

ramblings...

by: perlina m. anderkin

Saw the movie *Heat* last Friday night and it kept my attention -- which for me gives it an "A" rating. Of course, one reason it kept my attention was because I had to keep reminding myself to close my mouth which flew open often at the language used.

Movies have gone downhill so badly in my lifetime. If you don't like animated movies, movies about zombies or about drunken bachelor parties, then you're pretty much shut out of the movie world for entertainment.

My husband loved westerns and, of course, I love action movies (with the good/bad guys clearly defined), mysteries or a teary romance story. I read voraciously and so many of the books I read would make excellent movies but evidently Hollywood is not making movies for the over (barely) 70 set these days.

One thing today's movies have taught me is to be devious about getting my refreshments in from outside. I know my children get tired of hearing about my 30c double feature Saturdays when I was a child. But, it's true. It cost 15c to get in the movie, popcorn was a dime and a soft drink was a nickel. Friday night, after paying \$6.75 to get in (senior rate), I paid \$9.75 for a junior popcorn and medium soft drink. That amounts to \$16.50 to have to sit through numerous commercials and enough previews of upcoming duds that the movie that was supposed to start at 6:20 didn't start until 6:40. I paid the usury price for the popcorn and soft drink because it was a girls' night out -- me and three of the daughters -- and the youngest, Allison,

has been known to go into the theater almost crying because she was afraid the candy and soft drink police were going to arrest me for having those items in my purse when I came in from outside the theater. Of course, with the number of times I have ruined a purse (not to mention all the contents) when my drink slanted the wrong way, I am probably behind in money saved but it's the principle of the thing.

I would comment on all the outrageous revelations coming from our federal government, particularly the IRS but I just don't know where to begin. I stress out each year on how I'm going to pay my taxes only to find out that \$50 million has been spent by the IRS on "conferences." This is not to mention the over \$70 million given out as employee bonuses recently (evidently just because), and then reading that they have targeted conservative groups with intense scrutiny and "inadvertently" publicly released thousands of social security numbers, mainly of members of said conservative groups.

It is mind-boggling and I feel helpless. But, I have decided that if a conservative group ever decides to wage a protest sit-in near the IRS office, I'm there.

On Call.....

By Rich Branham

I have heard so many good comments from people that have read my column and for that I am truly thankful. I have so many ideas for this column and hopefully with the help of the Signal we will be able



The Way I See it

By
Doug Ponder

Tuesday night, I had to make the decision that no dog owner ever wants to make. I had to decide to have my childhood dog euthanized (put down.)

Fuzzy was a half spitz/half collie breed that my dad got for me when I was 5-years-old. I am now 24 and Fuzzy was 19-years-old, so he had been with me for over 80 percent of my life.

Nineteen years is a long time for a dog to live and he would have been 133 in human years, according to the universal rule of thumb that one dog year equals seven human years. That is amazing to think about and it is still a concept that is hard for me to grasp.

But similar to a lot of other older dogs, Fuzzy had started to develop arthritis in his hind legs. He had struggled to get up on his own for the last two years of his life but the past few days it had gotten to where he could no longer get up on his own anymore.

When I would wake up in the morning and come home from work in the afternoon, I would have to pick him up after he had fallen and laid on the ground for hours without being able

to bring those forward.

I want to start off by diving into the history of the fire service. The past is how the fire service gets its traditions. It's how the fire service grows and learns. If it was not for the firefighters before us developing tools and training, the fire service would look very different. We continue to look to the past to improve upon the future. But first, last week I left you with a question to answer. When and where was the first full time paid fire department? The answer, Cincinnati Ohio on April 1st 1853 became the first full time paid professional fire department.

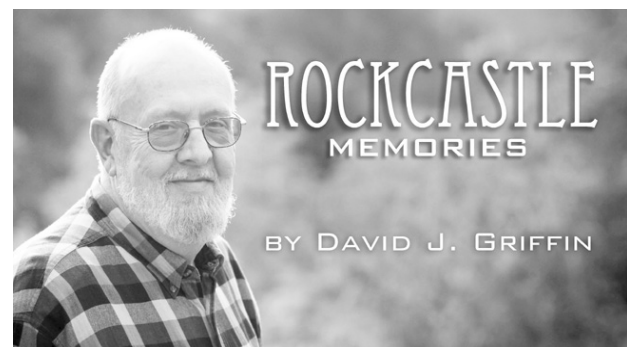
The first paid fire department may have been formed in 1853 but volunteers have been around a lot longer and from a greater distance than Ohio. Firefighting can be traced back to all the way to ancient Egypt. I know this sounds far-fetched but evidence of firefighting machinery, even a water pump, has been found to exist during this period.

Now fast forward to ancient Rome. The machinery existed in ancient Egypt but it was around the reign of Rome when the organization began taking shape. Romans formed a fire brigade of around 500 people to combat fire whenever a call goes out. However, if you wanted your property saved a price had to be negotiated first. I imagine these negotiations were a little one sided and often went in favor of the Roman fire brigade.

The Romans used a bucket brigade to try to put out the flames, but poles, hooks and even weapons of their time were used to destroy adjacent buildings next to the building on fire. This was done to minimize the spread of the fire. Unfortunately for the Romans this did not always work. In 64 AD Rome suffered the worst fire in their history where two-thirds of Rome was destroyed.

We'll stop here with the history lesson for this week. But, before I leave everyone with a question I want to congratulate my fire department for a job well done this past Thursday. Brodhead fire department took part in a meeting located at our state capitol to showcase some very specialized equipment involving structural collapse we have received through a grant. It

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ROCKCASTLE MEMORIES

BY DAVID J. GRIFFIN

Local law enforcement
of long ago

Does anyone remember the days in Mt. Vernon when the local police officers walked the streets while on duty? When I was a young boy, Mt. Vernon had two policemen who patrolled the streets on foot. In those days, there were no cell phones, hand-held two-way radios, or other sophisticated forms of communication. Even our home calls had to be handled by the operator. We simply told her who we wanted to call or gave her a three-digit phone number. Almost every home phone was on a party line, and we listened to a certain ring before picking up the receiver.

I distinctly remember hearing McKinley Arnold and Clifford Pitman using their shrill police whistles in order to stop a car or for it to move out of the way. They used the whistles to direct traffic, control crowds, and on occasion, to chase criminals. They were equipped with a nightstick, a badge, handcuffs, and a sidearm. All of the young boys thought they were too cool.

I remember one particular evening when I was coming out of the Vernon Theater when I heard Officer Pitman blowing his whistle over and over again as he ran down the sidewalk. We found out later that someone had been involved in an automobile hit-and-run incident, and he was "on the chase." At that time, neither of our officers had a police car -- they actually were a walking police department.

The only real reflection that we had of actual crime work was mainly through

the original Dragnet radio show, which was in its prime. It ran from June of 1949 until through February of 1957. On the other hand, the television broadcast aired from January 1952 until August 1959. That show was perhaps the most famous police procedural drama in media history. It provided the audience with a feel for the boredom and drudgery, as well as the danger and heroism, of real-life police work. It unquestionably improved public opinion of real police officers. Jack Webb wanted the series to be realistic with unpretentious acting -- which I suppose he achieved. (I must say, however, that I don't recall any actual police officer speaking in such a flat monotone.)

I also remember listening to that radio show with my mother, Bee, when she sat in her big rocker while sewing. Occasionally, she would say, "Listen, I want to hear this program." She was a big fan of Jack Webb and, like so many others, she made the move from radio to television.

I personally enjoyed the TV show more than the radio program. Two distinctive phrases from the series are long remembered. The beginning of the program announced: "The story you are about to hear is true -- only the names have been changed to protect the innocent." The other was the popular catchphrase, "Just the facts, ma'am," which still remains in our linguistic culture.

Officer Arnold in Mt. Vernon had a son who was also named McKinley, and he was in my class in school.

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