

School Starts Soon!

(I heard a rumor that all of the mommies of the children going back to school have planned a "Back to School Liquid Lunch Day". The kindergarten mommies are having a little harder time with it, they are having a "BYO-Xanax & Tissue Cry-off). That's what I heard. Honest!

NEW HOME PAGE Of interest....

Okay, we've picked this guy to build our home, now what happens?..... Much like the dog that chases the car, what the heck are you going to do with it now that you have caught it (picked the builder dude, or of course dudette)? So, this guy is going to build your dream home? Okay the simplified version of the process begins this way...**First - we pick a lot, second - we find a set of plans, or have plans drawn to fit the chosen lot, third - execute a construction contract, fourth - arrange financing, fifth - close the construction loan at a title company, and sixth - dirt should then fly....**

Picking the lot: In some cases you may chose from the inventoried lots that your anointed builder my have already purchased or optioned for. In other cases, depending what style and size house you are building, you might have to go find the perfect lot and buy it. In other words, if you want to express your individuality to the rest of the world, "free-styling" as it were, in the form of a monumental edifice resembling an exact replica of the home once occupied by the "Old Woman in the Shoe", you may have to look at lots with more *liberal* deed restrictions and covenants (I know, another right you have lost as an American).

Tips on picking the lot:

1 Lots with more quality trees like oaks, the more the seller will mark up the price of the lot, and the more it will cost to take the trees out that are standing in your proposed dining room. All of that means "*no money, no money, no money!*" A good rule of thumb is taking all trees out within five to ten feet of your house. I know! I know! You want to save every tree possible. *Just build a bridge and get over it,* because if you allow trees to remain close the house, they can cause foundation problems, branch out, destroying your gutters and roof, and/or allow varmints easy access to your attic, that is of course, if the trees don't die after the trauma of construction. **Story:** I started a house for an attorney, while I was a tender-foot superintendent working for a builder. We had to build this 5,000 plus, square foot home around this fairly small grouping of trees. Literally, this small group of oak trees,

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the largest being about 6" caliper, sat exactly in the middle of the lot. The lot was a corner lot, that sloped down, from its high point, to the curb, 14 feet lower. The architect created an "atrium" for the trees right in the middle of the house, and stepped the house down the hill to minimize retaining walls. This lawyer would come by the project every single day to make sure we were not damaging his trees. The minute he got out of his car, he was as nervous as a Chihuahua dog about his trees. He would have lost his \$200 per hour mind (that was over 25 years ago, too) if we would have skinned his trees. Shortly after we poured the slab I took a job with another company, so I did not get to see the finished house, but, years later, in conversation with the builder I had worked for, he told me the trees only lasted about five years after the house was finished. Now, many of you know that having a tree guy come over and cut down some trees in your yard is expensive enough, so, I don't think you can conceptualize the cost to remove some trees from the middle of the house? Well, let's just say it was in the thousands of dollars. **The lawyer told the tree guy, "I'm a lawyer and I don't make that kind of money!"** **The tree guy told the lawyer, "I didn't either when I was a lawyer"** (sorry, old joke, but I couldn't help myself).

2 Lots with big slopes or elevation changes will require a greater quantity of excavation, and/or retaining walls. All of that means, "*no money, no money, no money!!*" Oh, and those trees on the sloped lots you want to hug every day, they are.....**not math, not science, but they are history!** You cannot add more than 1" of soil per year, anywhere under the sap line (the furthest reaches of the branches) of an oak tree, or it will go into shock, then, most likely expire. So, if you are moving dirt from one side of the lot to the other to level it out, the trees will not make it, plus, it is much more expensive to have the lot leveler guy work around them than just knock them over and haul them off. He makes as much as the lawyer above. With a nice level lot you can plant new, healthy trees where ever you want them, and as many as you want. You alone can stop global warming by planting your own orchard.

Another situation to consider on sloping lots is where the utilities are. If the lot slopes from the curb down, be sure, I repeat, be sure to find out from the city how deep the sewer line is. If your proposed house foundation is going to be 12 feet below the curb and the sewer line is only 10 feet below the street, then....guess what doesn't run uphill? That right! You have to buy a lifting pump to make it run up hill. *Mo money, mo money, mo money!*

3 The best lots to build on are fairly flat, with the pad height (where the foundation will be placed) being 12" to 18" above the curb for proper water shedding, or drainage away from the house. Now you can plant trees where ever you want them, guilt free, since you didn't knock any down.

4 An old rule of thumb is that lots with indigenous oak trees growing naturally indicate good sandy soil, which is good to build on. Lots with mesquite trees on them naturally, indicate soil with a lot of clay in it. Clay expands and contracts with varying moisture content in the soil. Clay soils are very build-able, but you might experience a few more" settlement" issues than houses built on more sandy soil. Clay soils are all over north Texas. Anyway, just a rule of thumb.

Getting Construction Plans: There are two basic ways to ascertain plans for your new home. One, is to go to the office of a home designer, or architect (it is not necessary to have an architect's "seal" on house plans), find one of their "stock" plans, and have them draw a site plan for your lot with that house on it. This is the least expensive way to do it. Generally, if you want to make minor changes to the stock plan, the designer, or architect will charge an hourly rate, or fee to make those changes for you. The other way to get construction plans is to hire a home designer, or architect to draw something completely original for you to fit your lot. This is usually a four to five step process. The initial meeting with your lot survey, to tell him/her what you want (pictures and drawings are a huge help in this case), He/she will draw a sketch of the floor plan only, as a conceptualization to see if client and designer are close to being on the same page. No, he/she is not an idiot because he/she drew 5,000 square feet and you wanted 3,000. Give him/her as much detail and specifications as you possibly can during the initial meeting. The third meeting, the designer should have a drawing that is fairly close to what you want and an front elevation(what it looks like from the front). There may be some additional tweaking at this point, but final drawings are in the near future. If you have a hard time visualizing, take a tape measure to your meetings to measure on the floor how big 14' by 15' actually is. Also, measure your existing rooms for comparison.

Tips on getting plans:

1 Take as much detail, information, and pictures from magazines etc., to your meetings with the designers. A picture is truly worth a thousand words in this process.

2 Start smaller than you think you really need because, I promise you, the house will grow before it is all said and done. Most clients have room counts that they want, and do not really understand how much square footage it takes to give them good sizes in those rooms.

3 Please do not try to save footage by cutting a foot or two out of rooms. I built a house for a couple that wanted, absolutely no more than 2,800 square feet, but they loved one of my 3000 square foot plans. It had all of the rooms they wanted and it was arranged exactly like wanted., but they were dead-set on 2800 square feet, no more. So the designer took a foot out of the dining room, kitchen/nook, and garage (they were all in alignment front to back, so one foot out of one affected the rest of that side of the house, which affected the bedrooms upstairs above this area), and a foot out of the master bedroom which affected the master bath (no rooms above). That one foot taken from the dining, kitchen/nook, and garage, made the dining room almost too small for her oversized dining table and chairs, it cost her some storage cabinets in her kitchen, and made the garage to where you had to be real careful, when you got out of the car, or you would ding dad's car. The bottom line is, they got their 2,800 square feet, and saved, at that time \$10,000, (or about \$78 per month on their mortgage) and got a house with compromised spaces. **Just build a house with nice rooms. You will get your money back when you sell it because marginal rooms are hard to sell. That is a fact.**

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4 Porches, garages, and garage storage space still cost money to build, but it may not show up again when you try to sell. Homes are bought and sold “per air conditioned square footage”, not by total footage under roof. The cost to build porches and garages is almost as much as the cost of air conditioned space. You still have to put a foundation under them, they still have to be roofed, there is electricity, paint, brick, windows, garage doors, etc. Just be cautious when designing your home and adding all of that space. **Huge porches and 4-car garages are very desirable, but may not necessarily translate to a return on your investment.**

Executing a Construction Contract: There are two basic construction contracts for a “pre-sold home”. One, called a “Mechanic’s Lien” contract if the buyer owns the land, or a standard Construction contract if the builder owns the lot. A “Mechanic’s Lien” contract, in simple language, gives the builder certain rights of recovery, should decide, for some reason, that you no longer like his Aqua Velva after-shave, and you don’t want to pay him. It’s your land, your house, so too bad, so sad for the builder, right? Not so fast Mr. How, of the firm Dewey, Cheatum, and How! The mechanic lien contract gives the builder some rights to get his/her money. The Yellow Pages are full of attorneys if you would like a little more detail on this type of contract.

The second type of contract, when the builder owns the lot, is merely an agreement, that says when the builder finishes the house you agree that you will buy, close, and fund it. It is a very simple concept that takes about 40 pages, legal size, to describe how this will be accomplished, and what happens if either party chooses to do otherwise.

General Notes on Contracts:

1 The anointed builder will have a source for both contracts.

2 You can let your attorney go through it but, generally the anointed builder is not going to build your house unless you agree to “his/her” contract, the way it is drawn up. **I promise you, the builder has more at risk in this process, so the contract will be written slightly favoring the builder**, but a good contract is still fair for both parties. I built a house for an young, ambulance-chasing attorney, I mean, plaintiff attorney. He gave my contract to his real estate lawyer, buddy to review, who commenced to “red-mark” the living daylight out of it. My attorney, Texas Senator Chris Harris, called up the young ambulance chaser attorney, uh hm, plaintiff attorney, and yelled at him in such a manner (I think he was near tears), saying he was advising his client (me) to not only not execute this contract, but to run from such unscrupulous attorneys as the two of you. How dare they try to take advantage of a guy just trying to make a living! I thought I had lost the job, but the ambulance chaser attorney was, in reality, a really good guy. He and I sat down one night, over some adult beverages, and hashed it out. We became very good friends during the experience.

3 The builder is going to want some money up front, in the form of a

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“construction deposit“, not “earnest money“, to initiate the construction process. If you did your homework, as instructed by this periodical, July edition, then you should have a relatively diminished anxiety about giving your guy your hard earned cash. The reason for “Construction Deposit” is because once the contract is executed, the builder immediately becomes obligated to others. He/she commits resources, orders materials, applies for permits, hires engineers, and generally will sign a note for your house. At this point, you, the home buyers are at risk to the amount of money on deposit while the builder is at risk for 100% of the house. If you bail, you lose 10%, but now we have a builder with a house and no buyer. **As ludicrous as it seems, not everyone will buy into your little girl fantasies, to an equal fervor, of a quaint cottage home, feeling as though, Mr. Pottery Barn himself, had orchestrated the symphony of lilac, canary, and mint colored rooms, replete with the splendor of Nantucket driftwood rails and moulding.** I hear you, brother, who wouldn't like that? Some people's taste resides only in their mouth, right? I guess you see my point that there are homes that only one person in the world loves, and a builder doesn't want to be the one owning it.

“Earnest money” is dollars held at the title company as a function of good faith. It works great on houses already built or being re-sold. In the case of new construction, if the two parties get cross, earnest money can be tied up forever while the lawyers have their hissing contest. In the mean time, the builder has a house that is accruing interest with no buyer. We call it having a house inserted enema style.

Arranging Financing: There are two parts to the financing. Permanent financing, or mortgage, and interim, or construction financing. The mortgage, obviously, is the long term financing as mortgage companies are geared to service loans and monthly payments over a long period of time. Interim, or construction lenders, usually commercial banks, are geared for short term loans. They provide funds in proportion to the percentage completion of the project, and are charged to inspect the project's progress. This inspection tells the bank how much of the total construction funds to make available for paying invoices on the project. For example, if a construction loan is for \$500,000, and the foundation is in place, which has a completion value of 15%, then the bank will make 15%, or , \$75,000 available to the client/builder to pay for labor and materials on the project. **You don't get to go celebrate the pouring of the slab by using the funds for a new BMW.** You have to use the money to pay for the slab, or you could spend the next 2 to 5 years in small little room with bars on it, courtesy of the Federal government, and in the presence of very large men, named Bubba et al, that cherish undressing you with their eyes. Of course the nearer to completion the project is, obviously, the greater the percentage of the construction funds are available to draw, to pay for improvements. Once the house is complete, the mortgage is put into place, in the name of the home buyer, and the interim construction loan is paid off.

There is a product out there called, “**one-time close**”, which a mortgage lender will loan the homebuyer both types of financing. The mortgage company will finance the construction loan at a better rate than a commercial bank can, then flip it to a

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mortgage when the house is complete. It works out better for the homeowner because they can deduct the interest expense of the construction funds whereas, under normal construction financing, interim interest is a cost, just like lumber, to a builder. Although, during the recent housing funk, some of that product has dried up. There may be some companies that still have that product. I'm just hip to that dude at this moment.

Market News...

New house prices are doing what?.... Who would have thunk it? The housing market is flat, foreclosures are at a all time high, but guess what? New house costs are going up. I may have mentioned that 7 or 8 times in the last 7 or 8 Gazettes. One word, OIL. You know, the bubbling crude, Jed Clampett shot, "black gold", "Texas tea". *Well the next thing you know Ali Bahba's a millionaire, his harem of wives, say "Ali, move away from there. Said Trump Tower is the place you ought to be, so he loaded up the Lear and moved to N - Y - C. The City that is...movie stars, more wives."*

(Sorry, I was swept up in the moment.) Composition shingles and roofing are almost double what they were 18 months. Lumber is going up, concrete is already up, in fact, anything that has to be delivered to the job which is everything including labor and me, that has to pay \$4 per gallon is going up. Hmm, but Nancy Pelosi doesn't want to buy oil from us. Well I guess that makes sense then, because she is brilliant.

BUSINESS AND OFFICE PAGE

Of interest....

Randall Garrett Homes, Inc, - For Sale

Keller, Bourland Oaks Community (www.bourlandoaks.com):

This subdivision is heating up. I have 3 serious lookers at press time.

816 Gentle Wind - 4 Beds, 4.5 Baths, Study, Game, Media, 3 car (4,189 sf)

Cool Feature - "Pottery Barn" Styling **\$579,000**

812 Gentle Wind - 5 Beds, 4.5 Baths, Study, Game, Media, 3 car (4,487 sf)

Cool Feature - wheel chair access to 2nd bedroom **\$619,000**

416 Settlers Ridge - 4 Beds, 4.5 Baths, Study, Game, Media, 3 car (4,142 sf)

Cool Feature - 2 outdoor living areas **\$589,000**

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400 Settlers Ridge - 4 Beds, 4.5 Baths, Study, Game, Media, 3 car (4,596 sf)
Cool Feature - Pond view/best price per sf in B Oaks **\$599,000**

**Arlington, Lago Vista - Gated Community with common pool & cabana
(randallgarrethomes.com):**

4802 Spicewood - 3 Beds, 2.5 Baths, Study, 2 car (2,515 sf)
Cool Feature - "Pottery Barn" Styling **\$299,000**

4810 Spicewood - 3 Beds, 2 Baths, Study, 3 car (2,566 sf)
Cool Feature - only 3-car available **\$319,000**

4815 Starmont - 3 Beds, 2.5 Baths, Study, 2 car (2,472 sf)
Cool Feature - SOLD! **\$SOLD!!**

Hurst, Glade Pointe Court (randallgarrethomes.com):

3209 Glade Pointe Ct. - 3 Beds, 2.5 Baths, Study, Game, Loft, Upper Balcony,
exercise room 2 car (3,569 sf)
Cool Feature - It's like living in a mountain chalet. Low maintenance,
wooded lot that backs up to a creek. Like a bird sanctuary. Mallard
ducks come in the winter. Only 3-car available **\$469,000**

Classified Section...

Restaurant Furnishings for Sale!! The lovely and talented Ana Garrett closed down her restaurant in Frisco, so we have an abundance of **real marble and granite tables with iron chairs.** Purchased wholesale for \$1200 originally (you can't tear up granite and iron).....per set (1 table, 4 chairs).....**\$250.00**

Original Oil Paintings by Venezuelan artist, **Hugo Camacaro**.....**\$250.00**

1955 Chevrolet, model 150, 2 door post. Frame off Re-build in 1994, 7,000 miles on it since. Bel Air trim, Blue metal flake paint, mid '80's 350 ci w/650 Eldebrock carb, headers, disc player w/ remote, front disc brakes, Crager S/S mag wheels, blue Del Rey interior. I have owned it for 14 years, always garaged (**I know, you used to have one. I have heard that line at least 2.1 million times**).....**SOLD!**

For Information on the above Call Annie at the office, 817.428.7103, or me 817.475.4644.

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Advertising rules (It's my paper):

- 1 Send me \$50. You get 3 months.
- 2 I write the ad. We are "ocular pollution green" - no stupid ads.
- 3 I have to like the product or service before it goes in the paper. I will not compromise my integrity for \$50. Now, for \$100, I could be swayed. I call it

What you get for \$50:

- 1 A 3 months-running ad in a paper that reaches at least some people (most of them in my family) from all walks of life.
- 2 Professionally-ish written ad.
- 3 Personal product endorsement.
- 4 No ticks from Fifi (last months reference to being in the dog house, after I call).

Call the office or email to make arrangements. We are considering corporate sponsors as well, before we take this company public with our imminent IPO (working on my goal setting).

In My Opinion (that, and \$5 will get you \$0.50 worth of coffee at Starbucks - if yours is still open).....By Randall Garrett

Green Update - Lets' catch up.

- 1 No, I still do not believe in Global Warming just because Al Gore says so. In 1992, Al Gore was debating Rush Limbaugh on "Nightline with Ted Koppel". Al Gore claimed there was a hole forming in the ozone over North America, at that very moment in 1992, because of fluorocarbons man was putting into the atmosphere. If that were the case ultra violet radiation levels would have ever increasing, right.
Scientific Fact: UV levels are the same today as in 1992. Oh, and one other thing. One volcano, in a single eruption, can produce more fluorocarbons than man has produced during his time on Earth. I suggest you put a big cork in it, Al(ley) Cat.
- 2 Yes, I do believe millions and millions of dollars are being spent to study and look for global warming. I suspect these are the scientists that didn't get all A's on their report cards, therefore they cannot get real jobs. They are paid to try to find something that's not there. When they don't find it, they are, of course, going to need more Federal grants to keep looking for it, and it could take years not to find it. Good Job!!!
- 3 Americans are a society of consumption. The little-car fad will pass, again, as in the mid 70's. Forget gas prices, we'll make more money because the soccer moms will not tolerate those little cars. **Have you ever been in a "little car" with 2 little kids who just consumed 5 Sprites, with their Happy Meal, at McDonalds,**

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and, of course, they got a kiddie cone because they only had to go to time out twice? Well, let me just tell you from experience, when the little children get a good hit of kiddie crack (sugar), a Winnebago isn't big enough to keep the parents from losing their minds during a ten minute drive home. Those sweet little angels scare the devil out of you. Moms and dads, tell me I'm lying. I dare you!

4 Go ahead. Put up your wind fan in a hood in Southlake. See what your homeowners association does. There will be a SWAT team in Lexus & Mercedes SUV's, screeching to a halt in front of your house donning DG sunglasses, and Gucci purses, and little dogs tucked under their arms. *"Hell knoweth no fury liketh thy neighbor hissethed off."*

5 I predict that in 5 years the topic of "Green" will go the way of platform shoes, and pet rocks. American ingenuity and **capitalism** will persevere. Some one will figure out a way to produce low cost energy sources, make a profit, and pay taxes. Write that one down. I'm right on this.

Tap the Brakes a Little on the Green Building Products:

1 **Alert!** Bamboo floors. Before you put that cool, save the earth, re-newable resource, bamboo wood floor down, I suggest you wait 4 or 5 years to see if your ex-hippie neighbor's bamboo floor is still stuck down. What you think is the family pet hiding under the rug might be the bamboo floor popping up. My flooring company has been in business since the 1940's, and **they will not install a bamboo floor.** The prefer to put a floor down only once. Well, that's narrow minded, huh? All of those shows on HGTV, that put down the bamboo floors down, don't show them 5 years later.

(They may be fine, but usually pioneers end up with arrows in their back.)

2 **Alert!** Hybrid water heaters. On paper these are a great idea and frankly, I have not heard any complaints about them. My philosophy on cutting edge products like that is to wait about 5 years see how they hold up. Anyone can make something that will hold up for a year or two, but if they don't who is going to fix them....and at what price? For example, those of you who have owned "heat pumps" for your air conditioning system can testify that the heat pump was one of the most efficient air conditioning systems around, but the problem with heat pumps is finding someone qualified to work on them. Non-qualified repairmen can spend expensive hour after expensive hour trying to figure them out. They always say they can work on them, but not every air conditioning repair man is qualified to work on them. I had an air conditioning contractor tell me that you loose all of your savings on a heat pump in repair costs. Just be careful on all of this new tech stuff.

3 **Alert!** Re-cycled glass counter tops. I have not installed any to date, so the following is wondering out loud...ground up glass, fused together? Logically thinking, I am concerned about the there being "fault lines" in glass that is fused together. I would still wait 5 years to see if the kinks are all worked out. By then they will be like flocked wallpaper, kinda goofy looking.

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American Radical - Apparently that is what I am. I believe in God, I believe in keeping "In God We Trust" on all of our American stuff, I love my wife, kids, and family, I love our country AND its military, I believe that "death row" should mean death row pretty quick, not in 18 or 20 years, I believe The Constitution is not open for debate, nor should it change with the times, I want to buy my country's oil, but make the oil companies clean up their messes, I want to own a gun if I want to, I believe in making a profit so I can create more jobs, but I do not believe in adjusting our society for the new comers, nor do I believe in any son of a @\$%\$^\$##% that, if elected, that would remove the American Flag from Air Force One, his Presidential attire, or anything else, because it offends other nations. I believe I would like to give him a flag pole enema, whomever that is! That makes me an American Radical, I guess. So giddy up!!

Liberals - Why is it that all of the problems they come up are a "crisis"?

Fidel Castro - Speaking of liberals, which begets socialists, which begets Marxists, which begets communists, which begets me to think about Fidel. Are we sure he's not dead? Has someone checked, lately? I have 2 boxes of Cubans (cigars, not people) coming when he passes on to the next plane.

Iraq/Afghanistan War - I had a nice conversation with a Naval officer that just got back from a tour in Afghanistan. That's right the Navy is rotating in with the Army in Afghanistan to give the Army some time of relief. Reading all of media reports of how bad it is over there, I asked him point-blank, "Is it as bad over there, as it is portrayed?" He said, "No, it's not. We are kicking their arses (my interpretation of his word)". He went on to explain that when we first got there, the bad guys would fight during the warm/hot months, then retreat into the mountains when it got really cold. During their retreat, they would recruit more bad guys and come out fighting again when the weather warmed up. He said in the last two years they could not get as many new bad guys, and now they hardly are mounting a fight. My opinion is just keep kick their arses. I won't reveal his name, but **Sir, thank you for serving our country! I was honored to be in your presence.**

Hollywood and All those involved - Get over yourselves. Your not that important. Why do you think I watch so much HGTV and Seinfeld re-runs?

"Professional" Baseball Pitchers - Can someone explain to me why baseball pitchers, making millions of dollars, come into a game, throw 20 pitches, and are not available for 3 days?

Terry Glenn (ex Dallas Cowboy) - You got \$5million last year for about 4 plays, but you won't accept \$500K if, and only if, your surgically repaired knee isn't really fixed. No wonder Bill Parcells called you "she". (No offense to the ladies, that's what Big Bill said, not me.)

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FUN PAGE

Of interest....

Wine Tip of the Month (& Bonus Tip)

I have engaged with an intern on the wine staff of the RGG. **Jim “Millsy” Mills**, is getting a tryout as a cub reporter seeking permanence on the wine staff of RGG. I must say, I am delighted with his over active exuberance (I don’t think Comet could get the purple off his teeth). Charged with a ceiling of \$20 per bottle, Cub Reporter Millsy has searched high and low for tasty varietals to feature in this section, and I think he is on to something.

Cub Millsy has found, through many a arduous tastings (spitting is blasphemy at RGG) **“Twenty Bench”** from **Napa Valley**, California. We swilled (I am willing to risk a Comet cleaning as well) **2005, 97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Malbec**, from the **Yountville, St. Helena, and Stags Leap Districts**. This vintage is acclaimed as *“the best ever, as a sweet big black fruit aromas that are expansive in the mouth and evocative of blackberries, licorice, chocolate covered cherries, and cocoa powder (what I thought was a clove finish - wrong! Shows you what I know). It has a slightly higher ripeness that past vintages with well integrated tannins that balance nicely with the sweet toasty oak. Distinctive character, with rich palate coating textures and lots of lavers and depth - this is benchmark Napa Valley Cabernet!”* That is what it says. You know, I have to commend Cub Millsy. I will give it an official RGG YUMMY, and it is ready to drink right now. According to Millsy, it can be purchased at Central Market for about the \$20 cap. Well done Cub Millsy! Keep up the good work. We can always get those venires on our teeth. We won’t let a little purple stop us, besides it’s a good color on you.

Humor of the Month

Once you have a successful entity like the Gazette, everyone wants to get into the act. This little ditty comes from Brother Klint, who is currently the Senior Editor of the Gazette. Since I lost his email, I will make it up as I go along, using his punch line:

It was a bright sunny morning in April, a gentleman chose to walk to work this fine morning. It was a pleasant walk in which he passed two botanic parks, one with an inhabited duck pond, many familiar faces in the town square, and a normally somber mental institution. This morning’s walk was particularly enjoyable as the blooming florals perfumed the air and the ducks were soothingly afloat, but there was an odd

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commotion coming from the mental institution. He could not make out what the voices were saying until he approached the tall, wood-picket fenced sanitarium. As he neared enclosed campus, he heard several men shouting from the top of their lungs, "Thirteen! Thirteen! Thirteen! Thirteen! Thirteen! Thirteen! Thirteen! He was beyond curious, never hearing a peep from this place, so he searched for wide gap between the pickets that would offer him a clear view of the happenings. Finding a wider space between the pickets, he peering into the front lawn of the building itself, he was shocked to find a patient with stick in hand, who immediately poked him in the eye! Then the voices rang out again, "Fourteen! Fourteen! Fourteen! Fourteen! Fourteen! Fourteen! Fourteen!"

Parting Thought

“What will *they* write about *you* when your gone?”

My Dad gave me this book called, Golf's Sacred Journey, Seven Days at the Links of Utopia, by Dr. David L. Cook (you can order it at www.linksofutopia.com). It is a fictional book about a young professional golfer who is very frustrated with his game, and mysteriously ends up in Utopia, Texas. Utopia, Texas is a very real town in the Hill Country, around San Antonio. Not to give up the story, but this golfer meets a rancher that helps him with his game with in a very unusual, yet ingenious way. The book ends up teaching a "life lesson". The life lesson is "what will they write on your headstone when your gone? A moribund thought, right? Maybe not. A lot of headstones read. "*He was a loving father*", or "*She has gone to be with the Lord*". Clyde Barrow (with Bonnie Parker), the famed murdering bank robber has a headstone that reads, "*Gone but not forgotten*". No kidding! The point of the book is what have you done to make this world a better place while you were here?

That made me think about what I may have done to make this world a better place. After a lengthy bit of thought, I came to the conclusion that I really haven't done much of anything that is really worthy of note. "Of note" doesn't mean what have I done for myself because I have accomplished a lot "for myself", but that doesn't necessarily translate into making the world a better place. I think of teachers, coaches, friends, family, and others that have touched my life, but I don't think I have ever returned the favor. I'm going to work on that.

When I was selling lumber after I graduated from UTA with a "bidness" degree, I had a customer that turned into a friend, names Attilo "Lou" Giamarco. Lou was a second or third generation Italian-American, that built houses in North Arlington. He was funny guy that was always in a good mood, and for some reason, took a liking to me. In 1979, I decided that I wanted to build a house for myself, and Lou insisted on helping me. At that time banks were scared to loan money to some one to build their own

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house, much less a first timer. Lou, handled everything. He set up the construction loan in his name (\$5,000 for the lot, \$30,000 to build the house, total \$35,000) he helped with some of the subs, and would not take a dime for his services. **DO YOU KNOW HOW BIG A DEAL THAT WAS FOR ME? THAT WAS HUGE AT THE TIME!!** He just wanted to help a young guy. He touched my life in a way I will never forget. (That house, by the way, is approximately about the East 5 yard line at the new Cowboy Stadium.) As I went on to other jobs and started my own business, I lost touch with Lou, and I have no idea where he is, or if he is still alive, but I would write on his headstone, *“A great friend that made my life a little better by being here”*. I want to be like Lou. That is what I am going to work on. I want to know that I made a difference while I was here. I don't think stockpiling money is making a “difference”, but I hope that I can accumulate enough to make some one else's life a little easier or better. One of the legends in the home building business, locally, statewide, and nationally was a fellow named Herman Smith. Herman said, “You ought to leave the wood pile a little bigger than when you found it”. I hope I do.

What are they going to write about you?

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