

The Coffee Table Gazette

Life Writes Its Own Stories.



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My Days In Death Valley.

I was eight years old and at the end of third grade, my stepfather got a job running the small town of Stove Pipe Wells in Death Valley, California. My mom, stepfather, my sister who was fourteen, our two dogs Mooch and Cricket, my chipmunk Nutty and I, moved there. It was summer and it was blistering hot. The town consisted of a little grocery, a quaint “clothing” store on the left side and in front of the store gas pumps and a phone, that you had to turn a crank on to get an operator to connect your calls. There were two motels, one of them was “fancy” with a restaurant, and the other was similar to a motel six, except we didn’t leave a light on. There were a few mobile homes, a laundry room, and a very nice swimming pool. The fancy motel and restaurant were never used while we lived there, and the other was not used very often. My mom and stepfather manned the grocery store, gas pumps, and motel, they had an assistant named Ralph, a very kind gentleman, who took care of maintenance issues. My sister, our dog Mooch, and I spent most of our time at the pool unless we were doing laundry or chores at home. We would help our mom stock the store or clean a motel room that had been used. So much was packed into the time that we lived there, and since I was only eight at the time, I don’t remember the order of the “adventures” we had, but I will start with these two.

One time we had a man and his teenage son end up staying at the motel, because their car overheated and they were stuck until they could get it repaired. That was a very common occurrence in Death Valley, many people were just “passing through” and ended up staying for a couple of days or more. Anyway, my mom and stepdad suggested that the boy go swimming with my sister and I while his father was trying to get the car fixed. However, he didn’t have any swim trunks, but luckily the little store had “disposable” swim trunks, which meant they were made from paper (lol). My mom gave him a pair and sent him on over to the pool, well you can imagine how long the trunks lasted! The boy ended up swimming in his shorts, which he should have done in the first place.

It was fun for my sister and I to have company, the three of us and our dog Mooch hung out all day at the pool, swimming, and singing at the top of our lungs. Mooch loved to swim and would even go to the pool by himself when the mood struck him, Cricket our little black chihuahua didn’t like to swim as much, which reminds me of the time Mooch went missing.

One day, all of us were busy cleaning rooms and such, Mooch had gone swimming. When we were done working, my sister and I went to the pool and Mooch wasn’t there, which was odd because, he wasn’t in the house either. We went over to the store to see if he was there or if mom had seen him and it was a no on both accounts. Just then Ralph came by and said he had seen a car parked over by the pool and he wondered if the people had taken Mooch, so we called the local park rangers and let them know Mooch was missing and what Ralph had seen. The rangers and the local sheriff set up a roadblock to close off all of Death Valley, and sure enough Ralph was correct, someone had seen Mooch swimming and thought that he was a unique dog, so they took him. The rangers brought Mooch back to our house, we were so happy to have him back!

Anita ~ Oregon

A Sheet In The Corner.

As a teenager, I worked for a small local construction company in the Midwest. We were hired by one of the two mortuaries in our small, rural town of about 4,500 to replace the rotting wooden soffits on their two story, century plus old, brick main building with updated aluminum soffits. And they had a detached garage where we were allowed to store our scaffolding and materials when not in use where they would be securely locked.

On this particular Monday morning, the crew of young men and I arrived at the job site at our normal time of seven o’clock, unlocked the garage, and began moving our scaffolding to erect for our work week. As we were moving stuff out, we noticed what looked like a spare gurney tucked randomly in the corner and draped in a white sheet. And as young men will do, we joked about there being someone undercover spying on us.

Not thinking anything to if I walked across the building and pretended to knock on the sheet, saying “hello, hello, is anyone there....?” The other guys were laughing as I grabbed the corner of the sheet and pulled it up. To my great surprise, a cold, lifeless face was staring back at me. I gingerly laid the sheet back down, making sure it was not noticeable that it had been moved and we all quickly finished getting what we needed and shut the main door. As we were working, rather chagrined, about 9:00 AM, the mortician came with the hearse, backed it in the garage, and shut the door. A few minutes later, the door opened and the hearse drove out. After it was gone, we carefully went and looked in the corner. Sure enough, the gurney and sheet were gone. To this day, 25+ years later, I have not knocked on another white sheet!

Andy ~ Washington

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A Diamond In The Rough.

Not to long ago, I encountered an entitled, disrespectful, young adult who offered to beat me up for telling him to leave my vehicle alone. The more he screamed explicit phrases at me the more his I.Q. dropped and by the time he was finished his I.Q. was lower than his shoe size.

I just stood there with a smile on my face asking him, "Do you think I am scared of you?" which, much to his chagrin, was thwarting his attempts to intimidate me, it definitely gave me an insight into the lack of parenting skills or the indoctrination of entitlement that seems prevalent in today's society. In my day, we did "kid" things for sure, but destruction of property, confronting, screaming and threatening someone twice our size would have never crossed our minds. If we got caught, we knew "when the jig was up".

So with that said, it makes encounters with other young adults that are the complete opposite, all the more appreciated. I happen to employ a young man in my company and it's a pleasure to work with him each and everyday. I tell him every chance I get how much I appreciate him and I suspect he probably gets tired of me saying it so much.

However, I don't want him to ever forget what a diamond in the rough he really is. I worry about him everyday, not just as a boss, but as a friend. I want the best for him and I want him to succeed, probably more than he does. I pray everyday that life doesn't beat him up like it has me, and the thought of someone taking advantage of him or his kind nature breaks my heart. I pray that he gains the wisdom to navigate life as it goes along and he will have the skills to survive in what is now an uncertain world, that only seems to be getting worse. I hope and pray that he never has to deal with addiction of any kind (alcohol or otherwise). And as long as I draw breath, I will help him in any way, in any situation.

I am not sure what the moral of this story is, but I just felt I needed to put it on paper. However, I will say this....If you know someone like this young man, please let them know what a Gem they are, because there seems to be fewer and fewer of them and it's a cruel world out there, they need all the encouragement and support they can get.

Anonymous

A Few Events On This Day In History (07-25).

1814 – English engineer George Stephenson introduces his first steam locomotive, a traveling engine designed for hauling coal on the Killingworth wagon way named Blücher.

1837 – The first commercial use of an electric telegraph successfully demonstrated by William Cooke and Charles Wheatstone between Euston and Camden Town in London.

1850 – Gold discovered in Oregon (Rogue River).

1917 – Sir Thomas Whyte introduces the first income tax in Canada as a "temporary" measure (lowest bracket is 4% and highest is 25%).

1934 – Failed Nazi Coup in Austria

1944 – 1st jet fighter used in combat (Messerschmitt 262).

1959 – SR-N1 hovercraft crosses the English Channel from Calais to Dover in just over 2 hours.

The Humorous Side Of Life.

Why can you not trust Atoms? Because they "make up" everything.

I adopted a dog the other day, but my life was so depressing, he ran back to the pound.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until they open their mouths.

A computer once beat me at chess. But it was no match for me at kickboxing.

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems. But it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

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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