The Bandera Prophet

October 10, 2024

Gone Country
Back to the Beginning

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The Bandera Prophet

There have been so many kind comments about your missing my humor, so I think the best way to explain my humor, and why my brain needs to work in a whole world of silly, is to start at the beginning. So, let's get silly.

I blame it on Ms. Hammond, my fourth grade English teacher. She was formidable, in fact, she had better posture than any Miss America but, with her looks, I'm pretty sure there was never a crown on her head - except from me.

She made us write stories with our spelling words and get up in front of the class to read them. The three best writers of the week won fabulous prizes - a jump rope, a random boy toy and the most coveted of all - a TV shaped pencil sharpener. I wanted them all - every week. So, I wrote stories. Funny stories, because I was in front of an audience and if you were going to laugh at me, I was going to be in charge of that.

Not only could I win fabulous prizes, but I would also make my fellow classmates laugh. And with a name like Mikie, that wasn't that hard to do.

I wrote like a manic until the evil high school years. Diagramed sentences, Footnotes and Symbolism were the enemy. I really never cared for the Omni Present Eyes overlooking the gas station. What? That's not funny. It's just weird. I pressed on.

College was all about being a disc jockey and making people laugh over the airwaves. Then I got a great job as a disc jockey at KLIF so I could

leave all that learning behind. I was free from symbolism and sentence diagrams.

Fast forward to TGI Friday's, where I recorded music tapes, and oversaw photo shoots and t-shirt printing, until I was asked to write menu copy for all the items (more than 300) on the menu. Seared salmon atop a bed of freshly sautéed spinach and topped with a crisp and spicy parmesan crust. You get the idea. My symbolism centered around getting you to eat. Yum. That sounds tasty.

But still I pressed forward with funny. Party invites, company retreats, a newsletter. I never played it straight. I wanted you to laugh. And you did. I started my own Hospitality Marketing Company and perfected copywriting. I can make you giggle over a Portabella Mushroom.

Fast forward to disappearing to the Hill Country with no job, but Dearly Demented Mom to care for. Luckily, most everything out of her mouth was a riot - "I'm going to marry your old boyfriend Harry. The three other children I had (what?) named Iris, Rose and Violet are concert violinists and invented the heart valve. The oldest one is seven." I needed my sanity, so I began to write a column about the craziness around me. Between her and the Teenage Eating Machine, I was set with enough material to win myself a Texas Press Association award for best columnist in the state.

Maybe it was from all those Erma Bombeck columns Mom cut out of the paper for me continually throughout my formative years. Or maybe it was just because I wanted to win another TV pencil sharpener.

It's such a joy that I make you laugh. Life is funny if you look at it that way. And, wow, today we need funny more than ever. Things are weird, divided and mean. Why not laugh even through the very hard times? So, let's welcome some laughter back into our world.

I will get funnier as the weeks go on because I can now laugh again, and we all know laughter is the best medicine. That and music, which was my first love before Ms. Hammond motivated me to use those spelling words.

And now I'll end with my favorite joke from Joe the Pro.

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Boo!
Boo who?
Well, you don't have to cry about it.

Just giggle.