

GRILLING HOT DOGS

By John F. Hall

This is the second year that my son, John asked me to help him during the annual 400-Mile Yard Sale. There is an over-worked expression that one man's trash is another man's treasure. I heard a Pastor once say: "Judas the Apostle knew the price of everything and the value of nothing." At yard sales, people are looking for bargains. Some of the sellers just want to get rid of the clutter and stuff in their garages and other places. My son was not certain if he was going to participate in the 400-Mile Yard Sale this year. He was in the middle of reconstructing a house that was nearly destroyed by a fire. He plans to rebuild it and then flip it (resell it).



I told my son that I would help him if he decides to go ahead with the yard sale. The yard sale would be held in the same location as last year's yard sale at the intersection of Highway 68/80 and North Montgomery Road. It is about three tenths of a mile west of Interstate 24. The lot was originally owned by my wife's uncle, J.M. Towler. When he died, the lot was given to Paula's first cousin, Jimmy Towler. Jimmy's wife, Janet told my son that Jimmy was helping the man renting his farm, and he could not break free to mow the lot. Janet said that she would mow the lot. My son told Janet that he would mow and weed-eat the lot.

On Thursday, June 2, 2022, the first day of the yard sale, I told my son that I would bring six folding tables, and five chairs. I told him that he needed to find his tent because I needed to stay out of direct sunlight due to my skin cancer. He found and set up his fairly large tent next to the North Montgomery Road. His son, John- John helped and I put one of my tarps over part of the top of the tent to block out more of the sun rays. The weather forecast called for rain and Jimmy, Janet their daughter, Jamie and the other people invited to be on the lot, decided to wait until Friday to bring their items to sell.

My son and my grandson, John-John went to pick up other items from his storage rental in Canton. I was putting price tags on items that did not sell from last year's yard sale. There was a strong breeze blowing from the west. I had tent pegs and a hammer in my Ford escape. The tent has no sides and it could easily blow over. So I secured the four aluminum posts to the ground with the tent pegs. My son had several very expensive items to sell and they sold for his asking price. He knew their value and the buyers knew they were getting a bargain.

My son decided to bring his grill on Friday to sell hot dogs. The grill burns pellets and operates off a compact Honda generator that is nearly noiseless.

The generator will operate for eight hours on one gallon of fuel. My son sold hot dogs, chips and soda drinks. Jimmy wanted him to sell hamburgers, but my son said they are too messy with the grease they cause. Hot dogs are easy to cook with little or no mess. He

would cook 32 hot dogs at a time; put them in a hot dog bun; wrap the bun in per-cut aluminum foil, and store them in an insulated container where they stayed hot until sold.

Dewayne Blackwell and Larry Bastian wrote the song, "Yard Sale." These are their lyrics: "Cardboard signs say yard sale. Real estate sign says sold. Family picnic table holds all it can hold, holds all it can hold. On the grass and on the sidewalk. Well there must be half the town. Ain't it funny how a broken home can bring the prices down. Oh they're sortin' through what's left of me and you. Paying yard sale prices for each golden memory. Oh I never thought I'd ever live to see the way they are sorting through what's left of me and you. You left two summer dresses in the backyard on the line. A lady just brought them to me. Says she thinks they'll fit just fine. Well there goes the baby's windup and the mirror on the wall. I'd better take just one last look before they take it all. Well I'd wonder what you'd say if you could see the way they're sorting through what's left of you and me."

Some yard sales, sadly, involve the breakup of a marriage which the above song is about. Paula and I were married when she was 18 and I was 19. At that time, we did not have any possessions to sell at any yard sale. We've been married for 57 years, something that is rare these days. We have lived in our old antebellum house on Dyers Hill since 1978. To our grandchildren, it's the "old home place." Years ago, on the concrete patio behind the house, we once had a removable open fire grill. I put in small pieces of wood in the grill, and we would roast marsh-mellows as the grandchildren laughed and enjoyed the summer evenings.

Pamela K. Ward wrote the song, "Antiques in the Yard Sale." These are her lyrics: "She said that I walked to school every day, half a mile each way. My toes showed through the holes in my shoes. But I didn't complain, and my dress was made from an old feed sack. Money was hard to earn. New clothes all look worn out today. She'd tell the same old tales a hundred times. I never did mind. I stayed with her in the afternoons till Dad picked me up at five. She was proud of a son in Pittsburgh who was too busy to come around. He finally came home to see her, the day we laid her in the ground. Now all of her family photographs are in convex oval frames. Each one had a story, but now they're faces without names. And the quilts she made with her own hands for warmth on winter nights, are all just antiques in the yard sale and patchwork on the fire...". "Her husband was a handsome man. He put a ring on her hand. They had two good years together before the Great War with Japan. He served aboard the Yorktown in the Battle of Midway. She was thankful that he came home alive, but he was never again the same... I can't stand to see her precious memories reduced to five dollar price tags and that burn pile by the tree. So I'm taking home her photographs in convex oval frames. Each one has a story and I'm so glad I know their names. And I'm happy to keep a small piece of her amazing life, from the antiques in the yard sale and patchwork on the fire."

Next to Jimmy's lot, where my son and I have the yard sale, is the Wildcat Chevrolet dealership. It has a very large flag pole with a gigantic American flag. When I would take my oldest granddaughter, Andrea to kindergarten at Heritage Christian Academy in Hopkinsville, in 2000, she insisted that I drive under that American flag, every school

day. During the yard sale, my son asked me if I had gotten a picture of the flag when the wind was blowing so hard. I managed to get a good picture. At times, the wind speed



would increase above 20 miles an hour. The tent pegs held. On Saturday afternoon, my next to the oldest granddaughter, Heather drove to the yard sale. She was on her way to go to a concert with her sister, Andrea in Nashville. Heather spent some time with us under the tent. My wife, Paula, and my son's wife Lori joined us. Paula's sister, Marsha Garner and her husband, Roger came to the tent briefly for a short visit.

An Amish man with his-wife and tiny baby came to the yard sale. He dropped his horse whip just before driving his one-horse buggy off the highway. My son observed what happened and he walked over to the road and picked up the whip. He then walked over to the Amish man and gave him the whip. The man thanked him as they engaged in a conversation. Several Mennonite families came to the yard sale in vans. Unlike the Amish, Mennonites are not prohibited from using motorized vehicles. They are allowed to use electricity and telephones in their homes. I've seen teenage girls with cell phones. Amish and Mennonites both originated from the Anabaptist movement in Europe in the late 1600s. They rejected infant baptism and their religious beliefs are the same.

Ron, a Realtor that I knew from the days that I was a real estate agent, came by the tent.



He is one year younger than me, as I will turn 77 on June 29th. He told us that he could sell farm land as quick as he could get a listing. He said the demand from Amish and Mennonites that want to move to Trigg County is very high. I asked Ron if he was going to retire from the real estate business. He said "No." He added that he enjoys what he is doing. I know several people, my age that retired early and became absolutely bored to tears.

(Pictured: R to L: Paula, John, Heather, Lori & John Hall Jr.)

At the end of the day, on Saturday, we ended our yard sale. All three days of the sale, we enjoyed a cool breeze. My face was red, more from wind burn than sun burn. John's wife, Lori helped us disassemble the tent. I folded the tables, chairs, and the three tarps and loaded them into my Ford Escape. It was an enjoyable three days that I spent with my son. Even though I had nothing to sell, I continued to sell my son's items while he had to make several trips to the storage building for additional things to sell.

We started each morning with my son getting a take-out "Big Breakfast" from McDonald's, that was located a very short distance from our location. One thing that was missing at this year's yard sale, was seeing the ten-car caravan of the \$700,000

Lamborghini s heading back to Nashville. The price of unleaded, regular gasoline at the nearby Shell Market was \$4.68. It is expected to reach \$5.00 a gallon by July 4th. I'm kind of certain that the owners of those high price vehicles could easily afford that price.

It's Wednesday and 4:30 in the afternoon. I'm looking out the window, over the top of my "HP" laptop, at the amber fields of wheat. The fields are ready to be combined and I'm sure that the corporate farmer, Craig Perry will have a bountiful and profitable harvest. My laptop is set up on a card table on the second floor bedroom. I have a window air conditioner that keeps me very cool. I'd rather be on the front porch swing, but the temperature is almost 100 degrees and the humidity takes my breath away. Like the late Kentucky short story writer, Jesse Stuart, I enjoy writing almost every day. Christ has given me the grace upon grace upon grace and the inspiration to continue to write my stories. As long as Christ continues to give me that talent, I shall continue to give Him the honor and the glory from this old farm house on Dyers Hill.

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>