

Points East

By Ike Adams



My friend, Roberta Webb, who raises pecans commercially on a ranch near Lubbock, Texas, thinks she has the solution to my black bird problem.

She said crows were once stealing as many as thirty pounds of nuts per crow from her pecan groves until she mounted several big plastic owls atop 20 foot sections of PVC pipe and placed them around the trees and now the crows won't come near because they're afraid the owls will get them.

I have two rows of late bodacious sweet corn just starting to tassel. I also have two big great-horned plastic owls in the mail and I've already been to Lowe's where I purchased two twelve-foot sections of two-inch PVC.

I figure that once I get my pipes in the ground, my owls will still be ten feet high and well above my sweet corn which only grows to about seven feet tall. The owls are supposed to be twenty-six inches tall and look very intimidating. Sunlight or the slightest breeze is supposed to make them move around and twist their heads and they're supposed to scare off black birds and rabbits as well, which would make them serve the ultimate dual purpose. I'd be hard put upon to tell you which I hate more, black birds or rabbits.

I forgot to ask Roberta if the owls kept squirrels out of her pecans because I would have thought squirrels to be more of a problem

than crows to a nut grower.

Anyway, I figure that if the owls don't work in my corn patch, they'll give all the neighbors something to talk about and provide photo-ops for people who occasionally drive up Charlie Brown Road just so they can say they've been here.

In the meantime, I have discovered that I can't shoot a shotgun because Mr. Parkinson makes it wobble too much to aim and the couple of times I tried, I did almost as much damage to my sweet corn as the feathered vermin were doing. But I still managed to down three big starlings with one shot when about a hundred of them flew off in a swarm when they saw me coming. I couldn't have missed them if I'd been blind folded.

I used fishing line to hang the carcasses from my corn tassels but the flock came back and ate the rest of my first crop while they held a funeral for their buddies. Bumper Adams, from Letcher County told me that this had happened one time to Everett Banks when he tried the same tactic with a dead crow.

In other gardening news, we have eggplant, okra, bell peppers, cucumbers, Roma beans and tomatoes and such ready to pick but my garden is more akin to an everglade than something you'd try to grow veggies in and I've already ruined two

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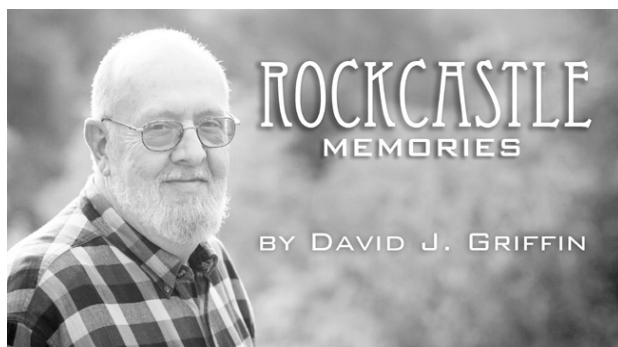
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Al Capp's Shmoo

While watching a sitcom on CBS called The Big Bang Theory, I noted that the stars of the show were planning a visit to the International Comic-Con, which is held each year in San Diego, California. The regular members of the cast are portrayed as "geeks" who live across the hall from Penny, an aspiring young actress. All four of the geeky members of the cast love comic books and even wear costumes to the convention. All of the discussion about comic books reminded me of the days of my youth when I too read and collected comics.

Even though I read many comics when I was a young boy, I suppose my most favorite was Al Capp's Li'l Abner, which first appeared in a comic strip on August 31, 1948. It quickly became a postwar craze in the United States. Shortly thereafter it was published in comic book form. I collected them for years and kept them in a box under my bed. My favorite character found in Capp's comic books was the Shmoo.

A Shmoo is shaped like a plump bowling pin with legs. Its skin is totally smooth with the exception of eyebrows and sparse whiskers. They have no arms, nose, or ears. Its feet are short and round, and they are very dexterous.

On Sundays, I often had my grandfather, Pop, read the Li'l Abner comics to me because he also loved the satire that was layered into the strip. He likened the Shmoo to the government's welfare programs. The following is a description of Shmoos:

Shmoos reproduce asexually and are extremely prolific.

They require no sustenance other than air.

The small animals are delicious to eat – tasting like chicken, steak, or pork depending on how they are prepared.

They produce eggs, bottled milk, and butter.

Their pelts make great shoe leather.

They have no bones, therefore there is no waste.

Their eyes make excellent buttons.

Their whiskers make perfect toothpicks.

They are so gentle that they make ideal playmates for children.

In late August 1948, Li'l Abner first discovered the Shmoos when he ventured into a forbidden valley in his comic strip. He befriends the small, white creatures. An old man in the story explained to Abner, "Shmoos is the greatest menace to humankind th' world has evah known! It's because they's so good!" As soon as Abner discovered the value of the Shmoos, he remarked, "Wif these around, nobody won't nevah havta work no more!"

The sequence in Capp's comics was extremely popular, both as a commentary on the state of society and as a classic allegory of greed and corruption. However, the mythical tale ends on an ironic note. Shmoos are officially declared to be a menace and, therefore, are systematically hunted down and killed – because they were deemed "bad for business." In the comic, it is soon discovered that Li'l Abner has secretly saved two Shmoos, a "boy" and a "girl." It is believed that the remaining two were protected in order for them to re-appear later in the sequence if needed. The two remaining Shmoos are seen running towards the Valley of the Shmoos. Capp wrote, "The Shmoo metaphorically represented the limitless bounty of the earth in all its

richness – in essence, Mother Nature herself."

The Shmoo phenomenon arose immediately, spontaneously, and solely from Al Capp's comic strip – and it appealed widely to Americans of all ages. Forty million people read the original 1948 Shmoo story, and Capp's already considerable readership then roughly doubled following the overwhelming success of the Shmoo.

One Christmas, my Aunt Ruth bought me a Shmoo

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On Call

By:
Rick Branham



The fair has ended, the rides taken down and another year of the Little World's Fair is in the books. Thank you to each and every one that came to the fair and supported Brodhead Volunteer Fire Department. I know the weather this year was not the greatest but you can always expect rain the week of the fair. But it does seem like this year was the wettest in a long time. The fair has become a big fundraiser for us and we truly appreciate you for attending this year. We look forward to next year and hope to see everyone again.

Last week I asked, can a volunteer become IFSAC certified and if so how? The answer is definitely, yes. A volunteer can become IFSAC certified providing they can pass the skills test and written exams. Some fire schools throughout the

ramblings...

by: perlina m. anderkin

Have been regularly attending the Livingston City Commission meetings for some months now and I am exhausted. The enthusiasm for the many projects in progress burns bright in the city's young mayor, Jason Medley. Medley has gotten his commissioners, all elected on a write-in vote last November, to buy into his many ideas for projects to better the city.

Medley's pet project of them all, however, seems to be the renovation of the old Livingston school. The building is a classic example of its era that has been allowed to fall into ruin. However, Medley is not letting the fallen drywall, ruined floors, dirt everywhere deter him.

Mainly with the financial help of the school's alumni, and volunteer help from the community, he has managed to renovate one huge area of the school as a visitor center for tourists coming to the recently-named Kentucky Trail Town. His next project in the building involves a Community Cafe in the former lunchroom of the school. He envisions the space being used for community dinners, bridal and baby showers, etc. and plans to have the renovations done in time for this year's Livingston Alumni Banquet.

He, and the commissioners, with the help of a loan from the fiscal court, also recently purchased a building on Main Street which has to have extensive renovations but will eventually house city hall, with other areas used for trail head activities.

Perhaps one of the biggest boons to the commission's plans for their city was the acquisition of Carl Swanigan as the non-paid law enforcement for the city. Swanigan, a retired police officer from Ohio, manages to keep order in the city in a manner, to date, that is not off-putting. The city recently enacted a series of ordinances, concerning dog control, a curfew for minors, protection of the environment, nuisances in general

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