

Gee, But I'd Give The World To See That Old Gang Of Mine... *George and Ira Gershwin*

BY LOYCE MARTINAZZI

Herb Lafky passed away at age 94 December 5. He is about the last of the old gang that grew up in Tualatin and attended the old 1900 Tualatin School. Gang, in this instance, is not a bad term, but a group of folks who hung around together and had fun. Herb came to Tualatin with his family, parents Mark and Manette and sister Lois Karen in 1928, and settled on a 60 acre farm, site of Lafky Park. "These days a realtor would list the house as "five bedrooms and a path!" Herb wrote about the old house.

"Complete indoor plumbing didn't come until about 10 years later. Then we didn't have to save the Montgomery Ward and Sears catalogs any longer."

In those days, Raleigh and Watkins salesmen would call at rural homes, hoping to peddle their goods. Herb remembered "The Watkins salesman always had a stick of Beeman Pepsin gum for me." Teachers in those days



Herb Lafky with his string of trout.

did not allow gum chewing in class, and if caught, she would strike the offending student sharply on the knuckles with a ruler. Herb once hid a wad of gum in the roof of his mouth, and when asked to "open up," the teacher could not see the gum. "While her back was turned, I held the wad of gum between my teeth to show those seated near me. That was my 15 seconds of fame in the eighth grade."

"I have always been fond of fishing. It seems like I've done a lot of fishing but not all that much catching. My first fishing trip was organized by Yvonne Addington's dad, Ted Saarinen." The boys fished on Saum Creek, and nobody ever challenged Ted, a big burly Finn, who always got the best fishing hole.

"About 1933 a huge flock of sandhill cranes landed in the field occupied by the new Tualatin Elementary School." Herb helped his dad corner the birds and Mark shot one, and took it home for dinner. "A couple of days later I had a drumstick in my lunch about a foot and a half long!" It was the depression and even on a farm, food was scarce.

Herb was nicknamed "Spud" and his pal Earl Sagert was called "Stink." I can only presume that Herb helped with the potato harvest to earn his nickname, and I will not venture an opinion on the origin of Earl's.

Herb and Earl were two of the old timers that lived and played in Tualatin in those days. Earl's kids, Gerald and Kathleen donated their dad's basketball shoes to the historical

society. I have never seen such a large pair of shoes.

Merle Pennington, who lived where the Tualatin High School is now, was too small to play ball, so he became a doctor. But play ball is what a lot of those guys did for fun back then. Families would load up in old jalopies and head to nearby towns to play either softball or basketball. My oldest sister Joanne was due in July and mom was watching dad and the rest of the team play a home town game, when she began to have labor pains. "Annie, you can't have that baby here," said Laura Kamp, who with her husband Slim owned the Tualatin Feed Store.

Dancing was another very popular form of entertainment in the 30s and 40s, and a bunch of guys, usually Clayton and Red Nyberg, Walter John Eames and Herb would borrow one of their dad's old cars and ride together to neighborhood dances where they would meet girls, dance, and often take the girls home. Walter John said that Herb always took the longest time to bid a girl goodnight at her doorstep.

Herb told about how his mother and three neighbor ladies would have weekly social get-togethers in their homes. Clara Sunde was from Norway, Violet Van Loo came from England, and Jane Ibach used to live in Silverton. The Thursday socials were called League of Nation meetings.

I remember that Herb liked to tell jokes and was pretty good at it. Here is one of his favorites. "I found out why married women are usually heavier than single women. A single woman will come home, look to see what's in the fridge, and go to bed. A married woman will come home, look to see what's in the bed, and go to the fridge."

According to Sandra Carlson, Herb's daughter, and Allen Lafky, his son, who took care of Herb at the last he was telling jokes up to the end.

Herb wrote, in pencil, the story of his life in Tualatin and that story was published in the January issue of the Tualatin Historical Society newsletter.

Those were the days my friend, I thought they'd never end...



Loyce Martinazzi was born and raised in Tualatin and is passionate about Tualatin History. She is currently Lecturer of the Winona Grange, Co-Founder of the Tualatin Historical Society and Co-Author of *Tualatin...From the Beginning*.



Wimpy - Myron and Bob Buswell remodeled this plane, *the Wimpy*. Here it is shown in front of the Wesch House, with the Mack house on the right and the "Little White House" on the left.



Some of the gang gather at Kamp's house (used to be on Tonka Street) for dinner after a ball game. Front row left to right: Slim Kamp, Laura Kamp, Bob Saarinen, Barbara Saunders, Mimi Saarinen. Back row: Wayne Howard, Walter John Eames, Bill Barngrover Jr., Clayton Nyberg, Elwood Dunmire. Standing behind Barngrover is Ted Saarinen.



The Tualatin Town Team played softball in this field in 1948. Hervin Company later built at the site, and now it's part of the Lake of the Commons.



Asa Mack, Johnny Ladd and Leonard Pohl after a successful raccoon hunt. They are standing in front of Asa's house, which is now the Bertleson Animal Clinic.



The Lafky family lived in this house along Boones Ferry Road. The Geiberger family, pictured, lived there at one time. Nobody knows who built the house.



Young William Barngrover parked beside the Nyberg garage.