

Jerry McKelvy's

SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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JAP SUBMARINE ON DISPLAY AT PRESCOTT

Nevada County residents got to see something quite unusual in November, 1943. A two-man Japanese submarine was on display at the Nevada County courthouse.

The sub was a two-man suicide "midget" HA-19 submarine captured near Oahu across from Pearl Harbor following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The officer of the submarine was captured, but the other man, a mechanic, was presumed to be drowned. The sub weighed 35 tons at the time it was captured. It was powered by storage batteries and had a cruising range of 150 miles. There was no way to recharge the batteries.

After it was captured, the submarine was taken apart at Pearl Harbor and studied. Photographs were taken and blueprints were drawn to show the design of the sub. It was then shipped to the San Francisco Naval Yard.

It was decided to use this submarine by sending it on a nationwide tour as a way to raise money for the Treasury Department by selling war bonds. Portholes were cut in the side and steps added so the public could view the sub.

The tour started October 27, 1943 in San Francisco. The sub was mounted on a tractor trailer 94 foot long. Two real-looking Japanese figures were placed at the controls of the sub for the public to view. The exhibit reached Prescott on November 19, 1943 where it was paraded through the streets and parked at the Nevada County courthouse for public viewing between the hours of 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. In order to view the sub through the portholes, a visitor was required to purchase war savings bonds or stamps.

I'm sure many people in Prescott viewed this display while it was in town. The government stated that sale of war bonds averaged \$22,000 per hour while the sub was on tour around the country.

You can find the complete article and a picture of the submarine in the Nov. 4, 1943 and Nov. 11, 1943 issues of *The Nevada News*.

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PRECIPITATION RECORD FOR 2016

Jan. – 4.7 inches plus 3.5 inches of snow
Feb. – 6.5 inches
Mar – 12.7 inches
Apr. – 6.4 inches
May – 1.3 inches
June – 2.3 inches
July – 4.8 inches
Aug. – 10.7 inches
Sep. -- .6 inch
Oct. -- .3 inch
Nov. – 4.8 inches
Dec. – 3.8 inches

Total – 58.9 inches

Our normal rainfall for the year is 52.9 inches. These totals are at my house. Some areas may have received more or less. As you can see, March and August were the wettest months. September and October were the driest.

While browsing through *The Nevada News* copies from 1927, I noticed the following article which was written by the editor of *The Dynamo*, the Prescott High School newspaper. It is interesting to see that even back in 1927, some of the students were not acting as they should in school. I suppose some kids have misbehaved at school as long as there have been schools.

This article was well written, and since it was written by one of the students, perhaps it may have had a positive influence on those students who were guilty of the things mentioned. Sometimes other students can do more than the teachers in correcting the bad behavior of some of their classmates.

There were a few words in the article I couldn't read from the microfilm, but you can get the gist of the article from what I have included here. This is still good advice for us today—both students and adults.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN (from *The Dynamo*)

"Politeness, civility, courtliness, an act of respect"—that is the way Mr. Webster defines our obsolete term: courtesy. Is it now obsolete? From a glance around the halls and class rooms of our school, I'm afraid one would have to reply in the affirmative. Many

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boys remain in our rooms wearing their hats. Some can be found sitting on the tables in the library.

A few of our students have passed the stage of "impoliteness" and are actually rude to our teachers. Remember, young man or young woman, each teacher on our faculty is superior to you in every way. They have been placed in authority by members of the school board because they have proven their capability as teachers and leaders. They are our seniors in age and knowledge. They have completed their high school and college work, graduating with degrees and honors. Therefore, students, we should not only give them our best efforts in our studies, but pro??? respect and courtesy.

Our student body has received compliments on the way in which we enter into the spirit of the occasion. If the person who paid this compliment could have been present at two of our last assemblies, I am afraid he would have regretted his statement. ??? boys and girls who are almost grown actually laughed at the ??? who visited our school. Disregarding his genius, they thought some mere part of his physical makeup amusing. Each person who laughed helped to cause the standard of our school to ????

There has been more talking in our assembly of late than in many years. To talk at such as place is being discourteous and unfair in three ways—to the speaker, to our parents, and to those around us.

And last of all, students; let us be more courteous to our classmate. Courtesy will cost us nothing and will add more cheer to our lives and the lives of others. Why not say a kind word to your friend instead of a "catty" one. Have we forgotten to say "Pardon me" or "Thank you"?—I think not?

So, let us be courteous to our teachers, to our visitors, and to our friends. Then those who have declared "courtesy is obsolete word" will have to change their minds after a visit to Prescott High School.

UNIDENTIFIED

Just about all the older people around Prescott know the story of "Old Mike", an unidentified man found dead in the city park in 1911. Authorities tried in vain to find out his identity so his family could claim the body. Days passed with no luck in determining his identity. The funeral home kept the body, hoping someone would report him missing. He was given the name "Mike" by the funeral home staff. His identity was never discovered and the body remained in the funeral home for 64 years until the state finally ordered that he be buried in 1975. "Mike" was kept in a closet at the funeral home and visitors could go in and see him. He was given a new set of clothes periodically and remained in a good state of preservation during the time he

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was at the funeral home. It was considered a rite of passage for young people to go in and see "Old Mike" and doing so was an experience one would never forget.

"Mike" was not the only unidentified person found at Prescott. The newspapers mention several unidentified people found dead in the city of Prescott over the years. I know of at least two cases where the person was killed by a train passing through town. I assume they were buried in the potter's section of DeAnn Cemetery since their identity was never verified.

One case was in 1911 when a man was found killed by a train. There was no identification on him except some of his clothing had the name W. C. Heber. It was assumed that was his name but there was no way to verify it and no relatives were ever found. After a period of time, the body was buried in the local cemetery.

Another case was in July, 1928 when a young man was killed while trying to catch a train in Prescott. His skull was fractured and his left leg was cut off in the accident. Some other boys who were with him told authorities that the young man told them he was from West Virginia and was there to pick peaches in the Highland peach orchard, but they did not know his name. The young man had a tattoo of a butterfly on his right forearm and was wearing a cap with the initials J. C. K. The body was held at the undertaking department of the Prescott Hardware. I did not find any further information about whether he was ever identified or if he was buried at the local cemetery.

SIGHT UNSEEN (A Personal Story)

It was the year 1966. I had just recently graduated from college and had taught school for one semester in a small town in Arkansas, taking the place of a teacher who for some reason was unable to complete the school year. I was not too happy with my first experience as a teacher in that school, so I decided to look for another job when the school year ended.

I checked the job postings on the bulletin board at the college I had attended and noticed one for a social studies teacher in a little town called Caledonia, Missouri. I decided to send them a letter. About two weeks later, I received in the mail a teacher's contract for the coming school year with instructions to sign it and mail it back as soon as possible.

I thought that was strange. Why would they offer a contract to someone they had never even met? I didn't know anything about this school or that part of Missouri because I had never been in that state in my life.

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The pay they offered was more than I could make teaching in Arkansas, but still I had reservations about accepting the offer without doing some checking first. I wanted to at least visit the town and the school before making my decision.

It was about 380 miles from Bluff City to this little town in Missouri. At that time, I was still single and living with my parents at home. I didn't even have a car of my own at that time, so if I went to Missouri to check out this school, I would have to use my father's pickup truck because it was the best vehicle we had at the time for such a long trip.

Our family seldom traveled far from home, so it was decided that my mother and younger brother would accompany me on this trip. It was a chance for us to see a new part of the country and we also planned to visit some relatives in Little Rock on the way back. We left one morning about 4 a.m. in our pickup truck headed for Caledonia, Missouri. At that time the freeway had only been completed from Benton to Cabot, a distance of about forty miles. The rest of the 380 mile trip was on two-lane highways. I think this was probably my first time driving through Little Rock and probably my first time driving on a freeway.

We made the trip just fine, stopping a few times for something to eat and to use the restroom. Most of northeast Arkansas was flat and boring with nothing but huge farm fields. We saw many huge tractors plowing in the fields that made our little farm tractor look like a toy. At the rest area near the state line, I got a Missouri highway map. It was about 10 a.m. when we crossed the state line into Missouri. I had made an appointment for 2 p.m. to visit with the superintendent at the school, so I had to keep track of our time so I would not be late for that appointment.

When we got near Poplar Bluff, Missouri, the scenery changed from the flat farm fields to rolling hills which looked better to me. We were soon in part of the Mark Twain National Forest. There were no large towns once we left Poplar Bluff—just an occasional service station and one or two very small towns.

When we got to Fredericktown, Missouri, we had to leave good old Hwy. 67 and head west into an even more remote area. We saw some beautiful scenery near Ironton and a nice little lake along the highway called Lake Killarney with its cool, clear water. We stopped and took some pictures while we rested from our long drive. We had been on the road for about seven hours by this time.

We saw a sign for an attraction called Elephant Rocks so we stopped there a while and took more pictures as we admired some of the largest rocks we had ever seen. It looked like a volcano had erupted and left these huge boulders stacked against each other.

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I checked my watch and decided we had better get back on the road if I was going to make my appointment. Soon we reached the little town (or what they called a village) of Caledonia. There was not much to it but one main street with a few businesses, some homes, and two or three churches. We looked for the school and finally found a very old school building. I soon learned that this was the elementary school. We were told the high school was out of town a couple of miles on another highway.

We soon located the high school and I was surprised to find a modern looking building out in the middle of a very large field with mountains in the background. It was called Valley High School, the home of the Vikings ball teams. We were a little early for my appointment, so I decided maybe I should sort of refresh myself after that long drive. We drove down a gravel road near the school and found a small creek with clear water. I dipped a clean cloth in the clear water of the creek and washed my face, combed my hair, and did what I could to make myself presentable for a job interview.

The superintendent, Mr. Mason, was a nice fellow. After some small talk about our trip, we got down to business talking about the job. I was impressed with the area. I liked small towns and Caledonia, I learned later, was a very historic old town.

There were still lot of unknowns about this job, but all I could do was hope for the best. I signed the contract and began making plans for my move to Missouri when school started in September.

After talking to the superintendent, I learned why they had sent me the contract to sign without having seen me. It turned out that a lady on the school board was familiar with the college I had attended in Magnolia, Arkansas. She knew people connected to the school and had contacted them when I applied for the job. They had checked me out without my knowledge. It could have been that I was the only applicant for the job and they were in desperate need of a teacher.



I had to have a place to live when school started, so that was a major concern of mine. Mr. Mason said an older couple living in town had several trailers they rented and might have one available. I stopped and talked to them after we left the school. They had a small trailer available for \$40 per month. I didn't have time to look around for anything else so I paid them the rental for the rest of the summer so I would be sure to have a place to live when I arrived in a few weeks. That small trailer (pictured here) was to be my home for the next three years.

By the time I finished making arrangements for a place to live, it was around 4 p.m. We had planned on driving back to Little Rock the same day. That meant 280 more

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miles of driving. We soon realized that we had not planned our trip well. That was too much for one day. We were dog-tired when we reached the relative's house in North Little Rock around 9 p.m. I had been on the road since 4 a.m., had a job interview, made arrangements for a place to live, and had driven over 650 miles in a pickup truck on mostly two-lane roads. The next day, we made it back to Bluff City.

In September, I loaded up my car (I had purchased a new 1966 Ford Fairlane 500 by that time) and headed north to whatever fate had in store for me.

I ended up teaching three years at Valley High School. For the most part, it was an enjoyable experience. I came home often on weekends and holidays during that time, sometimes driving and sometimes riding the train from Bismarck, Missouri to Gurdon, Arkansas. It was about an eight hour trip whether I went by car or by train. I spent my summers back in Arkansas and just paid the rent on the trailer for the summer months while school was out.

The other teachers were nice and the students were typical students. There were no black students or teachers in the school. There were a few students who caused some problems, but for the most part they were well-behaved. I felt sorry for some of them because they had to ride the bus for a very long time to get to school each day. There was no football team. The boys played basketball and the girls played volleyball. The school had the usual things like the Glee Club, junior and senior plays, and the prom. The graduating class was usually about 45 students and the seniors enjoyed a senior trip each year.

I had to get used to the local customs and way of speaking and I'm sure they had to get used to my southern Arkansas dialect. I had to get used to wearing a necktie because I noticed that all the other male teachers wore them. I thought of the old saying "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". I had to learn a new grading system (E, S, M, I, and F) instead of the usual (A, B, C, D, and F). Instead of saying "my third period class", the custom there was to say "my third hour class". Even county roads were labeled by letters instead of numbers like in Arkansas.

While at Caledonia, I made a few short trips checking out some of the attractions in that area. I visited some of the neighboring towns like Potosi, Bismarck, Flat River, and Ironton. I never made it to St. Louis even though it was only about sixty miles away. I endured some very cold winters and some large snowfalls during those three years. I had purchased a small black and white TV and an antenna from the local general store. That was my main source of entertainment. I had to do my own cooking which was nothing to brag about. The lunch at the school cafeteria was my main meal of the day. My little trailer didn't even have a telephone, so I had one installed just so I could keep in contact with my folks back home.

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I could have stayed at Caledonia longer, but I wanted to get back closer to home. After three years, I turned in my resignation and accepted a job at Cale, Arkansas not far from where I grew up. I taught five more years there before deciding to leave teaching and try something else. The three years in Missouri gave me a chance to learn about another part of the country and to meet new people. It was there that I met my future wife who was teaching in the same school.

It's been 47 years since my days of teaching at Valley High School. A lot of water has run under the bridge since those days. The students I had then are now at retirement age and I wonder sometimes how they turned out. Hopefully, I had a little positive influence on their lives during those three years. I still get out the old Viking school yearbook from time to time and reminisce about those days of long ago.

WHAT AM I THINKING?



I took this picture several years ago. It was a hot day and this little dog had found a cool place in this hole one of the other dogs had dug. Just for fun, can you come up with a cute caption for this picture—something you think the little dog might be thinking. Send me your caption and I'll print the best ones in the next issue.

We have already had five burials at Bluff City Cemetery so far in January. Our sympathy is extended to each of these families.

Kenneth Burroughs –age 61—died Jan. 4
Marion Holleman Starnes – age 87—died Jan. 12
James Claudis Nelson – age 97 – died Jan. 15
William Earl Davis – age 71 – died Jan. 15
Clinton Timothy Robinson – age 97—died Jan. 19