local contractor a lot of folks seem to think they ought to get a lot lower price than that guy in Lexington or that gal in Berea will quote. If the H2O guy, the Kentucky Ponds guy, or the Pond Lady will build for some Mt. Vernon family a nice pond with stream and waterfalls...and the quote is \$8,000 for instance...why would they think I am being unreasonable if I quote it at \$7,000 and will do a superior job because I do it myself instead of someone that may not even speak English?

It's really not about me. I can drive to surrounding counties and make the price I need to make. And stayed busy all year last year, despite the bad economy.

There just seems to be this mentality that holds back the progress I see in so many towns and cities from Cincinnati to Charlotte and most places in between. If there are some of the best home builders, some of the best stone masons, some of the best

blacksmiths, or whatever it is, in the Mt. Vernon area, why is it the most qualified of skilled people are supposed to work for less when they work for their Rockcastle County neighbors?

And, I've even had folks tell me, the picture you showed me looks better than the work you've done for me! (Yep, if I did it for \$4,000 locally, and for \$6,500 for the guy in Lexington...you have no right to expect it to look quite as good, in my opinion. The guy paying more expects to get what he paid for.)

There are a lot of down to earth folks reading this paper. Some of the best. In a world coming apart, there are still honest hard working people here more than most places.

Many poorer folks cannot hire a professional and have to do things themselves to save money. I understand that. Most of my life that describes me too.

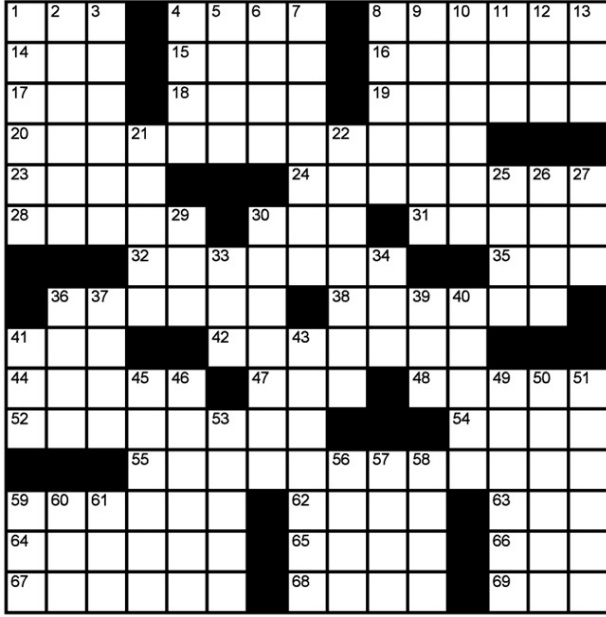
But even our more well to do citizens, I hardly ever can work for. Because I can make a better living working somewhere else. I got an offer from near Charlotte North Carolina a couple weeks ago to pay for my trip down to advise him on his landscape and give him a quote and even pay something for my time. It costs 2 to 4 hours out of my work day...and how much gas to drive to look at a yard...and locally everyone thinks I should come do that for free. I wish gas at the station were free, and so forth, but it's not.

Again, it's not just myself, but some of the fine skilled tradesmen locally need to get paid for their services at home just as they would in another city. That's my opinion.

Feedback is always welcome:
waterfallsinyards@yahoo.com
and the advice is always free by email.

Kentucky Crossword # 576

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ACROSS

- WBKO, WTVQ and WHAS network
- Schedule position
- Ford vehicle assembled in Louisville
- Cheerleader's cheer
- Plane-jumping G.I.
- Liqueur flavorers
- Black cuckoo
- "As I see it" in texting
- Derby wear, maybe
- It preceded the University of Kentucky
- Pitch-black
- Lee Co. community, or 13th U.S. president
- Kentucky county named for Mark Twain's great grandfather
- Bowling target
- Kentucky's highest waterfall
- Kentucky author Teresa Medeiros' genre?
- 007 creator Fleming
- Followed
- Prayer
- Clinch
- Kentuckian, former MLB pitcher Don
- Cylindrical military cap
- Campbell's container
- Doctor fish
- Kentucky university where more than 4400 sailors trained during WWII
- Fishing item

- Iroquois _____, Louisville
- "In Flanders Fields" author
- Kentuckian, Academy Award winning actress Patricia
- May honoree
- Tennessee Vols' uniform color
- Misses
- QB Manning
- Peggy Kemmer and colleagues, e.g.
- Gin flavorer
- Comprehend

DOWN

- Like our numerals
- Yellow-skinned fruit
- Baby fowls
- Extent
- Nonclerical
- Guesstimate phrase
- 1950s automobile feature
- Chart holder
- Fitting closely
- Kentucky Theatre, at times
- Flue residue
- Kind of patch
- Ballpark fig.
- Open court hearings
- One of Kentucky's three original counties
- Its quarter says "Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers"
- Horse color
- Forever and a day
- "That means ____!"

- Kentucky city where the Ohio and Tennessee rivers join
- Bus. exec. Whitman
- Before, of yore
- Mammoth Cave's largest river
- Approximate
- ____ Technical Institute
- Inscribed pillar
- Something to believe in
- Shipped goods
- Kentuckian, Reds' outfielder, 2002-2006
- Electrical resistance
- Mace is made from its aril
- Like jambalaya
- Thomas Merton?
- Fencing swords
- Bluish green
- Floyd Co. area, or nimbus
- "Anything ____?"
- Sun follower?
- French vineyard
- Camry, for one

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