

From Days Gone by ...



COVE, ARKANSAS, THE WAY IT WAS. The footsteps of students are silent and the old truck no longer runs, but the town is still alive and well in western Arkansas.



SNOW, OKLAHOMA, FROM YEARS PAST. The old church no longer tends to the spiritual life of the people, but to the daily life of the cows which stumble around it.



AND THE PEACE-AND-QUIET OF MODERN-DAY OCTAVIA, OKLAHOMA. The lone Mountain View Cabin located between the Kiamichi Mountains of eastern Oklahoma, just 15 miles from Arkansas.

Oversights and insights

by Keith Bridwell

Just at the time that money gets a little harder to come by, some fly-by-night businesses begin to work harder.

Case in point: church page advertising salespeople. You've noticed for a long time our church page, filled with new and different and interesting material each week. And I'm sure you've noticed the advertisers who sponsor that page. They're the ones who make it all possible.

For a long, long time, we've dealt with a Corpus Christi company - Challenger Advertising - who sells that page for us and supplies the editorial material for it.

Why would we deal with an outside firm to do that, you may ask. Well, for a variety of reasons, but primarily because I've known Zack Coleman and his father for years and years. They're good people, and they've specialized in church pages for most of those years.

We've had a good relationship with them for years, and I suspect we'll keep doing what we're doing.

In recent weeks, however, some of our businesses have been contacted by another advertising firm, selling church page sponsorships.

Well, that might be alright, except for the fact that the new firm will not leave a return telephone number, and wants the payments forwarded directly to them.

In the first place, we don't deal with firms which insist that payments be sent directly to them. We maintain a quite adequate bookkeeping department, and bill once each month.

I don't know who these people are, so if you are contacted by them, I'll appreciate it if you will collect as much information as you can, and get it to me. We'll go from there, and do what we can to head them off at the pass.

And while we're on the subject of scams, allow me to tell you of another one which has already affected one of our readers.

An individual ran a classified ad for Yorkie puppies several weeks ago, and provided only an e-mail address. The gentleman is presumably deaf, so could not have a normal telephone conversation.

Long story made short: a Bridgeport lady was soaked for several hundred dollars.

I can understand how that happens. I'm a pushover for Yorkies, myself. They're just cute.

There's nothing cute about losing several hundred dollars, however, so we became a bit more diligent in screening those out-of-county advertisers. The next time a gentleman called to run a similar advertisement, we were ready. Our diligence paid off, because he was trapped before he could do any more damage.

Caution appears to be the catchword during this time of tight money, so you might want to keep both eyes open, in spite of our added scrutiny.

I didn't awake until after 6:00 Monday morning, because the daylight I am accustomed to wasn't there! We had a heavy overcast sky, and Lord, was I ever glad to see that!

We got a break from the 105° temperatures last Friday for the first time in many days, and that break is still with us. We live with a curse here, however, because when the temperature comes down, the humidity goes up. Net effect on our bodies - precious little. Still, 95° is better than 105°.

Karen and I found a way out of some of the heat by driving to the Kiamichi Mountains of eastern Oklahoma Friday evening. We traded the 90s for the 80s, and the weekend was wonderful!

When we decided to go, I called Sherry Nichols on Thursday and arranged to rent her Mountain View cabin. It was a good move. She and her husband live on the property, but after the first night, we never saw them. They could have been 200 feet away and we would have never known they were there.

They have just the one cabin on a remote hilltop, nestled between the Kiamichis and overlooking a 10-acre meadow. It is the perfect place for recharging your batteries.

When I first talked with Sherry, she told me there was nothing much to do just two or three miles from Octavia, Oklahoma. I told her that's precisely what I wanted - nothing much.

That little cabin turned out to be a pretty good starting place to scout the rest of the territory. We took a back road over part of the Kiamichis into my favorite Oklahoma settlement - Talihina. That part of the trip was a little sad for me, however, because my favorite hamburger joint in Talihina had recently burned.

We drove from the cabin to Cove, Arkansas Saturday afternoon - a distance of about 20 miles - to see an old school house which was evidently built in the early 1900s. It is tough for me to describe the feeling I had about that old building, but it brought back memories of another era - a time when reading, writing and 'rithmetic were the fare of the day, and when some of our brightest folks were educated. Education, by the way, can only occur when the student absorbs what is taught, regardless of how much is attempted.

We drove by an old Christian Church near Smithville, and wondered where the people would park their vehicles. It was an old, but well-kept church, with pews for maybe 100 folks, but with no designated parking area. Interesting situation.

The most interesting old church of the trip, however, is located in Snow, a settlement between Clayton and Antlers on U.S. 271. That church appears to be over 100 years old, but is still in marvelous condition. Quite weather-beaten, but marvelous. I talked with a young man who was on his way into the property to feed his cows. He said he uses the church to store hay. People may not congregate there any longer, but the building is still in use every day.

That little trip accomplished its purpose - relaxation - but I am beginning to wonder if the people who live there don't have the right idea. They appear not to care if the sun comes up; they're happy with life as it is.

Back in "the civilized world," we spend our lives accumulating things, with no purpose in life but to accumulate things.

Life in the hills is wonderful, but if you have a propensity for claustrophobia, you might head the other direction. There are just too many places up there to hide junk. Out-of-sight, out-of-mind, you know.

Relaxation is alive-and-well in eastern Oklahoma

by Keith Bridwell

Relaxation is alive-and-well in the Kiamichi Mountains of eastern Oklahoma, just a stone's throw from Octavia.

The Mountain View cabin sets alone near the crest of one of the hills nestled between the mountains. The valley is also home to State Highway 144, power lines, creeks and rivers, and Bigfoot Crossing Gift Shop.

It is not a destination in itself, but rather, a base station

for other meanderings throughout the area - bounded on the south by the McCurtain County Wilderness Area, on the north by Ouachita National Forest, on the east by Arkansas, and on the west by 40 miles of winding, mountainous roads before you once again intersect with civilization!

Nearby attractions include the town of Talihina, Oklahoma, which is about 45 minutes northwest by way of a mountain passage over the

Kiamichis, Beavers Bend State Resort and the infamous Talimena Drive, which stretches for more than 40 miles over the tops of peak-after-peak of the Ouachita Mountains into Mena, Arkansas.

Everything is within driving distance, if you have a full tank! There's only one service station nearby - on U.S. 259 - but every hamlet has its own volunteer fire department. The subject of forest fires is stone-

cold serious to these people!

The region is home to the starting places of many rivers, including the Kiamichi, the Little and the Glover River.

To reach Octavia from Durant, follow U.S. 70 east to its intersection with U.S. 271, then northeastward to the intersection with S.H. 144, then east to Octavia.

For information on renting the cabin, call Sherry Nichols at 580/244-7455, then be prepared for real solitude.

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