

Jerry Ray and Marion

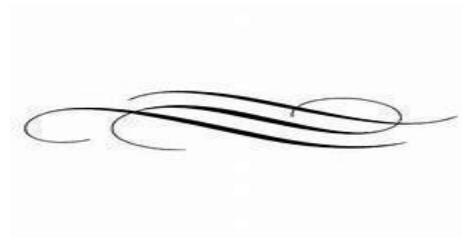
By Jim Lewis and Jim Black

Jan. 25, 2022

Hey, Marion Wallace-Thedford, this is Jerry Ray Bilson. We was in the same grade for a couple of years. Well, I was in the same grade for a couple of years and you was in there at least one of them. And how come you got another last name? Did you find out you was adopted or somethin? You was just plain ole Marion Wallace when I knowed you.

Anyway, it is always good to catch up with people you ain't seen in forever. Facebook is purty good about that. I like knowing how everybody turnt out. It will be good to get to know each other agin.

Sure was good talking to you. Bet you never dreamed you'd run into me again.



Jan. 25, 2022

Jerry Ray Bilson! What a surprise! How delightful to hear from you. Last time I saw you, you were scoring the winning touchdown in the 1970 District Championship game. Who can forget? Of course you did score it for the opposing team. I seem to remember another player once running the wrong way with the football and scoring a touchdown. I believe it was a Minnesota Viking.

How in the world are you? Has life been good to you? It certainly has been splendid to me. Evidently you don't know I married Donnie Thedford once we both graduated college. You remember Donnie, don't you? Valedictorian. Mr. All-Everything. Voted Most Likely to Succeed.

Well, he certainly has. Or I should say, *we* have. Our national chain of women's lingerie stores, "Daze and Nights", has exceeded even our grandest expectations. I'm sure you've see our ads. And now don't you go trying to picture me in any of our fine products, you hear? I remember you undressing me with your eyes in study hall every day when we were in school.

Donnie and I have two charming children if you don't know. 'Lizabeth and Ken. Both are married now of course with kids of their own. 'Lizabeth and her husband Rick have two beautiful daughters, Jenny and Lila, ages four and five and Ken and Paisley have twin sons, Samuel and Theo. They are six-years-old. (Like us, both couples decided to establish their careers before having children.) We all just spent Christmas together at Ken's beach house on Pawley's Island. The guys all golfed while the kids watched Disney movies in the home theater and us girls near-overdosed on gossip and mint julips out on one of their many verandas.

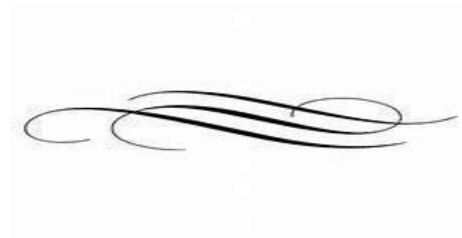
Well, I have to go. 'Lizabeth, Rick and the girls are here visiting. It's been fun. Thanks for reaching out. If you reply, you might want to look into Spellcheck. On second thought, never mind. This way you sound just like I remember.



Jan. 25, 2022

Wow! You make money selling bras and panties? Do you sell them little teddies and stuff like that? Do you need a partner in your undies business? I'd be glad to work on at the store, I'd be a real "hands on" employee!

I hope you took some of your profits and donated them to the Trump campaign. Donald j Trump speaks for god-fearing white Americans everywhere. Everybody knows that the commies hacked the 2020 election or that them democrats stole it. I ain't sure which but it don't really matter. They is all controlled by Satan anyway. They hacked into all them machines and changed all them algorithms and Biden got like 161 million more votes than he should have. Everbody knows that.



Jan. 26, 2022

Jerry Ray, if we are to continue corresponding, we need to agree to one rule: No talk about politics whatsoever. You and I are clearly on different sides of the fence.

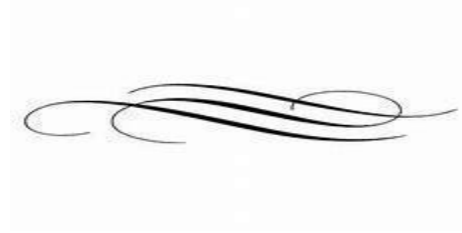
Moving on. You are just too much! *You* working in one of our outlets? You are kidding, right? I seem to recall you and Dirty Ernie getting caught in the boy's bathroom at school with a pair of Sissy Dell's underwear. I won't ask how you got them, but what you two were rumored to be doing with them still keeps me awake at nights. Now, to answer your question, yes, we do offer a line of provocative women's nightwear.

On another note, I can't believe my eyes. How in the world did you manage to correctly spell the word *algorithms*? There surely are nine wonders of the modern world, not eight.

Come see us if you are ever in Dallas. I'm guessing you still live in Dime Box. That right? Donnie wants to know how business is at the Dairy Freeze. We have a bet as to whether

you still work there. He says yes, but I say no. We both however agree that you still have that 1976 poster of Farah Fawcett on your bedroom wall. You do, don't you?

Oh, and before I forget it, Donnie wants to know if you ever married. He says at one time you and Boobs Babs were getting serious, but I think he's mistaken. Y'all are cousins, aren't you?



Jan. 26, 2022

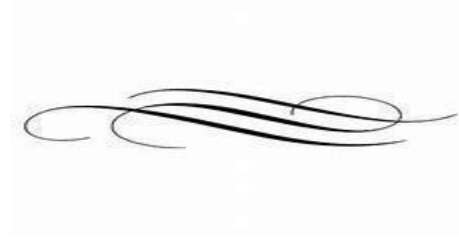
Okay. No politics. Although I worry about you wanderin around in that herd of blind sheep.

Now hold on here a minut! You think I am some kind of sicko because me and Ernie had a pair of girls' underwear when y'all have gotten rich off of selling em? Y'all have gotten rich off of the fantasies of men everywhere but you act all uppity towards me about that. That ain't right. We was all young once. Besides, I don't remember you lacking for company on Friday nights after the games. The rumor was you wasn't afraid to explore the avenues of love as they say. But there ain't nothing wrong with that. And as for you getting rich off of other people's inner thoughts, I say is this a great country or what?

No, I don't still work at the Dairy Freeze. I'll have you know I am now the assistant manager at the hometown video store. But business sure has been slow. And yes, Babs and I got hitched. She has her own beauty salon here in town these days and she does pretty good. She says for some reason she gets better tips when she cuts all the mens hair than she does the women. We do all right. We can always afford a chicken fried steak on Saturday night at the Dairy Freeze so life

ain't so bad. We have two kids. Our daughter is about to graduate junior college so we're real proud. Our son didn't do quite so well. I guess Grand Theft Auto wasn't just a game for him.

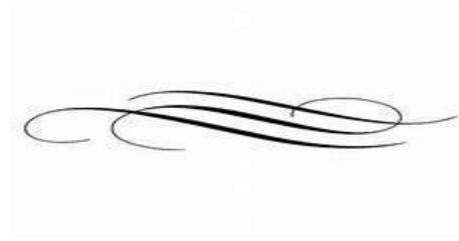
Anyway, it is good to be catching up. It just proves that we ain't so different after all. Don't you think? Oh, one more thing. Two last names? Ain't you an American?



Jan. 27, 2022

So you two did marry? That's wonderful. And two charming children. Life certainly is grand. Good for you!

Gotta go. Donnie and I are headed to Deep Ellum tonight for an early dinner. There are some exquisite eateries to be found there. We just love the Milos Brothers Grill. Donnie thinks they're gay but I say they just enjoy silk shirts and jewelry. And who doesn't?



Jan. 27, 2022

I thought about leavin the video store. I was gonna get me like one of them food trucks or trailers and I was gonna get them girls from the local titty bar and they was gonna be topless and we was gonna go out in the oil fields and we was gonna sell sweet tea to all them roughnecks.

That is what we was gonna call it - "Sweet Ts". But none of the oil companies would let us come out to where they was working. Said we would cause unsafe working conditions. Can you believe that? Ain't nothin like it used to be anymore. I swear lawyers and insurance guys are running and ruinin the world.

You know how they got all them magazines right there when you're waiting to check out at the grocery store? You know, right next to the .22 and 410 shells (for varmits and snakes and such). Used to, them magazines was all about aliens. But they don't hardly ever mention aliens no more. You know how when you're on vacation and you're tired and you start to pull into a motel and the wife says just to keep drivin because this place don't look too good? Well that is what I think is going on with the aliens. Things have gotten so bad down here on earth that alien wives won't let the husbands pull in. They tell 'em to just keep going.

I hope y'all enjoy your dinner. Me and Babs is always perfectly happy with our chicken fried steak and fries with a blizzard for dessert. Sometimes we will change it up and get rings instead of fries.

I know you is gonna think I am a heathern but if them Brothers is gay I say more power to em. I got a niece and a third cousin who is gay and they are good people. Besides, since Jerry Jr has been in Huntsville, we have met a lot of new people. And we got two guys here in town that run the flower shop and they are just as sweet as they can be. And they got the priettest house in town. I reckon I got nothing against gay people, exceptin' that they is all democrats. Oops. Sorry about that.



Jan. 28, 2022

Well good for you, Jerry Ray. I think my Donnie could take some lessons from you on being more inclusive.

Speaking of food, you and Babs should make the trip to Oklahoma City one day and have dinner at Bell's. There is no menu. The only thing they serve is chicken fried steak with your choice of vegetables. They only use choice cuts of New York strip and their steaks are out of this world. Donnie and I go at least once a month. And if you happen to like Vietnamese cuisine, Oklahoma City has some of the finest to be found. Just ask for directions to the oriental part of town and you can't miss the restaurant. It's a little confusing at first as their menu is in Vietnamese. However, a few of the popular items have been written in in English. It's all good if you can get past the smell. Took us a couple or three trips but we like it now. A heed of warning though. Go easy on the hot sauce. You'll spot it in a tiny glass dish, and I mean tiny. Donnie wondered why they were so chincy with it on our first visit and after dumping it all (and there wasn't much) on his entrée, the young Vietnamese waitress who was serving us said, "Ooooh. Hot." She wasn't kidding. Hours later at our deluxe suite at the Radisson, his lips were still burning.

That's all for now.



Jan. 28, 2022

Why would I want to drive all the way to Oklahoma City for chicken fried steak? The steak here at Dairy Freeze is real good and is a meal at \$7.95. Besides everybody knows the secret to chicken fried steak is gravy and big city folks ain't gonna know nuthin about makin gravy.

Vietnamese food and Thailand food and Chinese food is all the same to me. And we got Chinese food here in town over at the Golden Dragon next to the Motel 8. And it is all you can eat. And I bet their sauce ain't no hotter than the habanero sauce at the little Mexican food place just outside of town. It is kinda like your fancy Vietnamese place. No habla English there either.

We did get a Starbucks here. It opened just the other day. Everbody is all excited. Babs loves it. I don't care much for it. The coffee is damn near \$5 and hotter than blazes. You can't drink it for an hour it is scalding hot. Everything else on the menu I can't even pronounce. It all looks Italian to me. If I want something Italian, well, we got a Domino's. No thanks, I will have coffee at the Dairy Freeze ever morning with all the other men in town.

Hey, you like country music? I am pretty good with Merle and Loretta. I don't like none of them new guys that is all over the radio nowadays either. They wear them tight legged pants and never heard of a steel guitar. Some of em don't even wear boots. If you was to get cow manure in them shoes and tight legged pants that would be just nasty. They don't know nothing about how real people life. Just like politicians. How the hell can you play country music without no fiddle or a steel guitar?

I ain't worked on a rig in a long time. But they used to have mornin tower and evenin tower and you went home after your shift. But everything is so different now. But I will tell you this. There is something about standing in front of a fire on a cold mornin while the sun comes up

listening to them diesels roar and watching that Kelly turnin to the right that gets right in your soul. I just can't explain it.

But like everything else in the world those days may be slipping away.

Do y'all ever get back down these ways?



Jan. 28, 2022

We haven't been home in years. If you remember, Donnie's folks moved to Houston, and when Daddy died we moved Mama up here. She lives down the road a ways in Golden Gables Retirement Community. It's a bit pricy, but that's okay. After all, it *is* Mama.

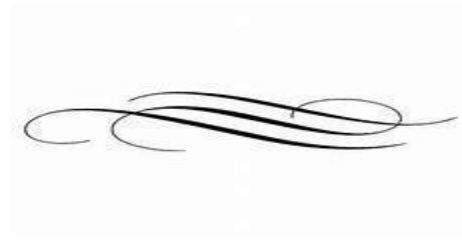
Pardon me for asking but is Jimmy Hoffa really buried in the north end zone at the Meadowlands in New York? Donnie figures you for a Mason and said you should know. Or did you not join like you planned on? If, for some reason, you weren't allowed in, there's always the Odd Fellows Lodge. Or the Lion's Club. Or, if you know someone who knows President Bush (the one who's still alive), he might can get you into Skull and Bones. Oh, wait. You didn't go to Yale. Sorry. Forgot.

If *you* are in the Masons, we'd also like to know who really killed President Kennedy. Donnie has narrowed his list of suspect down to four. All appear in the Zapruder film.

1. The Umbrella Man - If he wasn't the actual shooter, he was likely a lookout.
2. Dark Complexed Man - Probably from Cuba and in cohorts with the umbrella man.
3. Badge Man – Wore a uniform and was possibly a Dallas police officer on the grassy knoll.

I, on the other hand, think Levon Helm had it figured out. In the movie *Shooter*, he said the fellas who did it were dead within three hours and buried in unmarked graves in the desert out past Terlingua. Said he still had the shovel. If you have information to the contrary, we'd love to hear it.

And what about the Titanic? I read somewhere once that it never sank. Rather, its sister ship, the Olympic, hit the iceberg and the Titanic sailed to a secret location where the passengers were offloaded and spent the rest of their lives in solitude on an unknown tropical island. If you do ask around at a meeting some night, please don't mention our names.



Jan. 29, 2022

Not a Mason. We still got a mason's lodge here in town. Sometimes there's a few cars parked in front of it on Saturday night. But the windows is all boarded up so nobody can see any light much less what is going on. And don't nobody ever talk about what they do. When men go somewhere like that and don't talk about it they is usually drinking, playing poker, and watching dirty movies. I reckon they is just trying to get away from their wives. Say!! All them Masonic lodges might be a good place to send a bunch of your catalogs. Them men is probably doin a lot of dreamin, if you know what I mean. Right place, right time you know. Might boost sales a little bit. Since it don't sound like you are gonna hire me, I reckon that is some free advice.

I ain't never joined nuthin exceptin First Baptist. Most people in town go there. Brother Frank is a good guy and he tries real hard. Sometimes he gets a little full of the spirit and goes a little

long. But most people don't seem to mind much, unless the Cowboys is playin. And we is always havin them pot luck dinners after Sunday mornin services, unless the Cowboys is playin, of course. You remember Mrs. Jefferson, the home ec teacher? She is a widow now and don't have nobody to cook for. She always brings fried chicken and chocolate pie. Now I guarantee you that that right there is what'll make you say Praise the Lord! on Sunday.

So what does Donnie do when he needs to get away from you? Now don't take that personal cause everbody does. I bet he puts on his orange cashmere sweater and bright yeller pants and goes to the country club where him and his golf buddies sit around and count their money. And I bet you go to Neiman's and spend 12 hunnerd dollars on a pair of Italian shoes that ain't nuthin but a sole, a strap, and a toe. Shoes that you won't wear two years. I could buy two pair of full quill Luchese Ostrich boots for less than that and then boots would last forever. We got people here in town that live on less for a whole month than what you spend in one trip to one of them fancy stores. Rich people ain't better than everbody else, they is just richer. Again, ain't nothin personal.

And I got to ask. Ever man in town that does body work drives a car that is covered with a coat of primer cause the last thing they want to do when they get home is work on their own stuff. So Donnie spends all day lookin at purty women in underwear. I wonder if he has any interest at all in doin that when he gets home. Maybe things ain't so warm in that big ole house y'all got. Again ain't personal.

All I know about Kennedy is that he probably screwed with the CIA and the Mafia too much and his little brother helped him. That is really all anybody needs to know. Them is people you don't mess with. Ain't no need for a man to be any dumber'n necessary.

And maybe Jimmy Hoffa is buried under that stadium. At least part of him. The rest is probably in landfills all over New Jersey. Or maybe he just sleeps with the fishes.

No, the Titanic really sunk. You caint keep somethin like that secret. For y'all to be so smart and rich you say some really dumb things. But it weren't no accident. There was some real rich people on board. But the really really rich people didn't want a federal reserve and so they made sure it sunk because them people on board was for it, But I guess it didn't work cause we got a federal reserve.



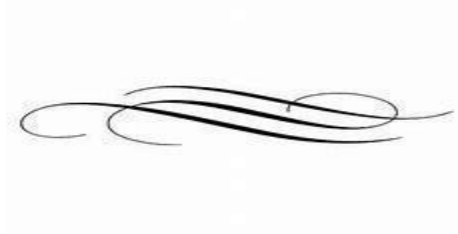
Jan. 29, 2022

I do remember Brother Frank. And dear, sweet Mrs. Jefferson. She taught me how to make a proper meringue. Please pass my best along to both.

To answer your question, Donnie does, in fact, frequent county clubs. We belong to three: Bent Tree, Brook Hollow and Royal Oaks. Although he spends a lot of time over in Fort Worth at Shady Oaks. That's where Ben Hogan used to hang out, you know. And yes, he does favor cashmere. And I do enjoy an afternoon spent at Niemen Marcus. I don't think that doesn't make us bad people.

As far as Donnie "lookin at purty women in underwear all day", he doesn't work at any of our retail stores. Neither do I for that matter. We have capable people who manage our businesses. And just so you know, when Donnie returns home from a busy day of golf, he is still

plenty interested in looking at me in my nightwear. Even after forty years of marriage. Now don't you go repeating that.



Jan. 30, 2022

Whatever you say. Ain't none of my business. I'm still tryin to get that image out of my head.

Now, about you and Donnie. You belong to three country clubs? I reckon that is one of the stupidest things I ever heard.



Jan. 30, 2022

You might be interested to know Donnie says Bent Tree is looking for an experienced greenkeeper and a general worker. You wouldn't qualify for the greenkeeper position of course, but you might have a shot at cutting grass and raking sand traps if you're interested.

Oh, you will never guess who I ran into today at my dentist's office today. Janice Ammo! Remember her? We used to call her Bullet? Well there she was sitting in the waiting room when I walked in, just as pale as a ghost. I asked if she was feeling okay. Turns out she was there inquiring about a set of veneers, and when Doc told her the price all the blood rushed straight to

her feet. She was waiting to get her strength back before going back in and resuming the conversation. Bless her heart. She does need some dental work. I blame that on that nasty old well water she grew up on. I spent the night with her once and it was a month before the taste completely left my mouth.

Anyway, I told her you and I were conversing on Facebook and she made me promise to say hi and ask if you remember the time you and Denise Hooperlaupher double dated with her and Ricky May. Something about you spending the entire evening with your fly unzipped. She said Denise later told her it was that way when you picked her up and her dad came within an eyelash of cold cocking you. Bet you didn't know that! 😊

I told Janice you and I were having some real interesting conversations and although we rarely agree that was okay because life's short and there are far more important matters that need our attention. For instance, I am in a quandary as to whether or not I should be tipping our dentist when I visit. Donnie says no because Doc is putting three sons through college and just recently joined Royal Oaks. I admit I see his point but still worry about it.

Anyway, she says hi and for me to keep an eye on you and should you ever mention you think the moon landing was faked, I should drop you like a hot rock and unfriend you because that and being a you-know-who supporter are the cornerstones of bat shit crazy. (Her words, not mine.) I told her I know other people who believe the moon landing was faked and she looked at me like I'd just done my business right there on the waiting room floor. She then whirled and returned to discuss payment options with Doc.

You don't think the moon landing was filmed on some secret Hollywood set, do you? Just because (a) the flag never moved one iota, (b) the shadows appeared to be completely out of kilter and (c) there wasn't a single star in the sky doesn't mean Neil Armstrong didn't really set

foot on the moon. Although, come to think of it, he did sound an awful lot like Liam Neeson when he delivered those famous words.



Jan. 30, 2022

I remember that night we double dated with them. I felt real embarrassed when I found out. Do you remember the time your junior year when you left for lunch with Bobby Jack Silver and Duke Johnson and when you come back your sweater was on backwards? You probably thought nobody noticed. But everybody did.

I figured out early on that I wasn't gonna get the best job or date the purtiest girl. And just in case I forgot it, you was always quick to remind me. My daddy wasn't rich. I didn't make all A's. I wasn't no great football player. I knowed I was gonna have to work hard for whatever I got in life.

I looked up what it cost to join them country clubs. They said it was 50 thousand dollars to join and 10 thousand dollars a year in dues. That is one hunnerd and fifty thousand dollars and then thirty thousand dollars a year just so you can hang out with other rich people and not have to be bothered by the deplorables as Hillary called us. With the life she and Bill has lived she's got a lot of nerve callin anybody deplorable. Dadgum. There I go again. Durn near everthing's got somethin to do with politics these days.

Anyway, you spend all that money ever year and elderly people in your own hometown caint afford their medicine. Some of these people probably fixed you dinner when you was growing up

or bought stuff from you when we was doing school fundraisers. Now they have to decide between pills and groceries.

You ain't done nothin but insult me since we started talkin. No, I ain't rich. No, I ain't purty. I live in a small town. The tallest building in town is only three floors. But I got a nice little house. We believe in God and the second amendment. Babs is always makin cookies and banana nut bread and takin em to some of the more unfortunate folks here in town. I mow the yard for the widow woman next door. Babs is always buyin extra canned goods at the store and stuffin em into her mailbox. Once a month we have a 42 tournament and everbody pays \$5 to enter. All the money gets donated to the pharmacy to help people get their medicine. Last month Mr. Dixon got hurt real bad when some yankee plowed into the back end of his tractor. They had a horseshoe tournament and a pancake supper at the school that raised \$10,000 dollars for the family. Just like what you pay at one of them fancy clubs.

Mygranddaddy told me a hunnerd times that it is always a rich man's war but a poor man's fight. Rich and powerful people have done good for themselves but they ain't done so good for everybody else.

Anyway, be sure and tell Bullit hi. I reckon I might know a story or two on her, too. We all grew up together. We all did dumb things.

Yes, we went to the moon. By god, if the good ole USA sets its mind to it, it can do anything. Excepting maybe cure cancer and helping people pay for insulin and pills and stuff.

I been meanin to ask you, do y'all got season tickets to the Cowboy games?



Jan. 31, 2022

Let's see. Where to start? Let's work backwards.

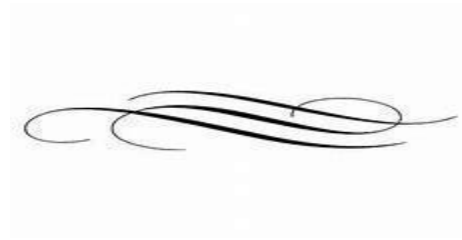
Donnie and I have a privacy suite at Cowboy Stadium. You and Babs are most welcome to come and join us anytime. There's plenty of room, we are near midfield, have our own chef and plenty of video games and such for the grandkids. I just need a few days' notice so I can get you a Specialty Parking Pass so you and Bab's won't have to walk half a mile with the deplorables you referred to.

It sounds like you and Babs are leading rich (not in monetary terms), full lives centered around helping others. That is wonderful. Donnie and I are both familiar with the warm, fuzzy feelings charitable work brings. Every Thanksgiving we volunteer at homeless shelter far across town, serving a good, hot meal to those in need. And one year, Donnie served as Salvation Army Santa ringing his little bell and collecting donations in front Niemens. But it was pretty cold and he had to quit after an hour or so because his fingers were getting numb. Silly him, he'd forgotten his Royce of New York Lambskin gloves that I'd gotten him for his birthday. And if it makes you feel any better, we donate annually to Father Flanagan's Boys Town. Weren't Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney just fabulous in the movie?

Okay, now that I've addressed your concerns, I just have to tell you what happened to me this morning. There I was, standing in the checkout line at H.E.B. (Yes I do my own grocery shopping) when I happened to glance over at the periodicals you mentioned earlier and spotted a headline that read, "Amelia Earhart Eaten by Crabs". And it reminded me of you! Isn't that the funniest thing? Now I am not one to normally read such trash, but seeing as how the checkout line was a mile long with people stocking up before the big snow, and I had time on my hands, I

did glance through the article and discovered that while it's widely believed her plane ran out of fuel and crashed into the ocean, some theorize Amelia Earhart landed by mistake on a deserted island (different from the one the Titanic survivors were inhabiting) and was eaten alive by the three-foot-long coconut crabs that call the island home. Bless her heart. I surely hope that wasn't the case.

Anyway, like I said, this sounded like something you'd believe and got me to wondering—you're not one of those who thinks the world is flat, are you? I mean some people do believe that. Now, Hal Ketchum does say, "The world must be flat; because when people leave town, they never come back." But you do know that's from one of his songs, right? And that people aren't actually dropping off the face of the Earth at the city limits sign, right? I worry about you sometimes.



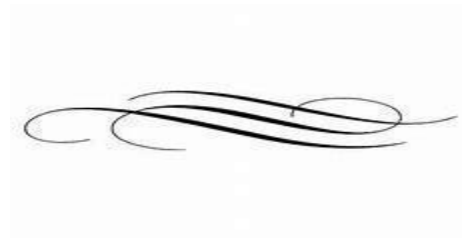
Jan. 31, 2022

I reckon Amelia Everhart knowed a thing or two about flyin and navigating and she didn't get lost or run outta gas. Everbody knows she seen something she shouldn't and the Japs shot her down. I don't like to think about what happened after that but I reckon if the sharks didn't get her then the crabs could have. To be so "intelligent" y'all sure don't know nothin about nothin.

We would love to go to a Cowboys game but we don't want to embarrass you. Or for you to embarrass us in front of your high falutin friends. So maybe sometime when they is all out of town. We liked the Cowboys better when Tom Landry was the coach. Then they wasn't just

America's team, they was God's team on account of God and Tom being so close. I don't think Jerry is close to anything but a expensive bottle of bourbon. Although Jimmy Johnson had em lined up purty good when he had Troy and Emmitt. We would really like to see em play the Redskins. They have always been the best rivals. Now don't go gettin all uppity on me for callin em the Redskins. As far as I am concerned you can kinda have some respect for Cochise and Sittin Bull but you can't have no respect at all for Chris Hamburger and Billy Kilmer and especially George Allen. I just don't understand what all the fuss is about. Bein a Redskin football player is a lot more derogatory than bein an Injun. People can't help how they was born.

Does you chef know how to make chicken fried steak? If he don't a good ole cheeseburger'd be just fine.



Jan. 31, 2022

Our dear Chef Antoine can cook anything. And his California cheeseburger is to die for. He makes his own guacamole! And no one is going to be embarrassed if you two join us. As I always say, we're all just people doing the best we can in this crazy, mixed up world we live in. Every one of us.

Now, about those Cowboys. Our favorite Cowboy of all time is Bob Lilly. Remember when he tackled Bob Griese for a 29-yard loss in Super Bowl VI? Twenty-nine yards! I love that man. He'll always be "Mr. Cowboy" in my book. Donnie even wrote a song about him. Want to hear it?

“Mr. Cowboy”

By Donnie Wallace-Thedford

I can still remember the way things were back then

In spite of all the hard times, I'd live it all again

Just to watch the Dallas Cowboys run the double wing

I'm proud to be from Texas where Bob Lilly's still the king.

When they talk about pro football and look back through the years

You hear about the Packers and the old Chicago Bears

But cross that old Red River, and they don't mean a thing

Down here we've got the Cowboys and Bob Lilly's still the king.

In the golden days of the Cowboys, folks came from miles around

To watch that Doomsday Defense knockin' Redskins on the ground

And Tom Landry's space-age offense with Danderoo at quarterback

Throwing bombs to Bobby Hayes who ran the hundred in nothin' flat.

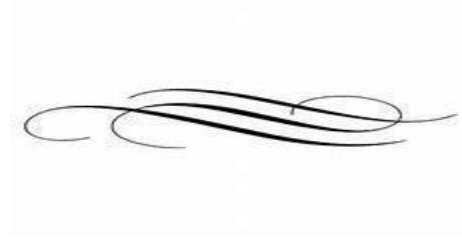
Well if you've never been here, then you might not know

There's a whole lot more in Texas than just the Alamo

It's the home of Roger Staubach and lots of other things

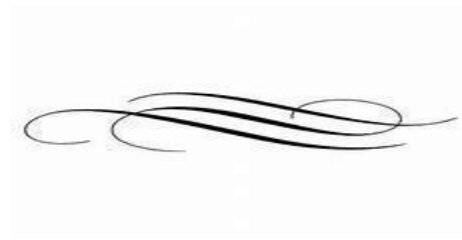
But he'll be the first to tell you Bob Lilly's still the king.

He got the idea from a Hank Williams Jr. song about Bob Wills. Donnie and I just love Hank Jr. And contrary to what most people think, I think John Boy Walton did a fabulous job of playing young Hank in that movie *Living Proof*.



Feb. 1, 2022

I'm pretty sure that your song is based on a song by Waylon not Hank Jr, I never cared much for Hank jr. I liked his daddy and I like III but Hank Jr is too Nashville. I ain't got much use for Nashville. All they wanna do is sell records. Ain't nothin wrong that that but just be honest about it. All that Nashville stuff today is designed for kids. I heard they call it bro country, whatever that is. All I know is it sucks. It ain't got no heart. I growled up listenin to Jerry Jeff and Waylon and Willie and all them guys and they didn't care nothin about all them strings and smooth sounds and all that phony stuff. They just put it out there the way it was, raw and real. You might not believe it but that is kinda the way I am - raw and real. I reckon George Strait is all right. He kinda plays stuff like I used to hear at the rodeo dances. I don't mean to get all romantic but when I was courtin Babs we'd sometimes go dancing at the Broken Spoke and Calhoun's. She'd put on some of them tight lawman jeans and then she would snuggle up real close and we'd two step around the dance floor. And I tell you somethin, that would be enough to get my motor runnin. And hers, too, just between you and me.



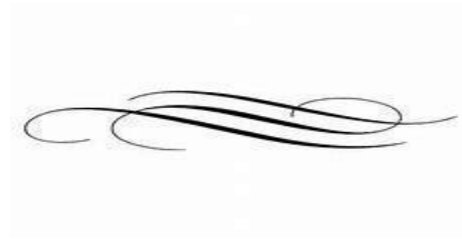
Feb. 1, 2022

Well, apparently there's one thing we can agree on—the state of country music. It has indeed fallen by the wayside. They just don't make them like the legends anymore. I was always partial to Conway Twitty myself. He had fabulous hair. So did Merle. And Sonny James. Course I can't think of Sonny without thinking of Running Bear's tragic love for Little White Dove. And that mean 'ol river. Breaks my heart just thinking about it. So let's don't. Now, where was I? Oh yes, the country music legends. I just think only two have come close to filling their shoes—George Strait and Alan Jackson. Sad but true. But, we still have Dolly. Don't know what we'd do without her!

Oh, and you are right. It was Waylon I was thinking of who wrote that song, not Hank Jr. Waylon had nice hair too, although I thought he could have washed it more often.

Okay, now answer me this: Where have all the good TV shows gone? I just don't understand programming these days. Especially all those reality shows. Are other people's lives really that boring that they need to watch other people's crazy, screwed up lives? We have two 72" flat screen HD TV's and a few 52" models. One is usually turned to a Hallmark movie and the other to someone's murder on I.D. Donnie loves Hallmark movies starring Lacy Chebert and Candace Cameron Bure', and I'm hooked on the Homicide Hunter, Detective Joe Kenda. Donnie says he worries about me watching all that murder and mayhem and that it can't be good for my well-being. I told him those shows are educational. For instance, I know never to (a) push him

down a flight of stairs, (b) knock him out, strap him in his truck and run it over a cliff or (c) poison him with anti-freeze because no one ever gets away with those things. Bless his heart; I think he slept with one eye open for a week.



Feb. 1, 2022

You is right about tv. My grandma used to watch her stories as she called em. She would get real into it. She would sit in front of her tv and say “Tell your ole lies, John Dixon!” Whoever that was. All I remember is that there was some big shot doctor that still lived at home with his momma and daddy. I always thought that was weird.

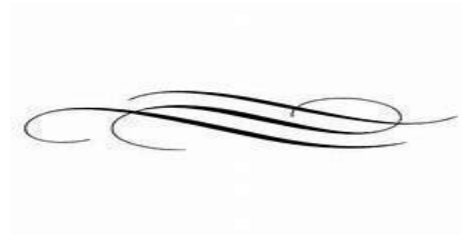
But you are right about falling down the stairs. In them stories if you was involved in a grinding car crash then you was gonna be in a coma and get amnesia and forget everything. And you wouldn’t remember whoever was in love with you and they would have to win you back all over again. Ever time. But if you was an actor on one of them shows and your character was goin down the stairs then it was time to start huntin another job because you was gonna be off the show.

They don’t have no westerns on tv no more. It is all big city stuff and people trying to sing or dance. I ain’t really watched much since the Dukes of Hazzard. I watch rasslin sometimes but I am startin to think maybe it might be fixed. I reckon if they can fix an election I guess they can fix a rasslin match.

Please don't say nothin about Babs and I goin dancin and it gettin our motors runnin. You know, us being good Baptists and all. If this gets out we'll be getting a visit from Brother Frank. You know why Baptists think it is a sin to do it standin up? They're afraid it might lead to dancin.

That's the thing about God. He's got to be a Baptist, and Church of Christ, and Methodist, and Catholic all at the same time, I don't know how He does it. He is even got to be Assembly of God, too but he can speak all them languages when they get all in the Spirit and go to spoutin.

The Olympics is startin. I hope our boys and girls go over there and kick some commie ass! I ain't much on all that figure skatin and stuff like that. Bout the only skatin a like to watch is roller derby. Why ain't that an Olympic sport - roller derby on ice skates? Them skiers and ridin them sleds doin all that ski jumpin looks fun though. But then French and Swiss guys always win all that. But that's cause they ain't got nothin else to do. They ain't got no football or baseball so how else is they gonna impress the girls? I wish they had that thing where guys on skates would see how many barrels they could jump over. There was some serious crashes in that sport. And I sure don't get that one where they try to play shuffleboard with a giant puck on ice and somebody goes along sweepin in front of it. Who the hell came up with that?



Feb. 2, 2022

I just love Olympic figure skating. Especially the ice dancing. The skaters are all so elegant. I am just amazed every time some strong, handsome young man in tight pants hoists his lovely partner above his head and twirls her around. Donnie likes it too, but I think he eye is on the women and their skimpy costumes with material the color of their skin. Those are bad, but they don't hold a candle to the girls' sand volleyball outfits. Who in their right mind thinks the viewing audience wants to watch women with small breasts in tiny tops pulling at their wedgies all day long?

OMG, are you getting snow? Our neighborhood is a winter wonderland! It has been snowing since early last night is predicted to continue throughout the day today. Just lovely. The man that installed our new Italian marble countertops said the government has invented snow that won't melt. He says there are YouTube videos of people holding blowtorches to snowballs that catch fire and burn. However, those people in the videos are from Georgia where they believe snow is used to spread chemicals in the government's attempt to poison the entire state. Which is silly. Why would anyone want to poison Alan Jackson? That said, I don't think we have to worry about our snow here in Texas. The neighborhood kids are all out playing in it, and none have dropped dead yet.



Feb. 2, 2022

I bet them boys in tight pants that you are talking about is just as attracted to boys in white pants as you is. Again, I got nothin against it. Just fact!

We got some snow, too. Probably not as much as you got. But snow is good for me. When people is about to get snowed in for a few days, the movie rental business gets real good. I bet you never thought about that. See, that is one more reason why I would be a good partner in your business. I got a real keen sense of trends in business.

I bet you people in Dallas is just crashing into each other left and right in all that traffic and snow and ice. That is just crazy.

I wish I could get all excited about the Olympics but I just caint. Normally I'd be getting all excited about the super bowl but who gives a crap about Cincinnati and Los Angeles. Boring vs Gomorrah. I keep prayin that the Cowboys would get back to the big game but they just keep chokin again and agin. Their windpipe must be smaller than the tube on a can of WD 40. I guess God ain't got no interest in football no more since He called the man in the hat home. Or maybe He is still mad at Jerry for runnin him off.

By the way. Don't never buy no WD40. Blaster is much better stuff and it is made right here in the good ole US of A.



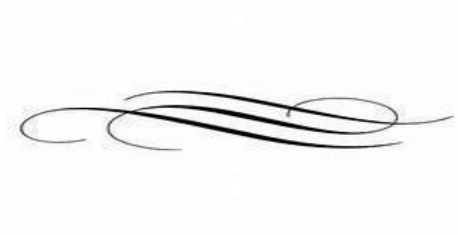
Feb. 3, 2022

Well, looks like we are stranded at home today. The roads are extremely hazardous. And I don't know what Mr. Atterbury was thinking when he headed out his driveway on his bicycle a short while ago. He made it about twenty feet before taking a dive. He's fine, bless his heart, but his \$8000 Pinarello didn't fare so well.



Feb. 3, 2022

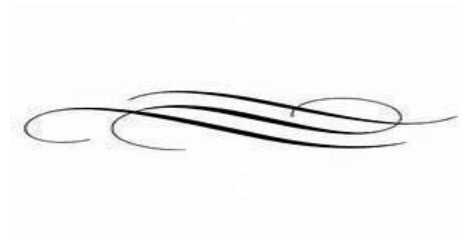
There was two Pentecostal women come in the store the other day. I ain't against any body's beliefs but there is a reason God invented make up. They was a little tough, I tell you. If nothin else, I seen bondo cover up a lot of dents and wrinkles.



Feb. 4, 2022

You'll have to excuse me, Jerry Ray, if I seem a little pre-occupied. I just got off the phone with my dear friend Sally Jean Deveraux, expressing my concern about our having everything ready

for this year's Debutante' Ball at Royal Oaks when she informed me that we have *plenty* of time to get everything in order seeing as how this is only 1725, not 2022. Evidently, according to German historian Herbert Illig and his Phantom Time Hypothesis, our calendars were muddled with centuries ago and advanced a full 297 years. This occurred when the years between 614 AD and 911 AD were inadvertently passed over, resulting in a clerical error of monumental proportions that most people today are completely unaware of. As a result, none of us need worry about being late for anything for the next 297 years, she says. In a way that's wonderful news, but I find it both invigorating and distressing. Because *if* true, I am not only a lot younger than my 65 years—I've not even been born yet! Is that possible? I tell you my mind is a blur right now and my tinnitus is at an all-time high.

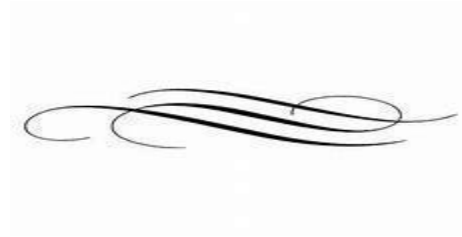


Feb. 4, 2022

Damn! You rich people worry about the stupidest stuff. Of course you is alive. We is having this conversation, ain't we? And it dont make no difference if it is 2022 or 1817 or Back to the Future, if something is comin up it is comin up. And what the hell is a Drbutant's ball? You should just find a good country western dance band and use one of them tennis courts at your country club. It'd be just like a good old fashioned rodeo dance. Excepting there probably wouldn't be no fist fights. So I guess really, what would be the point?

Go plan your fancy ball. Maybe you could get McDonald's to cater. I wonder how a quarter pounder with cheese would go with all that champagne. It wouldn't matter with the fries.

Everybody knows they go with everthing.

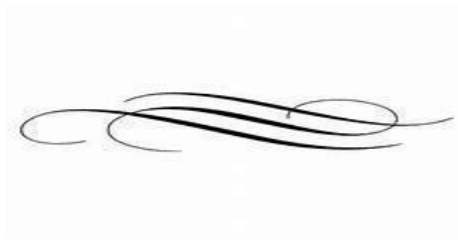


Feb. 4, 2022

There are some oddball people in this world, Billy Ray, you know it? And no, I'm not talking about you. Just last week before the weather hit, Donnie took our BMW SUV in for an oil change. In the waiting room, he ran into one of those guys who is an expert on everything.

I told Donnie he should have told the man that a lifetime of surfing the internet did not equal four years at an elite university and a twenty plus years running a highly successful, well respected business. Donnie's reply was, "I would have, but the guy had tobacco stains all over his T-shirt and I didn't want to get my new Alexander McQueen polo dirty, should it come to a scuffle."

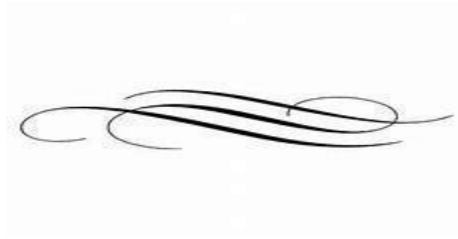
Gotta go. My friend Marianne Cromwell and I are headed to the grill at Bent Tree for a light lunch (their almond turkey panini is to die for) and possibly a movie afterwards. The roads are terrible, but she thinks we can make it in her Hummer HX. She wants to see *House of Gucci* but I prefer we see *American Underdog—the Kurt Warner Story*. Outside of Tommy Brady, that Kurt was the best looking quarterback the NFL has ever seen. Although young Joe Burrow is quickly moving up the list.



Feb. 4, 2022

Not everybody can afford to go to college. Ever think about that?

I ain't never really paid no attention to which quarterback might be the purtiest. But it seems to me that now that Brady has quit that all the good quarterbacks is in the AFC. You got Mahomes, and Josh Allen, and Joe Burrow and that other kid that plays for the lightning bolts. In the NFC you got Russell Wilson, but he's starting to get hurt a lot and I heard he might be goin to Denver. And there's that crybaby Rodgers (nobody appreciates me!). He is purty good but he's got to where all he does is whine about somethin all the time.



Feb. 5, 2022

Marianne and I ended up opting for the Milos Brothers Grill for lunch seeing as how it's closer than the club. Benjamin had on a lovely pearl broach today he'd found at Gino's over in north Dallas, and Bradley was simply gliding across the floor in his new Chameleon-skin loafers. They were exquisite.

Guess what? Marianne knows somebody who knows somebody who is related to a guy who says he has proof the moon isn't real. He insists it's a hologram. If that is indeed the case, what they ought to do is change it out occasionally, say every month or so. Could show Tommy Brady or Kurt Warner one month (for women my age), Taylor Swift (for boys and girls ages 8-12), Benji (for dog lovers), an eight-pound largemouth bass (for anglers), and so on. Might as well keep things interesting. The moon is beautiful, but once you've seen it nearly every night for 65 years, it does start to lose its allure.



Feb. 5, 2022

You know the moon ain't no holygram! People shouldn't be doubting and makin fun of God's creations that way. Ain't you ever been to Galveston or Padre? We learnt in school that the moon is what causes the tides. Remember? Too bad everbody ain't grounded in science like I am.

But just because the moon is real don't mean they couldn't come up with some movie projector that would be powerful enough to project images on the moon. I am in the movie business so I know a little bit about what I am talkin about. We could show movies on the moon where everbody could see em! Them big Hollywood movies that they spend all that money to make, they could just have a world premier on the moon. All they have to do is just figure out how to charge everbody for watchin. You know, some kind of pay per view deal.

Say! You could even advertise some of your products on the moon. Some of them girls you got modelin for you, I can just about guarantee that a whole lot of people would be watchin. Of

course you might get sued for all the wrecks you cause because men would be watchin the moon instead of the road. You might have to get everbody to sign one of them legal documents. You know, a release of imputinity. I think that is what they call it.

Chameleon shoes! I never heard of nothin like that. I wonder how many of them little lizards it takes to make one pair of shoes? One ostrich or one alligator will make several pair of boots. For some reason it don't seem fair to kill a bunch of lizards just to make one pair of shoes.

Do them shoes change colors dependin on what color pants that guy is wearin? Ain't that the way it works? Or maybe change dependin on that feller's mood?

Wait a minute! That's it! Mood shoes! They had them mood rings a long time ago. If we could make mood shoes ain't no tellin what we could sell em for! Between mood shoes, and your underwear business, and showin movies on the moon, we could be richer'n than three feet up a bull's—um, sorry, I forget sometimes who I'm talkin to. I don't mean to be crude. We could make us a whole lot of money and tell Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk just to go play with themselves.

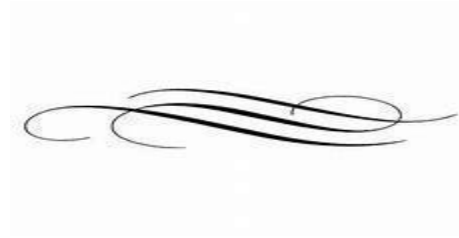
Marion, there is opportunities all around us. You probably ain't never met anybody with a keen sense of business like me. Are you sure you don't want to partner up on some of this stuff? Remember, most people only got 12 years of school but I got 13. I reckon that gives me a little bit of an advantage.



Feb. 5, 2022

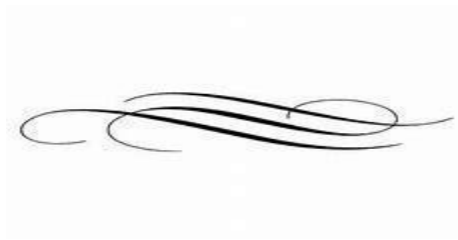
You certainly do have a grand business sense about you, Jerry Ray. Am surprised you don't have a chain of video rental stores nationwide. And your own space program. How about this? How about if Donnie and I ever decide to open one of our shops in Dime Box, we'll hire you as manager? But with planned outlets in Chicago and Miami to join those in Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Los Angeles, and New York it might be a while.

Good news. The sun is out and the roads we are clearing up. Hooray! We made it to lunch fine yesterday in Marianne's Hummer but saw a lot of stranded motorists. I asked Marianne if we should stop and offer to pull some out, but she didn't want to get her new Prada Shearling boots wet and dirty. Can't say I blame her.



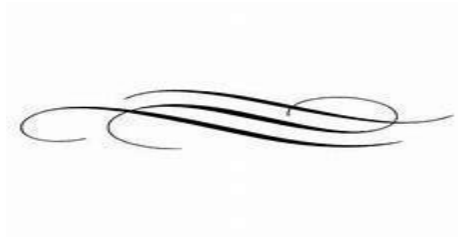
Feb. 6, 2022

Whenever y'all are ready to open a store in Dime Box just let me know. The way things are goin, I can probably get you a real good deal on the video store. Not sure how much longer we can hold out. And if you do open a store here, you might want to consider shipping a few less of your small and petite sized and a few more of the Xtra large and 2X. Just sayin.



Feb. 6, 2022

Guess you saw where Tommy retired. I was sure hoping the Bucs would get to the Super Bowl again so late in the fourth quarter he could call time out and stand on the fifty-yard-line and wave to everybody. You know, like Jack and Arnie did on the Swilken bridge at St. Andrews when they retired? That would have been great. Looks like Tommy will spend his time now doing commercials for Crypto. Whatever the heck that is. Someone told me it's a lot like BitCoin. I don't know what that is either. Good old American cash has always served me and Donnie well. And American Express.

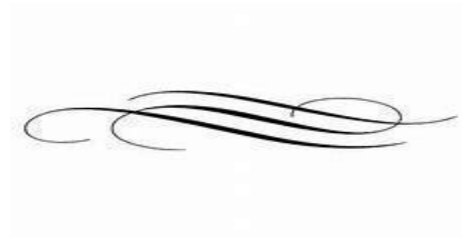


Feb. 8, 2022

Hi, Marion. Sorry I was so late gettin back to you. I had a couple ole trailers I was trying to sell so I was kinda busy yesterday. I tell you, people is just nuts. I had an old flatbed, 16', and I was askin \$1200 for it. It's gonna need to be rewired and some tires. First guy that come looked at it said with all that he would have to put \$500 in it and asked me if I'd take \$600. I told him if

it had all of that already on it I would've been asking \$500 more in the first place. Anyway I got 'em all sold.

It was time for Tom Brady to retire. Who does he think he is, George Blanda?



Feb. 8, 2022

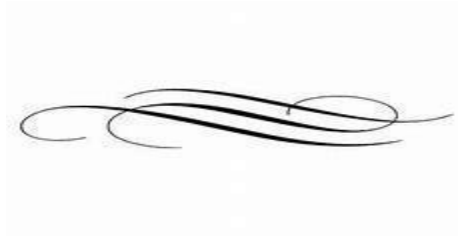
We have a real problem going on here, and it has really hit the fan. Seems some big company is dead set on putting up a bunch of wind turbines near Decatur where Donnie's brother Ethan lives. And Ethan doesn't want any wind turbines near where he lives because they will (a) kill poor, defenseless birds, (b) disrupt the air flow near Decatur airport causing small fixed-wing, single-engine planes like his Cessna 172 to flip over and crash when coming in for a landing and (c) worst of all, they'll ruin everyone's view of the night sky with all their blinking red lights.

Ethan's heading up a group getting a petition together to put a halt to the proposed project.

Donnie and I can't sign it because we don't live in Wise County, but we can offer moral support.

I wouldn't want the things anywhere near my home either for fear one of those gigantic fan blades would come loose, fall off and go bounding through the neighborhood destroying everything in its path. How frightening is that? Besides, I'm not sure about that whole wind-generated electricity thing. How does it get to where it's going? And where *does* it go? The gentleman who washes and waxes our vehicles by hand (that soap those automatic carwashes use is much too harsh) told us he doesn't believe electricity even exists. Said he never has seen any. In jest, Donnie suggested he stick two copper wires into a wall outlet and then touch his

tongue to them. Well, wouldn't you know it? The man did! Next time we saw him his tongue looked like a large, grill-blackened tomato. We think he said he's now a believer but weren't sure. It was hard to understand him.



Feb. 8, 2022

Damn, Marion! Is y'all stupid or something? I don't mean to be insultin but you can't be tellin people to do stupid stuff like that. You is gonna get the pants sued off of you. Or maybe I should say you'll be havin to give all your bras and panties! I sure hope you got one of them release of impunity papers with this guy!

Everbody knows electricity is real. We learnt in school that Ben Franklin invented it. Agin, grounded in science.

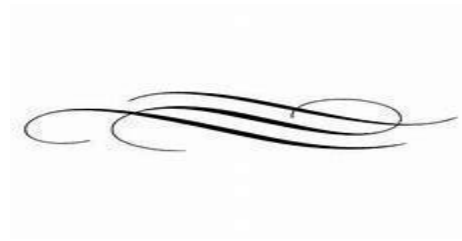
I reckon I don't know too much about Wise County. Bout the only time I ever think of it is when I'm shootings craps and 8 is my point. And we wouldn't need all them windmills if the government would just let us produce all the oil we got right here in the USA! But the government would rather buy it from all them Arabs and commies. That don't make no sense at all to me.

I know that when the oil patch slows down it sure does hurt our little town. Them oil field service guys makes good money. Of course they is working all the time so their wives ain't got nothin else to do but spend it. So that's good for everbody in town.

But things is pretty slow right now. We have all been here before and everbody knows how to scrape by durin the hard times. But then oil field eorkers are helpin keep us goin. They is always coming in and rentin them movies we keep behind the curtain.

Everbody says that they got all these options now where you can download movies or watch em on streamin and that's why our business is so slow. Maybe. But a big part of it is that movies just suck. They don't make no movies that are interestin any more. The Duke is gone and Clint is too old and Burt ain't tryin to get away from that Honeymooners guy so this just ain't nothin worth watchin. Chuck Bronson knowed how to clean up the streets in what you call your urban environment but he ain't around no more either. Nowadays movies is either all touchy feeley or they is about some people we used to read about in comic books. It just ain't worth your trouble to watch a movie no more.

Are you sure you don't need me around? If y'all keep telling people to do stupid stuff all the time them lawyers is gonna pick your bones dry.



Feb. 9, 2022

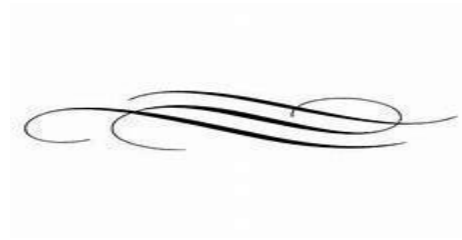
I don't think it's the crux of your problem, but I do agree they don't make movies like they used to. Donnie says the demarcation line is bold and clear and lies squarely at the boot heels of Burt Lancaster's death. And that nothing worthwhile has come out of Hollywood since. He is also adamant that the three greatest motion pictures of all time are *Come Back, Little Sheba*, *The Rainmaker* and *Elmer Gantry*. I don't disagree, but my interest lie in scary movies and there

hasn't been a decent one since *Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte* with Bette Davis. And don't you just love the song? Although I can't remember if the singer was Doris Day or Patti Page.

Well, enough of that. Wouldn't you know it? There's something far worse than an array of wind turbines near one's home—a 75-foot tall antenna tower next door! OMG! Donnie and I never even knew Harold (our next-door-neighbor) was a ham radio operator. Turns out he has always used discreet antennas made from black wire strung between the trees in his back yard so as not to draw the attention of the HOA. Well, evidently, someone pissed him off and now he's planning to erect just such a tower. And get this—he says there's nothing anyone can do about it because in 1996 Congress passed the OTARD (Over-the-Air-Reception Devices) rules giving amateur radio operators the right to erect antenna towers. And these rules prevent municipalities and HOA's from forbidding them, requiring permits or anything else that would cause a hardship to the owner/operator! What were they thinking?!!! Donnie has visited with an attorney friend and was told Harold does have that right and there's nothing we or any of our neighbors can do about it except make his life miserable in a tactless or inconsiderate way. And, of course, we would never do such a thing. Harold and his wife Doris are nice people and great neighbors. We don't socialize with them outside of saying hello and exchanging cookie platters at Christmas, but we would never go out of our way to make anybody's life miserable. There's plenty of stuff going on these days to do that without our help.

I can't speak for Larry and Georgina Blackwell who live on the other side of them, and we haven't spoken to them about it yet, but Larry has been known to be a hothead at times and I suspect he's about to blow a gasket. Donnie isn't as upset over the matter as I am. He's worried Harold is exhibiting early signs of dementia, because why else would anyone in their right mind erect a 75-foot tall antenna tower on Pecan Orchard Lane in Preston Hollow?

I hope that's not the case, and if he does follow through on building it, we can always move. They're building some nice homes over in Lake Highlands although Donnie says that neighborhood is comprised mostly of families and younger couples. That *is* a concern. We certainly don't want kids running rampant up and down the street making all kinds of noise, and that's not a problem over in the older section Lake Highlands. That's where the largest homes and giant oak and pecan trees are anyway. Guess we'll see what happens. Pray for us.



Feb. 9, 2022

I guess I just don't understand you people. What difference does it make to you what he does on his property? It is his property, right? And just think if there is a tornado or commie attack or another blizzard or something, you got a way to communicate with the outside world right next door. Might come in handy. Of course, if there was a tornado that big tower might just blow over on your house. That might not be good. And it is probably gonna get struck by lightning two or three times a year. Hope he's gonna have a good ground wire.

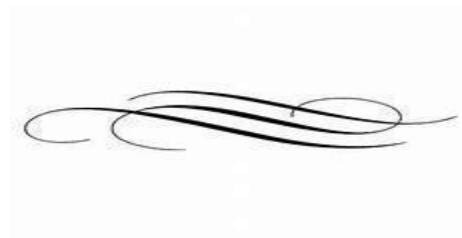
Somethin I been meanin to ask you. Where do y'all get all them unmentionables that you sell made? Please tell me that you are employing good hard workin Americans right here in the USA and that you ain't using a bunch of commies of profitin off the hard work of a bunch of little kids. That wouldn't be right at all. I don't believe y'all would be like that.

Since you is addin all them new stores I am thinkin you is gonna need what they call extra capacity. Have you thought about building a factory here? The land's a lot cheaper here than it is

in Dallas. And we got plenty of god-fearin hard workin Americans right here that would be damn proud to be sewin 'Made in America!' Into ever one of them delicates.

I could really be a good help in that. I know everbody in town and I could tell you which ones would be good workers and which ones might be prone to carry off some of the merchandise. You wouldn't have to start me off as manager. I could start out as assistant manager and work my way up in a few weeks. That would really be better than puttin a store here. It'd put more people to work. You keep acting like you got no interest in hirin me, but it is becomin increasingly obvious that our fates is intertwined.

Oh, one more thing. If you do put a plant in here, you might want to think about shuttin it down a couple weeks ever November. You know for deer season and all.



Feb. 10, 2022

We have all of our products made in non-communistic, third world country factories. By doing so, we are helping local economies that really need it. And you will be happy to know, our employees are all twelve and over.

We have indeed looked into building a plant in the U.S., but thus far it just hasn't been cost effective. That said, we've only looked at locations in large market cities. Perhaps a plant in Dime Box would work. And it is in close proximity to Houston, Austin and San Antonio. I'll run it by Donnie and we'll get our people to look into it. I'm somewhat surprised you are interested in a managerial position. I would have thought you would be happier in production. Perhaps

making our Midnight thongs or our Silky Wonder no-wire bras for full-figured women. And if we were to wind up *not* hiring you for some unforeseen reason, I'm sure a substantial finder's fee bonus would be in order.

In the meantime, you and Babs just have to come to Dallas in December one of these years. Our whole neighborhood decorates for Christmas and it is something to behold, if I say so myself. We've been featured in several publications including Texas Highways Magazine. What makes our neighborhood different from others is that each home uses a single color and a different theme. For instance, Donnie and I always do *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. In manganese violet. All of the displays are just delightful, but you will want to be sure and look for the Ludwig's *Baby Jesus Manger Scene* in cadmium yellow, The Brown's *Early Pioneer Christmas* in raw sienna, the Harrison's *Hail to the Navy* in ultramarine blue and the Madison's *The Grinch Stole Christmas*, in emerald green of course.

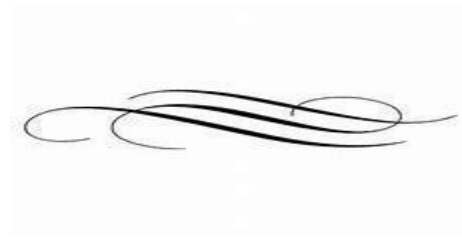


Feb. 10, 2022

Give me two strings of multi color lights and I'm happy.

Not many people know this but I thought about runnin for city council once. This bein a small town almost everthin is controlled by a few families. My campaign slogan was gonna be, "I ain't got no kinfolk". But my friends talked me out of it. They all said I would win easy buy that I didn't want all the headaches. I was getting all excited about makin a bunch of speeches but I guess it won't never come to that.

Do you and Donnie got a lot of big shot politician friends?



Feb. 11, 2022

Not sure that would have been a winning campaign slogan, but I think you *should* run for city council. You would definitely bring fresh ideas to the table. Would love to see your posters and television ads. Hey, here's a slogan—"Hello. I'm Jerry Ray Bilson. And you're not." If that didn't get you votes, it would certainly have people counting their lucky stars. Just kidding.

Donnie and I do have a number of "politician friends" as you refer to them. A prominent state representative lives just three doors down from us. George and Laura used to reside in Preston Hollow themselves before he became president and there is talk Matthew McConaughey is considering a home here. Which reminds me—our antenna tower dilemma has been resolved!!! Harold, it turns out, was only kidding about the tower to get back at Larry for draining his swimming pool into Harold's back flowerbed rather than out to the street drain where it's supposed to go. Larry's excuse was the flow somehow got diverted without his knowledge. Seven times apparently. We're guessing this won't happen again given the antenna tower trump card Harold is now holding. Whew! We are staying put!

Tell me, Jerry Ray, do you all still have lightning bugs in Dime Box? We were telling our granddaughters about catching them when we were their age and they looked at Donnie and me like we were crazy. Not because they didn't believe the little critters' tails could actually light up, but because they wondered why anyone would want to be outside running around trying to catch

bugs when they could just watch a YouTube video and eat chocolate chip cookies from Jacques Torres in New York. Then they went back to playing slots on their iPads. Gotta love 'em.



Feb. 12, 2022

Hey, Marion! Sorry about not gettin back to you yesterday. I know that hearin from me is probably the highlight of your day and I don't mean to keep you hangin. But we was real busy around here yesterday.

First off Babs was a little under the weather yesterday and she normally don't never get sick. So I was a little concerned. She didn't act like she had a cold or stomach virus and all, she said was she just didn't feel right. I'm sure it weren't nothin and she says she feels better today.

Plus my neighbor's bull decided he would just stroll through the fence and see what was goin on in my pasture. All I got is a couple of steers that I am feedin (have you seen the price of beef lately?) so that bull shouldn't have found anything interestin over here. Unless he is interested in cambium yellor. If you know what I mean. Mostly I figure it was just a case of boys bein boys, you know—gettin a little restless and havin an itch to see what else is goin on. And you know what they say about the grass bein greener and all that. I reckon that is the same stuff that makes people leave Dime Box to move to Dallas where they got all that traffic and crime and just so many damn people. I won't never figure that one out.

Anyway, me and my neighbor got that bull back over in his pasture. I got a 4 wheeler and he's got one of them John Deere gators and together we was able to herd him back. Then I helped him fix the fence. Hopefully that bull's urge to roam got satisfied for a little while.

Sure, we still got lightning bugs. And kids still catch 'em in a mason jar. But they ain't as many as they used to be. Usually they is at their peak in late April and May. But then so is the chiggers so sometimes chasing lightning bugs can lead to prolonged itching.

Speaking of the price of beef, it is higher than a kite but at least you can get it. At the grocery store half the shelves is empty. It looks like we is living in one of them communist countries like Venezuela or somethin. This is America. The world's breadbasket. But we done everything we could to kill the American farmer and now we is paying for it. On the other hand, I guess if there ain't no food there ain't no need to hoard up on toilet paper. Cause if you ain't got nothin to eat then there ain't no need to take a ... Oops. Sorry once again for my indelicacies.

Is everything in short supply in Dallas, too? It wouldn't surprise at all if the big city folks was getting all the food and stuff and the small towns was all havin to share the rest.



Feb. 12, 2022

Happy to hear you resolved your cow problem. Perhaps if more money had been spent on fence quality, those things wouldn't happen. Oh well.

I thought Willie cured all the farmers' problems with Farm Aid? Especially once he brought Bobby in. I mean, Johnny Cougar, Neil Young and those guys are okay, but there's only

one Bobby Dylan. I just love him and can't understand what all the fuss is about over his voice. You think *Blowin' in the Wind* carries any substance when Pavoratti sings it? Or Streisand? Give me a break. Guess you thought I was probably a Celine Dion or Adele fan, didn't you. Wrong!

No major shopping shortages here to speak of. Although I did have to visit three stores recently in order to find the bath beads I prefer.

Now, on a more serious note—We had quite the fiasco at our house last night. Jenny and Lila spent the night with us, and around eight o'clock they decided they wanted to watch a movie. Their favorite movie is *Frozen* and we are on our third DVD as the first two wore plumb out. Well, when I put it, both girls started crying. Turns out that Jenny learned some dreadful news at kindergarten recently and went straight home and shared it her younger sister.

Apparently, a classmate told her that Walt Disney used cryogenics technology to freeze himself when he died and had *Frozen* was created as a way to mess with Google's search algorithms in order to steer people away from that information in order to keep it secret. Donnie and I finally quelled the girls' shitstorm (pardon my language) with large bowls of Hagen Daz's Dulce de Leche ice cream (their favorite) and letting them watch *The Masked Singer*, although that turned out to be a bust when Rudy Giuliani was revealed and the Japanese judge stormed off the set saying he was "offended". Give me a break. Wish I'd been videoing when Jenny turned to Donnie and said, "Don't try and tell me this show isn't scripted." What a hoot! I tell you, kids these days are light years ahead of us back in the day. At five, I was just learning to whistle and you were probably still in diapers.



Feb. 13, 2022

I swear, Marion, I ain't so sure that you know anythin about anythin. For sure you don't know nothin about fences. Or about bulls. When they make their mind up bulls is pretty much gonna do whatever they want to do. Some bulls is real gentle. And some bulls is meaner than an acre full of rattlesnakes.

What in the hell are you talking about Walt Disney bein frozen? I heard the same thing about Ted Williams, best hitter that ever lived. It just don't make no sense to me that someone would want to freeze themselves so maybe they can be thawed out later. I reckon they might be a little unsure about where they might be headed after they die and are maybe tryin to buy a little more time. But it don't work that way. The elevator either goes up or down and there ain't no pause button. Know what I mean? I swear rich people ain't got nothin to worry about so they have to dream up the craziest stuff they can think of.

You might be surprised but I like Bob Dylan, too. No, he can't sing but that don't matter to me. And Willie, he is okay. I like all his real old stuff and I really like that Shotgun Willie album. But when all that Red Headed Stranger stuff came out is when he became an institution and all. That kinda bothered me. It might surprise you to know this but I ain't never really been what they call mainstream about nothin.

Maybe you need to bring them grandkids down to Dime Box and let 'em chase some lightnin bugs. (Be sure and bring some chigger spray!) Then maybe they wouldn't get so upset over somebody getting frozen after they die. And some good ole fashioned Blue Bell wouldn't hurt em none, either. Or better yet, some good ole homemade ice cream. In fact, I have a ice cream maker you have to crank and that might be just the ticket for them kids. I reckon the whole world

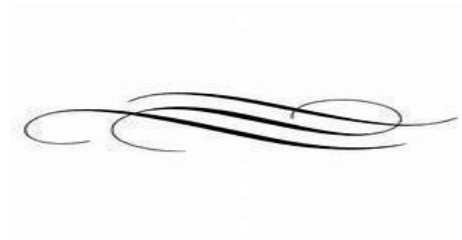
needs more of one kid crankin and the other kid sittin on top of an old fashioned ice cream maker. I suspect that might solve a lot of the problems in this ole world.



Feb. 13, 2022

Well, Jerry Ray, I can't say I agree with you, but Rick thinks a trip to Dime Box would do our granddaughters some good. And if they don't know how to crank an ice cream maker, they can learn. Not sure if 'Lizabeth would feel the same though. Our daughter's one and only trip to our hometown was not a good one. She was not a big fan of wasps, the Dairy Freeze, or coyotes howling in the distance while she was trying to sleep. I don't think she'd want the girls to suffer through all of that. But I'll check.

I shared our recent *Frozen* fiasco with her and she said that's not the first time Jenny has returned home from kindergarten upset. Apparently this classmate of hers is often sharing things he's heard at home. The poor boy's seven, having been held back a couple of years, bless his heart. Just a week or so ago Jenny came home crying, convinced Prince Charles is a vampire. The boy, whose name is Bud, told her the Prince of Wales is related to Vlad the Impaler, the inspiration for Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and that he suffers from porphyria, an iron deficiency that causes people to be sensitive to sunlight and exhibit somewhat pale skin—proof of his vampirism. The only good thing to come out of this is that Lila, age four, now can't wait to get to kindergarten where she'll be privy to such chewy tidbits. She had previously been dreading her introduction to formal education.



Feb. 14, 2022

Happy Valentines Day to Miss Marion Wallace - Thedford. I swear I just can't get over all them last names.

I caint even remember what we was talking about. This was a busy weekend what with it being Valentines Day weekend and the super bowl to boot. On top of all of that Babs was feelin a lot better (I think I told you she was a little under the weather) and she was wantin to get out and kick up her heels. Ever year they have the pre super bowl horseshoe tournament over at the American Legion and so we went over there. This year they had half the horseshoes painted orange for the Bengals and the rest painted blue for the Rams. And whoever wins the whole thing whatever color his horseshoes is that is who is gonna win the super bowl. It's real accurate, too. Somebody said it had gotten 7 of the last twenty winners right! That's nearly half! I always statg out real good and then I kinda falter. The first three rounds I am tossin ringers and just trouncing everbody but then I seem to tail off a little bit. Babs says that is about the time I get my 5th Shiner bock down but I keep telling her that ain't got nothing to do with it. Anyway everbody had a big time.

Afterwards she said she felt like doin somethin different so instead of goin to the Dairy Freeze we went over to the Golden Dragon and ate a bunch of Chinese food. I think really she just wanted a margarita. All I know is I ate a bunch of them fried shrimp and catfish. I usually

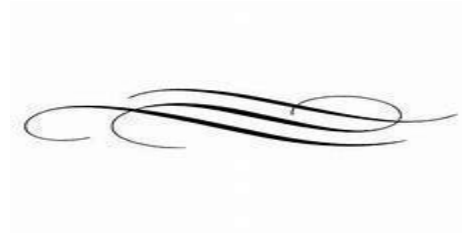
just stock up on that stuff cause them Chinese don't know nothin bout makin vegetables. But I guess you caint count on too much from people that expect you to eat with sticks.

Then we headed out to the Broken Spoke where she could have a couple more margaritas and I continued my tradition with the Shiners. Needless to say we was movin a little slow on Sunday morning.

But I was glad that Babs was feelin better. I been worried about her. Babs has got a real ability to cut hair. She is always sayin that it is up to us to maximize all the talents that God gave us, if you know what I mean. She cracks me up sometimes!

So did you watch the game? I reckon I didn't have no dog in that hunt so I really didn't care who won but it was a putty interestin game, Babs made a pot of chili and a pan of cornbread so we had good eats and a good game.

Did y'all watch it?

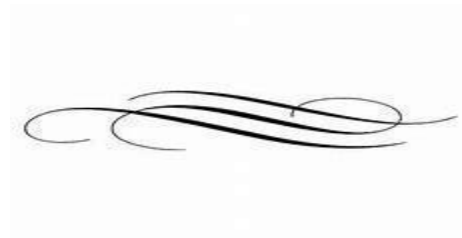


Feb. 14, 2022

Happy Valentine Day to you too, Jerry Ray. Sounds like you and Babs had an exquisite Super Bowl Sunday. We've never given thought to playing horseshoes and eating Chinese food before the game. What an interesting tradition. Donnie and I used to throw magnificent Super Bowl parties but had to quit when Donnie's brother Ethan spilled a full glass of Chateau Latour on our beautiful, white Bernhardt sofa. These days just the kids and grandkids come over. Yesterday, we grownups watched the game while the kiddos entertained themselves on our new Jurassic

Park Arcade in the basement. I had stocked the fridge down there with all their favorite goodies, so they had a big time. As far as the game itself, isn't that Joe Burrow a real cutie? It broke my heart to see him lose.

But what was really upsetting was stepping out of the shower yesterday morning and, to my horror, discovering our heated bathroom floor wasn't working. Our Adessi Mercado Blue Porcelain tile was like ICE! It's a wonder I didn't get frostbite. I guess all those people who believe all that global warming nonsense don't live in Dallas County in February. It was forty degrees yesterday morning! And do you think we could get someone out to repair it on Super Bowl Sunday? Nosiree. Thank goodness for my Birkenstock Zermatt Wool slippers. They're lifesavers.



Feb. 15, 2022

Gee, Marion. I have a solution for ya. They're called bath mats. They're warmer than time and you don't bust your ass. They work perfect on linoleum, I can tell you that!

And your Joe Burrow guy didn't look so cute with that Aaron Donald draped all over him.



Feb. 15, 2022

You are hilarious, Jerry Ray. Have you ever given thought to a career as a standup comic? You remind me of a fat comedian I saw one time with a fishhook in his camo cap.



Feb. 16, 2022

Hey, Marion. Good morning. That would be Larry the cable guy. And he is damn funny. Hope y'all is well. I just wanted to tell you that there's lots goin on in your old hometown.

First of all, the school board has announced a new bond election. They want to build a new high school and update the elementary and junior high schools, too. On account of all the growth. Well anybody can see we are growin. There's been a half dozen new families moved here in the last couple of years. And there's only been three deaths that I know of, so the population is booming.

Anyway, the school board is asking for \$38 million to do all of this. How can a new school cost that much? Do the school board just think we is made of money? I've knowed most of the members of that school board purty near all my life and they is normally good decent people but I don't know what they is thinkin here. That shore seems like a lot of money to me. And with our land (course we have the ag exemption) and the house and Babs ownin her salon, all that is gonna do to property taxes is gonna kick us right in the butt.

And to top it all off, the livestock association is wantin to build a new rodeo arena.so they is gonna start tryin to raise money to get that done. You know, you and Donnie got all that money, so if you was to make a big donation to the livestock association, they might name the new rodeo arena after you. “The Donnie and Marion Thedford Arena and Rodeo Pens!” Got a nice ring to it, don’t it! Course it would have to Thedford Arena. The livestock association ain’t gonna go for none of that two last names crap.

The rodeo facility is getting a little worn. I’ll grant you that. It ain’t right for people to be getting splinters in their butts while watchin the event. Of course most people around here know that and just take blankets to sit on. But out out of town guests don’t always know that. And it don’t leave a very good impression when people pay us a visit and then go home and have to dig wood out of each other’s butt cheeks. The Chamber of Commerce is pushin real hard for this one.

But, the school, I ain’t too sure about that. That school was good enough for me and you. It taught us how to be successful citizens that is movin our country forward. It has been good enough for ever kid that has come they here for the past 80 years. I don’t see why we need to chunk all that history and tradition away,

Oh, one more thing. I got a jury summons in the mail this morning. I ain’t too keen on goin the courthouse next Monday but I guess everbody has a right to trial by a jury if their peers. I reckon I can be a good peer. If I get picked I hope it is somethin juicy!

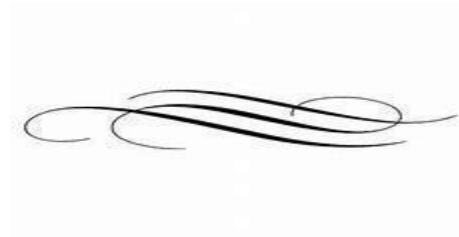


Feb. 16, 2022

A \$38 million school bond? And you're upset? The 2020 Dallas County school bond was \$3.7 billion. With a "B". It broke the record previously set in Houston. Course Houston usually does play second fiddle to Dallas in most things.

Thank you for the gracious invitation, but Donnie and I are going to pass on donating to the Livestock thing. We were never into Cowboy hats and boots and all that silly western stuff, and I have never been a fan of rodeos. I just do not see the attraction of gown men roping and tying up frightened, poor, defenseless little calves. And we certainly are not interested in having our names attached to any facility smelling of horse and cow poop. Now, the school is another matter. We might consider a small donation and having the new gymnasium named the Marion Walker-Thedford Indoor Sports Facility. And Donnie expressed interest in the new football field being called Don Thedford Stadium. After all, he was quite the gridiron hero in his playing days if you remember. Just a thought.

You are right. The old school was good enough for the three of us. But I'm guessing the students these days would enjoy central heat in winter. Those old radiators never did put out much warmth and were sure noisy. I still blame my "B" in English my sophomore year on all of their squeaking and squealing. The distraction was just too much. Elsewise I would have nailed my recitation of Samuel Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*.



Feb. 17, 2022

I passed your offer on to one of the school board members. He didn't understand all them last names either. He said it made him uncomfortable to have all them names up there for the whole world to see. But like he said, money talks.

I reckon there ain't much goin on in our sleepy town worth talkin about right now. I think everbody got sticker shock over the price of the school but that ain't nothin very juicy. As for what's goin on in Dallas I just don't understand why anybody would want to live there. I just caint figure it all out. And Houston ain't no better. And now Austin is worse than all. I think all them folks in Austin should just move back to California where they come from. Babs calls em cereal folks. She says they is all fruits and flakes and nuts. Babs got a way, don't she?

Anyway, I am still kinda excited about my jury thing. I ain't never served in a jury. I been called several times but for some reason I ain't never been picked. I caint figure that out.

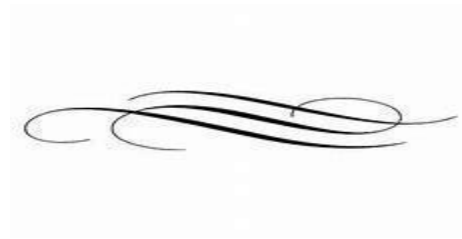


Feb. 17, 2022

Please tell the school board there we have decided to withdraw our offers. Donnie doesn't think having our names on any facilities in Dime Box will do much to further our brand and business. Thank you anyway.

I think you'll greatly enjoy your jury time should you be so fortunate as to be picked. I can't say the same for the attorneys or the judge though. One thing's for certain, it's should be interesting.

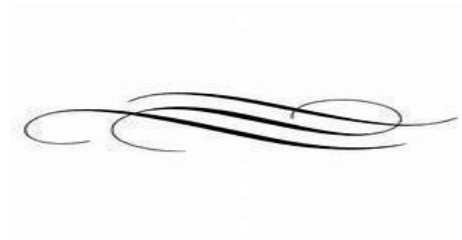
I've been meaning to ask you—do you like to read? Donnie and I are both avid readers. He prefers Stephen Hunter's Bob Lee Swagger series and Lee Childs' Jack Reacher books while I am a John Grisham addict. Have you read his newest, *The Judge's List*? Oh my word, it is wonderful. I used to like James Patterson until he became a paperback factory, turning out a book a month. Even Mozart wasn't that prolific, if you get my drift. You might be interested to know Ken is giving thought to writing a book. He's considering writing about the similarities between Prohibition bootleg runners and New York City cab drivers and how their respective cultures both seem to have evolved from the chariot racers of the 1st Century. Bless his heart; I don't think his premise is solidly founded. I saw the movie Ben Hur, with Charlton Heston, and I don't remember a cab driver one in it. If you ask us, he should be writing about a subject he has knowledge of. Such as finance. His father suggested *Private Equity and Venture Capital for the One Percenters* and Donnie said he'd give it some thought.



Feb. 18, 2022

Hey, Marion. I will pass the word along about backin out on the donation.

No I ain't never been much of a reader. I am more of a movie guy since I already am in the cinema business anyway. Gotta go. Customer just walked in!



Feb. 18, 2022

That's a shame, Jerry Ray, You don't know what you're missing by passing the literary world by. I think you'd really enjoy the *Clifford the Big Red Dog* series.

Have to run! Just received a notification from the Dallas Mavericks website that two courtside seats directly behind the visitor's bench have become available if we want them. (We have been at the top of the waiting list for ages, wanting to upgrade.) Donnie will be so thrilled. He loves, and is prone to, heckling the opponents from time to time. In a good natured way, of course. And sitting right behind them will afford him the best opportunity to do so.



Feb. 23, 2022

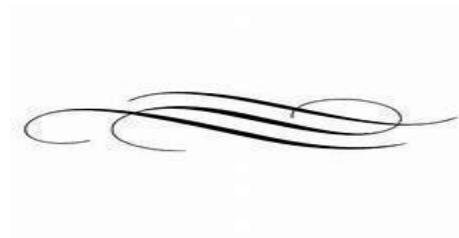
Good morning, Marion. Sorry I ain't gotten back to you. Just been busy. Stuff happens? You know?

On my way to jury duty! Yep I got picked! I'm gonna get to serve. It is an attempted murder trial. It is kind of an awesome responsibility, you know, knowin that the fate of a man is in my

hands. I'm sure he will be breathin easier knowin that I am on that jury. I ain't totally unfamiliar with the legal system, what with Jerry Jr's problems and all.

The judge give us strict instructions that we wasn't supposed to talk about the trial with nobody. But I reckon what with you livin up there in Dallas you won't be influencin things too much.

I will tell you all about it as it goes along. Openin arguments start at 9:30. I sure do hope the prosecuting attorney looks like Angie Harmon, you know what I mean? But it would be hard to say no to her.



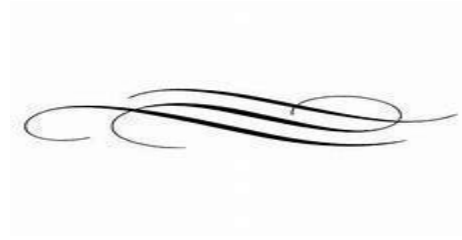
Feb. 23, 2022

That is wonderful news, Jerry Ray. Please do keep me updated on the proceedings. I just loved watching Perry Mason and Hee Haw on TV years ago, and your running commentary will be a combination of both I'm guessing. What fun! Did the failed attempt take place in Dime Box? If so it either had to be a heated game of horseshoes and too much beer down at the Legion Hall or some hanky panky at the Hill Country Motel and someone forgetting to park in the back.

OMG, I just remembered I have some awesome news of my own! Bob Dylan is coming to Dallas!! And we have tickets!!! March 10!!!!

Donnie and I saw him at the Bronco Bowl in Fort Worth about twenty years ago. He was fantastic although the same can't be said for the venue. There wasn't a chair one. We stood next to the stage on that old concrete floor for nearly three hours. My legs haven't been the same

since. But the show was wonderful as I'm sure this one will be. I wonder if he'll have his Nobel Prize with him? Sure would love to see it. That was one of the proudest days of my life when he was awarded that great honor. Did you happen to see Patti Smith's stirring rendition of *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* at the ceremony? I tell you I have never really cared for her before, but when she forgot the lines and apologized to the audience of kings and other dignitaries, I was so moved and have been a big fan of hers since. Anyway, Bobby's also going to be performing in Austin, San Antonio and Sugar Land. If you hurry you might still be able to get tickets to at least one of them! I can't wait to see him. I sure hope he does some of his really old stuff like *Bob Dylan's 115th Dream*. That part at the end where he's sailing on the high seas and meets three ships and he asks the captain of the lead ship what his name is and the guy says his name is Columbus and Bob just says "Good Luck!" always cracks me up. That Bobby is a real kidder.



Feb. 24, 2022

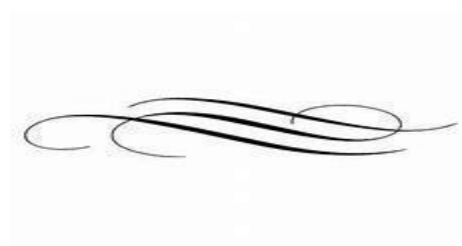
Hi, Marion. Hope you guys are ok. It is colder'n the north pole here! Everbody is iced in. No court today. We probably won't start back up til next week.

The trial is cool! I am excited! It all took place at the Cotton Picker's Club out on the County Line. It's a pretty rough place. The old Crisco plant is out there and sometimes the guys that work there on second shift will take their lunch breaks outside so they can watch all the fights that go on in the parking lot. Especially on Friday and Saturday night. Anyway, about all we know right now is that there was these three guys that got in a big fight and then one of 'em

went to his truck and pulled out a .22 and started shootin at the other two as they was runnin through the parkin lot. We got to see pictures of bloody wounds and a torn bloody shirt so all of that was really cool! Must of been a helluva fight. They all was all drunken up. Everbody had blood alcohol levels of over .2. Don't see how they could do much fighting in that condition but I reckon they did. One thing I know for sure, that ole boy that did all the shootin should be on the Olympics marksman team. Even with his brain swimmin in Bud Light he still never missed a shot!

Sadly, don't none of the attorneys look like Angie Harmon. There ain't no Matlocks or Perry Masons or anybody like that. They is just some old men who frankly look about as bored as we are. Nobody has jumped up and shouted "I object!" Or nothin like that. That part has been real disappointin so far. Maybe it will get better.

I always liked that Dylan song too. I know that might surprise you. But he a legend after all. And he does have a way with words. (Kinda like me, if I say do myself.) I know he caint sing a lick but that don't matter none to me. Maybe we is just kindred spirits, what with both of us havin poet's souls, you know.



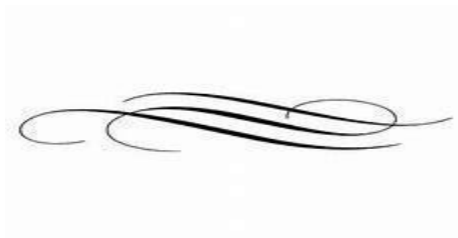
Feb. 24, 2022

Kindred spirits? Us? I don't know about that.

Well now, it appears you have really landed in a pot of stew as far as the trial goes. I expect you'll find it much of it appeasing and some not to your liking. But it should be

interesting. Please do keep me informed. The murder, albeit a failed one, is about what I expected for Lee County. And I would not be the least bit surprised to find it involves someone's relationship with a woman even if she wasn't at the crime scene. Especially since horseshoes weren't involved. It's basic math, really. Low income + night club + booze + hanky panky + easy access to a weapon = poor decision making. Sadly, it's one of the building blocks this country was founded on. Well, Texas, anyway. West Texas, that is.

We might be kindred spirits in a sense, you and I, but our daily lives couldn't be more different. While you are concerned with some fellow toting a piddly .22 pistol, we have bigger fish to fry here in Dallas. And Colorado. Donnie just returned from Denver, scouting possible locations should we ever decide to open an outlet there, and I asked him if he found any evidence that the Denver International Airport is home to the Illuminate or the New World Order as his brother Ethan claims. Donnie said he doesn't think so although all the cast bronze gargoyles, the 32-foot sculpture of a blue mustang horse with glowing red eyes (nicknamed Bluecifer), and the two large murals depicting animals in glass cages, a girl lying in a coffin, burning trees, people fleeing, a soldier in a gas mask wreaking havoc with a gun and a sword, a child hiding with his teddy bear, and a caravan of frightened refugees were a little disconcerting. Oh, and the network of secret underground tunnels adorned with gold leaf. His thought is DIA (Denver International Airport) is more likely home to a group of old, disenchanted Dungeons and Dragons enthusiasts rather than groups of people intent on ruling the world. There's merit in his theory I guess, but if you ask me, I think it's simply a case of the people who designed the airport smoking way-to-much grass in the mile-high city long before it became legal.



Feb. 25, 2022

No, Marion. I meant me and Bob Dylan was kindred spirits. Me and you ain't hardly got nothin in common except a shared home town and few common experiences. Me and Bob Dylan have poets souls. I wonder about your soul. I hope you didn't lose it when you started makin all that money.

But then how many people have lost their souls to a pretty girl in sexy underwear? Know what I mean?

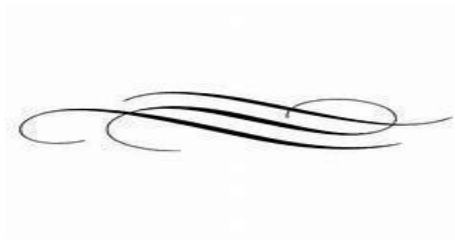
I been to that Denver airport once. I don't know about all that gargoyles and demon horses or none of that. But I do know it is 40 damn miles into town. That is like buildin a airport for Dallas in Waxahachie. People go to work in government and just lose their damn minds.



Feb. 25, 2022

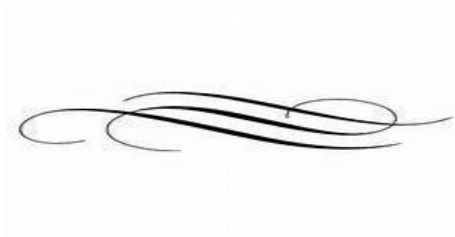
I do declare, Jerry Ray, I wonder about you sometimes. I'm thinking the only thing you and Bobby have in common is wild hair. Although I admit I have always found his attractive.

We are just relaxing at home today as the roads here are covered with sleet. It's really quite pretty. Looks just like snow. Donnie's in his study, fireplace going, reading the latest Lee Child thriller and I am in the living room, fireplace going, listening to *Nashville Skyline* on our Bose Lifestyle 650 sound system, watching cars creep past out front. Why these people don't have a four-wheel or all-wheel drive vehicles is beyond me. I once swore I wouldn't be caught dead in one and could get anywhere I needed to be in my Jaguar XF, but a chance meeting with a fire hydrant on an icy road changed all that. I *love* my BMW X3 all-wheel drive. Now, I wouldn't dare drive it to the club, mind you, but for running errands in bad weather, it's great.



Feb. 26, 2022

It is putty slick here today, too. I reckon we will just hang out at the house today. But right now I'm gonna do a little joy ridin on the four wheeler. Babs will be out though. She hates the cold.



Feb. 26, 2022

Streets are still icy here and I have come down with a bad cold. Did the rapid test and it was negative so have loaded up on Dayquil, Nightquil, Musinex and orange juice. Right now I'm all snuggled up in my Brighton recliner by the big bay window in our bedroom with a fire going. I have my Kindle, my iPad, my iPhone and the remote to the 52" flat screen TV above our Lexington Carlyle Park nine-drawer dresser so I'm all set. Donnie's not much of a cook so we'll be using Uber Eats the next few days. Hopefully they have experienced drivers and vehicles that can handle the slippery roads. If not, they shouldn't be in the business. Hmmmmm, some diver scallops from Nick and Sam's sounds delish for lunch. Donnie will likely get their Alaskan King Crab legs, and of course we'll both have their Mac N Cheese. It's to die for. Gotta go, it's almost time for Judge Judy.

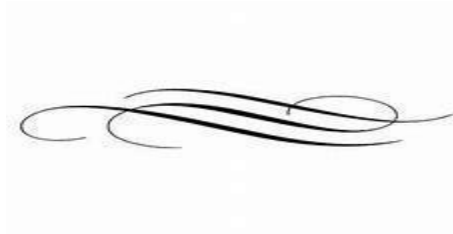


Feb. 27, 2022

Babs made a big pot of stew and a big cast iron skillet of corn bread so we are good for several days. Her cornbread is amazin! Or as you put it "to die for."

Bad weather is really good for the video rental business. When people know they gonna be stuck at home they really load up. Especially when there ain't no football on tv. So I been putty busy. I reckon that makes me one of them essential businesses.

I ain't never used Uber. Don't even know if we have that here. If somebody needs a ride somewhere they just ask a neighbor or a friend. And why would you pay somebody for Mac and cheese when all you gotta do is open a box? All of this ice and stuff is gonna be gone by tomorrow so our Saturday night at the Dairy Freeze is saved.



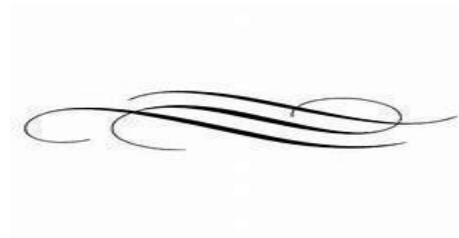
Feb. 27, 2022

If I were a betting person, which I am not, I'd say Dime Box likely doesn't have Uber. I mean, where are people needing a ride to besides the Dairy Freeze and your bustling video rental store?

It's beginning to thaw here too. That's good news. Donnie's headed to one of the clubs. It's too cold for golf but he has a new cashmere sweater he wants to break in. He also plans on checking out the new Callaway Rogue ST Triple Diamond driver and then having lunch in the grill with the guys. He's always changing clubs. Me, I'm happy with my Pings and my trusty Bullseye putter. I get kidded a lot that playing Ping clubs and putting with a Bullseye is an oxymoron because Pings are all about technology and my Bullseye is just a piece of brass on a stick. So they say. That might be, but that piece of brass on a stick drilled a ten-footer to beat Mary Ann Musberg on the final hole of the women's club championship at Brook Hollow last year. An occurrence that poor woman still hasn't gotten over.

Oh my! I best get going! I have appointments with my personal trainer and hairstylist I plumb forgot about! That Joe Joe is a character. He's Swedish and has a heavy accent and is a hoot to listen to. But my quads could care less about that. They know they're in for a real

workout and would be hollering bloody murder all the way there if they could speak. And I don't blame them. It's all for a good cause though. Donnie and I are planning a trip to the Riviera this summer, and I wouldn't be caught dead parading up and down the beaches there in a size 6. So, it's off to see Joe Joe at his private studio for a workout, then to Longmire House for a hot sauna and massage followed by a lunch of the Milos Brothers' famous Sangria Spinach salad. Then over to Lazlo's for a curl boost. Busy day, busy day.



Feb. 28, 2022

Hey, Marion. I got a question for you. Why would anybody want to screw up a glass of Sangria wine by stuffing spinach in it? I swear rich folks is more interested in bein fancy than they are anything else.

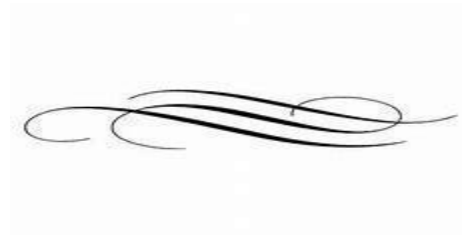
You're probably right about Uber, but there is a big rumor here at the courthouse this morning that we is about to get a Sonic. Man, I'll be getting me some of them chili cheese dogs with onion rings and a big ol' cherry limeade. I can guarantee that.

Gotta go. Court is about to start. Tell ya all about it tonight. Here come da judge.. Here come da judge.



Mar. 1, 2022

Yes, please do report back on your day in court. Donnie and I are looking forward to it. We contacted a friend of ours in the business about doing a reality TV show titled *Jerry Ray Goes to Court* or *Bad Doings in Dime Box*, but his plate is full right now. That's a shame.



Mar. 2, 2022

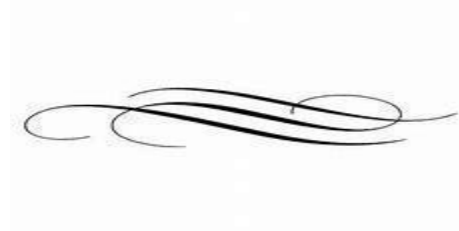
Well, all I can tell you is that the first day of testimony was actually pretty boring. Listenin to people talk all day ain't much fun. It was like bein stuck in the house with Babs all day when it was rainin! These lawyers don't got no sense of drama at all.

I really had to pay attention. After about an hour I was wantin to doze off. Thank God for free coffee. And thank God that the judge give everbody a break ever couple of hours. I'm gettin a little older and coffee and beer don't stick around as long as they used to.

All these guys had been hangin out at the Cotton Picker's Club most of the day and they was all drinking. But they wasn't all together, Anyway, the guy that did the shootin was sitting there about 9pm when his wife and 5 year old daughter come in the bar. Evidently she was pretty hot under the collar that he had been in a bar all day and didn't bother to call or come home. She started givin him what for and he didn't like it. He punched her right in the face and knocked her down. Right there in front of that little girl! Kinda made me sick to my stomach,

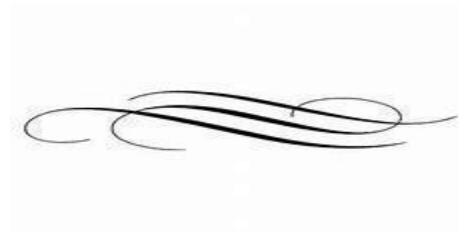
The other three guys was sittin at another table watchin all of this. When the shooter guy went outside to get some air they followed him out and went to beatin up on him. They pounded on him pretty good. Good for them as far as I am concerned. Anyway, when they got through whalin on him he ran to his truck and got out his .22 rifle and started shootin. He shot 6 times and never missed! And this was at guys runnin in a dark parking lot. And this is with a blood alcohol level of .24.I ain't sure how he could even stand up!

More to come tomorrow.



Mar. 2, 2022

Oh my goodness. It appears you have landed yourself smack dab in the middle of a real life drama. On the surface it doesn't appear the wife beater/shooter stands much of a chance of walking away from this. I just feel for his little girl. Is the mom okay?



Mar. 6, 2022

Hey,Marion! Remember me?

Sorry. I have just been really busy with the trial and all. Boy, I got lots to tell you.

So, Tuesday we heard more testimony from the prosecution. That little girl got on the stand. She had to tell everybody that her daddy whipped up on her momma. There wasn't a dry eye in the place. Just heartbreaking. The prosecutor was real gentle with her and let her take her time. The defense attorney didn't ask her no questions. Out of respect, I reckon. All I can tell you is that we was all so mad that we was ready to convict him involved right there on the spot, on account of what they put that little girl through.

There was one thing that was kinda weird. The defense attorney was questioning one of the deputies that did the investigation. He was asking him about this diagram that he drewed up. It showed spent cartridges on both sides of a pickup and they was just over 7 ft apart. The lawyer said everybody knowed that couldn't be possible cause a pickup was nearly 8 ft wide. Well, maybe from mirror tip to mirror tip. But if you ever tried to take nap or maybe get a little lovin you know you caint stretch out across a pickup. Something is gonna have to hang out. And by that I mean head or feet. Don't go gettin your mind all in the gutter!

We didn't have no court Wednesday or Thursday. Wednesday they was showin pigs at the livestock show and Thursday was the cattle so the judge said there wouldn't be no court. This is America after all. That judge, he done the right thing.

Gotta run. Gotta help my neighbor and his boys get their pigs back to the barn.

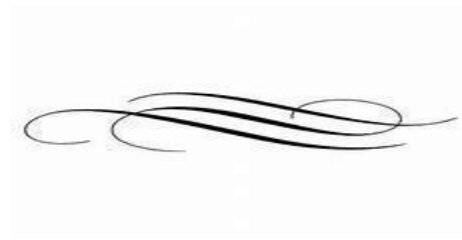


Mar. 6, 2022

I do declare, Jerry Ray. I would have thought life in Dime Box would be slower than Middle Yegua Creek in the summer. But here you are going ninety to nothing all the time it seems. Tires me out just reading about it.

A court trial postponed because of a livestock show? Only in Texas. And likely only in Lee County. What are folks in other states to think? No wonder the entire country isn't enamored with the Lone Star State anymore. Between livestock shows and people wearing firearms on their hips, I can't say I blame them. Why just the other day we saw a fellow wearing a holstered Smith and Wesson snub nose .38 Special at the salad bar at Jason's Deli. Donnie thought it was a .32 but he was mistaken. I know my firearms. Anyway, enough of this silliness. We have more important things to discuss.

According to Donnie's brother Ethan, reptilian humanoids from the Alpha Draconis star system are conducting a worldwide conspiracy against humanity. AND, some of the world's most famous dynasties and families are working alongside these shapeshifting reptilians, including the Bush family and the British Royal family. Donnie asked Ethan where he stepped in that pile of you-know-what and Ethan said it came straight from the horse's mouth-- conspiracy theorist David Icke. AND, according to Ethan, most of his neighbors and work associates are on board with it. SO, as much as we enjoy the steaks at Sweetie Pie's, we've likely made out last visit to Decatur where Ethan lives for a while. That's a shame because their ribeyes and twice-baked potatoes are on our short list. I tell you, if it's not one thing, it's another.



Mar. 7, 2022

Well, howdy, Marion. I sure do like a good ribeye. Ain't nothin better than a good steak medium rare and undercooked is better'n overcooked. When people used to ask my daddy how he liked his steak he would tell 'em dehorned.

I reckon there is still some people who like the simplicity of a revolver but most people around here that still carry one carry a 44. Almost everybody has switched to a 9 mm. Semi automatic and bigger magazine.

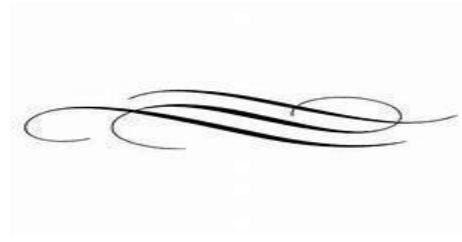
I guess people can make fun of gun totin simple livin Texans all they want to. But there is just things that they don't know. At the livestock show, the best pigs and heifers and steers and lambs and stuff make the sale. The sale is on Friday. Local businesses from all over the county along with supporters of agriculture bid on all the animals that make the sale. Almost ever animal gets sold for at least fifteen hundred dollars. And then the buyer turns around and gives the animal back to the kid. So basically the buyer just rewards the kid for hard work.

There was a 12 year old girl there that had a pig that made the sale. She lost her daddy last summer. When it was certain that her pig was gonna be in the sale, some of the local ranchers and oil men got together and got everybody organized. The biddin started at a thousand dollars just like for all the pigs but this time people just started biddin like crazy. And it didn't stop. That pig finally sold for forty eight thousand dollars. There weren't a dry eye in the sale barn. Even the auctioneer couldn't talk.

So, yeah, we are just simple folks and people think we ain't very smart. And maybe we ain't. But everybody pitched in to help that little girl and all the other kids. All those animals brought over a half million dollars.

I don't know nothin about shape shiftin reptiles. And the Bush family is proud Texans, exceptin they went to college at Yale. So maybe they might have got off track a little bit there. But little George even owned the Rangers for a while and Nolan Ryan pitched for him. So how can they be all bad?

But shape shiftin ain't really no special thing. I done some shape shiftin myself since high school. Mostly around the waist.



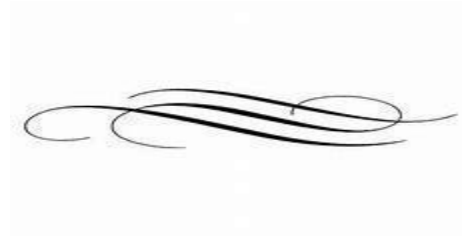
Mar. 7, 2022

Thank you for that wonderful story about the little girl with the pig. I get it. Had we known about it, we would have entered bids by phone, if that's allowed, and would gladly have exceeded the eight thousand dollar winning bid. I just don't know what we would have done with the pig. I guess we could have kept him in the back yard if he didn't make much noise or poop too much.

Your comment about your shape-shifting waist hit home with Donnie. He has been waging war with his waist for years. Happily, he's managed to keep the upper hand and continues to wear the same size 34 he wore on our wedding day. Although some weeks he does appear a little blue in the face.

Not much going on here right now. Yesterday we began a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle. It's from a company featuring hand and foot artists. If you don't know, these are individuals who paint with the brush in their mouths or between their toes due to disabilities. All of their puzzles are amazing and beautiful, and you would think this would be inspiring to others, but I find it quite depressing. Here I am with both of my arms and hands, and I can't draw or paint worth a lick. I took a class once, but when I finished the instructor said he found mine interesting but reminded me that ours was not an *abstract* painting class, whatever that means.

Gotta run. Donnie and I are headed to lunch and then to a movie. Rather than Saturday date nights, we prefer Mondays to start the week off on a good note. Not sure how good this one will be though. I have my heart set on *Marry Me* with Owen Wilson and Donnie wants to see *Jackass Forever*.



Mar. 8, 2022

Hey, Marion. That pig sold for 48 thousand not 8 thousand. And when you buy it you gotta give it back. And these animals ain't pets. They is good for one thing only. And that is meat. These animals all get processed.

I wanna finish tellin you about my trial. The first day was all about selectin a jury and all the openin statements. The second day and part of the third day was all about the prosecution layin out all the evidence. All the bullets was fired from the defendants 22. They had charts and pictures of where they found the shell casings and where everbody was when they got shot. Just

like on tv. The defense tried to show that some of them charts was wrong but they didn't try very hard and what they said didn't make no sense.

After lunch in the third day (which was Monday. We didn't have no court on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday on account of the stock show,) Everbody knew he shot them people so naturally the defense had to claim self defense. They had a witness that said the other guys picked a fight with him after he hit his wife. A nurse talked about how bad they beat him up. The last witness was his cousin. She was there drinking with him. She said she saw the whole thing. She said that after they quit beatin on him, he ran to his truck and grabbed his gun. And then he started shootin. The defense attorney asked her if she thought he was fearin for his life and she said, well, duh!

Then the prosecution attorney asked her a few questions. He asked her what she said when he got his gun. She said that she screamed. "No, Jerry, no" His name was Jerry, too! Small world. Anyway that clinched it for me. She didn't say lookout or here they come. She said no, no. Like she was saying don't do this. I knowed he was guilty after that.

Anyway, it didn't take long in the jury room. We found him guilty and sentenced him to 10 years. We was done by 6:30



March 9, 2022

That's it? Well for Heaven's sake. I thought you had landed smack dab in the middle of a sensational murder trial and would wind up being one of those clueless-looking jurors who gets

interviewed on Dateline by that gorgeous man with the thick gray hair. Keith Something. Or maybe appear in a book or movie. The kind of shooting you had there happen at honkytonks every night in this country. Probably Germany, too.

I should have known what to expect. Nothing sensational ever happens in Dime Box. It never has. Except of course when I was crowned Homecoming Queen in 1975. *And '76*. I 'spect my dresses are still talked about there these days. Especially the '76 dress. It had more sequins than Dolly Parton and more curves than the Monte Carlo Grand Prix. Beyoncé would have been jealous. Matter of fact, I still have that dress and wore it to the Royal Oaks Country Club Christmas Gala a few years back. It still fit and heads did turn, let me tell you. I was going to wear it to the Breast Cancer Awareness Dinner at Bent Tree, but Donnie felt it wasn't appropriate even after I spent a fortune having the all of the gold sequins replaced with pink ones. Go figure.



Mar. 9, 2022

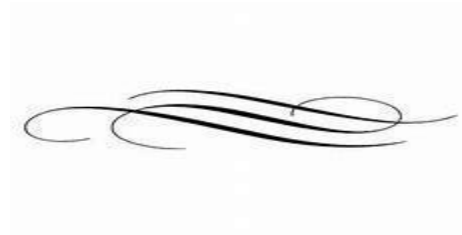
Hey, Marion. Gee, sorry the trial details wasn't juicy enough for you. Buy that is the truth of what happened. I was proud to do my civic duty. It probably is what happens all the time. But ain't that sad.

Babs said that what we had was four guys out drinkin all day. Then one of them hit his wife in front of his little girl. Then they all got in a fight. And then one of them shot the others. Babs told me straight up that is was not ok for guys to get all drunked up and then start fightin and shootin.

As she put it, this ain't the Wild West. We have to stand up for the community and for decent people everywhere. So we stood up and did the right thing. I am proud of that. And it kinda broke up the routine a little bit. Now it is back to the video store ever day.

How is the frilly underwear business? Y'all still sellin lots of bras and stuff? Man the price of everthing is going up like crazy around here. I seen what you charge for practically nothin but a little lace and some elastic. This can't be affectin your business too much.

I still think you should build a big factory here in your old home town.



Mar. 9, 2022

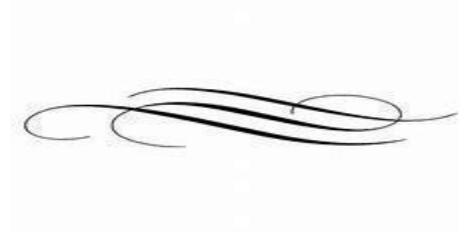
Babs sounds like a smart woman. Although, I really don't remember her that way. Did she ever get over her Dyslexia, or whatever it was that was causing her to sing the school song backwards at pep rallies and such? I always found it quite sad.

As far as our lingerie business concerned, inflation doesn't hasn't affected our numbers much. Women like their sensuous undergarments. Even if it means having pot pies for supper rather than lasagna. And believe it or not, we've not raised our prices that much. How about you? VHS tapes still a dollar?

Guess you saw where Tommy's already bored with retirement and is returning to the Bucs next year. Isn't that wonderful? I guess all those mysterious folks who write the scripts and plan out the games already have him winning one final Super Bowl. And if they don't, he's going to win it anyway. Patrick Mahomes just got married so he won't be worth a flip for a year

or so, and the Rams were a fluke, so it looks like it will be The Bucs and the Chargers in the big one. Isn't that Justin Herbert a cutie? I just love his hair. But his time will come. This one belongs to Tommy.

Don't be alarmed, but I won't be in touch for a week or so. Donnie and I are flying to Barbados for some golf and down time. It's still too nippy here to hit the links and he is just dying to play. There have some really beautiful courses on the island and Royal Westmoreland is just to die for. We plan to return on the seventeenth. Bye.



Mar. 17, 2022

Happy St. Patrick's Day! I will certainly drink a beer today to toast the Irish! But it ain't gonna be green. You back from yall's fancy golf outin'? You coulda come to Dim Box and played here. We got a good nine-holer.

Surprisingly, there ain't much to report on here in our fair city. Don't much ever happen round here. Mostly we like it that way, but sometimes it does get a little boring. I reckon that's why God invented beer.



Mar. 18, 2022

Yes, Jerry Ray, we have returned. All was splendid until Donnie's brother Ethan stopped by last night. He was in town on business and decided to have dinner with us. Unannounced. Uber Eats saved the day once more.

Ethan is a huge fan of the show, *The Walking Dead* (Donnie and I have never watched an episode). And last night he tried to convince us zombies are real. For proof, he pointed out that in ancient Greece, when criminals and other low-lives were buried; people placed heavy stones on top of their graves so they couldn't return. He even had pictures. It does make you think. I mean, why else would they put those rocks there? Good grief. As if we didn't already have enough to worry about with all the stuff that's going on, now we have to keep a lookout for a bunch of rough-looking Greeks in dirty clothes. Donnie doesn't believe a word of it, but I am going to keep an eye on Mr. Papadakis down the street. Just to be safe.

Okay, now on to more important matters. Jerry, I'm afraid this will be the last of our correspondences for a while. I am going to be taking a break from Facebook. For a number of reasons.

First, I have simply had it with all the ads. Mine are mostly for women's lingerie from our competition. It made for good research for a while but now is annoying as you-know-what.

Secondly, I keep getting friend requests from people I have never heard of. It is a constant barrage and headache even though all the men are handsome as all-get-out and the women are beautiful. Donnie says those are probably fake pictures and that all the men want is sex and all the women want is my money. *And sex.*

And lastly, all this talk about fake news, fake this and fake that is stressing me out. For all I know, I'm not even talking to Jerry Ray Bilson in Dime Box, Texas. Although it's hard to picture anyone else thinking and sounding like you. But it's possible, what with all this Artificial Intelligence (AI) stuff we hear about every day now. Like I've said before, if it's not one thing, it's another.

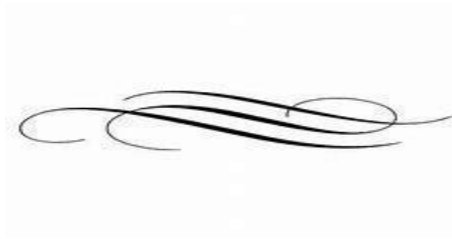
Surprisingly, I have thoroughly enjoyed our conversations and am truly pleased you reached out to me. Donnie and I promise to make it home to Dime Box someday and share a chicken fried steak with you and Babs at the Dairy Freeze. It is now officially on our Bucket List just under Dinner with the Pope.

Please pass our good wishes along to Babs and take care of yourselves. Sounds like the two of you are very happy and that, as they say, is everything.

Your friend,

Marion Wallace-Thedford.

(While that might look like three names, it's actually only two. Just so you know.) 😊



Mar. 18, 2022

Marion (one) Wallace (two) -Thedford (three). I can count. I go by three names, too. Jerry Ray Bilson. My three names don't sound like nothin special but yours sounds all fancy. I reckon it is on account of my name not havin no punctuation in it.

Yesterday turned off real pretty so we hung out outside. I throwed some burgers and hotdogs on the grill while I enjoyed a few Miller lites. Babs made some deviled eggs and some French fries and we set out under the oak tree and had a nice afternoon lunch. Iguess it is too early for mosquitoes and ants. Anyway. Mrs. Jefferson dropped by. She had made us some pecan sandies, peanut brittle, and apple cinnamon cake so we invited her for a burger. We all had a real nice time rememberin all the things that used to go on and how different things was all them years ago. I told her that I had been talkin to you on Facebook and that you had a fancy life in Dallas. She said it was probably best for all involved that y'all didn't hang around here.

That got me to thinking as I laid in bed last night. I reckon God ain't no dummy. He didn't get to be God by not knowin what he was doin. He made you one way and me another. He sent you off to Dallas cause He knowed you'd be miserable here. He kept me here caused I'd be a fish outta water in your world. As I was contemplatin all this last night I come to understand that I am just fine with knowin most everbody in town and everbody not thinkin that they is any better than anybody else. No, we ain't jet-settin around all the time but we got a good life. The daughter has got a nice new fella that she is seein and the boy is up for parole next year. Maybe he can get a new start.

Anyway I learnt a lot from talkin to you. You might not want to admit it but I kinda think you did, too.

I hope you have a good rest of your life, Marion Wallace-Thedford.

And that is Three damn names!