

The PACER

CHAPTER 21

By DAVID PARAMORE

I finished up my lunch, placed the tray on the rack and put my paper in the trash. I stopped by the supermarket on my way home and bought some fresh toiletry items, as shaving cream tends to set up after a year. I spent the remainder of the afternoon busy with the cattle trailer and servicing the flatbed. With the oil changed, the lube completed and the truck full of gas, I felt it was ready for the Fanning Springs run on Tuesday.

The family started coming in from work and school, and soon mom had supper started. I sat on the back steps, playing with Chester. That dog never tired of fetching sticks, but as soon as my sister came out and sat down, he returned my stick to her.

"He just loves me the most," she laughed.

If he belonged to anyone, it was definitely her!

"I ran into Kathy Simmons at the Sonic at lunch," I said to Beth.

"I see her there sometimes, and if it is slow, Kathy and I will spend a few minutes just chatting -- girl stuff mostly, clothes or boyfriends," Beth said, adding, "I thought Kathy had decided she would just move on and date whomever she wanted."

"We are going to dinner Saturday night," I said. "Where are the best steaks these days?"

"There is a new place just south of town on 301 that is good, but a little pricey," Beth said.

Dad came home from work while Beth and I were still on the back porch and sat down to remove his boots. Beth sat for a minute longer and went inside to help Mom finish supper.

"I had the old flatbed serviced, fueled and ready for Tuesday," I told Dad.

"It is nice having you home," Dad responded.

The sound of Mom calling us in to eat rang out. We made small talk during dinner, and after the table had been cleared and the dishes put away, Dad asked me if I wanted to go fishing the next morning as the speckled perch bite was on. We agreed that 7 a.m. was early enough to leave the next morning.

I watched a little TV and went to get a shower. I was in bed by 10 p.m.

The next morning Dad and I rose early. After coffee and breakfast, we gathered up our fishing gear. We stopped by the bait shop for a bucket of minnows before heading out to Doe Lake in the Ocala National Forest. While Doe was located about 35 miles away, we had fished there many times, as it was a favorite fishing and camping location in our area. Dad had a 14-foot boat on a trailer with a 15HP Johnson that ran most of the time that would be our water-bound ride for the day.

We spent a good day on the lake, caught several keeper-sized specs, and got home at just about three in the afternoon. We cleaned the fish and put the fishing gear and boat away. Then, I went to get my shower and start getting ready for my date with Kathy. I asked Beth, who was also getting ready to go out, if she would help me decide what I should wear.

"Most guys nowadays just put on jeans, boots and a nice shirt," Beth said.

That suited me, as most of the clothes that I had before being drafted were decidedly Western in style. I ended up wearing a pair of good jeans, cowboy boots and a nice Western shirt that Mom ironed for me as I was finishing up getting ready.

"Can I borrow your car, Mom?" I asked.

"Boy, is this not like old times," Mom laughed, before fetching the

key. "You better stop for gas."

"I will fill it up," I said.

Mom told me I was handsome as I headed out the door to pick up Kathy. I showed up at Kathy's house just before 7 p.m. I could not believe how nervous I was. I had known this girl since we were about 12 years old and after all, this was just a casual date. Kathy came out looking nice, wearing a Western style dress that really looked good on her. After chatting with her mom and younger sister for a minute, we headed to the restaurant.

As we got in the car, I asked Kathy if she had been to the new steak house that was on 301 south of town and she said she had, once, and that it was good.

"That is where we are headed then," I said.

She agreed and said we were dressed just right, as the place looked like it was straight out of Texas. When we reached the restaurant, it looked like it was packed.

"Maybe we need reservations," I said.

"We should be fine," Kathy said.

We parked around back, and we could tell the place was much bigger than I first thought. We walked around to the front entrance, went in and got seated immediately.

Kathy spoke to a girl she knew as we were headed to our table, and after we had taken our seats, she asked me if I remembered the girl. I told her the face was familiar, but I had lost her name. She said her name was Erin Sellers and that she had been really smart in school. Kathy said Erin was a student at the University of Florida now, in the large animal veterinary program, studying to be a horse doctor. I told her that would be a good choice, as horses were taking over the local town.

"Kathy, why didn't you go on to college? I remember you being smart in high school," I asked.

"The guy from Gainesville and I

had planned to get married, but we placed everything on hold after he was drafted. I wanted to be free to join him at his permanent duty station, but now it looks like he is no longer interested in me," Kathy said.

She then asked me what my plans were along those lines.

"Whatever I do will have to wait until I finish up my obligation with the Army. However, I am going to check out the pre-engineering program at the junior college that Beth told me about," I said.

While we were talking about school, our plans for the future and my time remaining with the Army, I thought about the Piper PA 20 I had bought from Kenneth Swanson. I told Kathy about the airplane and that it was currently disassembled.

"It sounds like you just bought a bunch of airplane parts!" Kathy laughed.

We ordered our steaks--mine rare and her's well done. When they came out of the kitchen, Kathy said they should give me some of my money back because they did not cook mine. I told her it was just right, and it was very good. Turns out Kathy was a lot of fun with a wicked sense of humor. Whenever I would stick my fork into my steak Kathy would let out a "Moo!"

She wanted to hear some of my Vietnam stories-- not the bad stuff but the other, funny stuff, so I told her how we once traded fish for beer and girls.

"Girls? The Vietnamese traded their women for fish?" she said in disbelief.

"There were only two girls, in their late teens, and we had had a lot of fish! In fact, we probably had a ton of fish," I said.

"Exactly what were these girls for? Were they, you know, concubines?" Kathy asked.

Laughing, I explained, "It was mostly a joke on our part. All the girls did were act as waitresses. They only stayed until everyone was through partying and then went home. Seeing as how they lived on a boat, and we were partying in the Quin Nhon Harbor, they didn't have very far to go."

Kathy and I finished our dinner, paid our tab and went out to my mom's car. I asked her what she wanted to do then.

"We could just cruise around town and talk or we could go to the drive-in movie if you want," I offered.

"The movie sounds good, but I have already seen the one currently playing, so we could just cruise up to Williston and back if you want," she said.

That sounded good to me because I was really enjoying her company!

Kathy asked me if I smoked, and I told her no. I told her I was okay with her smoking though if she wanted one, and she fished a pack of Salem's out of her purse and lit up. She opened her window just a crack, and I could hardly smell the smoke from her cigarette. She asked if her smoking bothered me, and I told her no. I told her about leeches and described how we used a lit cigarette to burn them and make them turn loose.

She said the very thought of having a leech on her would have driven her crazy. She said it was a good thing the Army did not draft women because they simply would not have gone to Vietnam or any other place that had leeches.

"Where all on your body have you ever found leeches?" Kathy asked.

"All over, even some places you don't even have!" I said.

"Really, they would bite you there!" she said.

"They were not proud," I responded.

"Oh, hell no! We girls would not have gone to Vietnam," Kathy said.

We had a good laugh about that before she added, "We would just cry and cry, and they would have just sent us all home."

We talked about people we remembered from school, and before we knew it, it was time to gas up my mom's car and take Kathy home. We stopped down the road from her house and just sat talking for another few minutes. I asked about her work schedule and asked if we could see each other again. She said we could as she had

enjoyed being with me.

"I had a crush on you back in high school," Kathy told me.

"I wish I had known that," I said.

Growing serious, Kathy said, "I want to tell my boyfriend that I am going to date other guys."

"You should do it before he goes to Vietnam," I said.

That seemed to be the time everyone got their "Dear John" letters, after they had been in Vietnam a few weeks. Their girlfriends could not stand the thought of being true to someone who was going to be gone such a long time. The girlfriends craved company, too, and most of these relationships had not had a lot of time to develop. Vietnam was a special hell for most of the guys that received Dear John letters.

I started the car and slowly drove up to her house. The light on the front porch was on.

"I will be 21 in two months, and mom still worries about me," Kathy mumbled.

I got out of the car and walked her up to the front door. She gave me a tight hug and held it a full minute. I told her she felt so good in my arms, and she just nodded her head and kissed me on my cheek. Her eyes were tearing up when she looked at me again. She told me she wished she had pursued that crush back in high school. I did not know what to say so I told her I would call her. She fished the key out of her purse and opened the door. I did not see her mom, but I am sure she was still up and waiting.

(To be continued)

Editor's Note: How does the story end? You can find out by picking up a copy of "The Pacer" by local author David Paramore from the Book Mart or purchase on Amazon as a paperback or Kindle e-book download, with all proceeds going to support the expansion of Point of Grace (POG) Christian School. Kindle Unlimited members can download the book for free. Visit www.thepacerstory.com for more information.

LEGALS

(continued from page 10)

Statutes). All other creditors of the decedent and persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent must file their claims with this Court WITHIN THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS AND DEMANDS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. The date of the first publication of this notice is October 6, 2021.

Person Giving Notice:
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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, pursuant to the fictitious name statute, Chapter 20953 or Section 865.09, Florida of State, Corporation Division, Tallahassee, Florida, upon receipt of proof of publications of this notice the fictitious name, to-wit: Chic Hauling LLC under which we/I will engage in business. i/we expect to engage in business in Perry, Florida and our address is: 1885 Donald Russell Rd., Perry, FL 32348. The extent of ownership is: Edwin Schapper-100%.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

CITY OF PERRY Chemical Monitoring Public Notice

What happened?

Our water system did not meet the requirements of a drinking water rule. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results we received from samples taken May 11, 2021, when averaged with quarterly results from the past year, show that our system exceeds the standards, or maximum contaminant levels (MCL), for Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs), which includes Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) and Haloacetic Acids [Five] (HAA5s). The standard for HAA5s is 60 µg/L, and the average level of HAA5s over the last year was **63.93 µg/L** (as of May 11, 2021) at 700 Charles Hendry. The average level of HAA5s over the last year was **86.05 µg/L** (as of May 11, 2021) at Taylor Correctional.

What should I do?

Some people who drink water containing haloacetic acids in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

Some people who drink water containing trihalomethanes in excess of the MCL over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous systems, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

Any customers who are concerned about their exposure to these contaminants can choose alternative sources of water for ingestion.

What does this mean?

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately.

What is being done?

The City of Perry is flushing hydrants through out the City.

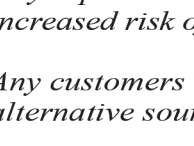
For more information, please contact [Jerald Lee](mailto:Jerald.Lee@cityofperry.com) at (850)584-7940 or contact the Department of Environmental Protection, Potable Water Section at 904-256-1700.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by our water system: **CITY OF PERRY**

Potable Water System ID: **2620208**

Date distributed: **October 6, 2021**



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