

THE WAY WE WERE

Writer's Corner

By Sarah Holloway

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When did the words “back in the day” become a phrase on everyone’s lips? I see it in books I’ve been reading, hear it from TV anchors and catch it in everyday conversations. People don’t say “Clark Gable was a big star in the 1940s.” They say, “*Back in the day*, Clark Gable was a big star.”



They don't say, "Five years ago, I played tennis every day."

The say, "*Back in the day*, I played tennis every day."

The don't say, "It was the '70s – everybody smoked pot."

They say, "*Back in the day*, everybody smoked pot."

A current mystery novel I just finished must have used this phrase a dozen times or more.

For me, “back in the day” would be back in the really olden days before television, computers, cell phones, iPods and political correctness – and before menopause, arthritis, fuzzy vision, failing memory and being called a “senile citizen”, as my husband used to put it. For 20-somethings, it probably means a few years ago when they were in high school.

Another frequently used phrase is “game changer.” I heard these words a lot during the last political campaigns when some candidate apparently hoped a certain maneuver on his part would prove to be a *game changer*,” that it would change a failing situation into a winning one for his side. The TV pundits opined, “It probably won’t be a *game changer*.” The Internet shows a number of books with the name, but I don’t recall hearing it a lot until recent years.

I grew up in a different world. I remember when milk came in a glass bottle with the cream on top. You could pour off the cream for your coffee or shake it up for regular milk. Now we have a coffee “creamer” without cream. It’s made up of “pasteurized skim milk, milk, corn syrup, titanium dioxide (for color), sodium citrate, dipotassium phosphate, mono and diglycerides, carrageenan, vitamin A, palmitate. Contains milk.”

I remember when Hershey bars were a nickel and you could see a good movie, plus “The March of Time” and a cartoon and other shorts, at the air-conditioned theater for 25 cents; and Cosmopolitan was a great magazine that carried numerous short stories and serialized novels by authors like Edna Ferber instead of a gazillion articles about sex.

People prayed at school, marbles and jacks were the staples on the grade-school playground and the principal kept a big paddle to beat unruly pupils and...But wait.

I just head a TV commentator say of a prominent politician of 70-some years, "He's passed his sell-by date."

Well, so have I, but *back in the day* I was a real *game changer*.

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