

Twice Twenty Tiny Tales Plus Ten

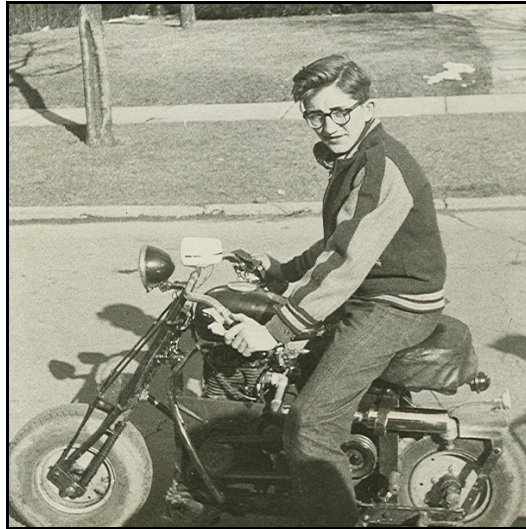
Fred Gielow. January 3, 2026.

Across-the-Street Neighbor.

When I was just in single digits, in the house across the street from where I lived in Detroit, was a girl, younger than I, named Diane. She seemed to be a fussy little kid. She was selfish and irritating and she whined a lot. I didn't want to associate with her. What irony: the girl I married a couple of decades later had the very same name. (She was *not* the same person.)

Herb Daly.

My very first best friend was Herb Daly. We were in the same class at Edison Grade School and he lived two blocks from me. He was near sighted and wore horn-rimmed glasses. I was sort of jealous of his glasses. Once, probably in the third grade, he admitted he couldn't keep straight the



difference between quarter *of* three and quarter *after* three. He married right after high school and I was the best man at his wedding. He went to chiropractic school, following in his father's footsteps (his father died while Herb was in grade school). Then he moved to California where he had a long and very successful practice.

Sleep-over.

A grade school classmate, Rich, was also a very good friend. At a sleep-over at his house once, I woke up and

found the bed was wet. Rich said he had gotten up in the middle of the night to get a glass of water, but spilled it. Later, he admitted he had wet the sheets; there was no glass of water. I admired how, in our grade school music class, he would eagerly volunteer to play the piano. I admired his confidence and his talent. Many years later, he became very influential in the University of Michigan's School of Music. Once, when we were still in grade school, Rich's dad took us to visit his foundry. I think he was president of the company or maybe the owner, maybe both. Anyway, we saw countless sand molds used for casting iron parts. I touched one of the molds and it broke apart. I don't think anybody saw me do that, but I was very embarrassed. And I have been ever since. I remember when, one day, Rich announced to all of us that he knew the whole story about the birds and bees and he told us all about it.

Christmas.

Of course Christmas was the highlight of each year. My parents made sure my brother and I received a mighty stack of presents under and by the Christmas tree. But, it was more than presents, because each Christmas morning, first thing, we'd have pop-overs for breakfast, and Mom's pop-overs (with lots and lots of butter) were the best and tastiest in the whole world. Oh my, those pop-overs were good!

Sophomore Year.

At the beginning of the second half of my sophomore year at college, I stayed for several weeks on the eleventh floor of South Quad. (I spent my freshman year in East Quad.) The eleventh floor was a big, open room stretching from one end of the building to the other. It was used to house dozens of late-filing students or those with housing mixups. One night when snow was predicted, I decided it would be fun to sleep on a section of the roof that was

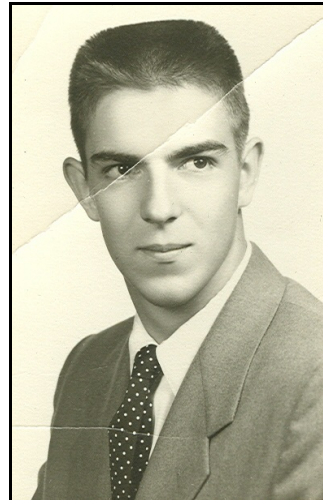
adjacent to where all the beds were. A couple of others helped me move my bed outside and that's where I slept. When I woke up, I found I had been dusted with a light covering of snow. Fun! Later, I was transferred to West Quad, where I had a room with a psychology major. One night, he was determined to join me in bed. However, I was even more determined he was absolutely *not* going to do that.

Smoking.

I had a job at the snack bar in the basement of South Quad, and one evening I guess I found an unused cigarette. I thought it might be a good time to see if I wanted to take up smoking, so I smoked it. And, over the coming weeks, I smoked some more. But it wasn't long before I realized that for me, it was a smelly, objectionable habit, one I wanted to stay far away from. I found I was quite uncomfortable being near people who were smoking. The smell of smoke penetrated everything and I didn't like that.

Blind Date.

A close high school friend, John Lama, arranged a blind date for me with Diane, the person who later became my wife. We attended a dance at the Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church. It turned out to be the first of many double dates Diane and I went on. Oh my, those were so very happy times. Once, John and I drove from Detroit up into the Upper Peninsula, then down through Wisconsin and back home in his parent's car. The trip was particularly memorable because we both got terrible cases of food poisoning from a place where we stopped for lunch in the Dells, Wisconsin.



Minstrel Show Jokes.

During rehearsals of one of my high school minstrel shows, the two “end men” exchanged jokes that weren’t in the script. Some were quite funny. On a double date some time after that, I repeated one of the jokes. As soon as the words escaped my lips, I realized for the *first time*, the joke had a double meaning. One meaning was rather innocuous, but the other was quite disgusting, and totally improper for mixed company. It was a very embarrassing moment. How could I have been so naive? I wince now just thinking about it.

Nicknames.

While we were dating, my wife to be and I had names for each other. She was “Bumberoo,” and I was “Bumby.” More than once, I parked in her parents’ driveway so the two of us could do a little smooching together and fog up the windows of the car.

Clothesline Attachment.

I think it was a Christmas present I bought for Mom. It was a device that could be attached to the garage wall and it allowed the clothesline to be pulled taut. I thought Mom would love it. Some years later I found it tucked away on a shelf in the basement. It was never used. But little matter; not too long after that, Mom got a clothes dryer. But, I was sad my present was such a failure.

Watch.

A very good friend from high school days (Chuck Jones; photo below), a mutual friend (Don Ridley), and I rented an apartment for our junior year at the University of Michigan. We got along very well together and apartment living worked out perfectly for us, except when our lease was about to expire. For the following year, the apartment was going to be leased by someone else, so interested

parties came in to take a look. One couple seemed to look the place over quite quickly. We didn't understand why, until Chuck noticed his watch was missing. Apparently, the couple had a scam going. The two of them would quickly see if there was anything of value to steal. Then, one made sure he had our attention, while the other pocketed the loot. Chuck was furious. And understandably so.



Painting.

Once, while I was dating Diane, I decided to paint a portrait of her. I had paints and brushes and a canvas, but what I didn't have was talent. So I took the best slide photo I had of her



(pictured), projected it on a canvas, then set up a light so I could turn it on and off easily, and then I simply painted on the canvas the colors that were projected there. Sounds foolproof. But it most certainly was not. It took me days to complete. Probably a week or more. When I finished, I proudly showed the portrait to Diane. She hated it. Well, I was no Rembrandt. I did the best I could do.

In-Laws.

I had heard that if you want to know what your wife

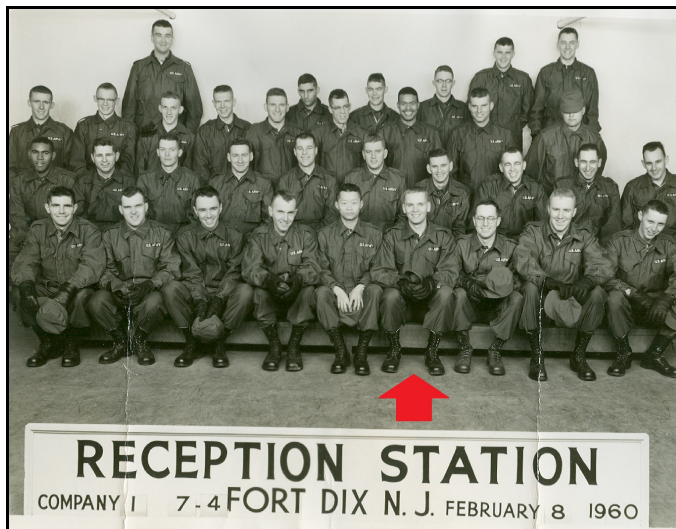
will be like when she's 65, just take a look at her mother. My wife-to-be's mother was gentle, pleasant, kind, and an absolute delight to be around. She frequently made Jell-O with fruit for me (it was one of my favorite desserts). She always had a warm smile on her face. On the other hand, my father-in-law was rather grumpy and sometimes a tad intimidating. Once, during a visit, he showed me a notice he had received in the mail. It said if he didn't respond immediately to the offer in the envelope, he would *die!* Eerily, he died that very night (not while we were there, thank goodness).

Electricity in the Garage.

My family's house had a garage, but it had no electricity. I thought I'd fix that, so during a period when my parents were away for several days, I dug a deep trench between the house and garage, made a hole in the basement wall for an electrical cable, made another hole in the garage wall, installed the cable, installed a receptacle in the garage wall, and connected the line in the house. As it turned out, there really wasn't much need for electricity in the garage, but having a light there was handy at night.

Stint in the Army.

In 1960, I was inducted into the Army. However, since I was working for IBM, I was able to receive a "critical skills" classification, which meant my stint was



only three months. One bitter-cold night, I was chosen for furnace duty (outside), which meant I had to keep the furnaces of three different barracks stoked with coal and blazing hot. My duty was midnight to three in the morning, at which time I was to awaken the next guy for his three-hour tour of duty. However, the next guy simply refused to get out of bed, no matter how much I pleaded and pestered him. So, my three-hour tour became a six-hour tour. Some time after that, I got pneumonia and was sent to the hospital. There, it took me weeks to recover, but then I contracted chicken pox when I went to the next ward for supplies, and my hospital stay was extended even longer.

La-Z-Boy.

For one Christmas, Diane got me a La-Z-Boy chair. I didn't like it. It was a boring brown, and I thought it was ugly. Not just ordinary ugly, but first-in-its-class ugly. I asked her to take it back. The problem was that the salesman had told her that returns would not be accepted. (Methinks the salesman also thought the chair was ugly.) But I didn't want it. I believe eventually the chair was returned and a refund received, but only after a three-month delay. (Or, was it six months?)

Enlarger.

For one Christmas, Diane gave me an photographic enlarger, so I could take black-and-white pictures and then develop the film and make prints right at home. That was a really thoughtful gift, and I made good use of it. For a stand, I built two cabinets with black Formica sides, and a counter top that I covered with white Formica. I got a dark fabric to cover the window in the downstairs bedroom and converted it into my photo workshop. I spent many a pleasant hour there developing and printing pictures.

Dad's 80th Birthday.

For Dad's 80th birthday, my brother and sister-in-law thought it would be a fun surprise if I flew to Grand Rapids, Michigan where they lived, to celebrate the occasion with Dad at a



dinner at their house. They got a big box for me to hide in and when Dad opened it, there I'd be. Of course, I was all in favor of the idea, but I needed a special gift to give him for such an important occasion. I decided to make a book of pictures I found in various magazines, but I photographically substituted Dad's face in place of what was in the original image. Here's a sampling of the results:



Birthday Gift for Dad.

One year, I got Dad a replica of "She Goat," created in 1950 by Pablo Picasso. It was about 15 inches long and 12 inches high, and I had no idea how to safely get it from where I lived (Woodstock, New York) to where he



lived (Detroit). I thought the statue would probably be destroyed in the US Mail, UPS, or even FedEx. As it turned out, I was going on a business trip that just happened to have a stop-over in Detroit, so I took the statue with me on the plane, left it in a locker at the Detroit airport, and mailed the key to Dad. By the time the key reached him and he had a chance to drive to the airport, a number of days had elapsed. When he got to the locker, the statue had been impounded because it had been in the locker too long. Dad had to pay a penalty to get his birthday gift. And he had a long drive to and from the airport. Happy birthday, Dad.

Haircut.

One day at work at IBM in Kingston, New York, I decided to get a haircut at lunchtime. I scurried over to the barbershop, which wasn't far from my office, and got back quickly. Later in the afternoon, while I was in the mens' room, I noticed one of my sideburns was a good deal longer than the other, by a half inch or more. I scurried back to the barber for repairs. Actually, I don't think anyone noticed the mistake.

Knob for the Steering Wheel.

When I saw that a handy knob could be purchased and attached to the steering wheel of the family car, it was a no-brainer. I had to get one. I knew my parents would be thrilled with the convenience and ease of steering with the knob. That belief was totally unfounded. The knob *was* installed on the steering wheel, but probably just to please me. My parents were not pleased with it at all. (The knob pictured is *not* the knob I bought. Source of photo:



Internet.)

Thanks.

It wasn't until I was in college that I finally figured out my parents weren't adversaries. Rather, they were a conscientious mother and father who wanted the best for me. This came into sharp focus when I saw how much they were paying for my college education. I think it was \$90 for tuition and \$200 for room and board per semester. That sounds like a trivial amount now, but back then, it was a lot. When I was working in the U of M Law Club dining room, I was paid 90 cents an hour, and that was after a pay increase from 75 cents an hour. One afternoon, I sat down and wrote my parents a long, heart-felt thank-you note.

Skin Cancer.

It was probably 1964 or thereabouts when my doctor told me I had a spot of skin cancer along the left side of my nose. I remember asking him in a very sarcastic tone, "Does that mean you have to cut off my entire nose?" No, of course not. He made a careful and tiny slice along my left nostril. Nothing more was necessary. It was so skillfully done that over the years, only one person ever noticed it and mentioned it to me. Since that first surgery, I have been under many a dermatologist's scalpel. A few surgeries were done as well as the first, some were worse, and a few were much, much worse.

Picking Apples.

One fall day when my family was living in Woodstock, New York, Diane and I decided to take our two sons to an orchard to pick apples. For some reason, I have unusually fond memories of that outing. As I recall, the air was crisp, the sun was bright, and we all had such a wonderful time. Just picking apples together.

Motocross.

For several years, I wrote articles and took pictures for the *Hudson Valley Magazine*. One Saturday, I thought I'd get some photos at a motocross event in upstate New York. I thought I'd look rather dapper in a red, long-sleeve shirt, but when I started taking pictures, I was informed red was a danger flag for the racers and if they saw my shirt as a flag, they'd have to come to an immediate stop. I wanted to act like I was an experienced, professional photographer at the event, but my cover was blown. I felt very stupid.

Glider Ride.

For another article, I thought I'd take a glider ride out of the Wurtsboro Airport in Sullivan County, New York, and write up my adventure. Dad was visiting at the time, so he came along to watch. It was quite a thrilling ride, but not the smooth, quiet experience I expected. It was bumpy and surprisingly noisy. Afterward, Dad and I thought we'd stop off on the way home and get something to eat since we had missed lunch, but my stomach was so tied up in knots from the flight, I wasn't hungry at all.

Bad Cold.

I caught a really nasty cold once that sent me to bed for a number of days. It wasn't just coughing and sneezing and a sore throat. I felt absolutely miserable, and after what seemed like enough time to get over it, I wasn't feeling any better at all. Our family doctor was Dr. Neporant, and his office was in Kingston, New York. I was in Woodstock, about ten miles away, and I didn't feel well enough to get in a car and drive to see him. I asked if he could come see me. I suppose most doctors would scoff at such a suggestion, but Dr. Neporant agreed. His visit assured me I wasn't about to die, and a few days later I was on the road to recovery. I couldn't thank him enough.

Temporary Office.

When I moved from the banking system planning department to the computer display planning department at IBM Kingston (New York), I temporarily occupied an office at one corner of the laboratory building, first floor. The only time Dad visited me at work was when I was in that office. Dad enjoyed his visit, as did I, but years later I realized he saw my office as a measure of success. He saw my big corner office as a mark of high achievement. He never knew that shortly after his visit, I was moved to a tiny office in one of the trailer units behind the lab.

Cottage Work.

I enjoyed working on repair and improvement projects at a cottage I stayed at on Lake Michigan for a few weeks each summer. Usually, the jobs were relative minor, but every now and then there was a major project, like capping the crumbling cement stairs and replacing the kitchen counter. One year, I thought it would be a good idea to remove the screens on one wall of the sleeping porch and replace them with windows. That was a lengthy effort and took much of the time I was there. Bob (my son) offered to assist in the project and was a big help. But that meant he sacrificed much of his time there, too. That was very generous of him.

Tim's Great Surprise.

In June, 2011, I attended the fiftieth year anniversary of the founding of the Poughkeepsie Chapter of barbershop singers. There was a reception and dinner at the Grand Hotel Friday evening. It was truly a delight to see many, old, familiar barbershoppers. Then, there was an afternoon barbershop show on Saturday. Following the show, while talking to members of the featured quartet, Our Town, I felt someone tap me on the shoulder. I turned around and couldn't believe my eyes. It was Tim (my son)! Of course

I recognized him, but he was the last person I expected to see. He was living in the Boston area. How could he possibly be in Poughkeepsie? At a barbershop show? He had traveled all that way to surprise me. What a special moment! And what a wonderful surprise! He was also at the afterglow in the evening. It was such a treat to see him! And such a super surprise!

\$10 Gold Piece.

IBM offered a \$10 gold piece as prize to the employee who could provide a name for a new banking terminal IBM was about to announce. Lots of names were submitted. A name quickly came to mind: "The IBM Financial Services Terminal." I submitted it and won the prize.



That was great, but then I found my prize resulted in additional withholding taken from my paycheck. So, as long as I kept the gold piece, I lost money in the deal! (I still have the gold piece; photo.)

Compliments.

I sang in a barbershop quartet for a number of years. It gave me more pleasure than I could ever describe. At a party after one of our shows, someone I didn't know came up to me and began to regale me with high praise at great length about the quartet's performance. He said we had sung so well and it was one of the best performances he had ever witnessed. His compliments went on and on. A little later, I spoke to Pete Donatelli (our quartet's tenor) and I said, excitedly, "You'll never believe what that guy over there just told me about our performance. . ."

Pete interrupted me. "I talked to him a little earlier. He's drunk as a skunk. Don't believe a word he said!"

Another Compliment.

At a party another time, someone came up to me and said, “Are you one of the singers in the Unlikely Hoods quartet?”

“Yes, I am,” I replied.

“Well, I just wanted to tell you,” he continued, “I absolutely love your quartet’s stationery!”

And Yet Another.

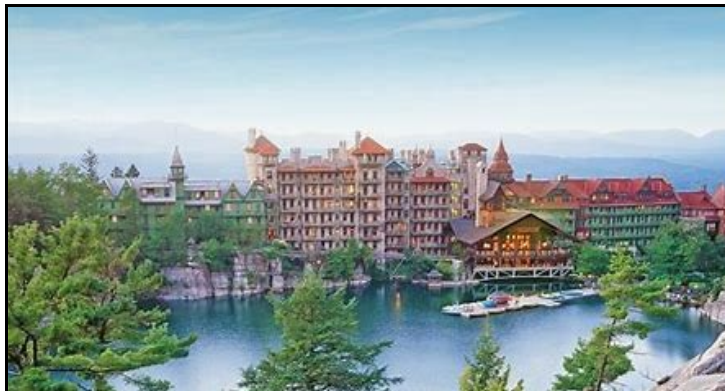
One time, while working at IBM in Kingston, New York, my manager had his office in White Plains, New York. I had to make a presentation to him, so I drove down, parked my car, and went to his office. I had a series of flip charts which I went through one by one. When I was finished, he said “Good,” which obviously pleased me. But then he asked, “Were you a salesman before becoming a product planner?” Well, I wasn’t, but that, coming from a salesman who had climbed up a number of rungs in the promotion ladder, was a real compliment!

Mohonk.

Jack Cole, a dear friend at the YMCA from my high school days, visited me when I was living in Woodstock, New York. I thought I’d take him to see Mohonk Mountain

House and the surrounding sights. I think that place is gorgeous.

(Photo from the Internet.)



We were

walking the grounds when someone approached us. She was a complete stranger, and she said to me, “Didn’t I see you in a quartet performance a few days ago?”

“Yes, I guess so,” I replied. “ My quartet performed in a show a couple of days ago.”

“Well,” she said, “that was a simply marvelous performance.” And she went on and on to describe in glowing terms how great the quartet was. Obviously, receiving a heart-felt compliment is very special, but receiving such a compliment when you’re with someone you want to impress – priceless!

Customs at the Border.

The quartet I was in had the pleasure of singing on a couple of barbershop chapter shows in Canada. One was in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Going through Customs, Pete Donatelli (tenor) got through quickly. So did Mike Myers (lead) and Anton Grosz (bass). However, for some reason, I was singled out for special attention. Taken to a interview room, I was subjected to a whole series of questions that must have lasted 15 or 20 minutes. I don’t remember if I was also searched, but that may have happened, too. When I was finally released and joined the others, we all had a good laugh. Obviously, I was the most suspicious-looking guy in the group.

Motorcycle.

While living in Cary, North Carolina, I decided to buy a motorcycle. I thought it would be something different, it would be exciting, it would be a real adventure, and it was all those things. But when I moved to Florida, I had to give it away, because I didn’t have time to sell it, and there was no place to store it in the new Boca Raton villa I bought. I thoroughly enjoyed that motorcycle for the few short years I had it.

Response time.

Occasionally, I encountered periods when I had no work to do at IBM. None whatsoever. Sometimes, there

were organization changes or assignment changes and there was simply nothing to do. Those were bad times, and during one such period that was particularly protracted, I decided to write a computer program to simplify making product acceptance and inventory projection charts which were frequently required in my job. To do this, I had to write my program on a computer screen, then enter it for computer processing. After a while, the computer would respond with results, but the response time was usually quite long, sometimes up to an hour, sometimes much longer than that. Once, when another department member was in the same room with me (doing nothing), I decided just for fun to count down, out loud, from 50 while I waited for a response. Slowly, I counted: “50, 49, 48. . .” At the very instant I reached 0, the computer responded with a message on the screen.

“How did you do that?” the other guy asked in total amazement. He thought I was somehow controlling the computer response. I wasn’t. It was just a coincidence.

Deodorant.

Once, I participated in a week-long work session at an IBM branch office in New Jersey. An IBM salesman, a few customer people, and I worked on some kind of computer display problem (don’t remember any specifics about it). Monday and Tuesday were fine, but on Wednesday, when I got back to my motel, I noticed a slight hint of odor from my underarm perspiration. Thursday morning I used an extra dose of deodorant (I think it was Old Spice), but in the evening, once again there was that odor, this time even stronger. Friday I liberally slathered on the deodorant, but to no avail. It seems my under arm chemistry had become immune to the deodorant’s protection. When I switched to a different brand, all was well again. I felt very embarrassed IBM customers had to witness my deodorant battle.

Robbery.

My son, Tim, visited me one Thanksgiving weekend when I was living in Boca Raton, Florida. We drove south on I-95 to visit the Miami Zoo. The trip took most of the day, and when we got back, we found someone had broken into my home, pried open a corner of my safe, and stolen much of its contents. All this happened during daylight hours. Money was taken as was a valuable set of antique silverware. Of course, I called the police. The robbers had broken in without causing much damage to my home, but after the police, looking for fingerprints, had painted black powder everywhere, my place was a mess.

Car Breakdown.

When Pete Donatelli died, a funeral was held in Hudson, New York. Obviously, I had to attend, but my Honda Civic refused to start. My neighbors were at work, but I called someone I knew, but not well, and asked if he would be willing to drive me to a car-rental place in Kingston. He was an elderly guy and had just bought a new car, but he agreed. I got in his car and we started out, but he drove a little too close to a mail box perched on a post by the road. The mailbox and the right-hand, rear-view mirror met with a bang and both were damaged. Unexpectedly, the guy didn't even notice this unfortunate collision had occurred. Perhaps he was a little hard of hearing. So a question quickly arose: should I tell him it happened? I finally concluded he would learn of the damage soon enough, but it wouldn't be before he delivered me to the car rental place.

Misidentification.

Alice Holanbeck and I met at a political gathering and after some time became friends. Once, following a political meeting, we, along with her friend, went to a restaurant for lunch. A waiter came to take our orders.

“What can I get for you ladies, today?” he inquired. I knew my hair was long, but I didn’t think it was *that* long.

Car Battery.

I attended an evening political meeting – probably in Fort Lauderdale – and afterward, one of the attendees found his car battery had died. He wanted to use jumper cables to start it and he wanted to use my car’s battery to do so. At the time, my car was brand new. I had heard many a story about batteries blowing up if jumper cables weren’t connected properly. I didn’t want that to happen to me. But, I was torn. Here was a guy in trouble, and I might be able to help. What a moral dilemma. I opted for the selfish option and told him no. I certainly didn’t make a friend that night.

Steve Plumb.

Once when I was going through a particularly hard time, a barbershop singer friend, Steve Plumb, tried his best to keep up my spirits and see to it I was okay. One evening, he invited me to play a game of handball with him, knowing that physical activity would keep my mind off my troubles. And it did. He was a really thoughtful guy. Years later at a barbershop show he hosted, I wanted to thank him again in person. Unfortunately, he was not feeling well and headed home before I got a chance to speak with him.

Helping a Friend.

Alice Holenbeck held monthly political meetings in Deerfield Beach, Florida. One of the people who attended had a handicapped son who was under the care of a local childcare center. But, the center was abusing the son, she said, and she asked for help. I decided to write a letter to the board of directors to get answers about the reported abuse. In response, the center sued me, and it took years

and a significant legal expense to get a resolution: an arbitrated settlement. There's a lesson to learn: be cautious with your charity.

New House.

Before moving into my new house in Winter Garden, Florida, my brother (Jim) and I wanted to take one more look at it. (Both of us were going to move in.) There were still a few last-minute fix-up

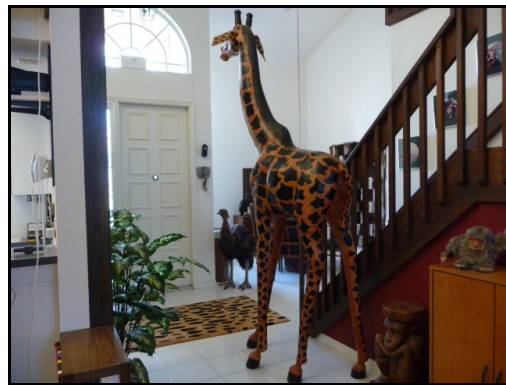


items needing attention after the walk-through. When we got there, someone was sweeping out the garage. He was a black man, of small build, but with a friendly smile. He was attired in work pants, t-shirt, and work boots. Jim said to him, "Oh, are you a worker here doing clean-up duties for our new house?" Immediately, I had a premonition this wasn't going to end well.

"No," the man said. "I'm the general contractor for the entire community." My premonition was confirmed.

Stuffed Giraffe.

One day while driving along Route 1 in Boca Raton, I noticed a large stuffed giraffe in the window of a second-hand store. It wasn't an actual giraffe that was stuffed; rather, it was a pretty good replica. "Oh, my," I said to myself, "I may need to buy that." And I did, and it



lived very happily for years by the doorway of my Boca home (photo). But some years later, I moved to Winter Garden and I had to find a new home there that could accommodate a nine-foot giraffe. And I did. But then I moved once more (to Fort Myers) in 2020, and again needed a place with a high ceiling. And I found one. I got to thinking: it seems a stuffed giraffe has been dictating where I'm going to live.

Medical Procedure.

I was undergoing a medical procedure that necessitated poking me with a series of needles. And the pokes were not just on the surface; they went in a bit. The urologist told me he'd give me a clear warning when he was about to jab me, because I'd definitely feel it. (There was no anesthetic.) Anxiously, I awaited his warning. After a few moments, he said rather loudly, "Now," as he shoved in the first needle. I was thinking that it would have been really nice if the warning had come a little bit *before* the poke, not simultaneously with it.

Retirement.

I didn't think much about retirement benefits most of the 31-plus years I worked at IBM. Retirement was something to delve into when I got old, like 65. And the subject was far from my mind when IBM offered me a full year's pay if I retired right then and there. That proved to be too good an offer to pass up. So monthly now, I receive a pension check. How nice is that! I don't do a stitch of work for IBM, yet I get a fine, monthly payment. That seems too good to be true. And now, I have been retired from IBM for a period longer than all those years I worked for the company! That's crazy.

Eye Surgery.

When I had cataracts removed from my left eye, it

was discovered I had an inherited trait, Fuchs dystrophy, which left my left eye blind until I was able to receive a cornea transplant. When sight returned to that eye, it was amazing. Everything was so bright. And the colors were so vivid and strong. The image on my big TV screen was so beautiful. The icons on my cell phone were so pretty. I stared at the deep, rich blue of the Caloosahatchee River next to my apartment. It was absolutely magnificent. Oh my! There are so many blessings we take for granted.

Please note that many of these tales are from long ago. I remember them as I've described here, but my memory is now more than 90 years old, and it's not as good as it used to be. Have the tales improved over time? Perhaps.