

The Coffee Table Gazette

Life Writes Its Own Stories.



Issue 7. Page 1 of 2. Publication Date: 03-12-22. Order additional copies at <https://coffeetablegazette.com>

A Bag Of Cat Food.

It was early 2020, our governor had just announced lockdowns due to the CoVid-19 pandemic. Stores were operating on limited business hours, and banks were closing branches and reducing the hours of others. I was heading home from town in my landscaping truck and trailer, listening to the beginning of a Zoom worship service. I was trying to get home before the main event, so I could participate.

I stopped for an intersection at the north edge of town, and there was a car sitting half cross-ways at the opposite stop sign. I could tell someone was confused, so I pulled across to check it out. I walked up to the vehicle and noticed an elderly lady who was somewhat distraught. She told me that she had left her home trying to get to a US Bank in order to cash a check and buy a bag of food for her cat before the lockdowns began, but she had gotten lost somewhere along the drive. She told me that she tried to get emergency dispatch to send her help, but since it was not a medical emergency nor a traffic incident, she was unsuccessful. I then asked her where she lived and recognized the address as an assisted living facility, 10 miles away, across the river, and in a different county. I know of these things because I used to be a full-time EMT.

At first, I tried giving her directions, showing her on the map how to get home, but quickly realized it was confusing her more. So, I told her, "follow me, and I will lead you home." When we arrived at her place of residence, she was very relieved, but still worried, because her facility was preparing to lock them in their rooms, due to CoVid-19, and she still needed to get her check cashed to buy food for her cat.

As we conversed, I learned she had a nice place in a small town about 30 miles away, but her children had moved her to the assisted living facility, sold her house, took the money, and left her alone. A distant relative had sent her a check to help out, but she could only cash it at a US Bank. I showed her on a map that there was a branch only a half-mile from where she lived, but they were operating on limited hours. She then asked for my number, so I got a business card from my truck and folded a \$50 bill that was supposed to be used for our groceries underneath and handed it to her. She didn't see the bill, so I trusted she would find it soon.

She then advised me, "don't count on your kids to help you, they will only hurt you." Little did she know at that time, I myself was in the middle of a very stressful situation with two of my early and preteen children. It broke my heart to hear how she was hurt by her kids. As a matter of fact, it still brings tears to my eyes as I'm writing this. Nevertheless, I made sure she was safe, able to get into her apartment, and left. I never saw or heard from her again. I prayed that God would fill her needs and keep her safe. The lesson I learned that day is that we never know when someone is going to cross our path and forever change us in ways we never imagined.

Andy ~ Washington

Is It Baleen Or Not?

Back in 1989, when I was young and full of adventure, I decided to head to Alaska and see what it had to offer. When I got to Sand Point, Alaska, I tossed caution to the wind and boarded a fishing boat. While on the boat, I got to see things that most people can only dream of, such as: porpoises swimming back and forth in front of the boat like it was a game of "catch me if you can," killer whales that would nudge up on the side of the boat, then roll over to look at us, and various sightings of whales sifting the water for food through their baleen.

Which brings me to my story. I noticed that street vendors would sell baleen plates, because they can be used for many different things, and I just thought they were neat. Truth be told I really, really, wanted one, but my car was too small.

So, one day the crew from the boat and I were headed from Homer to Anchorage, and I was riding shotgun, when all of a sudden, I saw what I thought was a big piece of baleen on the side of the road. So, I yelled, "stop! stop! There is a piece of Baleen!". On came the brakes of the vehicle, and we turned around as fast as we could only to find out what I had seen was a piece of truck tire that had sheared off and had the appearance of baleen. Boy, did I feel silly! The entire crew from the boat started laughing, and to this day, every time we come across a piece of tire on the side of the road (even if we are in the middle of Kansas), some smart aleck has to yell, "Look it's a piece of Baleen!!!!"

Laura ~ Oregon

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The Loss Of A Friend.

In 1981 I was young and had the innocence of a child. The biggest thing I had to worry about was what my friends were doing that day, how we could meet at the nearest swimming hole, and most importantly, avoid girl cooties at all cost! Late one evening that summer, my dad came home from work, knelt down as I ran to give him a hug, and with tears in his eyes, told me to sit on his knee. He had never done that before, and from the look on his face, I knew it wasn't good. He then looked at me, and he explained that a friend of mine had been murdered the night before.

It was like a bomb had gone off right next to me when he said that. The only way to describe it is like a scene in the movies when everything goes silent except the ringing in the ears and time slows down. Then the pain in my chest hit, and I walked away without saying a word. This horrific news had just stunned me to the core of my little body, and I didn't know how to deal with it. I couldn't speak, I couldn't cry, I could barely comprehend what I had just heard.

The next few months were pure torture for my little mind, I lay in bed each night shaking for fear of someone coming to murder me, not knowing how to deal with the pain of never seeing my friend again, and trying to comprehend the pure despair and total devastation that I had seen on the faces of my friends family. To be perfectly honest, a part of me died that day too, and I would never be the same again. It's been 40 plus years since then, and I can still remember it like it was yesterday. There are times, even today, that I still can't help but shed a tear from the pain of that day.

There are a few things I learned from that experience (and in the years following) and here they are:

1. Life is short, don't sweat the small stuff.
2. If you love someone, tell them.
3. Spend time with friends and family, because today could be the last day of their life.
4. Do something nice for a total stranger, you never know what they have been through in life or even that day.
5. Express gratitude and be humble.

Anonymous

A Few Events On This Day In History.

1804 – Samuel Chase became the first (and, so far only) U.S. Supreme Court Justice to be impeached.

1894 – Coca Cola sold in glass bottle for the first time.

1912 – Juliette Gordon Low formed the first troop of American Girl Guides (later renamed Girl Scouts), in Savannah, Georgia.

1930 – Mohandas Gandhi begins 241 – mile civil disobedience march.

1933 – FDR broadcasts his first “fireside chat” during the Great Depression.

1938 – Germany annexes Austria.

1948 – American Singer, songwriter, and guitarist James Taylor was born.

The Humorous Side Of Life.

My old neighborhood was so tough, our chief export was ransom notes.

My life is like a romantic comedy, minus the romance and just me laughing at my own jokes.

WebMD is like one of those choose your own adventure books, where the result is always death.

When life knocks me down, instead of getting back up I usually lay there and take a nap.

My relationship status? Netflix, Oreos, and Sweatpants.

A note from the editor.

We rely on stories from readers to spread the word far and wide. If you are interested in submitting a story, or a joke you can do so at <https://coffetablegazette.com>. I personally want to thank you for taking the time to read this publication and kindly pass it on, who knows it may just brighten someones day.

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