

THE NEXT ONE IS YOURS

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'Writers Corner'

My grandkids are pretty down to earth, and I must say that their parents require they mind in a way that, in my totally biased grandpa's mind, is better than most. But when I consider the changes in the way they live their life and the way I grew up in Carthage, it nearly takes my breath away.



It is not uncommon for them to spend a Sunday afternoon going to a Titan's football game or driving to Atlanta to see the Braves play, while most of my Sunday afternoons were spent going home with Hale or Richard Wright or Bill Ross to play on their farm or puddle around in Peyton's Creek. A prime Sunday afternoon was when I could go with my Uncle Tom Kittrell to fish in Mulherrin Creek and maybe indulge in a little "skinny dipping." Most Sunday afternoons, however, were spent going for a ride in the old grey 1952 Buick visiting relatives on Roaring River or in Cookeville.

Now days, when my grandkids ride, they are entertained by videos placed in the in-car viewer. Guess I fail to grasp what the reason for a ride is if not to gape at the things one might see up and down the road. We didn't have any videos of course, and in fact we didn't even yet have TV, so there was no sense of loss on our part, but we did play games in the car. Like most families we played "count the cars" to see how many red cars each of us could spot first, or blue, or black, etc.

But my favorite game was played by Mama, Daddy, Adie, my sister Donnieta and me. No one was exempt. It was called "the next one is yours." Some one would start first and the next car we met on the winding road to Cookeville or Gainesboro, "belonged" to that person. There would be much speculation by those who were not to be the recipient of the car that "I can hear that thing coming down the road now, what a noise" or "I think I can see it. The wheels are wobbling too bad; they look like they will fall off."

In the mean time, the intended recipient was claiming that, "Why, I think that thing is going to be a Cadillac" (truly "The standard of the world" at that time.) "I believe it is going to be bright red and I think it is going to be a convertible," the opinion would be issued.

When we finally did meet a car coming down the road, there would be much hooting and laughing if it was a clunker, and much moaning and groaning if it was indeed a fine car. I know that doesn't sound like much excitement in this day and time, but in 1954 it was fun, fun, fun. There is a saying that goes, "He who expects little is seldom disappointed," and it would seem to apply in this case. Our expectations of externally generated

entertainment were pretty low, so “the next one is yours” generally met those expectations and we were seldom disappointed with the fun that resulted.

I guess it was a microcosm of our life in those days, our expectations were low, and so we seldom suffer disappointment. Listening to a good episode of Lum and Abner in the “Jot’em-down store” or waiting for the clunks and crashes when Fibber McGee opened his closet, met our expectations and we were happy. At least, one did not have to worry about allowing the children to listen to those old programs because “the Great Gildersleeve” or “Mr. Peevie” the druggist were going to say something so off color that we would be embarrassed to have another member of our family hear it. Even the cynical Jack Benny and Rochester dealt with one another in a civil if somewhat disrespectful manner.

My expectations of TV have become low, and I am seldom disappointed. This new season looks like it will be no exception.

Have a blessed day, and maintain high expectations.

Read more of Robert “Bob” Rodgers Chaffin stories at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>