

## PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES

If I remember correctly (let me say right here at the beginning that at 76.5 years of age my memory is still pretty good but I'm sure is slipping little by little such that when I get a few pages into this story, I won't remember completely what I've written before, and will probably even comment on such, as I'm want [or is it wont, or is this improper grammar altogether?] to do, so, I'm going to try to refrain from using the "if I remember correctly" caveat hereinafter, asking anyone who might stumble onto this story to remember as you read further that I may or may not be remembering correctly what I say), the 1949-51 Ford automobile was the same each year, with maybe just a few hardly noticeable improvements. The first car I remember us having was one of those years' Ford sedans, a black 4-door.

Somewhere in the archives is a photo, black & white, of course, of said car at Grandma and Grandpa Beaty's small white asbestos shingle sided house a hundred or two yards from Uncle Leighton (my mother's twin) and Aunt Eva Dell's small house (it may have been a trailer which had been added onto) which housed them and their 3 boys, our first cousins, Frank, several years older than my bro, Bill, now 80, Ray, I think a year younger than Bill, and David, a few years younger than my bro, Harry, now 74. Uncle Leighton owned a dairy farm and Mom threw Frank, Ray and David up to us everytime we grumbled (one of her favorite words, along with many others, one of which comes to mind being "gumption" as in "so and so" [some "trifling" {another of her favorites} {{ne'er-do-well}} "has no gumption") about having to pull the bermuda grass out of her day-lillies which lined both sides of our crumbly brown gravel driveway at 2318 Rama Rd, Charlotte, NC (don't remember the zip), by saying "Frank and Ray" have already milked the cows". I don't know how we didn't despise the Beaty boys but rather, they are three of my favorite cousins. Since this story is about transportation, I'll relate that I learned to drive a straight drive by learning to let out the clutch on one of Uncle Leighton's orange Allis-Chalmers tractors under the patient tutelage of Frank and Ray, who didn't laugh too loud when I repeatedly let the clutch out too fast and stalled the engine time after time till I finally got the hang of it.

Several years ago I wrote a story entitled My Most Unforgettable Character about Grandpa William Badger Beaty which is on my website, which I advertise frequently: [tomcaldwell.org](http://tomcaldwell.org). Frank told me about Grandpa riding with Frank driving at I don't know what age (you could get a license in SC at 14 but couldn't until 16 in NC, which we chafed about). Frank was driving too fast going round a curve and got a little sideways till he straightened it out and Granda Badger said something like "hold her steady", completely unperturbed. As I wrote about in the story about him, Grandpa chewed Brown Mule plug tobacco. I've ridden in the back of that pickup more than once when Grandpa spit juice out the window and it would give us in the back a shower. Once was enough to learn to sit behind the driver!

Frank, as are Ray and David is shorter than we Caldwells. He may have lost one of his eyes, at least one looks like a glass eye. He definitely lost the ends of several of his fingers, I think cutting something on a table or band saw. If I'm not mistaken, Frank had an academic scholarship to Clemson. I don't know how long he stayed but dropped out, got married and built a small house on Uncle Leighton's farm. I also don't know how long the marriage lasted or how many children it produced, but he's been married for years to Judy, a great gal. Getting ahead of myself, Uncle Leighton and Aunt Eva Dell sold their farm maybe in the 70's (I know it was after '66 because Dad & Mom drove down to Clinton, SC to see us play Presbyterian in '66 and I rode home with them

and we stopped by to see them at their farm near Chester, SC-it's now a golf course) and retired to Apopka, Fla where D&M stopped by to see them on their annual trek to Fla, destination St. Pete to see Mom's oldest sister, Bertie and her husband, Harvey Hatfield and her next oldest and favorite, Edna, who married Bill Pryor, who had retired from one of the car makers, I'm thinking GM in Michigan and moved to St. Pete with his wife and attended 1st Baptist which Edna attended, and they married after Uncle Bill's wife died. Of course we loved Aunt Edna and also Uncle Bill. She outlived him and 2 other husbands, passing away a childless widow. Mom's youngest sister Jeannette, whose nickname was Nig cause she enjoyed playing with the black kids on Grandpa's farm; she later moved to St Pete, Fla, where she lived the rest of her life. (Mom's name is Annie Louise; she went by Louise; her nickname, I've no idea why was Lid).

Mom said Uncle Leighton was not as good a student as she because she always did his homework while he helped Grandpa on the farm. He was shorter than we Caldwells (Grandpa Badger was short), stocky, bald as a cue ball and always jovial when I was around him. I asked Frank several years ago at a Beaty annual reunion at David's place on Lake Watteree (more about the reunions later) if he ever saw his father mad. He said the only time he could remember was when he was young and they were living on a small farm below Matthews, near the Caldwell homeplace and near the last farm Grandpa Badger ever owned and Uncle Leighton had some high school boys helping him with his small dairy. One of them abused one of his cows, maybe beat her to make her get up or move, and Frank said his mild-mannered dad took a barrel stave and beat the tar out of the kid.

Dad wasn't particularly fond of Grandpa Beaty, probably because in comparison with his own father, who had accumulated 1,000 acres of land by the time he died in 1942, Badger was sort of a ne'er-do-well who lost 3 farms, primarily because he'd rather have coon and fox hunted than farm. Uncle Leighton was Dad's favorite Beaty. He loved to repeat Leighton's story about some fellow who would come to the "dinners on the grounds" at Orr's Baptist Church which the Beatys attended not far from their farm outside Chester. Uncle Leighton talked slowly and had maybe a slight speech impediment. About the fellow church member, Uncle Leighton said "He'd pull a chicken leg fru his moufe and then just frow the bone down on the ground!" I don't think I ever saw Dad laugh any harder than he did telling that story. Tears of laughter are running down my cheeks as I'm typing this! Once Uncle Leighton spent the night with us on Rama Rd; maybe he had a Dr's appointment in Charlotte early the next morning. Mom cooked a big breakfast, as she usually did, sausage, eggs, grits and biscuits. Her twin brother mixed his sausage, eggs and grits up together before he started eating them. I expect Bill, Harry and I just gaped. Which reminds me of one of Dad's favorite fictitious stories: A family invited the preacher home for Sunday dinner (that's the noon-day meal for you Elites) and the teenage son left the table to take a leak. He didn't close the bathroom door and the sound of pee hitting water reverberated all over the house. His dad said, "Eats like a horse, too!"

Frank moved to Apopka or nearby as well and I think maybe was the building inspector for a while and maybe got in the building business himself. Ray joined the Navy out of high school and, if I remember correctly (oops, I said it), served on a mine-sweeper, which, again, if I remember (double oops) what he told me, had a wooden hull so as not to inadvertently explode a mine if it ran into one. I think Ray got into cars and hot-rodding while he was still in school. He had an old car, maybe an A-model Ford, maybe chopped and whatever else hot-rodders do to cars that he drove to school. He may have painted it because it was real shiny, so shiny that girls looked at their reflection, maybe applying make-up on its mirror-like body, touching and putting smudges on its glossy finish. After asking them to quit touching his car several times, Ray rigged up an electric fence

charger somehow, I guess hooking it to the battery, and when the preeners got their nose close enough, a spark jumped out to greet their snout! Wouldn't you love to have a cellphone video of that??? After the Navy, Ray got into the business of building engines and cars and I think became very successful at it. The last time I saw him, he had chin whiskers at least a foot long!

(I last typed on this story over 2 weeks ago, and, if you've read any of my stuff, you know I hate scrolling back to see exactly what I've said, so please forgive if I repeat or skip ahead of something I should have said.) Having said the foregoing, I think I'm to David, Frank and Ray's younger brother, probably 71-2, a couple years younger than Harry. I think David went to Clemson and must have gotten a degree in chemistry because I think he went to work with a company in that field and eventually started his own company which I think (I know, I know, a lot of "thinks" because obviously I'm not sure of that which I'm saying) he sold for a very shiny nickel. He and his sweet wife, whose name doesn't come to me just now, own a cool place on Lake Watteree where they've hosted Beaty get-togethers for over 20 years, probably longer. I know it's been at least 20 because I took Mom and her younger sister, my Aunt Ruth once and Mom died in 2006. David's place is a perfect place for family. It's right on the lake with a nice pier with docking for several boats. At its core, the one story house may be a mobile home which has been added on to. A deck runs almost the length of the house and is wider in some places, and the kitchen opens right onto it. The whole place is shabby chic. It's not new or chic enough to be in Southern Living but I would take it over most of the showy places shown therein. I've been to the reunion several times, usually with Bill and once with our wives. There's always a feast of wonderful food, topped off with home-made ice cream. The kids wolf down theirs so they can get back in the lake or in a boat or behind Ray on one of his jet skis. I'll bet there have been 50-60 Beatys or Beaty invitees several times when I've been there.

Before eating, David always welcomes everyone and asks Frank to say the blessing, which he usually prefaces by saying that Aunt Eva Dell asked them to try to get the family together once a year and that they're going to try to honor her wishes for as long as they can. Some who I've seen there over the years in addition to the regulars, i.e. Uncle Leighton and Aunt Eva Dell's progeny: Billy Dick (I guess he was William Richard but all I ever heard him called was Billy Dick) Beaty, Uncle William's son from Raleigh and his wife, who I probably hadn't seen since he got married when I was probably only 10 or 12. I think he and his wife are now deceased. Nancy Head Dixon, Aunt Ruth's oldest, who just turned 90 and her husband Ed, who passed away several years ago in Chapel Hill, where he and Nancy lived in a retirement community. Bill and I went to his funeral where I saw her youngest brother, Mickey, a year younger than Bill, and the closest, at least in appearance to Grandpa Badger. Their brother Max died 10-12 years ago. Bill & Sylvia and Janet and I attended his funeral near Deep Gap in the NC mtns. Carolyn Head Richie was with Nancy and Ed at the reunion. Carolyn lost her husband Bruce some years ago. I'm FB friends with some of Mickey and Carolyn's children and with Nancy's daughter Becky. Mike, who lives in central Michigan and Pat, who lives on Widby Island, Washington, Aunt Jeannette's sons made a joint appearance a few years ago.

Aunt Eva Dell's sister, whose first name I don't remember, married a Mills and lived just a few houses down toward McClintock Jr Hi from us on Rama Rd. They have 4 daughters. I may later but can't this minute recall their names. Bill asked the oldest to dance at a sock hop at East Meck and he said she led and wouldn't relinquish the lead. The next in age was a year or two older than me and the youngest were twins, Harry's age. The daughter just older than me and one or both of the twins brought their mother one year. I hadn't seen any of them in many, many years. One of the twin's husbands is or was an operatic baritone. WOW, would I love to

hear him. (An aside; when we were all home, Dad, Mom and Bill, Harry and I all sang in the choir together at Matthews Baptist. Bill stills sings in the choir at Providence Baptist in Charlotte. Harry, a tenor, is by far the best vocalist of we 5. I can't count the times I heard Harry yell from the hall on Rama Rd, as I was vocalizing in the shower Nelson's Eddy's part in The Indian Love Song, which he sang as a duet with Jeannette McDonald or the musical version of Joyce Kilmer's poem, "Trees", or the matador song from Carmen, which was on one of the lp albums Mom bought in her attempt to culturize us, "Tom, you're flat!" I don't have much of an ear. When I sing now, which is seldom, I'm sure I'm still "pitchy" as one of the judges on the first American Idol used to say.

Dad moved from his dad's farm below Matthews when he was 25 to Atlanta in 1933 (why: see my story THANKSGIVINGS, HALF-BRO (?) JOE and MO on my website [have I mentioned it previously?; tomcaldwell.org]), married Mom at her Aunt Em's house in Charlotte on Thanksgiving Day, 1938 and took her to Atlanta, where they lived in half of a duplex they bought in Decatur until they sold it during the war and Mom and Bill, born in 1942 moved to Norfolk where Dad was stationed with the Navy. In the early 50's we drove in that black '49-51 Ford to Decatur to visit their neighbors and friends, the Webers, who we stayed with. We saw Stone Mountain, way cool, which was close by and the Cyclorama and zoo in Atlanta, where the chimps mooned us, turning their red rears right in our faces, which apparently they and definitely we thought was hilarious. It was winter and when we got back to the old, uninsulated house on Sharon Amity Rd in Charlotte which Dad and Mom rented from Mr Neal Craig, heated only by the Warm Morning stove in the main room in which we burned coal, the water pipes had frozen and burst.

Our next road trip, probably over Christmas and I think still in the Ford, was to Florida. I don't know when the first interstate highways were built but there weren't any from Charlotte to the Sunshine State. I remember that the roads we took ran right down the main street of most small towns. For some unknown reason, I remember that we went out Wilkerson Blvd, crossed the Catawba River on a narrow 2 lane bridge and drove down Main St in Gastonia. The first thing I remember about Fla was the palm trees. We felt like we were in an exotic tropical paradise! I started to say that I didn't know if Dad and/or Mom had previously been to Fla but I remembered Mom telling about the time she and toddler Bill took the crowded train from Decatur to Jacksonville to see Dad where I guess he was in Navy boot camp. Our first stop was St Augustine where we toured the old fort-super cool! Then on down to stop by Dad's cousin, who's name may have been Wallace (maybe Bill remembers his name) who either owned an orange grove or at least had some orange trees-also super cool! We were headed toward St Pete where Mom's sister, Bertie, the oldest of her siblings, and her husband Harvey Hatfield and their daughter Martha Ellen, between Bill and me in age, lived. That may have been the first time we had met her, or at least the first time in my memory and we loved her. She was a lot of fun and laughed at everything, even our corniness!

Tragically, Martha Ellen had cystic fibrosis, living longer than most but dying at, I guess, 13 or 14. If I remember correctly, when she died, Mom flew to St Pete and rode on the train with Aunt Bertie, Uncle Harvey and Martha Ellen's casket back to Charlotte. For some reason, I suppose because the train didn't come thru Charlotte, I got up early and drove with Dad to somewhere in SC, probably to Rock Hill where we picked up Mom, Aunt Bertie and Uncle Harvey. It seems like, but maybe I'm fantasizing that a hearse picked up Martha Ellen's casket and that we followed it to a funeral home in Charlotte. I don't think there was a funeral, maybe just a graveside service when our wonderful cousin was buried at the small cemetery in Matthews. It was probably the second funeral I had attended. A friend or neighbor died when I was maybe 5 or 6 and the casket was put in a drawer and pushed shut in the mausoleum at Sharon Memorial Park, where Dad and Mom, Uncle Frank

Caldwell, Uncle Jack and Aunt Virginia Caldwell and Uncle Don Caldwell are buried. Supposedly I said that I wouldn't want to be buried like that cause it would be hard to breathe. Precocious or its opposite?

On to St Pete where we stayed with Aunt Edna, the next oldest Beaty. I don't remember whether she had married who was to become my favorite non-blood uncle, Bill Pryor at that point. Hers was a small house and she asked we 3 rowdies to go out and play on the patio. Again, supposedly, I said "Patio, hunh, it's just a stoop!" I remember that the Hatfields lived in a 2 story stucco with an orange tile roof and I thought they must have been rich. Dad took Bill and me deep sea, if the Gulf is considered "deep sea" fishing on a crowded head boat. He fished with a rod and reel but Bill and I fished with a baited hook and sinker on a thin rope. Instead of reeling, we wound the rope around a big wooden spool as we pulled it across the edge of the boat, spraying us with cold gulf water. I don't remember catching any fish; we probably caught a cold! One more story about Dad and deep sea fishing which is way out of place chronologically but which I would probably forget to insert when I reach its proper place.

Dad and Mom were at the beach with my family and me when Tommy and Tim were too young to go deep sea fishing but Pop wanted to go, so he and I got up early, stopped somewhere for breakfast, where I think he had pancakes and got on another crowded boat at Little River, SC and headed out. It may have been a little choppy and several would-be fishermen tossed their breakfast up and over the gunwales of the boat, providing the fish with a breakfast of partially digested bacon and eggs. Dad made some comment about their inability to keep down their breakfast when he leaned over the side and added his pancakes to his fellow swabbie's bacon and eggs! I don't remember what he or I said after that. I don't remember catching any fish but if we did, we threw them back to let the salt water heal their sore mouths.

While I'm at it, one more fishing story with a positive spin. It may have been before Harry was married that he, Mom and Dad, Bill and his family and me and mine were all at the beach together and Bill Carr and his family were, too, staying nearby. Bill, Carr, that is, knew somebody with a big deep sea going fishing boat and arranged for him to take both Bills, Harry, me, Dad and Tommy, who was probably 8 or 9 out into deep water, otherwise known as deep sea fishing. Our main catch was some large amberjacks, which we returned to the deep because they weren't fit for human consumption but which provided a thrill for human fishermen trying to reel them in. We have a couple of black and white photos of Dad, wearing my First Baptist, Monroe softball cap and Tommy cranking away on their big reels hauling in those big jacks. Thank-you Reverend Doctor Colonel William B. Carr, Jr for the best fishing outing ever for all the Caldwell men except Tim and Will, who were too little in the britch, a term maybe invented by my Kiser cousins and used by them as the reason I couldn't do what they were doing when I was a youngin', and not yet born David! Priceless! The only thing that could have made it better is if my father-in-law Mac Tweed could have been with us. I have some other pretty good fishing stories, some including Mac, but they'll have to wait for a story about fishing because this one is about Planes, Trains and Automobiles.

On our way home from St Pete, we stopped somewhere in central Fla for our best adventure of the trip, riding in some spring fed lakes in a glass bottom boat and seeing Ross Allen (I think that was his name) milk the poison from the fangs of some poisonous, maybe rattlers, copperheads or even coral snakes! We were mesmerized! I can see it now and I'm still mesmerized!

Leaving Automobiles briefly, I'll relate my one and only Train story. Our 1st grade at Oakhurst rode the train to Gastonia, probably with the other first grade classes. I remember the trip only because Linda Haigler Marks, who I started school with in 1952 and graduated from East Meck with in 1964 communicated with me after reading my latest story, SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS, even sending photos of our 1st grade class at the fire station and mentioning the train ride. I don't remember (should ask her, she probably will) any details, such as where the train station was, what kind of car we rode in, who I sat beside (probably Rusty Abernathy or Jimmy Hinkel), what we had for or where we ate lunch. I seem to remember that some parents drove to Gastonia and we rode back to school in automobiles. They must not have had a roundtable in Gastonia or at least weren't going to turn that train around for a bunch of 1st graders! The only other time I remember being on a train was riding on Tweetsie with Janet and the boys at Beech Mountain, where TV cowboy Fred Kirby fought off some train robbers. Thanks, Fred, now long dead. May he RIP in Cowboy heaven (wonder if there's an Indian heaven-oh yea, it's called the Great Hunting Grounds). I further wonder if the Masked Man and Tonto get to see each other?

Let's see, where am I (I'm sure my readers love to hear about my writing idiosyncrasies, such as going several days, even weeks away from the keyboard, and where scrolling back to see what I've written is not fun and consequently rarely done, not to mention the rabbits I chase with long, highly punctuated, particularly with parentheses, brackets and squiggly bracketed syntax [enough said?])? Oh, yeah, finished Trains and now back to Automobiles. The next car I remember Dad (I say Dad because we only had one car and he drove it to work) owning was a '52, 3 or 4 Dodge, relatively dark green, not to be confused with the light green '55. Without a car in the early 50s when we lived on Sharon Amity, Mom and we kids did what country people without transportation did, we walked. The only shopping except for groceries at Elder's in Oakhurst was in downtown Charlotte and the closest bus to get there was also in Oakhurst, I would guess a mile from our house. Many a time did we 3, Bill 4 yrs older than me and Harry 2 yrs younger follow Mom the 200 yds to the railroad tracks, a half mile or more up the tracks to Richland Ave, and then the quarter mile or so up to Monroe Rd to downtown Oakhurst, where we caught the bus to the square in Charlotte, where she shopped for our clothes in Belk's basement and occasionally at Efirds, beside Belks on N Tryon if I remember correctly and sometimes across Tryon at Iveys. Lest I forget, years later Mom and her good friend, Lib Outen would help take inventory of the silverware and china once a year at Iveys. Other times, we took the bus downtown with Mom and sat in the audience for the TV, or was it just radio show, "What's Cooking?", which may have featured Betty Feezor, who later hosted a TV show, appropriately called, "The Betty Feezor Show" about cooking and other domestic how to's, Mom's favorite TV show which we 3 cowboys and Indian fans detested.

Oh, while I'm on Mom and TV, she loved watching, mainly listening to Kate Smith ("when the moon comes over the mountain"-I can hear her now, Kate that is, but also Mom singing along). Mom loved to sing, especially when she was cooking or canning in the kitchen. She had a good soprano voice and sang mostly hymns. I can also hear her now: "Farther along we'll know all about it, farther along we'll understand why, Cheer up my brother live in the sunshine, we'll understand it all by and by". Mom also was a pretty good pianist who could read the score or play by ear. She gave us lessons on our old upright, with a thin piece of cardboard stood up behind the keys designating what notes they played. We practiced till she left the living room on Sharon Amity and then we were out the front door, doing what boys do, playing ball, climbing trees, rasslin' and pushing each other on a homemade go-cart. You get the picture, fun stuff!

Mom's first car of her own was a black 4-door something, I don't think a Ford, maybe a Chevrolet with running boards and large front fenders, a Depression-era gangster car, probably a '38 or '39 which they bought from Aunt Louise, one of Grandpa Beaty's sisters, I think and her husband, Uncle Joe, who lived on or just off Tuckaseegee near Aunt Em, one of Grandma Beaty's sisters. I'll come back to Mom's car in a bit but this may be a good place to tell a little more about Mom and the Beatys. Grandpa William Badger Beaty was born and raised in the Paw Creek community, west of Charlotte, near the Catawba River which separates Mecklenburg from Gaston County and Grandma Nancy Ann Dunn was born and raised nearby. Aunt Em married an older Presbyterian minister named George Cook who founded Cook's Memorial Presbyterian Church, located on the Mt Holly-Huntersville Rd, also west of Charlotte where Grandpa and Grandma Beaty are buried along with Aunt Em and Rev Cook and other Beatys and Dunns. For some reason, son Tim was flying somewhere and had a several hour layover in Charlotte. Janet, her Dad, USMC Colonel, Retired McDonald (Mac) Douglas Tweed (have I mentioned him previously? If not, as the introduction to my website [have I mentioned it previously? If not, it's [tomcaldwell.org](http://tomcaldwell.org)] says, I wrote a memoir of him in either '16 or '17, the year after he died), who was living with us on our 62 acre farm outside Monroe after his wife, Janet's mother Mary had died, and I picked Tim up at the airport, grabbed a sandwich for lunch and visited the cemetery at Cook's Memorial, the first and last time Mac saw it and the first and probably last time Janet and Tim will visit it. I might go by again when I'm in Charlotte and feeling nostalgic. We used to have a rattlesnake rattle which we were told came off a rattler Uncle George Cook killed while riding his circuit on horseback. We kept it in a small matchbox in the top drawer of the desk with shelves above which were built on the pine paneled wall in mine and Bill's room at 2318 Rama Rd. He and I slept together from as early as I can remember until we were grown and gone to college or beyond, still sleeping together in our double bed when we returned to visit home and hearth!

Grandpa Badger had inherited some land where he was raised but wanted more and better, so he sold it and bought a farm outside Huntersville and moved his family there when Mom was little. Actually, as I'm typing this it occurs to me that I'm not sure where they were living when Mom was born on October 13, 1909, a year and a half after Dad was born on February 27, 1908 (his youngest of 11 siblings, twins Dot and Don were born Feb 27, 1930 and I was born on Dad's 38th and their 16th birthdays, Feb 27, 1946-how's that for coincidence?) in the Caldwell house on Matthews-Weddington Rd, just before reaching the Union Co line on some of the nearly 1,000 acres Grandpa Caldwell had acquired before he died in April, 1942 (Dad and Mom were living in Decatur, Ga and had come up for his funeral when Mom, great with child, her first, delivered William McKamie (Dad is Joe McCamey and Grandpa was John McCamey. For an explanation of why Bill's middle name is spelled differently from Grandpa's and Dad's, see my story, again on my website, THANKSGIVINGS, etc).

Back to the Beatys, Mom went with Bill&Syl (I'm retyping, making corrections after proofing [the original typing, i.e. writing hereof was several months ago and the proofing over a month ago {I've been busy}], consequently I don't know if I've previously introduced Bill's beautiful, tall and statuesque bride, Alabama born and bred, a graduate of that state's fine university [Roll Tide], and mother of ear, nose and throat doc and entrepreneur, son Will, father of twins, Annie and Cecilia {14, or maybe 15} and of daughter, Ruth, wife of Trevor and mother of Mae {8?}, Ruth the proprietor of "Ruth's Curiosities" whose wares are too expensive for me to be very curious about, Sylvia Ruffin [her maiden name-I don't know her middle name, but being Alabaman, probably something very southern, like Magnolia or country, like Maybelle or Fredonia] Caldwell-in case you're interested, I've just now been inspired to add this rabbit chase to Alabama and back and hope hereby to stay in Syl's good graces [I slipped, or almost slipped out a few months ago with an uncalled for poke at dear Sylvia's

politics but hope that if I did slip out that I've slipped back in]; with apologies to Kate Holmes Caldwell, Harry's wife and mother of their very talented children, Alexandra, wife of MD Mike and mother of Jo, David, husband of Katherine and father of Isabelle and Meredith, wife of MD Winston for a little over a year [I fell or almost fell out of Kate's favor when I posted some photos on Facebook of Kate and Harry's house, built in 1810 or 12 on 20 acres that front on and with a picture post-card view of Penobscot Bay in Deer Isle, ME, where Bill and I visited them in June, because Kate was concerned with identity theft which she had recently been the victim of; Kate told me how and I took the photos off FB; hope I'll be invited back some time. BTW, have I mentioned {if I have it's more than worth mentioning} that Harry has built, the first with a kit, the rest from scratch, a dozen or more wooden canoes, kayaks, skiffs {is that the correct name, Bro} and a small sailboat, having just finished a kayak for Mike's father, who has cancer and lives in Minnesota, whose university he is a graduate of, and which therefore the top of, the kayak that is, not the university Harry painted UofMinn Gopher dark red; WOW, another venture off the trail, but, though this story is about PLANES and TRAINS and AUTOMOBILES, not boats, I hope you will agree that the side trips were worth it]) and Janet and me to visit the farm off Ramah (another coincidence, Ramah/Rama) Church Rd outside Huntersville where we drove down the long gravel drive they walked or rode in their goat drawn wagon out to the paved road to get on the school bus. If the goat had a name, I don't remember it but Mom said that if you pointed him toward someone and pulled his tail, that that someone had better hi-tail it or get butted!

I think it was an ill-fitting pair of hand-me-down shoes that rubbed Mom's big toe, leading I guess to a sore which got infected, resulting in her having her big toe, I don't remember whether right or left, amputated. What a horrible thing to happen to a pretty 12 year old girl. She had trouble with that foot for the rest of her life, eventually having the next toe amputated as well, causing her to hunt continually for shoes that fit. Out of sequence but a hilarious story just occurred to me. In her later years, Mom always wore socks to bed in all but the warmest weather. She was spending a night or two at the house we'd built on 60 acres outside Monroe, which I think I've mentioned before, which had hardwood floors in all but the bathrooms. The bed in her room, which I think (maybe I'm doing too much thinking) had originally been hers, was a bit high. Janet and I had turned in when Mom yelled, "Tom" and I hurried through the living room, concerned that she was in distress of some kind, and she was, her distress being that she couldn't get into the bed because in her socks, she couldn't get any traction, she was just spinning her wheels. Tears of laughter are running down my cheeks as I type this! Which reminds me of another Memaw (that's what Janet and the boys called her) story, this one another bedtime story when we were growing up. We boys were in bed but not yet asleep when we heard Mom, in her bathroom with no lights on, spew Ben-Gay, mistaking it for the toothpaste tube out of her mouth. Tears are still streaming!

While I'm talking about Annie Louise Beaty Caldwell, my Mom, let me say, as I've said many times before and doubtless will many times hence, that she was the most creative and energetic person I've ever known. She made every inch of over 100 wedding cakes, and by every inch, I mean she even molded the sugar bells and did all the decorating by hand; oops, well, not quite every inch. If the couple wanted a bride and groom on the top, she bought a miniature happy couple to keep the full-sized couple happy. My first cousin, Mary Lynn, the oldest child of the oldest of Dad's siblings, Uncle Frank, having just graduated from Meredith College was on the cover of Ladies Home Journal in the spring of 1961, I think it was because the Journal wanted to feature a southern wedding, and Mary Lynn's marriage to Dan Morrill, newly graduated from Wake Forest and en route to Emory to earn his PhD in Russian history, was featured, one of the reasons most likely being that she was the spitting image of Jackie Kennedy. The 8-10 page spread included a photo of and the recipe for "Aunt



Louise's wedding cake" and the text included some of Mom's words from their writer's interview of her at our house on Rama Rd. Mom got "all dolled up" (her words, though she didn't use them in this context; I just did) and they photographed her as they did the cake, sitting on our dining table, which I sits in the kitchen of my small condo in Louisville, the table that is, not the cake, but she was a little "out done" (also her words, though again, she didn't use them in this context; again, I just did) when her photo wasn't in the magazine.

First cousin, Jackie Caldwell Ford, the oldest child of one of Dad's younger brothers, my Uncle Jack married Eddie Ford at 6:00 PM on September 18, 1965 at Commonwealth Presbyterian Church, then located in Charlotte at the corner of Commonwealth Ave and Independence Blvd but no longer standing as a result of changes at said intersection. I had dinner with Jackie, her sister Kay and 8 or 10 other cousins, most with spouses last week, Sept 27, 2022 at the Great Wall of China in Charlotte, one reason for the get together being that cousin Carol Alexander (one of the twin daughters, the other being Cathy Walker, fairly recently widowed after the sudden and untimely death of her husband, Ron, of one of Dad's twin older sisters, Vernon, who married Dwight Alexander, her twin being Aunt Verla, who married Wilkes Kiser) Crosby, visiting, without husband Dick, from their long time home in Alaska. [Not germane to this story but very germane to my sanity, I learned that Carol is an anti-Trumper, having learned her lesson after voting for him in '16, while I would say that some %age, I hope a minority of my Caldwell cousins are Trumpers {I'm afraid Carol's twin, Cathy and older sister Diane are} though also learning, quietly, that cousin, Kay and her husband Jim, Mack, I think their last name is, who live in Southern Pines are very progressive. My most liberal, maybe as liberal as me, and maybe therefore one of my favorite cousins is Ben Franklin, who with his wife Linda, always gracious, welcomed me to spend two nights with them, before they flew to Germany Monday to lead their Dreams To Go travel agency on a trip floating down the Danube River {I would have gone but for my colitis.}]).

The reason I remember the day, time and place of Jackie's wedding is because I played my first varsity football game, as a sophomore at Davidson College on Richardson Field at Davidson, where we skunked the Blue Hose of Presbyterian College 35-0. I had our longest run from scrimmage when I went 45 yds, if I remember the distance correctly, on a fake punt (you can read all about it and more than you'll want to know about my life in sports in my story, MY SPORTING LIFE). Dad and maybe Harry were at the game (Mom wasn't because she had made Jackie's wedding cake and was probably at the church getting ready for the reception, which she was handling) and after the game we drove to the church, where I was a groomsman at Jackie and Edd's nuptials. At the cousins gathering Jackie confirmed that the wedding was at 6 so I could be in it.

When talking about her wedding cake, Jackie told me something I don't think I ever knew: Mom made her wedding dress as well! She said that she and Mom made several trips to Montaldo's to check out their bridal offerings, then Mom made the pattern and stitched a mock-up before making the actual dress. I think she said she still has it. AMAZING! So glad Louise was my Mom, and glad that Jackie, who was the prettiest girl I knew growing up and is still as beautiful a 75+er as I know, is my first cousin! Unfortunately, Jackie lost Edd to, I think it was the flu a number of years ago and she has remained single all these years. Even today she would make some lucky guy a wonderful wife!

I last chased the above rabbits yesterday, Oct 5 at about 9:00 AM and this morning, at 5:15 AM, I'm trying to remember where I left the road. Oh, yes, I was telling about Mom's gangster car. As youngsters, Bill, maybe 9 or 10 and me, thus 5 or 6 had a paper route, not the typical route where kids delivered papers, just the opposite; we collected papers and magazines. I guess Bill dreamed up this unusual business venture, our

route to, if not fame, certainly fortune. We asked neighbors up and down Craig Ave and over on parallel Castleton to save their newspapers (the morning Charlotte Observer and the afternoon Charlotte News) and magazines (Look, Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Boy's Life) and we picked them up once a week in our little red wagon with side planks that Dad probably helped Bill build (I was, to use our Kiser cousins' term "too little in the britch" and if I was too little, Harry was way too little). Our wagon was piled high by the end of the route, one of us pulling it by its handle (tongue?) and the other trying to keep the papers from falling off. We stacked our haul on the little screened-in porch off the kitchen and when our pile of gold reached almost to the ceiling, we took the back seat out of Mom's car (we'd have her pull it around back near the porch) and loaded the trunk and where the back seat had been to the roof. I guess all 3 of us boys crammed in the front passenger seat and Mom would drive us uptown to the Chesapeake Paper Company near the train station off W Trade where our load was weighed and we were paid by the pound. It seems like we'd usually get \$4-5.

I've written about our venture somewhere before, probably in ENTREPRENEURSHIP in which I think I said that Bill was certainly the senior partner and me the junior, though I didn't remember our split but that Harry, a budding intellectual (Harry was small as a youngster and had flat feet and was too young to "join in any Reindeer", oops the Sharon Amity crew's games, but while Bill was letting me tag along, Harry read the World Book Encyclopedia [not sure, maybe Harry will remember when Mom & Dad bought them] from cover to cover, thus now being as well read a person as I know, while Bill grows beautiful plants and flowers in his backyard [I should call Southern Living to do a photo shoot at 2422 Ansley Ct in Charlotte but should tell them not to look in the garage where Bill's '31 A-model Ford coupe [more about it later] hasn't moved in close to 50 years, while I plug along on my Google Chromebook [my long time HP recently died or, I guess more accurately is on life support]). It's a good thing that Mom didn't charge us for gas or wear and tear on her Gangstermobile. I don't know when they got rid of her car, but it didn't make it to our new house Dad built at 2318 Rama Rd, which we moved into at Christmas, 1955.

Before I move from Sharon Amity to Rama, let me insert a couple of car stories, mostly about the Kisers (as usual, I don't know what I've already said and I probably won't correct errors when finished since I hate both proofreading and revisions, so please forgive any repetitions). Gene, Sid, Mickey, Mary Lou and Frankie (Ray?) were the children of Aunt Verla (I may have mentioned her earlier as the twin sister of Aunt Vernon Caldwell Alexander, 2nd and 3rd in age after the oldest, Uncle Frank [Dad was 4th] of the 12 Caldwells) and Wilkes Kiser, who (have I already talked about him?) killed himself while they were living in the Neal Craig house on Sharon Amity just after the suicide period in the life insurance policy that he, a life insurance salesman had taken out on himself, and Aunt Verla built a house on Windermere, a few blocks away with the \$5K insurance proceeds, and we moved into the Craig house when the Kisers moved to their new house, all probably sometime in 1948, maybe 9.

Mom said that every time we heard tires squeal, we'd yell "Gene Kiser". Aunt Vernon's oldest, cousin David told me recently about Gene working on a race car that he planned to run at Darlington, of course not in the Southern 500 but in something of less distance and distinction. Gene asked David, visiting the Kisers on Sharon Amity, if he wanted to take a little spin in his race car. David said they were sideways almost to the big curve at Mr Neal Craig's house! Bill says he was riding with Frankie one night down Sharon Amity, probably going from Monroe Rd toward Cotswold since it's downhill and as they approached the railroad tracks, Frankie didn't slow up (way before crossing arms) but cut his lights off. When Bill asked him why he cut the lights off, he answered, "to see if a train's coming!" Once Uncle Don, who with his twin Aunt Dot were the 11th and 12th

of the 12 Caldwells, visited us on Sharon Amity and left his car in neutral without putting the parking brake on when he came into the house. It must have started very slowly, or he would have noticed but his car rolled down the slightly sloping toward the street gravel drive and ended up in the Swofford's yard across the street!

The next car I remember was the light green 1955 Dodge with an automatic transmission, which Dad drove to work. Mom's replacement for her old car may have been the 1950 (?), also light green, straight drive Studebaker, which burned about as much oil as gas. We'd buy oil for it at Sears by the 5 gallon drum. To sexy it up, Bill got an aerosol can of yellow paint and sprayed the wheels. He must have taped the tires. Sexy indeed! A babe magnet, Bill?

Dad traveled every other week, his partner the other, leaving Monday morning and often not getting home till supper time on Friday, to call on his customers throughout the Carolinas, even crossing into western Va and, at least once, WVa. He took me along on two trips, the first time the Va/WVa trip. I don't remember how long we were gone but I had a ball. We stayed in "tourist" homes, usually the large house of a widow who let tourists and traveling salesmen and their little boy stay in the rooms, usually upstairs and served breakfast and dinner around her dining room table, family style. I guess we stayed in a small town in Va, but large enough to have a minor league or maybe semi-pro baseball team which we went to see play one night, my first "real" baseball game, not to say, Bill, that y'all's' games at Mayer's Field (see MY SPORTING LIFE ) were "unreal"! We drove over Big Walker Mountain (there's a tunnel through it now) to Bluefield, WVa. Bill, maybe you can help me here; it seems like Dad used to tell the story of someone, maybe him, driving a truckload of lumber down a mountain somewhere and losing either his steering or brakes. Do you, or maybe even Harry remember that story? Dad's stories may make a story of its own one of these days!

I don't know what we drove on that trip but the second trip I took with Dad was down into SC, maybe to Florence and Marion, or that area and he drove that '55 Dodge. We were driving down a long stretch on a two lane road with little or no traffic, spanish moss, probably the first time I'd ever seen it hanging from the trees, and for some reason (I may have asked how fast the Dodge could go), Dad floored it! I want to say that he got it up to 95! I remember the rows of cotton, perpendicular to the road, whizzing by in a blur. Did I have a cool dad or what? We stopped to see one of his customers, Jesse Warr, who I remember because of his name-I didn't know any other Warr's, or even any other Jesse's, for that matter (HA! Get it?). I also seem to remember that he bought me a Coke at a drugstore soda fountain, maybe the first fountain drink I'd ever had, though, as I think about it, I may have had my first at Woolworth or Kresses on the square in downtown Charlotte when Bill and I would take the Sharon Coach bus to downtown on Saturday mornings (can you believe that I have procrastinated so long that I'm typing revisions hereto on Dec 28th at 6:00 AM in my 1 BR, actually just a hotel room, at the Litchfield Inn at Litchfield Beach, SC, and I don't remember what I've talked about herein, in other words, I may have already told about our Saturday morning ventures to town, but if not herein, then I have in some of my previous stories, an incentive, I feel sure to anyone who has read this far to read the others, HA!). I remember thinking that Dad was glad I was along. He seemed to enjoy introducing me to his customers. I always hated when Dad was gone, traveling and couldn't wait till he got home. He worked at the wholesale household goods store he started, Imperial Sales, originally, changed to Imperial Mfg and Sales after they (he originally partnered with Curtis Walker and later, Bob Hutchison) began making chenille bedspreads. I think I incorporated Imperial after I started practicing law. Dad worked every Saturday till noon and I couldn't wait till he got home. My eyes are moistening as I recall those halcyon days of my youth. I hope my 2 sons remember their growing up years as happily as I do mine!

I guess Mom took over the '55 Dodge when Dad bought his first Cadillac, used, of course, as he couldn't afford a new one, a green '56 if I'm remembering right. Mom was driving the Dodge, I think with Grandpa riding with her and had what must have been a pretty scary collision. I don't remember where, when or its details. Fortunately, I don't think Mom or the Badger, you know, like the Beaver on Leave It To Beaver, were hurt. Dad had the totalled car towed home. Our house on Rama had a one-car garage and I think it sat in there for quite a while. Bill was getting interested in cars about then and the thought crossed my mind that maybe he could fix it and it could be his/ours to take the place of the Studebaker, but it was way beyond repair, and didn't stay in the garage long before Dad got rid of it. In fact, that garage sheltered very few newer cars because Bill, inspired by his then girlfriend Elaine Baker's uncle, Ed Stanley and his perfectly restored A-model Ford roadster pickup, got bit by the A-model bug and that garage became his, with me again as his junior partner's workshop, housing the two-door A-model sedan, I don't remember its year, but it had to be a '28-'31, the only years the A was built, on which we worked for years doing a body-off complete restoration. I may come back to it later.

I don't remember for sure what replaced the Dodge, maybe the 4-door white 1960 Chevy Impala with an automatic transmission. When Chevrolet introduced the Impala, it immediately became a sexy hit, that is if it was a 2-door, 4 in the floor with fender skirts and white walls. Ours was on the other end of the sexy scale, BUT, it was an Impala! Bill and Harry, did ours have white or black walls? I don't remember us taking any trips in it but maybe we drove it on our second visit to Fla, which I think was in the summer of '60, to where else, St Pete. This time, rather than staying with Aunt Edna, who may or may not have been married at that time (Uncle Bill Pryor had died and this may have been before she remarried), we rented a small apt right on the Gulf in Clearwater, just north of St Pete. This time it was Harry and I who went fishing with rods and reels in, I guess it was Tampa Bay. Dad dropped us off with some bait and we caught a few small ones. Some joker came by and saw our catch and asked if he could have our "little panfish" for bait. Ticked us off! The other rememberable (if that's not a word, it should be) from that trip was Bill, 18, meeting a cute girl named Gidget. Somewhere someone has some black and white photos from that trip, one including me, 14, 6', probably 135-40#'s, looking cool in my white sox and T-shirt, or maybe it was a short-sleeved shirt with the sleeves rolled up a couple of turns. One other rememberable: Dad was napping on the couch and Mom asked me to wake him for lunch. I shook his shoulder and he jumped as he woke and kicked me in the butt. He must have been having some dream, from which he was either very glad or very sad to be roused from!

Before we leave Fla, there's one other story I almost had forgotten. I think it was on this 1960 trip rather than the earlier one, though if the later one, I don't know why Harry wasn't along. Dad, for reasons unknown to me then and now knew a guy in Tampa who made beer commercially and he took Bill and me over to his brewery. There was a tall metal vat with a ladder welded up the side and he asked us if we wanted to climb up and see beer being made in the vat. Bill climbed up first and peered over the side and I followed. Shortly thereafter Bill whispered to me that he'd spit in the vat and I whispered back that I had, too! After all, it was the devil's brew which the Southern Baptists steered us away from with the admonition that you'll never become an alcoholic if you don't take the first drink. I wished they had warned us of the dangers of smoking. I got hooked on nicotine, smoking up to 2 packs of Winstons/day when I was practicing law, but gave them up over 20 years ago. Thankfully alcohol wasn't as addictive for me. I took one sip of champagne at an after prom party my senior year in high school and nary another drop till almost the end of my sophomore year in college. Now I enjoy 1

New Castle Ale before or with dinner, which I drink in a frosted mug in which I put a few cubes of ice to keep my brewsky good and cold, the only way I'll drink it.

It's 6:15 AM on Sunday morning, October 9, 2022 at 2246 Rutherford Wynd in Louisville, Ky, where it's presently 39 degrees. I turned the heat up to 70 and have a space heater 2.5 feet from my feet, so I'm toasty and comfy in my favorite tweed covered armchair. I'm telling you this for several reasons: 1) I'm sure you readers want to be sure your writer is comfortable, as your writer wants to be sure you, the readers are comfortable as well, as you read this (hope you're in bed or a recliner or some good place to doze off since, as I say in the intro to my website, which may be where you discovered this long-winded discourse on the modes of transportation first, as on this very page, the Joe & Louise Caldwell family and later of the Tom & Janet Caldwell family and who knows, maybe even others, is sure to put you to sleep), 2) I want you to know that I'm up early so I can bring this story to you ASAP as I know many of you are anticipating it with bated (it is "bated" instead of "baited", isn't it?) breath, and 3) so I can tell you that I took off, from writing, that is, yesterday and therefore am having trouble remembering where I am in this journey by PLANE, TRAIN and AUTOMOBILE. Oh, here I am in our white 1960 4-door Chevy Impala, possibly with blackwall tires in Clearwater Beach, Fla where Dad took Bill and me to the brewery in Tampa, either before or after he kicked me in the rear!

Didn't I mention Dad's Cadillac(s) earlier? I think his first was a used, of course '56, the first car he'd/we'd had with power windows and door locks. His justification for a Cadillac was that it drove smoother on those twice monthly sales trips he was still taking. Somewhere someone has a black and white photo of Dad washing his Caddy on which Mom wrote the caption "even a man with a Cadillac has to wash it!" I loved riding in such a luxury car but was a little embarrassed when we drove it to church, particularly if we parked beside old Mr & Mrs Culp's old pickup. Were we being a little uppity? I wonder if Dad's then partner Bob Hutchison bought a Caddy too? Then Dad traded his first Cadillac for a second, also green, '57, with even cooler features. That was his last Cadillac. I don't know what he traded it for, maybe the goldish brown Oldsmobile, about which you will hear more later.

For some reason Dad got on a Ford and Mercury kick. WAIT, Wait, wait, I almost forgot that before his Ford Motor Co adventure, he ventured into Nash-Rambler territory. We had a light green Nash sedan which I guess Mom drove. I don't think we had it long and thus I don't remember much about it because he traded it for a NEW 1960 deep red, almost maroon Rambler station wagon. I guess it was the summer after Bill graduated from East Meck in 1960 that we Caddwells felt the call of the wild. We borrowed a tent and some other camping equipment from Clyde and Wilma Swofford, who we went to church with. Clyde was a math teacher at East and Wilma taught me algebra at McClintock Jr Hi. Clyde's brother, was it Lewis or Jake was principal at Matthews and he and his family lived across Sharon Amity from us. They had 3 children. I think Lena, a year older than me, married Richard (?) Gordon, who became an assistant DA in Charlotte, and she had two brothers, Bobby and Donnie. I think I'm right that one of the boys was chairman of the chemistry dept at Wake Forest and died several years ago.

We crammed all of the Swoffords' camping gear, and, knowing Mom, at least some tomatoes from the garden in the back of that Rambler wagon and we three boys, plus Bill's girlfriend at the time, the aforementioned Elaine Baker crammed in the back seat. Actually, I think Harry and I took turns lying on the tent behind the back seat. I don't remember whether the Rambler had a roof rack and, if so, whether we tied anything up on the roof. We camped a night or two at Smokemont Campground, just outside of Cherokee, NC, the jumping off

point to the Smokies, The Great Smoky Mountain National Park, that is. The tent was large enough to hold all 6 of us. We didn't have sleeping bags. We put folded quilts on the floor for a little, very little padding and covered with sheets and blankets. I'm sure Mom was in charge of the sleeping arrangements. Elaine slept at one end, beside Mom, then Dad, Harry, me and then Bill. We probably slept in our clothes! We could hardly sleep for the bears coming through camp, turning over garbage cans looking for food, which we stuck our heads out of the tent to see.

The darnedest bear story from that trip, though, was along a rather crowded road with wide grassy areas to pull off to picnic, maybe the Blue Ridge Parkway. We were driving slowly, maybe looking for a pull-off ourselves when we saw an older man and woman who had pulled their right new Buick off and had gotten their picnic basket from the trunk, ready to enjoy a nice, leisurely lunch that they'd packed. But before they took a bite, a medium sized black bear ambled out of the woods and decided to join them. He had reached in their basket and found and was eating a delicious pimento cheese (I guess it could have been egg salad or maybe even bologna) sandwich, while the couple had scooted around to the front of their Buick where the man was beating the heck out of his shiny hood with a big stick trying to scare the interloper off. Gosh, I wish we'd had cell phones in those days-what a video that would have made!

NEWS BULLETIN; This just in! Harry facetimed me yesterday afternoon from his home in Severn Park, Md where he and Kate had arrived yesterday, each driving a car which they had at their beautiful house built in 1810 on 20 acres right on with a gorgeous view of Penobscot Bay in Deer Isle, ME, where they summer and where Bill and I drove to after flying into Portland about a month ago for a delightful several day visit, the only negative aspect being that there wasn't enough wind to sail in their, what Harry (?),24' sailboat anchored in the Bay, just off their shore. He said they took their time coming south, spending the first night at Franconia Notch, New Hampshire, then driving across Vermont to meet a friend who just built a house on Lake Champlain, near Burlington. He said the traffic coming from NY to see the New England fall leaves was backed up for miles and was the worst he'd ever seen as they came through Delaware to cross the Chesapeake Bay bridge to Annapolis, with tailgaters just waiting to pass at 80+ mph. I told him I knew the feeling, having recently driven I-26, on my way to my condo at Litchfield Beach, SC, from Asheville to Hendersonville where they are widening both the southbound and northbound lanes, meaning the lanes are narrowed with concrete barriers which your my '04 Tundra seemed to be almost brushing, half the traffic being tractor trailers. I'm going back to the beach in a week or two and will drive however far out of my way that I have to in order to avoid that stretch.

Well, the reason for my writing here about Harry's call is that I was telling him about this story. He confirmed that the trip to the brewery was on the '60 Fla trip because he was along on it and, without my mentioning her, that a cute girl named Gidget was also with us. Bill and I must have boasted about our using the beer vat as a spittoon because he remembered us telling about it. Harry may not have climbed the ladder. If he did, he must not have expectorated into the brew, or if he did, he's not talking. Unlike me, Harry knows when to keep his mouth shut.

Back to our mountain camping trip, the one and only time all of us, or is it "we"(?) Caldwells slept on the ground together. We drove into Smoky Mtn Nat Pk as far as Clingman's Dome, where we parked in the lot and started up. Dad didn't make it. He developed chest pains and shortness of breath, the first signs of his heart problems that would eventually end his life on December 10, 1989 at 81 years of age. One other incident, which may or

may not have been on this trip, was when we stopped to get a closer look at Toxaway Falls on US 64 west of Brevard. I slammed the door on Dad's fingers. Ouch! He should have booted me for that!

Let me wind the clock back a little before we leave the mountains. Several times on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon we'd drive to Lake Lure and Chimney Rock and the Hickory Nut Gorge. It cost to go up to the Rock by elevator, so we never went up, but we had a ball jumping from rock to boulder in the stream that carried the water going over the falls down to Lake Lure. Mom always brought sandwich fixings, usually delicious tomatoes from the garden and it seems like I remember fried chicken, which, to me, is just as good cold as hot! Maybe it was on one such Saturday trip that Dad stopped by to see a customer/friend (most all of Dad's customers became his friends) and there was a pretty steep hill beside his house. Bill, Harry and I climbed up it and started running down, only to discover our brakes didn't work very well. I think we eventually tumbled to the ground and rolled to a stop in the ditch where the hill ended at the road. I've never run down that steep a hill since. I guess I'm a pretty fast learner, particularly when pain is involved! I've always said that if I'm found dead and there is a question as to whether I've done myself in, if pain was involved in my demise, then there's a murderer walking around!

I guess Mom drove that Rambler because I think Dad had his Cadillac by then. But, as I mentioned above, he got on this Mercury kick, buying a black 4-door Comet, a straight drive with about 20 HP. Once I was driving it to the beach with probably Harry and Bill Carr on a Friday. We were getting close to Little River, going along a long straight stretch with swamp on both sides of the road, and it had gotten dark. I decided to pass some speed limit abider and had plenty of room to get around him, that is if I'd been driving something with more than 20HP. I had it floored and just got back in our lane before we were turned into memories, statistics, by an on-coming tractor trailer. WHEW!!! I still remember it, vividly. Reminds me of the joke: "I want to died peacefully like my grandpa, not screaming in terror like his passengers!" I don't know which would have won a race, that Comet, so inappropriately named or Bill Carr's Carolina blue Falcoon, to which I've intentionally added an "o"! They both probably came off the same assembly line, or at least sported the same 20 HP engine!

I guess Dad traded the V, oops, Comet (did you get it; Comet rather than Vomet [yes, yes, I know how to spell VOMIT]) for a bigger and more powerful inhabitant of the Mercury solar system, a white, 4-door automatic Meteor, the automobile of my boy to man, or at least older boyhood. I've written before about us pulling the hulk of a boat named, and also the name of my story "THE BEST YET", which can be found on my website (am I advertising it too much?), where I backed the Meteor into Lake Wylie in order to dislodge the battleship until there were a couple of inches of water in the back floorboard and the exhaust pipe was blowing bubbles. In the fall of 1963, my senior year at East, I drove it to Winston-Salem at the invitation of the coaching staff of Wake Forest to see its opening game against VPI, losing and extending its record longest losing streak in major college football, and again to Winston to see the Demon Deacons end the streak by beating South Carolina at homecoming, to which Bill Carr, who I told the assistant coach who was recruiting, and I use that term loosely, me that he was our QB and was thinking about walking on at Wake, came with me to spend Friday night in a fraternity house (at Wake, a section of the dorms, where, unlike at Davidson, distilled spirits added to the Homecoming spirit and where, also unlike at Davidson, females added both spirit and flesh to the festivities), meal tickets to eat in the cafeteria and 50 yd lines seats at the game (Willie [Carr], is this my longest sentence so far, at least in this story?).

I also drove it to Chapel Hill, hauling John Lagana, John Corne, and Martin Brackett, at the invitation of the UNC coaching staff to see the Tar Heels, with All-American tailback Ken Willard and end Bob Lacey whip up on the Wolfpack of NC State, led by running backs Joe Scarpati and Tony Kozarsky (can't believe I remember those names). I've written about this trip before (not sure, but it may be on my website), about the fact that the only player Carolina was after was Lagana and we 3 teammates were invited I guess to keep him company, and the fact that Lagana, one of 5-6 nominees, me being one, from East for the Morehead Scholarship was one of two recipients thereof from Mecklenburg Co despite John's having told them all along that he was going to Ga Tech and play for Bobby Dodd. GEEZ! I lost a lot of respect for UNC and the Morehead, not that John wasn't deserving, though he wasn't as deserving as some other nominees, not necessarily moi.

And I'm sure I must have driven it on dates my senior year at East, even to the prom where I took Dianne Holt, who I'd been dating all year. Mom drove the Meteor to take me and my belongings to Davidson College 10 days or so before I began my freshman year for preseason football practice and she loaned it to me for Homecoming weekend to drive to pick up Dianne at High Point College on Friday and to take her back on Sunday afternoon. I guess she, Dad and Harry shared Dad's car that weekend, though Dad may not have been driving much because he had had a heart attack just before I left for college, which almost caused me to delay beginning school, but I went on time after he and Mom convinced me that he and they would be fine and besides, there wasn't much, if anything that I could do except maybe cut the grass and plant their turnip green patch, both of which I guess Harry took care of.

Mentioning Dad's heart attack scared up a rabbit out of the briarpatch and I can't resist chasing him a bit. When he had his, all they could do was put him in the hospital for a few days, give him aspirin and tell him to rest and not worry. If he lived, he lived. If he died, he died! About 15 years ago Bill got a physical and on the advice of his son Will, like my son, Tim, who I think is only a day or two older, a Davidson grad and now an ear, nose and throat doc, Will, that is, not Tim, who's an associate high school principal, asked and paid for because I don't think his then insurance would, a calcium test, resulting in Bill having quadruple by-pass surgery. Actually, I can peg the date fairly closely because Sylvia drove Bill, not long after his surgery and herself, obviously, to a surprise 60th birthday party I gave for Janet at our cabin in the Ledger community, halfway between Spruce Pine and Bakersville in the NC mtns. Janet's birthday is Sept 4 and she was born in 1947, so that would have been in early Sept, 2007.

I had a heart attack in late summer, 2002 and had a couple stents put in. If I remember correctly, I had a later spell and got another stent. In 2010 I was feeling fine but Janet mentioned that I hadn't been to the cardiologist lately, so I went and saw a young Dr Honda, a far easterner, Indian I presume, new to the Sanger Clinic, started in Charlotte by, or at least Dr Frances Robichek was instrumental in its founding (for more about him and my heart, see MY SPORTING LIFE on my website), with offices in the hospital in Monroe after it was absorbed by Charlotte Memorial, predecessor of Carolinas Healthcare Systems ("CHS"), predecessor of what is now Atrium, that is unless they've changed names again. Doc Honda suggested that since I hadn't had one recently that I have a stress test, which I flunked. The next thing I know, I'm in old Mercy Hospital, which had also been gobbled up by CHS being readied for a heart cath, after which the cardiologist who had looked in my heart told me the heart surgeon would be by to see me that afternoon, which he did, informing me that I would have to have a double by-pass, which I did a week later, after I'd lain in the hospital bed for a week to get the blood thinner I was taking out of my system (they wouldn't let me go home for fear I would die or something worse, and thus further fearing a lawsuit-I don't know if they knew that I was a retired lawyer). The doc who



performed my surgery's last name was spelled Stegall, which he pronounced Stegel (the first "e" being long), had attended East Meck but graduated from Independence, and then NC State, his attendance at all of which I kiddingly suggested disqualified him in MY mind to crack MY chest, until he told me that he'd gone to med school at Carolina, but what really cinched him for me was when I found out, I guess my cardiologist told me, I'm sure he didn't that he had done Jerry Richardson, the Carolina Panthers' then owner's heart transplant.

So much for my heart history. Now where was I (it's Friday morning, Oct 15 and I've been dilatory, not having hit a key the last couple of days! Oh, yeah, the Meteor. This is probably a good time to tell about the 1931 A-model Ford coupe, black of course, with a trunk rather than a rumble seat which Dad bought for Bill for, he thinks, \$550 from some Flowes across Monroe Rd from the McAteer's Do Drop In convenience store, before 7-11's on the way in to Matthews. Bill thinks he was 18 at the time which means the A would have only been 29. Bill's now 80, so the A must be 91. It sits in Bill and Sylvia's one car garage and hasn't moved in 50 years. Bill & Syl have 3 granddaughters, son Will's twin 14(?) year old enthusiastic horse riders, Annie and Cecilia and Mae, Ruth's 7(?) year old enthusiastic domestic and foreign traveler, none of which seemed destined to be antique car enthusiasts. Bill, I would loan you my 20 yr old car enthusiast grandson Sam, who's already bought and sold 5 cars, but he's mainly into speed and style, both of which your A is short on. Bill thinks we, no, he, well, maybe Dad, no, as I think about it, probably Bill, since he'd been bagging groceries at the Winn-Dixie in Amity Gardens shopping center for probably 2 years or more bought the 2-door A-Model sedan which resided in our one car garage on Rama Rd for, I'd guess, at least 2, maybe 3 or longer years. You'll have to ask Bill where he got it and what he paid for it. I was 14 when Bill left for State in 1960 so I guess his '31 coupe just sat behind the house until I could drive in Feb, '61. Actually, Dad tore down the masonry portion of the Warner house that he and Mom bought shortly after we moved into our new house on Rama Rd around Christmas, 1955 and into which, the Warner place, that is Grandpa and Grandma Beaty moved shortly thereafter, after Grandpa (I've mentioned Grandpa Badger and Grandma Nancy before, haven't I, and that Grandma died before Grandpa) died about '62 or 3 and moved the frame portion that had been added onto the masonry part of the old Warner house back to the edge of the garden, near Uncle Jack and Aunt Virginia's and added a lean-to carport to it. Somewhere there's a color photo of Bill, Harry and me, at I'd say about 22, 16 and 18, looking more like hoodlums than choirboys, standing in front and leaning on the fender of Bill's A backed under the carport. Bill remembers driving his A to Raleigh to summer school after his sophomore year, usually adding a quart of oil at the Blue Mist drive-in in Asheboro, going or coming. I drove it to East my junior and senior years and Harry drove it after that. I've written, probably in SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS about Amy Griscom's (may she RIP) head bouncing off the headliner when we crossed the tracks at Rama, NC!

I don't know what replaced the Meteor. Dad bought Bill just before his senior year at State, or maybe for his graduation therefrom, a yellow 2-door Corvair, a cool new sporty Chevy model, with bucket seats and 3, or was it 4, Bill, in the floor. It was fun to drive, too much fun! Right after his graduation with a degree in textile chemistry, Bill took a job with Chatham Mfg in Jonesville, NC, on the Yadkin River, which separates J'ville and Elkin. He was driving his new car with a date on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bill was then and still is a little heavy with his right foot, resulting in the Corvair's (the Corvair was the main character in Ralph Nader's book, UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED, which ushered in the last 50 years' continuing efforts to improve car safety) failure to make it around a curve, thus causing it to flip over, trapping one of Bill's legs underneath and throwing his date out the shattered back glass. She was unhurt. I don't remember the details of Bill's predicament, such as how long he lay there with the car on his leg, who and how he was rescued, whether an ambulance came or who took him and how long it took to get him to the hospital. He, or someone called home. It seems like it was

on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and, if I recall correctly, Dad, Mom, Harry and I hi-tailed it up there and I think brought Bill home, either with a brace on his leg or one was put on in Charlotte. I don't know how long he wore the brace, how he got back to Jonesville or how long he was out of work. His leg recovered fully, thankfully. I think his Corvair was repaired.

Bill was drafted by Uncle Sam after a year at Chatham. I would have been in my freshman or sophomore year in college. A short aside, fairly early one Sunday morning in my freshman year, Bill knocked on my and my roommate Martin Brackett's door on 2nd floor East Dorm at Davidson, early enough that we were still in bed. I showered and got dressed and we were in Matthews, I think in time for Sunday School, certainly for church. Bill was continuing to show me what big brothers are for! I guess it was in the summer after my freshman year that I drove the Corvair every weekday to work and knocking around on the weekend. Dad and I changed its oil and I either forgot to screw the oil filler pipe cap on or didn't screw it on tight enough. I don't remember how I discovered my error; maybe a low oil pressure light came on, but when I raised the trunk lid (the engine was in the back), oil was on everything. I don't think it caused any engine damage. I don't remember the Corvair's final disposition. When Bill got back from Vietnam and out of the Army, he bought a sweet car, a brand new light green Buick Skylark, and before starting work at Celanese in Charlotte, he drove it to Arkansas and he and his best friend from the Army, Ken Carpenter took a 3 week or more road trip west, getting, I think as far as Las Vegas, where if I remember from his telling, they pitched their tent in a park! Caldwell/Beaty and probably Carpenter frugality!

It's Monday morning. I rested, from story-telling that is (I played 9 holes of golf yesterday afternoon at the hilly course at the Lincoln Homestead State Park golf course about 15 miles SE of Bardstown, KY, and liked to have frozen from the cool, windy overcast weather, but at least the course wasn't crowded) on the Sabbath and had to scroll up to see that I left Bill and Ken Carpenter in Vegas. I guess it's time to tell about my first car, a dark blue, bordering on purple 1965 Volvo 544 four cylinder with bucket seats, at least they were separate if not actually buckets with a long handled gear shift in the floor to shift through I think just 3, not 4 forward gears. Bill's Army friend, seems like his name was Eric Beva, maybe Bill will remember, drove it up from Ft Bragg where he was stationed before shipping out overseas to our house on Rama. Despite his showing me and Dad how the backs of the front seats could be lowered back into a sleeping or whatever one does in such a position, Dad bought it for me. I don't remember how much he paid for it; seems like maybe \$2500. It was the summer before my junior year in college. I loved that car! It had fenders like Mom's old gangster car and the back came down like a 1948 Ford.

That summer I dated a girl from Matthews who I finished East with but who I didn't know till Bill Carr introduced us, named Jean Stephens. One Saturday we drove the Volvo to Blowing Rock. I've written about this in some other story but it needs to be retold here to put things in proper historical sequence. I met my wife of 55 years, Janet, who won't be my wife for much longer as our divorce is pending, at the end of my sophomore year. Jean came, I'm not sure how, maybe Bill Carr brought her to our opening football game in Sept, '66 at Davidson and I took her to my fraternity's party afterwards, where I saw Janet who was dating one of my frat bros. I don't remember whether it was that night, when I drove her home to Matthews or later that I told her that I was going to resume my pursuit of Janet. She literally threw my 8x10 photo, which she had asked for, at me on the way out her front door. I've only seen Jean once more in my life. A couple of years later, when I was in law school in Chapel Hill, Janet, 1 yr old Tommy and I were visiting my folks for Christmas. We were with Dad and/or Mom,

pushing Tommy in a stroller in Charlottetown Mall and Jean walked past us in the opposite direction. Our eyes made contact but neither of us stopped or even acknowledged seeing the other.

Janet nicknamed my Volvo Farfel for the dog in the Nestles' commercial who, after the jingle "N E S T L E S, Nestles make the very best", says "Chaaklet". She had learned to drive a stick shift in the VW bug her father had bought for her and her brother to drive in high school, so she didn't have any trouble driving Farfel after we were married, BUT, I should have given her instruction on how to close the trunk lid, or, as Mom used to call it, the "cooter shell". When the lid was raised, a catch automatically held it open. To lower it, you raised the lid slightly and the catch released and you could lower and close it. The first time Janet drove it, to the grocery store in Mooresville after we had eloped and moved into a small brick house just north of Davidson, she tried to force the lid down without lifting it and releasing the catch, thus springing the hinges on the lid which kept its top edge from seating properly. I never did get it fixed. Potentially worse, Janet stalled on the RR tracks in Mooresville with a train coming, thankfully slowly, thus allowing her to crank it back up, escaping the fate of Lona Evans, the wife of ob/gyn doc, Dr Dave Evans, friends and fellow church members in Monroe who failed to stop for a faster moving train and was killed instantly, some 40-45 years ago.

We drove Farfel throughout my senior year in college and 3 years in law school. We drove up to Va Beach to visit Janet's folks (I've mentioned them before haven't I, the Tweeds, then Col USMC McDonald ("Mac") D and Mary M) in, of course, the Volvo. The radio wasn't working. I pulled it in the garage to get out of the hot sun and, lying on my back, trying to keep from being impaled on its gear shift stick or hand brake handle, I finally figured out that a wire had come loose and would have to be soldered back in place. Just as I crawled out, Mac drove up from work in uniform, I guess a short sleeve Marine tan shirt and black tie and asked what I was up to. I told him, and that I would need a soldering iron to reconnect the wire, and he said to let him take a look. 10-15 minutes later, he crawled out, shirt saturated in sweat, and announced that a wire had come loose and would need to be soldered back on! Mac later bought a Volvo station wagon, which he loved and gave to Tim with I don't know how many, at least 100K miles on it, who put I have no idea how many more on it before handing it off to his step-son Tai, then probably 17-18, who drove it till it died, maybe aided in its demise by the weight of trash and 99% of Tai's belongings it was hauling around. I think Tim said they sold it to a guy who restored Volvo's and he breathed new life into it. Mac bought a used Volvo sedan for his granddaughter, Jennifer, who had a wreck in it. I think he bought her another one. I wish I was driving Farfel today, sprung cooter shell and all! Man, would I get a lot of stares!

I skipped over planes, for which I've got to go back to 1965. That spring, a dude named Frank Hall on my freshman dorm hall who nobody liked very much, a spoiled rich kid from Belmont who drove (I don't know where he kept it, freshmen weren't supposed to have cars) a new Corvette asked me to ride with him to Fla for spring break, and though I wasn't fond of him either, what the heck, a free ride to sunny Fla. I'd never ridden in a Vette before and didn't realize that it would beat you to death! We pulled into a restaurant parking lot in Daytona at about 9:00 PM on Saturday night, only to discover that Davidson's spring break was a week behind most colleges, whose kids had come and gone the previous week, leaving as tourists mostly sailors whose ship had come in. We had just gotten out of the car and here comes a cop chasing a drunk with a bottle of liquor in his hand. The cop tackled him onto the back of Frank's Vette and the bottle broke into a million pieces on the asphalt. As he's putting the cuffs on the culprit, the cop tells us to pick up the glass from the bottle, and to our as vociferous as we dared protests, he responded "do you want me to run you in, too?". We picked up the glass!

The next morning, Frank took me out to the Interstate so I could thumb across the state to St Pete to spend the week with Aunt Nig (have I mentioned Mom's youngest sister, Jeannette, who married Chicago Catholic Murphy Hughes at Ft Jackson, SC where she was working and he was stationed just after WWII, getting her nickname because she loved to play with the black sharecroppers' kids when she and they were young), Mike and Pat, with free food and lodging. A guy picked me up driving, I'm almost sure, an Olds F-85 2 door with bucket seats. I pulled the seat back up and threw my things in the back seat and got in. There was little conversation, maybe "how far are you going", that sort of thing. He was listening to a race on the radio. We hadn't gone a mile when he put his hand down between the bucket seats and rested it on a pistol. When I glanced down and saw it, I drew my right fist back, scared fecesless. We both kept our hands in said positions, neither saying a word for maybe 20 miles when he pulled over just before an exit and said he was getting off there. I grabbed my bag and was out the door before you could say serial killer. I have no idea why he picked me up. I don't remember much about my second ride but he took me almost alway across the state. My 3rd ride was with a guy not much older than me driving a pretty slick car of some kind. As we were coming into Tampa he said that was as far as he was going. St Pete is across Tampa Bay. I started bragging on his car, wondering how fast it would go. My strategy worked and he lit out across the 2-lane bridge across the Bay, probably reaching 85-90. When we got across, he drove until he found a bar and pulled up in front of it and gave me a come hither look as he invited me in for a drink. I grabbed my stuff out of his back seat and ran like hell down the sidewalk until I found a phone booth and called Mike to come and get me.

We had a great visit, me riding on the back as Mike drove us around on his motor scooter. I talked to Mike and Pat recently about my visit. Mike remembered that he worked with the girl he got me a date to double with him and his girlfriend one night. We went to the beach and I told Mike that what I remembered reminded me of the scene in the movie The Summer of '42 when the lead kid and his blind date went to the beach with his buddy and his hot date, but unlike the movie where the kid with Ms hot-to-trot, the guy, that is, she didn't need a book, had read a how-to with the lead guy, whose name I think was Hermie, couldn't remember what came next in the male pursuit, kept coming back over the sand dune to ask Hermie what came after step 4 and 5, etc. Mike apparently remembered the steps without my help; little help I would have been even if he'd asked! I tried to make conversation with my date, with no touchy/feely stuff of any kind transpiring. The only thing that I remember about her was that she used the word "bitchin" frequently, which from its context I figured out meant cool, you know, like groovy. I knew only the noun portion of the word, never having heard it converted into an adjective! Well, I guess Mike had fun.

Pat remembered that we listened to some kind of call-in show on the radio and I made the winning call, and Aunt Jeannette, her real name, drove us down to the station to pick up my prize. It must not have been a priceless prize. Pat didn't remember what it was either. I don't even remember the contest! Now, for the PLANE. I flew from St Pete to Charlotte, my first time on a plane, except for when Rusty Abernathy and I took turns sitting in the cockpit of the Navy Hellcat his dad had gotten hold of somehow and parked in their backyard when we were in elementary school at Oakhurst School in Charlotte in the early 50's (see SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS, posted recently on my website). I guess it would have been more accurate to say that the flight was my first. My next came around Oct 1st, 1965 when, as a sophomore football player at Davidson we flew from Charlotte to Charleston, SC to play the Citadel. I don't remember being nervous on the flight from St Pete but on the flight to Charleston, when the Eastern Airlines plane taxied down to the end of the runway

and revved its engines up before taking off, the plane shook and my knuckles turned white as I gripped the armrests. To say I was unnerved would be a huge understatement!

Though buses aren't in the title and though I've ridden on many, from hundreds of school bus rides to my first Trailways bus ride when in the 5th grade the Safety Patrol took a trip to DC, riding up through the Shenandoah Valley and visiting Natural Bridge near Lexington (the next time I saw Natural Bridge was in early September, 1967 when we stayed in the Natural Bridge motel the night before we played VMI in Lexington), Luray Caverns and then several days in Washington, where we southern kids couldn't understand why the cafeteria where we ate didn't have grits, and on many high school and college bus trips to away games, but my longest was from Anniston, Ala to Charlotte. Bill was stationed at Ft McClelland near Anniston in the US Army Chemical Corps and had been home on leave for a few days over Christmas and I was home from college on Christmas break. I decided to ride back to Ft McClelland with him and get a little taste of Army life. I don't know what he was driving at the time but it's water pump went out past Gastonia. It must have been on Sunday and nobody was open to work on it, so we limped back to Rama Rd, stopping frequently to add water, and I think we took off again in Mom's faithful Meteor. I enjoyed my few days in bachelor officers' quarters and Bill took me to the bus station to ride the Trailways (it could have been Greyhound or some other bus company but I say "Trailways" the way we used to say "Fridge" for the refrigerator, even if it was a Kenmore) back home. While Bill was at work and on the bus ride home I read *The Catcher in the Rye*. Frankly, I wasn't too keen on it then because not only was I naive but also pretty conservative, you know, god and country and motherhood and apple, though I prefer peach, pie and all that stuff. I've read it again several times and can certainly see why it was the voice of a generation, or several. One of my favorite lines in all of literature is when the protagonist Holden Caulfield, in lamenting rampant hypocrisy, says "It's enough to make even good old Jesus want to puke!".

In keeping with my tradition of keeping my readers informed as to my comings and goings, it's 10AM on Monday, Oct 24 and I'm in my Room 433 at the Litchfield Inn, mine that is after Janet deeds her interest in it to me when our divorce, which she insisted on after 55 years of marriage, after almost a year of almost engagement, is finalized in a month or so. I drove down yesterday after a couple days in Monroe attending the visitation on Friday afternoon and the 1:00 PM Saturday funeral of former law partner and then Superior Court Judge David Lee, 4 years my junior who fought a rare form of liver cancer for 3 years before succumbing. I drank a cup of coffee and ate a small bowl of cereal with blueberries thereon at Ricky Creech and his beautiful, talented, one of the nicest people that I've ever met, girlfriend Pat's house where I spent my second night before hitting the trail about 8 AM. En route, I drank a diet Mtn Dew and on arrival about noon, ate 2 cream cheese crackers. An hour later I put shorts on for a walk on the beach but developed some pressure in my chest, the feeling that if I could only let out a good burp that the pressure would be relieved. I could only manage a few lesser belches, none adequate to dispel the feeling, which seemed to be getting worse. The feeling being the same that I experienced in 2002, albeit then over several days and culminating in severe pressure which, when I explained to the ER doc in Monroe that Saturday afternoon was resulting from what must be a hiatal hernia, his response was "You're having a heart attack", to which I responded, "No, I can't be", to which he responded, "Where'd you go to medical school? Look at the monitor. It says you're having a heart attack". Don't think I responded to that. He asked if I wanted a clot buster shot which should, if not eliminate at least minimize any heart damage, adding that there was a risk of it breaking a clot off and causing a stroke. I asked him what he would advise if I was his brother and he said he would recommend that he get the shot. I did and had no heart damage. Of course that didn't prevent two of my arteries clogging and necessitating double by-pass surgery in July, 2010, followed by knee replacement in Feb after realizing that I had met my

insurance deductible for the year. Ah, the miracles of modern medicine and the con/re/straints of the medical business model, designed to thicken the wallet of those clever (deceitful?) enough to figure out how to stick their straw in the trough and suck out more than their fair share of the rubles. BTW, I spent Sunday afternoon at the local hospital, where the tests didn't show anything out of the ordinary, but where the cardiologist wanted to keep me overnite until a Lumbee Indian hospitalist intervened at my request and sprung me!

Dad and Mom owned a green Ford station wagon and a light brown or tannish gold Oldsmobile in 1967, in the spring of which Janet and I eloped and were married in York, SC, coincidentally, I would say very coincidentally by the same justice of the peace who had married her folks in 1943 before Mac flew his B-25 to the South Pacific to bomb the Japs. Janet had gone home to Virginia Beach when school was out and told Mac and Mary that she was married. I had rented a small duplex off Independence Blvd, not far from Mom and Dad and borrowed the Ford station wagon to go collect my bride and her stuff. The Tweeds, as frugal as their name would suggest, suggested that since I was driving up and had room, would I mind stopping by Mint Hill and picking up Mac's mother Dora and letting her ride shotgun. In the story I wrote about Mac in 2016, which BTW is on my website, I told in detail about having to take to the muddy shoulder of US 64 near Raleigh to avoid running into the back of a car that started to turn off to the left then suddenly pulled back into my lane of travel, causing me to sink up almost to the station wagon's axles in the mud, necessitating calling a wrecker and receiving assistance from the NC Highway Patrol in controlling traffic as the Ford was pulled out of the mud, only to see Dad and cousin Pat Hughes sitting in the stopped traffic in Dad's Olds, in which they were traveling to Tarboro for cousin, Mickey Head's wedding, where Mom had already gone, I guess with Mick's mom, one of my Mom's sisters, Ruth so Mom could decorate the wedding cake which she had baked on Rama Rd. The green Ford station wagon was full on its return trip to Charlotte, Janet's worldly goods leaving just enough room for her and her new hubby, me.

Farfel remained our car until I guess sometime my 3rd year in law school when the clutch started slipping and was going to have to be replaced. I don't remember why, probably because I didn't have the money to put a new clutch in, but I sold it and Dad and Mom gave us the Meteor, which we drove for a year or more after we moved to Monroe in August, 1971. I wish I knew how many miles that Meteor flew before it burned out and Dad bought us a used tan Bel-Air Chevrolet from the Red Cross. Tim was born March 6, or was it the 7th, 1972. I'll chase a rabbit for a short run here. Lane Ormand was Janet's baby doctor, a big Carolina fan. The high schools often had lawyers come give a talk and answer questions, usually about traffic citations but occasionally meandering over to child support. Monroe High had Koy Dawkins speak at 10:00, let's say, and me at 11:00. Somebody had a Jag XKE and for some reason Koy took it for a spin out Medlin Rd, maybe to see the property that Harold Shirley was going to sell him, on which Kelly Helms later built Koy and his wife a big 2-story brick house. Because Kelly didn't have a general contractor's license, Koy was able to stiff him for a rather substantial sum, I'll say between \$25-50K. I never liked or trusted Koy after that. He's dead now, but I digress.

Koy wrecked the Jag. I made my talk and answered the student's questions and drove back to the office to go in through the big sliding doors in the rear of the building where our offices were through a small warehouse-type area where Mr Hart, who owned the building sold some fertilizer out the back, staying warm from a small wood burning stove. Several Monroe police were there because some teenager had hit Mr Hart in the head with a stick of wood and robbed him. As I was taking all this in, someone from our office came back there to tell me I had a call. It was Janet, telling me that I needed to come home and take her to the hospital

because Lane Ormand was going to induce labor because she was full term, and besides which, he had tickets to the ACC basketball tournament in Greensboro the next day. Tim, all \_\_\_ inches and \_\_\_ lbs of him entered the world at \_\_\_ o'clock (I'll have to get back to you on the details). His son, my grandson Sam will be 22 on March 6, the day before his dad's birthday. Tim's wife and Sam's mom, Sara said she couldn't keep Sam, all \_\_\_ inches and \_\_\_ lbs of him (I'll have to get back to you on the details) from popping out any longer!

I don't know whether it was the summer after Tim was born or later that Mac and Mary visited and took Janet, Tommy, then 4 and Tim back to Nashville, where Mac was either director of Naval ROTC at Vanderbilt U or whether he had by then retired after 33 years as a colonel in the Marine Corps and was director of security for the University, a position he held for 10 years. A week or so later I drove the Bel-Air out to get them. I'd never driven I-40 west of Asheville, where 25-30 miles west thereof it winds through the Pigeon River gorge, 2 narrow lanes going west and 2 east, separated by a 3' concrete wall. This was during a recession and to save gas, the speed limit in NC, even on the Interstates, was 55 mph, but increased to 70 at the Tenn line, about halfway through the gorge. I drove through the Gorge last week and now tractor trailers are restricted to the outside lane, but not so in '72, when the gargantuans of the highways, the suppliers of Wal-Mart and others' shelves could drive in either lane. They were passing me, who was going the 55 mph speed limit in NC and more began whipping around me when we hit the Tn line, threatening to push me into the side of the mountain which had been chipped away to build the road (if I'd been going east, I'm sure I would have ended up in the Pigeon River). I'm not sure if I had been wearing my seat belt or whether it was part of the shoulder harness, but I reached up and grabbed the shoulder strap and buckled up and gave the Bel-Air the juice and led that pack of behemoths all the way through the gorge. When we reached straight road, I didn't want to try to outrun them anymore as they were flying by me at 80-85! Oh, to get that merchandise on the shelves without a minutes delay, those seemingly dare-devil, or maybe devil-may-care truck jockeys risk life and limb, and if it was only theirs' I wouldn't be scolding them here, but of course it's not just theirs', it's that of all of us who drive the highways. It's a wonder to me that with vehicles whizzing down the highway, bumper to bumper, at least 2, sometimes 3-4 lanes wide, all going 70+mph, no more than 3-4' apart, around curves and up and downs hills, when all it would take is a driver sneezing or having a coughing fit, not to mention a stroke, heart attack or fainting spell, the pile-up and death toll would rival the destruction and loss of life as when Putin's missiles and shells bombard apartment buildings, schools and hospitals in Ukraine! Well, suffice it to say that I reached Brentwood, just south of Nashville in one piece and, despite tens, hundreds, maybe even millions of miles since on the highways, I've only been in one wreck (I'm looking around for some wood to knock on)!

Back in Monroe, one Sunday morning I'm driving the Bel-Air down Sunset drive on my way to co-teach the 11-12th grade Sunday School class at 1st Baptist Church, by myself because one of the boys has a cold. A, I'll call him a dude because this is a family friendly story so I won't use a more descriptive and much less civil name for the guy who ran a stop sign for a street intersecting from my left and plowed into the rear driver's seat door, just 12-18" from where Tim would have been strapped in his baby seat but for his or Tommy's runny nose, turning me over into a small ravine on the right side of Sunset Dr. If I recall, I had on my seat belt and was suspended in air until I was able to release the belt and lower myself onto the headliner. I wasn't hurt but I was shook up and disoriented briefly. Shortly several stopped and came down to help me. Within a couple of minutes someone brought a tire tool and was fixing to bash in the windshield, the sight of which quickly reoriented me. By then I had been able to roll the window down, or up, since the car was resting on its top, a few inches and I yelled at him not to smash in the windshield, but to give me the tire tool. I was then able to break the driver's door window outward and climb out. We were only 100 yds or so from Central Methodist

Church, which my boss, Frank Griffin attended and I asked someone, possibly a policeman who may by then have arrived and would know who Frank was to go get him out of his Sunday School class, which he did. Frank got the offender's insurance info and drove me to 1st Baptist, where I, arriving a little late and slightly disheveled, taught SS school. A church member neighbor drove me home after preaching.

We may still have had the Meteor as our second car, but now we were down to one, either the Mercury or, if we'd gotten rid of it, maybe the little green 4-door VW 3-in-the-floor station wagon Mac had bought for us. I don't remember what I replaced the totalled Chevy with. Janet was the primary driver of the VW but one night I took Tommy, 7-8 and Tim, 3-4 in it to play Putt-putt. I think it was on the last hole that Tim, by now diaperless and maybe even underpantsless displayed, maybe for the first time, his proclivity, more pronounced in recent years, for failure to anticipate when his sphincter is going to open like a gate, and open it did, right there on the putting carpet. I guess I apologized to the proprietor and cleaned up the best I could with paper towels, both the carpet and Bubs. Fortunately, there were some old newspapers in the back of the VW. I sat Tim squarely in the middle of them and told him not to move. If I recall correctly, for some reason Janet thought I was punishing Tim; no, Janet, I was just trying to keep your car from smelling like a diaper bag! It was reminiscent of the summer Saturday afternoon in Chapel Hill when I had Tommy playing in the grass in front of our apartment on Branson St in married student housing (2 BR, \$95/mon) and his sphincter-gate opened up. I took his diaper off and was squirting him with the hose, to his delight when Janet drove up and thought I was engaging in child abuse. No, Janet, I wasn't punishing Studbolt (in his teen years, Tommy gave us all nicknames, his own being Studbolt; Janet, Stovetop; me, Couch, and just now, Tim's doesn't come to me, though he garnered several growing up: Little Red Bootman and Bubba-Jukes come to mind, while Tommy's "others imposed" moniker was Logs. FULL DISCLOSURE: Tim may have inherited his surprise pooting problem, which has gained frequency in recent years, from me, who has something they call only colitis, for over 10 years, meaning I don't sleep or leave home without wearing Depends!

We lived at 1105 Martha Dr in the Lakeview subdivision in Monroe which my senior law partner, Frank Griffin and two others developed, and where Frank built and he and his wife and two daughters lived in the biggest house therein. It was a great place to raise kids, particularly boys, as there seemed to be more of their variety than the other. Johnny Munn was Fungo, older brother to David, their father being John, the county manager and their mother Susan, who though only a, and not THE school secretary, seemingly ran Monroe High School, only a few blocks away. Mark Erckman, nicknamed Ercleburger, alias Stone Bruise, lived across the street (tragically, Mark was in a wreck a few years ago and became a quadraplegic, deciding in the last year that he could no longer live that way and with the pain, ended his own life). Adam Talmadge, at least 6 years older than Tim, was his hero and protector when Tommy wasn't around or needed reinforcement. Terry Sweezy's house top was a homerun in tennis baseball which they played in our backyard, using a corner of the brick wall connecting the garage to the house as a backstop. Jonathan Lowder lived a street over but he only wanted to play wiffleball. Brewster, aka Clifford Birch lived behind Adam, and right beside us lived Craig, Tommy's age and UNC frat bro and his 2-3 year older brother Lee Burris. I was in Monroe last weekend for former law partner David Lee's funeral (Did I mention that earlier? I'm enjoying my condo, just a motel room on the 4th floor of the 7-story tower at the Litchfield Inn in Litchfield Beach, SC, so much that I haven't been story-telling as diligently as I should [It's 10:30 AM on Wednesday, Oct 26 and I'm in my room, facing the ocean, with the sliding door to the balcony wide open, enjoying the 71 degree breeze and listening to the waves breaking not 100 yds away]) and drove through Lakeview Saturday morning, killing time before the 1:00 PM funeral and decided to stop at the Burris's, Mac, now 82, and Linda. We had a delightful almost 1 hour visit!



Back to cars. I don't remember what other cars we owned until I bought a used gas Mercedes 4-door sedan, light green, identical to one driven by NK Dickerson, CEO of Dickerson, Inc, a heavy highway construction company and probably the wealthiest and most influential (powerful?) people in Monroe. We had just settled a case in which we represented Mitchell Griffin, 17-18 for major brain injuries he sustained when the corner of a truck, turning into a chicken farm to pick up a load of chickens at night, jutting across the centerline of the road, took out the windshield corner post and the left side of Mitchell's skull as he drove past, for \$500K, and we earned (I hope that's a term non-lawyers won't quibble with) the biggest fee Griffin&Caldwell had ever received, but, not wanting to deplete the cash we, Janet and I now had, we borrowed \$10K to buy the Benz. My partner Frank Griffin kiddlingly used a racist 2-word phrase to describe my sudden apparent wealth, and it was more appropriate than I wanted to think. The MB was a great car but inconvenient and expensive to get serviced at the Barrier-Beck MB dealership in Charlotte. Someone put me on to Justin somebody, a Barrier-Beck mechanic who moon-lighted at his house in Mint Hill, less expensive but just as inconvenient. We kept the MB for years, garaged both at work (when Frank and I bought the building our offices were in after Mr Hart died, we converted the old livery stable in the back into a 2-car garage) and home, but for some reason the paint started to crack all over, and, given its color, reminded me of an alligator hide. I forgot who painted it and what it cost or to whom and for what I eventually sold it.

David Lee, my then law partner's "rich uncle Marvin" Little was an insurance adjuster who learned the tricks and trade of the damaged car business and parlayed his knowledge into the business of buying and selling vehicles in which he made a fortune in Atlanta. When my law partners and I got into the real estate development business, Uncle Marvin was our banker, who made money off us as we did off the homebuilders to whom we were selling lots in the subdivisions we developed. Marvin lived near Atlanta but kept a small house near Unionville where David Lee grew up and came up fairly frequently. One day he either came by the office or I saw him visiting one of our projects and he was driving a new Mercury and said that if I would go to the car auction held regularly south of Atlanta that his daughter and son-in-law, who by then were running the family salvage car business would help me get a deal on a new Merc. Janet and I still had that VW station wagon and drove down and spent the night with Bill and Jann Carr on Lake Lanier, pulling out early the next morning on the expressway south toward south of Atlanta. Seems like it was GA 400. Expressway my eye; actually it was, sorta, cars bumper to bumper in 3 or 4 lanes going 80 mph, until, that is, they ground to a virtual halt when reaching a major on ramp where others headed south flooded on to 400. Then the phalanx would gradually speed up to 80 again until the next on ramp and recurrence of the phenomena just described.

We finally got to the auction and met Marvin's daughter and husband who explained to us the process of bidding on a car. Several hours into the auction, we saw just the Mercury we wanted and placed and won the bid. One problem, the car we actually bid on wasn't the Mercury which we intended to buy but a silver Ford Crown Victoria 4-door, a cop car if I've ever seen one. The former Miss Little and hubby convinced us we got it at a good price, so after the shuffling of some papers and our shelling out something north of \$12K, if memory serves me, we lit out north on the beltway to I-85, me leading the way in our police cruiser and Janet behind in the VW wagon, 6+ hours to Monroe. I drove Vic for several years, more than once to Louisville to see the boys, once when Tommy was pastor, Tim was minister of music, both ministers of education and youth, James Grant pianist and occasional soloist at Banks St, where Tommy, in giving directions (way before GPS), told us that when we turned onto a certain street to be sure our doors were locked, and where, upon arrival, we found that both sons have anti-theft sticks on their steering wheels! Following one Labor Day weekend visit, we drove Vic

northeast, stopping in Columbus, Ohio long enough to see Buckeye Stadium, then proceeding across NY and Lake Champlain to visit Fort Ticonderoga. We passed a biker with panniers on both sides, packed to bulging struggling up a hill. After visiting the Fort and heading to our Vic, the biker rode up. He had started in Washington State, ridden all the way along the US/Canadian border and was heading on to Maine and then down the Atlantic coast in his circumnavigation of the USofA. I wonder if he's back to Washington yet? We then traversed the New England states, making it to Bar Harbor, ME before heading south, visiting Nantucket and Winterthur Gardens (I'd seen it in Southern Living), formerly a DuPont estate near Wilmington, DE, maybe stopping to spend the night with Mac and Mary in VA Beach, if they hadn't moved to Kingsport, TN by then, before winging back in to Monkeyrow (I guess I shouldn't mock Monroe, as I said above, the situs of Lakeview Estates, a pretty good place to raise our sons)

I need to back track a bit and tell about the boys' cars before they got to Banks St. I've written about Tommy's first car in my story I REMEMBER MAC, his combo 16th birthday/Christmas present, a block long, olive drab, 4-door Plymouth, a Fury, if not a Grand Fury, the size of it's engine not being something I was concerned with since it had been 20 year older than me CPA Lee Potter's mother's car, but which I later learned was a gas-guzzling monster engine that would make that sucker fly! Tommy drove it through high school and we bought him a white VW Jetta I think before his junior year at Carolina from Bill and Janie Woods Durland, Janie, as a Woods, being my 11th grade US history teacher and 12th grade BETA club adviser. I'll have to ask Tommy but I think he was in a wreck, not hurt, thank goodness in the Jetta and we bought him a small Mazda from Pete Tomberlin in Monroe. Tommy hitched a ride from Louisville to Mac and Mary's in Kingsport, probably with the guy who was briefly in seminary with him at Southern but who dropped out and became a golf pro in Kingsport. I don't remember who was driving the Mazda and who the Crown Vic, but I was leading, Janet following. There were 2 routes to Kingsport, one thru Asheville and I-26 through Johnson City, the other up I-77 to I-81 and then down through Bristol. The jumping off point was where Brookshire Expressway in Charlotte crossed I-77. I don't remember whether we had discussed which route we would take but we probably did and it was probably through Asheville. Janet stay right behind me coming up Independence Blvd but a car got in between us as we got onto Brookshire and then I don't know what happened but as we approached the point of no return, I couldn't see Janet. I slowed down as much as traffic would allow but had to make a decision, mine being to stay on Brookshire to I-85, the Asheville route. No Janet. There was no place to stop and wait for her until I got to the light on Brookshire where I would turn left to get on 85. The light was red and long and I got in the lane that would permit me to turn left onto 85 or continue straight on Brookshire. It turned green. Still no Janet. I stayed on Brookshire and found a place to pull over so I could look back for Janet. After 6-8 minutes, I decided that she was lost and thought about what she would do. I drove on and found a pay phone and called Sylvia, thinking that maybe Janet would call her. I may have even called Mac or Mary to see if she'd called them. Neither of them having heard anything, I waited 15+ minutes and called them back. Nothing, so I headed on to Asheville. Janet, not knowing which way I had gone, took the I-77, 81 route. We arrived at Mac & Mary's within 15 minutes of each other. Tommy drove his Mazda to Louisville the next day and Janet and I, both in the Vic, headed to Monroe. What's the saying, all's well that ends well!

How could I possibly have omitted from the Caldwell conveyances "the most famous reindeer of all", the 1984 Ford 150 van, "will go down in Caldwell his-to-ry". My story WESTWARD HO tells about the trip west we took in 1984, leaving the day after school was out, visiting the Royal Gorge in southern Colorado, Bryce, Zion and the Grand Canyons, driving across the Hoover Dam for a one night stay in Los Vegas, our least favorite place, across Death Valley, into Yosemite from its east entrance for a 2 day stay in a raised floor tent in Curry Village,

out its west entrance/exit to Monterey to visit cousin Pat Hughes, stationed at the Presidio by the Navy in its graduate school, wife Jan and their 3 kids, then up the coast, taking in a Mariners' game in Seattle, turning east through the North Cascades, driving across the Grand Coulee Dam, on to Glacier NP and a night in its Canadian counterpart in the Prince of Wales Hotel, then south to Yellowstone, continuing south to the Grand Tetons and southeast to and through Rocky Mountain NP to Denver, then a beeline east, stopping only to eat a delicious steak at the Apple something restaurant in Kansas City, go up in the claustrophobic Arch in St Louis and to eat another mouth watering ribeye at Mac and Mary's in Brentwood, just south of Nashville, then to Monroe, 9,000+ miles in 23 days, killing only one prariedog which Janet smashed after swerving all over the Interstate trying to miss him, and me quitting smoking, if only for a week.

We had broken in the van before our western excursion going to Williamsburg with Andy and Sue Boggs. I would say, if I had to choose one vehicle that defined the life of my family, it would definitely be that red and gray, as Tommy said, Monroe Rebel colors, with its red and gray interior, Ford van. Four years after returning from the west, the summer after Tommy had graduated from UNC-CH and before Tim started either Fork Union or Davidson, I don't remember which, they and a friend of Tommy's from college drove old Red&Gray west again, with me flying to San Francisco and joining them for a couple days backpacking in Yosemite's back-country and driving down to camp at Lake Tahoe and seeing the 4th of July fireworks over the Lake, after which I flew back to work so I could continue to support their youthful adventures and education, while they continued adventuring for another 3 weeks or so. I don't remember how many miles the van had on it when, and I don't know how I got rid of it. It started stalling on occasion when starting off, a problem neither Bowie Ford nor anyone else could seem to remedy. Glad it didn't stall when I pulled out in front of a big truck. Hope no one got killed or maimed when it stalled on the new owners after we got rid of it!

Mac gave us, actually Tim, a VW Dasher station wagon after he'd put 100,000K or so miles on it and it was, by then 6'5-6" Bub's high school wheels. He had to slide the driver's seat as far back as it would go, making it look like he was driving from the back seat. He drove home after school to get something before football practice and his friend, slow talking Derrick Huntley, sporting dreadlocks came with him and was sitting in the den while Tim went to his room. Mac and Mary were visiting and they were taking a walk around Lakeview with Janet when Mary decided not to make the second lap and came up the steps in the garage, into and through the kitchen and into the den, only to see Derrick sitting on the couch. She liked to have had a heart attack! Sort of like the time when Tim was at Fork Union and brought several of his basketball teammates, if I remember correctly, his roommate Fernando, from Spain, his closest friend, a redbone black from TN, Michael Peck (whose older sister Carolyn was an All-American bball player at, I think, Vanderbilt, played in the WBA, coached I don't remember which college team to the national championship, coached in the WBA, and is a commentator on ESPN) and Ricky Dudley, 6'7-8", the high school football and basketball high school player of the year in TX, who went to Ohio State to play basketball, switching to football tight end and playing for a number of years for the Oakland Raiders. I had been out of town when they got to Monroe and didn't get home until late, after everybody had gone to sleep, Ricky on the couch in the den. I flipped on the light and saw his frame covering the couch with his feet hanging over the armrest. Bout gave me a heart attack, too!

I think Tim had the Ford van at Davidson till I got rid of it. Mac gave him a VW vanagon which may have been his son, Janet's brother, Doug's. If I recall correctly, somebody ran into it in Davidson and I had it towed to Boyd Trull's in Monroe, but it cost too much to repair. I don't remember what Tim did for wheels after that, but for his graduation present, we bought him a used black Ford Taurus from an individual in Charlotte. I don't

know how many miles were on it, less than 50,000K, I feel sure. It looked like new. I couldn't think of Taurus so I googled Ford models in the 90s and here's what popped up: "8 Fords Of The 90s That Always Broke Down" and the 1996 Taurus is listed 3rd. I called Tim after typing this. One of his buddy Jimmy Stewart's friends, after they'd rafted the Guadalupe River near San Antonio and eaten all the bbq'd meat of every kind at an all-you-can-eat BBQ joint, washed down by probably a gallon of brew, fell asleep with a lit cigarette in his hand and burned a hole in the back seat of the Taurus. The last day Tim taught, I think he taught and coached bball for 3 years at Shawnee High in Louisville, a driver came across the median on I-64 and totaled old Blackie. Shortly thereafter, Mac gave him his 19?? Volvo station wagon with ? miles on it. Haven't I mentioned it before?

Tim told me a Dasher story that I'd forgotten. Tommy parked it at the end of the driveway in Lakeview and left it in neutral. It rolled down the back yard, sheared a metal clothesline post and was stopped by a dwarf apple tree before entering my garden. He said Tommy had parked it where I usually parked old Blue, which I had heretofore completely overlooked. Steddy Parris and I had bought 100 acres on Stack Rd and Lake Monroe, 4-5 miles south of Monroe and I wanted to garden on a larger scale than our backyard in Lakeview would permit. I had bought, rather obtained in exchange for a legal bill John Neil Tucker owed me, a Troy-Bilt rear-tined tiller which I had been salivating for ever since I began taking Rodale Press's Organic Farm and Gardening and I needed a way to transport it to the "farm", so I bought a 60's blue, straight drive Chevy pick-up from Jim McCollum, lawyer Joe's brother, both of whom we went to church with. It had a camper top on the bed which I took off and stored in the old barn on the farm. During gardening season, every Saturday morning I'd drive the tiller up 2 planks onto the truck, and as soon as she heard the passenger door open, our beagle Clio would make a beeline and jump first up on the floorboard and then onto the seat, sticking her head out the window as soon as I rolled the window down, and we'd head to the farm, usually before Janet and the boys were out of bed. Some Saturdays I would garden most of the day and some days Janet would bring the boys out in the afternoon. We rented the pasture to neighbor Bill Hasty who had some cows and a few nags fenced in with barbed wire. The fence ran near but excluded my garden and ran down to Lake Monroe. Bill would drive his pickup to scatter some bales of hay for the beasts around the pasture. Janet and the boys, probably 3 or 4 and 7 or 8 were down near the Lake, maybe the boys had a cane pole with a worm on a hook in the water, and Bill drove down toward them, the cows in hot pursuit, stampeding Mama and sons, who I think slid under the fence, just in the nick of time, according to the escapees!

Bill and some guys from Celanese discovered the Nolichucky River. The North Toe begins over near Grandfather Mtn and the South on the eastern flanks of Mt Mitchell and they come together between Spruce Pine and Burnsville, soon after which they are joined by the Cane whose headwaters are on the western flanks of Mitchell, flowing together for a distance as the Toecane before being joined by another stream, resulting in the Nolichucky before the wide spot in the road known as Poplar and then cascading through a gorge, paralleled by the Clinchfield RR into Erwin, TN. Bill got a small maybe 6' raft from K-Mart and floated the 'Chucky a time of two with the Celanese-fiber boys, carrying his Canon camera in an ammunition box inside some plastic bags, showing me enough slides and regaling me with enough exciting stories to convince me to buy a raft just like his and join them on the next trip, on which I drove my Chevy pickup with the camper top on the back and Bill and I slept in the bed, camping at Rock Creek (?) campground, park of the US Park Service camps outside Erwin. The next day we drove down to Poplar where there was a small store, where they either let us use their vacuum cleaner or let us plug in one that we'd brought to inflate the rafts. I guess some in the group of 6 or 8 had left a vehicle at the take out near Erwin.

I'm sure we didn't have helmets but think we did wear some small cheap life jackets. The River was just across the road from the store, wide and gently flowing at that point, so gentle that after we'd put in and floated a 100 yds or so, I said to Bill, "I thought you said there was some whitewater", to which he replied, "wait till we go under the railroad trestle", visible several hundred yards downstream. At the trestle, I heard the rumbling around the bend, and within seconds, I fell out of my raft in a class 3 rapid, washed over a couple more without benefit of raft, finally catching up with my K-mart special a quarter mile or so downstream in an eddy. MAN!!! Two guys were in an aluminum canoe. I guess they turned over and it soon became apparent that there was no way they could negotiate those rapids, so we helped them get their canoe up the steep bank to the RR tracks so they could walk it out. Later we saw a maintenance car coming down the tracks and later discovered that those guys, when resting, set the canoe down across the tracks, shorting out the RR communications system which used the tracks to transmit over rather than overhead wires. Further along, we plunged over a fall where a lot of water was coming over, creating a hole which pulled anyone or thing entering it under water. One guy was in a kayak and got sucked into the hole and was under for what seemed like an eternity before finally popping up downstream.

I went with Bill and some other guys once more before deciding that the 'Chucky was too dangerous for us to keep tempting it. Some years later the Nantahala Outdoor Center began leading rafting excursions on the River and my friends Andy Boggs and Lynn Keziah from Monroe joined Bill and me on a guided trip in a large raft. None of us could believe that we had run it before on those K-Mart specials. As an aside, Bill and I kept those yellow rafts for years and we have photos of the boys, Mom and Aunt Edna riding them in the surf at the beach! The last time I was on the 'Chucky was several years ago when Tim, Sam and one of Sam's friends met me and we slept in my camper at Cumberland Falls near Corbin, Ky and then came to our cabin between Spruce Pine and Bakersville. I originally signed those 3 up for a trip on the 'Chucky and at the last minute I decided to join them. We were on a raft with a guide, who steered it and a female MD, maybe 35, her 8-9 year old daughter, and her mother, younger but not much younger than me. We learned into the trip that they didn't realize the turbulence they were getting into. The grandma fell out first and drunk half the river before we hauled her back in. I don't remember who was next, Tim, Sam or (his name just came to me) Brandon, but they all fell out of the raft. The guide, the MD, her daughter and I were the only ones who didn't go overboard. Sam said that was because I slid down off the inflated edge that we sat on and into the floor of the raft when we approached major rapids. I may have once or twice but usually I stay on the rim, keeping my foot firmly pushed into where the inflated rim joined the floor: locked to keep from being unloaded! I could tell about other rafting and canoeing trips, but this story of conveyances is land based. Maybe water as the medium of moving, always downstream if the means of transport is powerless, can be the subject of another story, but for now, I'll return to terra firma and caelum (Confession: I didn't take Latin [should have] but we all know terra firma is the ground we walk on, but I googled "sky" to find that its Latin word is "caelum").

I don't remember how I got rid of the Chevy pickup, but being the farmer that I was I had to have a pickup, so I replaced it with a dark red Ford which I bought from Fred Parker, a fellow bass in the choir at 1st Baptist and president of Peoples, later Heritage Savings & Loan, who had bought it from grading contractor, Bill Davis. It had a big engine and guzzled gas but it didn't take much to get from Martha Dr to the farm. I never drove it on a road trip like I did ole Blue. I guess I kept it till we built a house on and moved to the farm in 2002. I know I had it in 1989 when Hurricane Hugo blew down at least 25 large oaks on a 4 acre lot we owned in "Boggs Acres", my nickname for Oakland Forest where Andy and Sue Boggs had Ray Helms, who I recommended,

the father of my later law partner, Ken, who, BTW, I saw on a FB posting just turned 60, build them a beautiful cedar-sided house (Ray built our cedar-sided house on the farm, the last one he ever built before dying young, at least younger than now 76 year old me, suddenly from a blood infection) on several acres beside our 4 (BTW, Ray was one of the nicest and most honest people that I've ever known and Ken not only didn't fall far from the tree, he sprouted from it's trunk!). The next summer Tommy and Tim helped me limb the oaks and cut the trunks into lengths I could snake out of the woods with Frank Griffin's Kubota and leave in the wide grassy area beside the road, where I cut them into firewood length, split them with a log splitter that Lakeview neighbor Bill Eudy, his boss Steve Birch, the husband of Janet's best friend, Betty and then the owner, with his brother of Birch Bros, which made textile machinery, and maybe another one or two had customized. It was a horizontal splitter to which they attached a contraption I'll call an "arm" on the side, consisting of two steel pipes hinged to the side of the splitter with a metal "foot" welded to the ends of the arm, all operated by a hydraulic system, such that when the arm was lowered, the foot sat flat on the ground. You could roll a log cut to firewood length onto the foot, raise the foot and arm hydraulically till the arm was parallel with the ground, roll the log onto the steel frame of the splitter, then advance the log with another hydraulically operated pusher into the wedge located at the end of the frame, which was wide enough that if the log wasn't too large, you could slide the 2 halves back down the frame and place one of the halves such that the pusher could push it back down to the wedge, dividing the half into a quarter. Janet helped me split the wood and load it onto the Ford pickup and load a small trailer I pulled behind it, and take it out to the farm where we stacked it on some wooden pallets I had talked Wayne Duncan at Consolidated Metco on Charlotte Highway (before US 74, Roosevelt Blvd in Monroe and Independence in Charlotte was built in the 50s, Highway, I think it was 20, two lanes, came out of downtown Charlotte, where it was called Monroe Rd, through Oakhurst, Matthews, Stallings, Indian Trail, Bakers and into Monroe, where it was called Charlotte Highway, continuing as East Franklin St through Monroe and heading to Wingate and then Marshville in Union Co, then through Peachland and Polkton before going right through downtown Wadesboro in Anson Co, and crossing the Pee Dee River headed toward Rockingham in Richmond Co on its way to Wilmington. I'm weary of traveling US Highway 20, aren't U?

We stacked the wood on the pallets to keep it from rotting. I just googled "cord" and found that a cord of firewood is 4' high, 8' long, and 16" deep. I would guess that we stacked at least 6-8 cords of wood, burning a good bit in the used Buck Stove insert we put in the fireplace on Martha Dr and the new Buck I put in the den fireplace on Forest Hills. Our church delivered a cord or more to poor folks heating their homes primarily with wood. I think I bought a tarp and tried to cover a portion of it but even held down with pieces of the firewood, a strong wind would blow it off. Much of that wood, limbed, drug, cut, split, hauled and stacked all by Caldwells rotted on the farm, as did the pallets, leaving nothing but the nails that held them together. Well, if nothing else, I didn't have to join a gym for exercise and I saved weekend golf course rates, and also saved on electricity and natural gas, though admittedly contributing to air pollution and warming the earth. Can I chalk that up to the law of unintended consequences?

It's 8:00 AM on Monday, Oct 31, Halloween, 2022 and I've been up since 5:30 AM, intending to put finger to key first thing, only to discover that I couldn't pull this story up, so I lugged my Chromebook (actually it's pretty light) down to the lobby to get a cup of coffee, and where, within a couple of minutes Sam(anth), 28 with kids 5 and 2, who are with her parents, both, like Sam, smokers, one with COPD and the other emphysema, who, Sam that is, has been behind the counter or in the night clerks' private space behind, where hopefully she got some shut-eye had this Chromeboy up and running in no time, Thanks Sam! She was wearing a black dress

covered with jack-o-lanterns. Takes me back to the spook days of my youth where we were lucky not to have blown, if not a hand, at least a finger or thumb off with firecrackers, to which we had graduated when sparklers grew too tame.

Parked in the new Bank of Union parking lot on Charlotte Hiway in Monroe was a used but new looking Ford Windstar mini-van with a phone # which was Fred Turner's, who lived on a short street, actually it served only him, which turned off the street, whose name I can't remember, that connected Stewart Park to Weddington Rd. Fred's (I can't remember his wife's name) house could barely be seen from the street whose name I can't remember, but it was a sleek one-story ranch with a low pitched roof which provided a wide overhang and a carport in the front. It was built by John Dickerson, NK (remember him)'s brother on several acres adjacent to the property where their father and mother's house was situated, facing Weddington Rd, later owned by Bruce Griffin, Sr, the owner of the Buick and Cadillac dealership, later run by Bruce, Jr and now by his son's, Macon, Tommy's age and his older brother, whose name I can't recall, who at 6'5-6" was on Monroe's State 2-A championship basketball team 5-6 years before Tommy was at Monroe, and 9-10 years before 6'6-7" Tim helped lead the Rebels, (now, with political correctness, Redhawks) to being runner-up State champs, losing to the champs, Farmville in the Dean Dome in Chapel Hill in the finals.

We bought the Windstar from Fred, gave it to Tim and Sara a year or two later, and bought another from Fred, who traded every 2 years. When we decided to build on the farm, Fred gave us the plans for his house, designed by an architect from Greenville, SC, if I remember correctly in 1949 or 50. John Dickerson, Jr, an architect, a few years younger than Janet and me, grew up in that house, so we went to him to draw us a plan very similar to the Dickerson house, with a few fairly minor changes. Big Mistake! Ray Helms could have taken the original Dickerson house plan and built the house we ended up building, without any architectural intervention or guidance, and saved us \$15K!!

That 2nd Windstar was also a mistake. Our very nice dining room table, chairs and sideboard's style didn't go with our new contemporary style house, so we decided to give it to Kim & Tommy, loading it up in the smallest U-haul trailer it would fit in and took off early one Saturday morning for Frankfort, KY. On that sunny afternoon, with my, and I assume Janet's spirits sunny, we were heading up Jellico Mtn on I-75, north of Knoxville, almost to the KY line when I felt something that quickly turned my mood to cloudy, the transmission slipped, then dark cloudy as it continued to slip, then stormy when we came to a stop in the emergency lane. I didn't have time for my disposition to turn to gale force winds before I saw a guy pull over just in front of us and run toward old Windsty with a fire extinguisher, and before I could even get out, extinguishing the transmission fluid burning on the road below the transmission. BUNGAGOWA (or is it "COWA", or maybe it's GOWA, or COWA BUNGA; does anyone know, or care?). Saturday afternoon on the side of I-75 in Nowheresville, TN! Geez, Louise! I was able to get a wrecker to tow the Windstar to the largest mechanic shop in LaFollette, TN and to finally talk (it seems like there was something special going on at the high school that everyone was going to) somebody into driving me south past the Uhaul trailer to a Uhaul place in a small town further south where I rented a small Uhaul truck, driving up to and hooking Uhaul trailer to Uhaul truck, driving back to the Uhaul place, transferring the furniture from Uhaul trailer to Uhaul truck, leaving said Uhaul trailer at said Uhaul place and driving said Uhaul truck, laden with table, 6 chairs, 2 with armrests, 4 without and sideboard, arriving at Mahon Ct, near the Forks of the Elkhorn, not far beyond the Jim Beam Old Granddad plant several hours later than we and they expected, tuckered out but with a good story to tell, which obviously I'm still telling, lo these many years later!

I called the mechanic Monday morning and, if I recall correctly, he said he could put in a used transmission or a virtually new, rebuilt one from Ford that would carry some kind of warranty, which, though more expensive, of course, is what I opted for. I needed to get back to the office so I rented, it seems like a RAV-4, which must have been when they first came out, left Janet in KY, drove to Monroe, turned in the rental and drove back whatever our other vehicle was to KY Friday or Saturday, probably Friday so we could pick up the Windstar, then two-vehicle caravan it back to Monroe, though Janet may have stopped off at Mac & Mary's in Kingsport. All's well that ends well, right?

I guess it was that summer that we drove Mom to Maine, the trip originally designed for us to visit Harry and Kate in Deer Isle, but postponed because I was overseeing a wrap-up IPO in which Andy Boggs and his cousin, John Harvey Edwards, the owners of Site-Prep, which they formed to provide some kind of chemically enhanced sub-base for roadbeds being built over less than optimal subsoil, were hoping to join Site-Prep with other heavy highway construction firms all over the country (two big ones were in California and Alaska) to form a mega firm to bid on new federal infrastructure jobs coming down the pike. King and Spaulding, a huge law firm headquartered in Atlanta was spearheading the legal work, one of the big 8 accounting firms the number crunching, and Prudential the underwriting. I told Andy that all that was way over my head but he wanted me to keep my ears and eyes on things. I don't know how many hours of conference calls I listened to, maybe picking up a thing or two I understood, but saying virtually nothing. As it turned out, the IPO never got off the ground and Site-Prep never even got on the plane. Both Andy and John Harvey had been convicted along with many others of bid-rigging, simply for participating in a complimentary bid scheme which all road building firms engaged in to satisfy the gov't requirement for 3 bids, until some sore loser started screaming out loud and the feds had to take some action, John Harvey and Andy both serving a few months in federal prison. The IPO bunch claimed that they hadn't disclosed that on a form in which there was a moral turpitude question, resulting in Site-Prep's being thrown out. All of this came much later, but they stayed in the deal past when Harry & Kate had left Deer Isle for home in Severna Park, Md, but since we had planned the trip, Mom, Janet and I went anyway, driving as far north as Bar Harbor, ME. I probably could write a story just about that trip. Overall, I would say it was a success, though Mom complained when there were few vegetables she liked on a restaurant menu. We were saved by Jan Karon's, from Wikipedia, "Mitford novels, featuring Father Timothy Kavanagh, an Episcopal priest, and the fictional village of Mitford". I had either checked all of the Mitford series CD's out of the library or maybe even bought a couple. Mom loved them! She couldn't wait to finish lunch and get back in the Windstar to hear what Father Tim was up to. Thank-you Jan Karon and Father Tim Kavanagh! Even I got to looking forward to the stories!

We couldn't sell the house that we'd lived in on Forest Hills Dr for 10 years or so for a decent price after we moved to the farm, so we gave it to Tim and Sara and they moved down from Louisville for a year, a disaster since Sara's son, Tai, 10 or 12's father, Peter A\_\_hole refused to let Tai go, him visiting only a few times, so after a year, they moved back to Louisville. (BTW, while I'm talking about Forest Hills, where we moved shortly after Tim started college, Tim reminded me the other day that he, his friend, Danny Grossman, and maybe some others drove the red van to Danny's home in Ft Lauderdale over spring break their freshman year, the return group including a couple of Davidson girls who had gotten to Fla but needed a ride back, the whole crew spending the nite with us at Forest Hills.) If I remember correctly, we were car-convoying back to Louisville with Tim and crew, he and Sara each driving one of their vehicles, one being the used Honda van they bought while in Monroe (Tim and I saw it with a for sale sign on it sitting in a front yard on US 601 N while bicycling up that



busy highway, fortunately 2 wide lanes, with 3-4' of paved shoulder outside the outside lane stripe, such that tractor trailers were missing you a good 6-8'), the other probably Mac's Volvo wagon. Janet was riding with one of them and I was driving the Windstar with the warranted transmission.

It was near supertime so the caravan leader decided we would stop in Lexington to eat. I was bringing up the rear and #s 1 & 2 moved into a left turn lane and, having the green arrow, turned. #3 me and Windstar 2 were several cars back and weren't able to make the turn because the arrow had turned red, so I brought old Windy to a stop and felt a jolt. Warranted transmission had quit transmitting. Windy wouldn't move. I guess because I was blocking the turn and a cop pulled up to see what the problem was and when I told him, he asked if I knew what F O R D meant and answered his own question: Found On Road Dead! Ha, Ha! He called a wrecker and towed it to the Ford place. Tim et als dropped me off at Tommy & Kim's and went on to Louisville. The next morning I borrowed Kim's car and drove back to the Ford dealer in Lexington where I was told that they were waiting on word from the warranty department before repairing or replacing the transmission. I called back that afternoon. No word. I drove back on Friday morning and was told there was still no word and asked, by then assuming it was a rhetorical question if there was any way my van would be on the road that day or the next, and the non-rhetorical reply was NO. I'm sure they didn't but it will liven up this story if I say the words of the old Roger Miller song "Dang me, dang me, They oughta take a rope and hang me, Hang me from the highest tree..." came to mind.

I don't remember where I spent the weekend, I guess at Tommy & Kim's Sunday night because Monday morning I had Kim drive me to Greene's (I remember the name because a plate bearing it is still on the front bumper) Toyota and I bought a 2004 4-wheel drive Tundra with 25K miles on it for \$25K and asked the Toyota guy to ride with me over to the Ford dealer. I told those bozos, "Let me introduce you to the new owner of the Windstar van, Mr Toyota", and I drove Mr Toyota back to Greene's and drove to Louisville in my Tundra, which now has traveled 225K miles. It's the best vehicle I've ever owned and hope it will be my last! BTW, I had taken the rear bench seat out of the Windstar and left it in my barn in Monroe. Ford called me about it and I told them they could have it but they'd have to come get it. It made a great place to rest from my labors in my nearby garden!

It's 8:30 AM on Nov 2 and I'm going for the checkered flag this morning because I'm on the last couple of laps. Kim had a Mitsubishi sports car when she and Tommy got married. She could write a story of her own on the cars she's had over the years, and it would be a white knuckler. In one of her junkers she could see the road through the floorboard! I'm not sure when but Tommy bought a used Toyota Camry, which reminds me, how in the world did I overlook the light gray '06(?) Camry hybrid which we bought new, purchased because Mom had been in the hospital and Janet wondered how we were going to pick her up because she wouldn't be able to climb up into the van. The Camry was a great car. We drove it into Manhattan, contributing to the over 100K miles we put on it before giving it to Tommy. When we did, he gave his Camry to Phoenix, who was a senior at Asbury College and having to bum rides to her student teaching assignments. He drove and I rode with him to Asbury to pick up Phoe, pronounced Fee, for either the weekend or maybe fall break. She put her stuff in the car and Tommy suggested that she drive. When she looked at him quizzically, he said she should drive since it was HER car. She and Jarod may still have it!

Tommy parked the gray Camry not out of range of Kim's backing the white Toyota Highlander they had bought new out of the garage, assuming nothing was behind her. I think she hit the rear driver's side quarter panel

hard enough to crumple the wheel well in some, but not enough to make it undriveable. They gave it to Sam, Kim bought a sleek new dark ruby Highlander and Tommy started driving the old white one. Emma, 17 this month (Emma, I'm sorry I don't remember which day but with Anna's 15th just a few weeks ago and Sophie's in December, it's hard for old Growley to keep all y'all's' birthdays in my 76 year old brain) is now driving the white Highlander to her new job at TJMaxx, often having to get there at 6:00 AM and Tommy and Kim have just bought a Toyota RAV-4. Tommy's been driving the ruby Highlander and Kim the Rav because he says she is a better driver than he and he doesn't want to be the one to put the first ding in it. Sam, impatiently waiting to turn left at a light while cars in the two oncoming lanes were slow getting out of the starting blocks, decided to turn in front of them, but one approaching vehicle, apparently not paying close attention, stepped on it and hit Sam, who thankfully wasn't hurt but whose still in good condition Camry was T-totaled. Since then, Sam, working at Target (he started part time at Wal-Mart when he was at South Oldham where his dad Tim is an assistant principal, then followed his buddy to higher paying Target, leaving it for even higher paying all night sorting packages at UPS at the airport, tiring of that [who wouldn't, though his half-brother Tai, {25?} is working there now]), moving to the tire dept at Costco before returning to Target while taking some community college courses on-line) has bought and sold 4-5 cars already. Sophie started at Starbucks in Sam's Target last week!

It's a good thing my now deceased cousin, 2nd, 3rd, removed, unremoved, unmoved, WHATEVER, Shannon "Shank" Forbis didn't know about my and my family's predilection for Toyotas. His oldest brother Jimmy Lee died during WWII and Shank wouldn't be caught dead in a German or Japanese made vehicle. I rode with Bill, driving his Toyota Highlander down to Jefferson, SC to see Shank, who was beginning to slip a little after his wife LaMarr died. He wanted to take us over Mt Crogan to see his 700 acre farm over there and he got in the front passenger seat of Bill's Highlander and one of his sons, Tommy or Ronnie, I don't remember which, got in the back seat with me. Shank complimented Bill on his car and asked what kind it was and before Bill could open his mouth, I said "it's a Chevy", which satisfied Shank despite "Toyota" or "Highlander" being inscribed on the dash right in front of him. Close call!

I can't believe that I've overlooked our first Toyota, an '89 gray Landcruiser which I bought from a guy whose name I can't remember, who owned a large land development and house building company headquartered in Mint Hill and who came on the board of directors (just remembered, his name, Bob McLemore) of American Savings Bank which I had been on for several years. If I recall correctly, I was driving through Mint Hill for some reason and the Cruiser was sitting in front of McLemore Builders with a for sale sign on it. I don't remember what I paid for it. It was a behemoth, designed for rugged use, not real fast but a gas guzzler. We drove it to Louisville when Tommy was in seminary and up to the Cincinnati zoo, where Studbolt rode a camel. Mac and Mary, pulling Mac's 17' run-a-bout with probably a 50 hp outboard motor, the boat Janet and her brother learned to ski behind at New River, the Marine air base attached to Camp Lejeune on the coast of NC, and in which I made many flounder fishing trips with Mac out to the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge tunnel when the Tweeds lived in VA Beach, catching and Mac stabbing between the eyes with an ice pick on a board he keep on board just for that purpose, a lot more skates than flounder, followed Janet and me, us driving the Landcruiser to Ocracoke to hopefully fill up a cooler with flounder just like my client, Dean Harrell had done on several occasions. Unfortunately, this was just after a hurricane poured rain down on eastern NC, flooding hog lagoons, breaching their dams and washing hog manure clear to Pamlico Sound, closing it down for fishing, until the last day, but the wind was still strong, preventing our fishing from the dock into the sound in front of the condo we were staying in. But fortunately, I had brought my flounder gigging rig, the light powered by my lawn mower battery which I carried in a pack on my back when Janet and I drove the Cruiser out into a large tidal

basin area after dark, where we weren't alone. I gilled two "door mats" and Mac's eyes were bright as stars when we brought them in and put them in the sink. I think he insisted on cleaning them that night and I also think we had to leave the next morning, so we packed them in ice and had a fish fry when we got back to Monroe.

I know fishes have nothing to do with planes and trains and automobiles but I may not have as good a spot to tell this short, fishy story in again. Kim's mom Carol and her stepfather Don had been at Myrtle Beach or some such place and they came through Monroe on the way back to Taylorsville, KY and Tommy and Kim came down from Frankfort and I guess stayed with Tim and Sara when they lived on Forest Hills in Monroe. I guess Don and Carol stayed with us at the farm. We had an acre+ pond right behind the house which I had stocked with bream which I caught in another pond and transported to ours and some bass and catfish which I bought. A few of the cats had gotten pretty good size, 18-24" and I guess 8-10 lbs. The women went shopping. We caught several nice cats and Don, who I had asked to bring his electric carving knife, cut some nice filets, starting just behind the gills and cutting right down the backbone to the tail, then flipping it over and cutting back just under the skin. I had called Spiro, the owner of Hilltop Restaurant and he told us to bring the fish over, and while his cooks fried them, we fixed our plates with slaw and fries and had a fabulous fish fry, no muss, no fuss!

Back to the Landcruiser, which, to put in 4-wheel drive, you had to turn a hub on the front wheels. I had a few problems with it, like having to replace a motor for one of the power windows. It sat in the barn long enough to let its battery run down and I stupidly got the poles reversed jumping it off and fried some electrical parts. Somebody, probably either Tom Fincher or Charles Edwards across the street helped me jury rig it, and when you turned something to the on position, maybe the heater fan, the windshield wipers came on. I ate lunch frequently with lawyers from the office and Janet and I occasionally ate supper at the Brown Derby Restaurant, owned by Jimmy, whose last name I've never known so have always just called him Jimmy or Jimmy the Greek. (BTW, Jimmy's a great guy, very personable and gregarious. He said that his wife Carolyn thought that she was marrying a Greek god but found out that he was just a GD Greek!) Tony, one of his sons then in his early 20s had seen the Cruiser. We didn't need it and I was tired of fooling with it so I "gave" it to him for \$1K. Sam tells me that it's now worth at least \$25K, the number or a higher one confirmed by my friend Ricky Creech's former son-in-law Jimmy Johnson who owns, restores, trades, shows and sells Cruisers from his barn/shop near San Antonio, TX. Not the only bad deal I've ever made in my life, but it ranks right up there!

Now it's 6:36 AM on Thursday, Nov 3, the day after I thought I was going to cross the finish line, but I'm now starting, no, I was going to say the final lap, but actually I'm half-way around the penultimate (hope you know this means next to last. I didn't until finding it in some loan documents prepared by a very bright lender's lawyer representing the life insurance company making the permanent, as opposed to the construction loan on a Food Town, now Lion anchored shopping center one of my clients was building) lap. Janet bought Tim and Sara a new Prius 4-5 years ago, but don't worry, Tommy, she keeps up very closely with the \$ given to each of you in order to be sure neither gets a nickel more than his brother. Tim drove Tommy and me in the Prius to my niece, their cousin Meredith's wedding to Dr Winston Joe (sp?) last November in Annapolis, MD. They flew back to Louisville Sunday morning and I drove the Prius on an almost week-long history tour.

I watched the flag being lowered at Ft McHenry in Baltimore late Sunday. Monday drove NE to Valley Forge where I made a video, which is on my website of a young, at least much younger than me

Vietnamese-American demonstrate how he could start and drive his Tesla with a remote control, offering to let me drive it in the parking lot. I politely declined. A video of the Tesla and its owner is on my website. Tim's Prius was advanced enough for me. Then to Gettysburg, stopping first at the cyclorama and last on Cemetery Ridge where, with daylight fading, Tim called and told me to watch out for the Rebel sharpshooters, spending the night there and visiting Eisenhower's farm before heading west and being apparently the only guest in a rather large hotel/lodge but eating some delicious tacos with several diners in its pub/restaurant. The next morning I drove out to the recently completed memorial to the 40 passengers and crew of Flight 93 who forced a crash landing, thus thwarting its intended crash into the US Capitol on 9/11/01. It is a fitting but eerie memorial, with a granite wall with the names of those who died, not including, of course, the hijackers near where the plane actually crashed in an old, abandoned pit coal mine, all out in the middle of nowhere, the perfect place to crash a plane so as not to kill people or damage structures on the ground.

Then to a happy place, Frank Lloyd Wright's magnificent Falling Waters, and from there to the French and Indian War's Ft Necessity. In 3 days, I visited forts, battlefields and memorials to 5 wars, the French & Indian, Revolutionary, War of 1812, Civil and the War on Terror. I also visited the Red River Gorge and its Natural Bridge and one lane, narrow, unlit tunnel to nowhere, a video of which is also on my website, before returning to Louisville.

I'm now starting the last lap of this long trip by PLANE, TRAIN and AUTOMOBILE, driving a Mercedes. Mac bought a white 4-door gas Mercedes about 1968 on the overseas program, which may have just been for servicemen in which you bought and paid for the car in Europe and picked it up in the US. He loved that car and drove it for years. In one of Tim's stories he writes about Christmas really arriving when Mac & Mary rolled into 1105 Martha Dr in their white sleigh, loaded with presents and Goo-Goo bars. He kept the '68 for a while after he bought a 2004 tan Mercedes station wagon, I think the smallest wagon MB made. I think their great grandson, Josh has the '68 now. We're going to drive the '04 wagon to the finish line with a few stories about it. After Mary passed, we drove it and Mac accompanied us on a Christmas trip to KY. I drove most of the way with Mac riding shotgun and Janet in the back, but I got drowsy and changed places with Janet. As we got near Lexington on I-75, the light precipitation which had been falling began to freeze. Janet was driving on the inside of 3 lanes, almost bumper to bumper traffic, when we hit a slick spot and the wagon skidded, turning a little toward the concrete median barrier. I don't know if anyone yelled but the sudden change in direction woke me, sitting right behind Janet. Mac's left arm shot out and grabbed the steering wheel and the car immediately straightened up in our lane of travel, averting disaster. I don't know if his action caused this or whether the vehicle straightened itself when it hit dry(er) pavement, but I'm giving all the credit to Mac and his pilot training.

Actually, Mac became a safe driver after he had a wreck when he was 16 or 17 on the River Rd near Marshall, NC where he was born and raised. River Rd ran along side of and parallel to the railroad, which hugged the French Broad River and Mac and a buddy passenger were chasing a car full of girls when he crashed almost head-on with a big Packard driven by a judge on or near the centerline. Mac wasn't hurt but his buddy went through the windshield and it took a lot, the number, which Mac remembered but which I don't, of stitches to patch-up his face. The judge's family was in his car. Mac got out and Mrs judge screamed at him, "you've killed my family!". He said he looked at the river and thought about jumping in it but instead said "let's get them to the doctor!" The doc who tended to them was Dr McElroy, whose son Pender is a retired lawyer in Charlotte, a few years older than I am. When Mac was living with us at the farm, I took him to Charlotte to have lunch with Pender and a guy whose name will hopefully come to me before we reach the finish line, a year behind me at

Davidson and a Rhodes Scholar, whose ancestor was the sheriff, a secession supporter, who was shot and killed by Mac's great grandfather, Neely Tweed, a Union supporter in April, 1861 following the vote in Madison Co on whether NC would join the Confederacy (see the first story I wrote, I Remember Mac, on my website). Maybe that accident caused Mac to become a cautious 33 year pilot in the Marine Corps. The first time I rode with him I grew a little impatient as he checked everything he could check on the dash before even starting the car.

Later Janet and I were driving the station wagon heading for Tommy and Kim's for Thanksgiving and had a flat south of Lexington. I put the small spare on and only discovered that it was flat when I let the car down. What to do, late on either the day before or Thanksgiving Day. I walked a few feet south in the emergency land, bent over and imitated pumping up a tire. I got a few stares but realized that by the time a passing motorist was able to tell what I was doing, they were already hundreds of feet past. So I walked several hundred feet further south, resumed fake pumping, and finally a guy stopped. He had an electric gizmo and inflated my spare, and we hi(high?)-tailed it to a WalMart just before the tire shop closed. Rather than taking time to fix the tire, I just bought the cheapest tire they had in that size. When we finally got to Tommy's and I told the story, Don got the biggest kick out of it but Kim did the best imitation of me fake pumping!

I drove the MB wagon to my 50th college reunion, which Janet didn't attend. Returning to our log cabin in the Ledger community, between Spruce Pine and Bakersville (we have several photos of the station wagon at the cabin, one with a great photo of Mary in the back seat when Janet's brother and wife drove Mac & Mary to a surprise 60th birthday party I gave for her in 2008), I was in the going straight lane while stopped at a red light and realized that I needed to be in the left turn lane, somewhere out in the boondocks, with no visible traffic around except the car waiting in the turn lane. I swear to this day that I looked in the rear-view mirror and that there wasn't anyone behind me. I backed up to pull over into the turn lane. BANG! I backed into a young Asian woman, who was scared to death. I don't think her old clinker was damaged, but I gave her my insurance info. The damage to Janet's MB wagon, which Mac gave her before he passed away in 2015, or '16 was minimal but she insisted on getting it fixed, to the tune of \$800, if I remember correctly.

Janet bought a new 2017 or 18 white Subaru Forester in Asheville. The ubiquitous Subaru is the NC mountain goat, maybe more of them on the roads in the hills than any other make. We didn't need Mac's station wagon anymore so we gave it to Sara. There had been a few times when it wouldn't crank, not even turn over with me, but would start after waiting a few seconds. Tim and Sara were in Lexington for something and ate dinner at a small Mall. No crankee! (BTW, did I say this before: whereas Shank Forbis wouldn't get in a WWII Axis vehicle, Mac loved German and Japanese made cars.) They called Tommy who came and got them and they drove his car home, calling me when they got in. Sunday morning Tim and I drove to Lex and it started right up. He followed me to the MB dealership in Louisville where I left it. The next morning I was over there when they opened and told them the problem. Over the next couple weeks, they couldn't get it not to start, so Sara started driving it again. A few days later, no crankee! When it finally started, she took it back over to the dealership. In a few days, they said they fixed it, so Sara drove it for a few days, and lo and behold, they hadn't fixed it. Back to the dealership where I talked louder than with my inside voice to the service manager. I told them not to call me until they were sure that it was fixed and also asked them to give it a good look over and let me know what it would take to put it in tip-top shape. The verdict: \$8K+. I told them to go ahead. I'm not sure how long Sara drove it until the transmission went out. MB estimate: \$6K. No Way! Someone told me that the manager at Cotterman Transmissions knows more about transmissions than the guy who invented them. To save \$ he

recommended a completely rebuilt rather than a new one. Sara says that it's driving fine now except that the heater and defroster isn't working, but the heated seats are. At least part of her is staying warm.

AND, relatively warm it is this morning at Litchfield Beach, 63 now, headed to 71 before I walked 9 holes of golf at Litchfield CC at 1:52 to celebrate my just crossing the finish line and getting the checkered flag. Now to celebrate with a cup of iced coffee! HOORAY (from me), ATTA BOY and GOOD JOB (hopefully, from readers!)

Sheesh, now I gotta proof this sucker, and how I HATE proofing!!!