



## On the Road Again...



### Times Remembered

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I've recovered from my bout with kidney stones last week. They were very painful. Not a fun thing to experience. This was the second time in the last four or five years that I've experienced them. My Urologist tells me they are caused by high uric acid. I take medicine daily to decrease the acid and change it to alkaline instead of acid, but sometimes that doesn't work.

On Sunday morning, "Glory Road," the Bluegrass Gospel group from our church, (Calvary Baptist), sang at the New Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Jackson County. Our friends, Brenda and Londale Brewer invited the group to sing at their homecoming. Brenda and Londale are former residents of Irvine and former members of Calvary Baptist.

The group members are: Roger Thomas - Lead, Ricky Thomas - Baritone, Jason Woolery - Tenor and Bob Young - Bass. If you know Ricky Thomas, you know you never stop laughing when you are with him.

On the road traveling to Jackson County, we saw all kinds of wild life from groundhogs and deer to a Billy Goat on the road. He was a furious looking customer. He looked like he could send you sailing if you got in his territory.

The road to McKee, as most of us know, is very crooked and narrow. Susie, Ricky's wife and myself became a little nauseous riding in the back seat on the way up the mountain. But we made it to the church without losing it.

Being on top of Brushy Mountain is about as high as being in Gatlinburg. The scenery was beautiful; so green and thick. Several kinds of wild flowers adorned the roadside. We are so blessed in Estill County and neighboring counties to have such beautiful trees, green grass and a host of many kinds of wildflowers. Amongst those flowers, I'm sure there were several copper heads and rattlesnakes close by, hiding under some of those big rocks on the side of the road.

As we arrived in the church parking lot, Ricky got excited about a "scere" crow, as he called it, that was poised in the garden across from the church. We teased him about his pronunciation of scare crow. This scare crow was unlike any other that I had ever seen. It was a lady mannequin dressed in a low cut dress with a slit on the side, wearing a wig and high heels. She had makeup, and the whole works on her face. Cars were stopping to look at the scare crow lady. This was different.

The group sang several songs they perform so well; such as "My Rock," "It's All Right," and, "I Would Not Be a Sinner," to name

a few. New Zion had just completed a week of revival. The evangelist also brought the message Sunday morning. He was a fiery old time preacher. His message was based on the choices in life that we have to make; whether it's heaven or hell we choose. God gives a free-will choice.

If we ask Jesus to come into our heart, and repent of our sins and turn from them and live for him we are going to heaven. If we choose hell; we will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (II Thessalonians 1:9). (Matthew 13:50), says we will be thrown into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The preacher made it very clear and probably stepped on toes; but that is what many of us need. I was blessed by his message.

After the singing and preaching we were invited to eat and fellowship with everyone. The food was delicious; fellowship was great and we had a joyful time in the Lord! Praise God!

Incidentally, "Glory Road," is seeking to qualify for the Gospel Music Show Case, Blue Grass Acappella Division, at the Kentucky State Fair, August 24th. Good Luck guys!

Glory Road is available to sing at homecomings, revivals and special singings. Contact Roger Thomas at 606-723-3770 or Bob Young, 606-723-7516 for bookings.

## Strawberries are best with sugar and cream and a porch swing



### America's Heartland

**Roger Alford**  
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Strawberries are best with sugar and cream and a porch swing

A farmer was driving along with a load of manure when he passed by a little boy playing in a yard. "Something stinks," the little boy called out. "What do you have in your truck?"

"Fertilizer," the farmer replied. "I'm going to put it on my strawberries."

"You ought to live here with us," the boy said. "We put sugar and cream on ours."

That farmer might have known the best way to grow strawberries, but that little boy knew the best way to eat them. I'm not sure there's anything better than strawberries with sugar and cream, unless it's blackberries cooked into a pot of dumplings, which was a midsummer delight in the community where I grew up. God really did create a world of wonders

for us in the tasty foods we enjoy, in the beauty of the countryside where we live, in the kindnesses of our families and friends.

As we grow older, we become more mindful that we should take time to enjoy the good things that God has put in our lives, whether it be a peach so luscious that juice drips off our elbows, the smell of fresh air after a summer rain, the view from a high mountain lookout, morning dew on bare feet, leaning on a gate watching cows graze, gazing skyward as a V of honking geese pass overhead, walking with our families along a country lane, celebrating that first fish caught by one of our little ones.

That's because, as we grow older, we realize that our time on this earth really is short, as the Bible declares: "Your life is like the morning fog; it's here a little while, then it's gone" (James 4:14). We need to enjoy the good days for bad ones are certain to come.

Some wise person once said that growing old is not for sissies. It's a tough, painful process. We deal with all kinds of hurts along the way. Thankfully, we have Jesus who will be right there with us when life gets tough. My friend and neighbor, Damon Rains, always assures everyone of the Lord's faithfulness. He's 95, a World War II vet, and as solid a Southern Baptist as you'll ever meet.

To Damon, it seems like just yesterday that he, as a

rambunctious kid, hopped a coal train to see what was beyond the tiny East Tennessee community where he was born. Damon remains an active and adventurous sort. He actually played softball in a church league a couple years ago, earning a frontpage headline in the newspaper: "Still swinging for the fences."

I saw Damon sitting on his porch swing the other day, and I couldn't resist stopping in to visit. He told me he'd had a heart attack a few weeks ago, that he'd spent several days in the hospital and many more days recovering at home. But, he cheerfully announced, that he's doing a lot better now.

I love listening to Damon reminisce about his life, whether about growing up in a coal town in the Appalachians or fighting the Nazis a world away as a young machine gunner in the Army. Those chapters of Damon's life may seem long, long ago to a younger generation, but he'd chuckle and tell you the years have flown by.

If you're fortunate, you'll make 95 one day. And when you do, I hope you're able to think back over a life of porch swings, and strawberries, and happy times, and that you'll ponder the years and see, like Damon, that Jesus was right there with you all the time.

*Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.*

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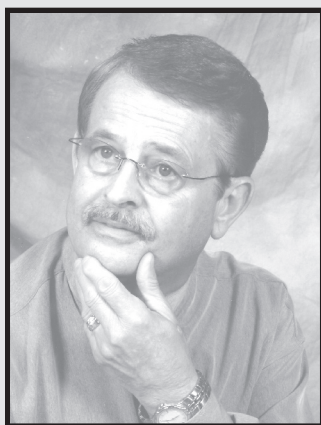
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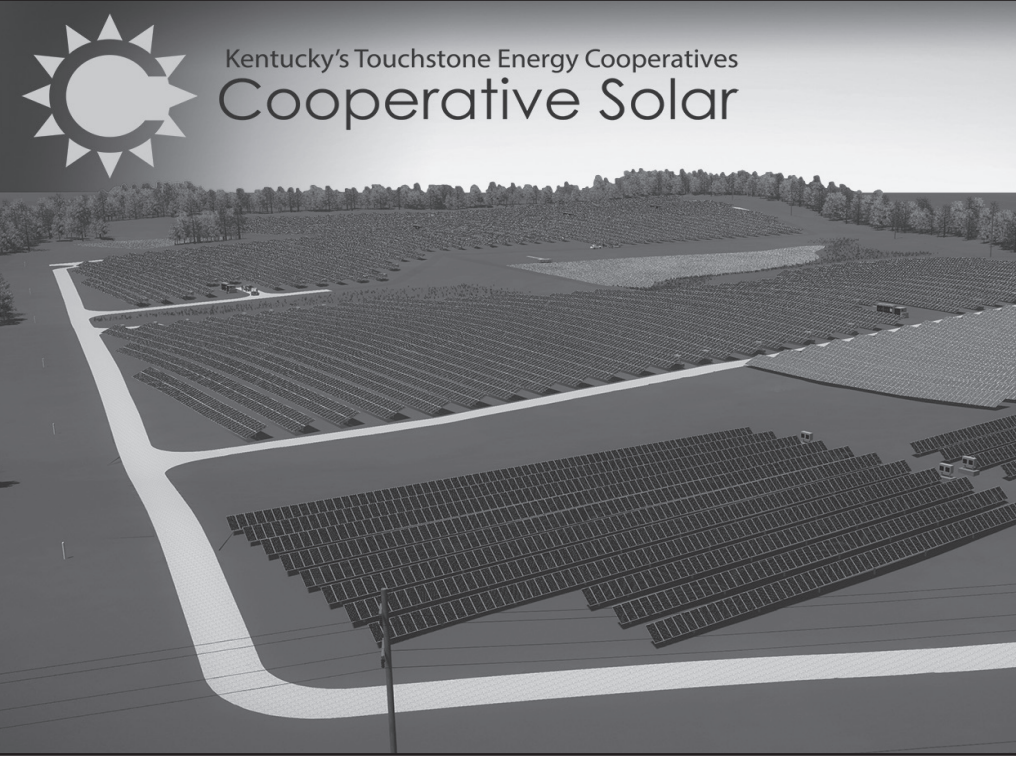
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