

STORIES FROM THE YARD SALE TENT

By John F. Hall

Heidi Fuller wrote a hymn called, "Content In A Tent." I pondered how I could put some spiritual inspiration involving a yard sale tent. These are some of Heidi Fuller's lyrics." In whatsoever state I am there, I will be content. If I live in a mansion or in a broken tent, If



I drive a Mercedes Benz or a bicycle that's bent, no matter, I'll raise my praise to God -- I'll choose to be content. We read about contentment in Philippians chapter four. Though Paul did not have riches, he did not long for more. God called him to go forth and preach, a job that few men dared, but no complaint from Paul was heard, though he was speech impaired. There were not many accolades, yet mockery and pain. But even 'mid such treatment, he sang while locked in chains. Now, some may look at Paul and deem no pleasant way to live, but he had learned to keep a smile

even as a fugitive. In whatsoever state I am there I will be content. If my bank account is loaded or down to fifty cents, if the sun is shining brightly or the storm just won't relent, no matter, I'll raise my praise to God -- I'll choose to be content. Whatever your lot in life may be this truth each should know: There will be times that you abound and times you'll be made low. It's easy to be happy-when-everything seems right, but how will you respond when the daytime turns to night? When money wanes and health grows dim, will for relief you plead? Or trust, in whatsoever state, God meets your every need. Yes, Paul had learned the secret to a rich and joyful life: God was the One Who gave him strength to smile "in the strife... I choose to be content...".

My son, John Andrew and I participated in the 400-Mile Yard Sale, at the same place as last year. The location is on a lot at the corner of North Montgomery Road and Highway 68/80, in Cadiz, Kentucky. The lot is owned by my wife's first cousin, Jimmie Towler. I purchased a new tent with a UPR 50 fabric, to screen out some of the sun's harmful rays. My son erected his tent, side by side, with my tent. His tent does not offer much UV protection from the sun. I set up one long folding table in my tent, and four card tables in front of my son's tent. My son brought his battery operated 20 volt radio and put it on the table. He has to have music playing, especially when he works. He also brought a 20 volt battery operated fan to keep me cool. The temperatures, for the three days, that we participated in the yard sale, reached 90 plus degrees. I brought one back supporting chair and two cushions. My son brought two folding chairs that rock and have shock springs. . We each brought a cooler filled with sodas and water.

Thursday was the first day of the sale. It is usually not the best sales day of the yard sale. My son is a Master Plumbing, but he can do some carpentry work. He decided to build wishing wells made of wood, for the yard sale. The wishing well is made from two-inch by four-inch lumber, and fence wood that he stained. He completed some plumbing on a house in Cadiz, and he showed the owner of the house, a picture of the first wishing well that he built. The home owner told him that she wanted that wishing well. He built three other wishing wells, and put them in front of my tent. He took four very used 19-inch

tires and rims off his Chevrolet pickup truck. Two buyers wanted the tires and rims, one buyer was there with the money. So my son sold that person the tires and rims.

The sales from the first day of the yard sale were surprisingly good. At the end of the day, my son and I folded the tables and put them under his tent. He rolled the wishing wells and put them under my tent.

Friday, the second day of the sale, we arrived at 7:00 am, and set up the five folding tables. My son rolled the three wishing wells out of my tent, and put them so that they were visible from the road. Many yard sale customers would take pictures, standing by the wishing wells, but no one purchased one. An 18-wheeler, semi-truck, stopped on the side of the road. The driver of the truck got out and walked over to my tent. He was just looking at what we had to sell. I asked him how long he had been driving the big rigs. He told us that he has been driving trucks for 49 years, and he never hurt anyone, except his dad. He explained that he and his dad were driving trucks for a coal mine. His dad got out of his truck, and he did not see him doing that. His dad was standing next to his truck up, and he accidentally ran over his dad's foot.

The truck driver would pass for Santa Clause. His hair was solid, clean white, as was his long white beard. And no pillow would be needed for his pot belly, to play the role of Santa. His blue eyes and soft voice, would be a child's delight. He told us that he picks up a load in Aurora, Kentucky, at 2:15 am. He drives that load, full of peanuts, and various nuts, for the Kroger Company. He takes the load to Campbellsville, Kentucky, and he drives a new load back to Aurora. He is back home by 2:30 pm. He told us that every year he has to get a physical to keep his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). After the driver left the tent, I said to my son, "I will call that truck driver, Santa Peanuts."

A young soldier, from Fort Campbell, came by my tent with his wife. She is expecting their first child in July. He told me that he is a 88-Mike (Army truck driver). He said that he just re-enlisted. He went on to say that he is concerned that the Army might Medical Board him out (discharge him). He explained that he has hearing issues and a serious ear problem. He is scheduled for a six-month deployment to Romania. His wife is a former correctional officer, but she had a knee injury that disqualifies from keeping that job. We talked about the Army and other things.

My brother-in-law, and my sister-in-law, Roger and Marsha came inside the tent to visit. Roger noticed that a Mennonite family, two women and a man, needed some help to load a heavy chess into their horse drawn buggy. Tiny, my son's next door neighbor, sold the chess to the Mennonites. She set up, next to me, and my son, John Andrew for the yard sale. Roger, and another man, went over to help load the chess into the buggy. When Roger came back into my tent, he said that he did not realize how heavy the chess was. Later that day, my wife, Paula and my daughter-in-law, Lori came inside the yard sale tent.

The Mennonites do not own vehicles. The reason is to maintain their close-knit communities. They will hire a driver and his vehicle to do certain things. One driver and four Mennonites walked over to one of my son's wishing wells.

The Mennonite driver walked over to my tent, and asked my son how much he wanted for the wishing well. They bargained back and forth, and my son agreed on a price. The driver told the four Mennonites to load the wishing well into his pick-up truck.

Saturday, the third day of the 400-Mile Yard Sale, a man came by my tent with a big black dog, held by a leash. He told me that he was dog sitting for a friend, and that he has his own dog. I asked him if he was able to train his dog to roll over and play dead. He said yes. I asked how he was able to train his dog. He said, first, he would give his dog a hand signal with the command, "Down." And the dog would lie down. He would roll the dog over on its back, and give the command, "bang, bang, bang," and give the dog a treat. After many repetitions, the dog learned to fall down and roll over with those two commands.

My son noticed a small pick up truck pull up to the back of my tent. He walked over to the truck and said to the driver, "I thought you were Lindsey Freeman." The man said, "I thought I was Lindsey Freeman too." They were joking, of course, because he is Lindsey Freeman. They talked for awhile, and my son walked back to my tent. He told me that it is Lindsey. I told him to take over, and I will go talk to Lindsey. Lindsey and I have been friends for more than 40 years. As I talked to Lindsey, my mind drifted back to 1986. I was the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) of the Land Navigation Qualification Course on Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a college program offered at more than 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States that prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. Military. (Pictured: Fort Bragg, ROTC 1989 Land Navigation Requirement. L to R: Capt John Hall, OIC with Colonel Lindsey Freeman).



These ROTC students have to pass the Land Navigation Qualification Course to be Commissioned as Second Lieutenants. In 1986, Lindsey Freeman was a full-bird Colonel, and the Commander of the 100th Training Maneuver Training Command (MTC) in Louisville, Kentucky. I had 20 Army Reserve Sergeants, serving under me, from the 100th Division. Each Sergeant was paired with a active duty Sergeant from the 82nd Airborne Division, to help administer the course. These airborne soldiers were on a four-hour call-up. If the 82nd was to be deployed, these soldiers had four hours to pack and report to the base airfield, for rapid deployment. Colonel Freeman came to Fort Bragg to inspect the Land Navigation Testing. Many years later, I would again serve under Lindsey, when he was promoted to Major General (Two Stars), and I was his Assistant Inspector General in the 100th Division. At the yard sale tent, we were just two good friends, and retired soldiers that believe in God, duty, honor, and country.

I'll end this yard sale tent story with the last few words of the Farewell Address that General Douglas MacArthur delivered to the US Congress, on April 19, 1951, in Washington, DC. These are his words: "And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty."

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