

There's SOMETHING FUNNY About That!

The Foxhole,
the House Call,
the Intern's Quarters, or
the Family Vacation



Written & Comically Illustrated by Hermon Price, MD

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HERMON PRICE, MD

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All the illustrations were drawn by the author, and amplify the understanding of the stories they represent. Some of the memories have been printed earlier in a modified form in other vehicles. These include the Timberwold Howl, a semi-annual newspaper of the 104th Infantry Division Association, and a commemorative illustrated Booklet printed for the 50th Reunion of the Northwestern Univ. Medical School class of 1953, recalling outlandish experiences by Senior medical students delivering babies in the homes of charity patients in west Chicago.

A few of the tales were printed in a book called "Stories of the Forties" by Grandon Tolstedt, M.D. of Rockford, Ill. This gentleman, who is a prolific writer, was a medical school classmate of mine, and he also was a fellow enlisted man in my Infantry division. Incidentally, both of us were wounded in action in Europe, which makes our feeling of kinship even greater.

There is also another previous printing of a bizarre "dining experience" in a Cookbook called "Chow Time with the Timberwolves". That is a book compiled by three lovely daughters of another of my fellow 104th Division veterans. These ladies, especially Sandra Eberhard, of Atlanta, "coerced" me into drawing illustrations for that excellent cookbook in 2002. As it turned out, that experience served as a training ground for embellishing this memoir.

DEDICATION

To my late Parents, Hermon Sr. and Maude B.
Who provided me with
The Heredity and the Environment
To Appreciate and Participate in
The Recognition of Humor in Every Aspect
Of Daily Life.
Also to my sister, Billie Jo Ryan, retired Navy Nurse,
Who Has always “Been There” for me.

And to my Lifelong Friend, Gordon Thomas of Mesa, AZ,
And to my late Bosom Buddies,
George Brown, M.D. of Albuquerque
And Val Hotz of Thomaston, TX
I am eternally Grateful for your
Friendship, Empathy and Support;
Through Thick and Thin.

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I am indebted to Clyde Lowery, another dry-wit newspaperman; one of the few people who is so clever he can make me laugh out loud by merely emailing a single, sardonic sentence or word.

My thanks to the many “Muses” who provided great moral support and encouragement: Ollie and Jack Urie, Margaret Lott, Maria Hill, Pat Huston and Bee Griffith; and to Gerry Murray, Alex Churchhill, and Theresa Felgar of Tucson; to Jack Wright and Lilas Dangerfield, of Mesa, AZ, and to former Bisbee residents Lloyd and Betty Thomas, and Bob and Lesley Yates.

Kudos to Betty Williamson, my office assistant for thirty years. We didn’t make much money, but we tried to do the right thing and preserve our sanity at the same time. If it hadn’t been for the Saving grace of Humor, we would have “Crashed and Burned.”

Inspiration was generated by friends who have become published writers. These include Grandson Tolstedt, M.D. of Illinois, the Rev. Gordon McBride, Virginia Roberts and Elliott Stearns, M.D. of Tucson, and Jack de Pagter of

Aspen, Colorado.

Most of all, I am indebted to Margaret (Marge), my wife of fifty-eight years, who helped with typing, proof reading and organizing, while putting up with all of my eccentricities; or at least Most of them. And to George, our eldest, “computer savvy” son, thank you for your help and advice on scanning and technical support.

I am indebted to our other four grown children: Lorrie Thomson, David, Steve and Harold, plus their spouses and to our dozen or so grandchildren, since it was for their benefit that this project was begun in September, 2001. The terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania were a wake-up call; a chilling reminder of our Mortality that served as the stimulus for recording these memories; before it is too late.

FOREWORD

Hermon Price is the funniest doctor I have ever known. And I have known some pretty funny doctors. But they were not *funny* funny, just *strange* funny. Hermon is *funny* funny; but in a *strange* way.

I didn't know Hermon when he was in the Infantry. The kind of work he did in that part of his life was too dangerous. I saved the world by working on airplanes while they were sitting safely on the ground. I will never understand how Hermon can make us laugh about something that, at the time must have caused his hair to stand on end; (he had hair then).

And he doesn't just tell the stories. He makes them funnier with his great cartoons. Actually, I think it is an ego trip. The cartoons depicting him make him much more handsome than he is in the flesh. Really, who would think that a guy, badly wounded as he was, could draw a picture of the incident to make us laugh? It isn't as if he sees the whole world as a big joke. I mean, this guy is married and has five kids. (No Laughing Matter).

I have been a friend, patient, and stooge to him and for him for many years. That is why I am so happy to write this Foreword for his memoirs. I think he started writing all of these things about four years ago. I started receiving a chapter or two in the mail, and others were on his mailing

list as well. By the second or third mailing we all joined in a chorus urging him to publish.

Which brings up another facet of this serious, funny, Pfc-MD-good friend. He seldom talked about most of his experiences to his friends. Maybe his wife and children have heard them, but the horrors of his battle experiences (which he downplays even here by making them laugh material) were kept inside.

Hermon has a gift for story telling and he transfers that gift to paper in these stories of his life experiences. From his days as a youth in Bisbee, Arizona, to his harrowing life, and almost death, as a private in World War II to his experiences as a practicing physician, Hermon has revealed a marvelous, touching, scary and funny look at a diversified and interesting life.

I wish I could write stories such as these, but I can't. The funniest and most interesting things in my life have to do mostly with Hermon Price, and no one can top that.

--- Clyde D. Lowery

Mr. Lowery was a newspaperman and editor in Colorado and Arizona for more than twenty years. He was Executive Director of Student Publications at the University of Arizona for sixteen years. He was past-President of the Western Association of University Publications Managers, and was elected to the Arizona Wildcat Hall of Fame.

INTRODUCTION

Recording the memories accumulated over a lifetime is a daunting, insuperable task. (How about That? A five-syllable word in the very first sentence!) Anyway, it is a foreboding project to undertake at any time until some stimulus inspires you to begin! Various friends and family members have urged me to record a few interesting or amusing experiences of military service and medical practice. Wild events during Adolescence, Family vacations, Specialty training and in Medical School were also sources of unique tales worthy of sharing. It would be a shame if loved ones, particularly Grandchildren, were deprived of the opportunity to discover, to their great amazement, that “Poppy,” (my family nickname) was once something more than a “Grumpy Lump in a LA-Z-BOY.”

What was the event that launched me on this venture? It was the Terrorist attacks in September 2001 that broke my lethargy and launched me on this enterprise. I was inspired to begin recording these anecdotes within two weeks of 9/11. To my knowledge I am unaware of many other positive events resulting from that treacherous and devastating assault.

The stories recounted in this book have all been shared orally a number of times and in a variety of settings. In earlier years the rendition was often stimulated and

“lubricated” with the aid of what are referred to as “Adult Beverages.” Then nine years ago, thanks to the magic and expertise of the Cottonwood de Tucson Rehabilitation Center, I learned, to my astonishment and delight, that alcohol is absolutely unnecessary. In fact, it is a hindrance to meaningful communication and thought. For that I am eternally grateful, and also a great deal healthier.

There are more than a dozen stories in this book dealing with my experiences as an enlisted man in the Infantry during World War II. These are entered generally in chronological order. Interspersed with those tales are random adventures from Medical School and Internship as well as from my medical practice. Also included are mostly humorous events about my six years as a locum tenens physician following the end of my office practice. During that period I worked in Emergency Rooms and Urgent Care Centers.

I served multiple tours of duty in Family Practice clinics and private offices in many locales all over the state of Arizona. Included are some tales of pseudo-calamatous family vacations, as well as a few demented teenage misadventures. I am grateful that I was able to recognize and record the Humor and Satire in almost all of those situations. I consider myself fortunate to have had these experiences. I sincerely hope that the comical and bizarre adventures depicted in these pages will give you a chuckle,

and perhaps lighten a few of your burdens, or put them in perspective.

I should add that the illustrations were all drawn by me and they constitute a significant part of my memory of the events described. And so, as Ed McMahon on the old Johnny Carson Show might say, as he opened the program:
- - - “Heeeeere’s POPPY!”

--- HERMON PRICE, MD

After closing my medical office in 1990, for the next six years I worked as a locum tenens doctor in various offices all over the State of Arizona. I would fill in for physicians who were on vacation, Sabbatical, or while awaiting the arrival of a new employee. The most interesting part-time job I ever had was in the “Men’s Vascular Clinic” in Tempe, Arizona.

THE TRIUMPH OF CUPID or “WHAT’S UP, DOC?”

“You’re Doing WHAT?” That is the reaction I usually got from family and friends when I explained my latest occupation. It was located in the Shalomar Shopping Center in Tempe. The Men’s Vascular Clinic dealt with the problem of Erectile Dysfunction, E.D., most commonly suffered by older men, and it involved a “virtually pain-free injection” of a particular chemical into the side of the “lagging member.” (How’s That for delicate terminology?)

It was early in 1996 and just prior to the Avalanche of the oral preparations (such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra) flooding the market and overwhelming us with their intrusive TV advertising. (Is it just me, or did that leering, lascivious “Lolita,” who was the “shill” for Levitra, remind anyone else of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden?) Of course, the big advantage for all those new products is that

they are pills to be swallowed rather than shots to be injected into the “errant extremity.”

At the Clinic, the clients would already have undergone blood testing and had their circulation measured earlier in the week. I would arrive at 0800 and review the test results on the first patient, take his History and do the Physical. Then, based on all this information, I would estimate the proper dose of Alprostadil, the erection-enhancing drug, to overcome his impediment.

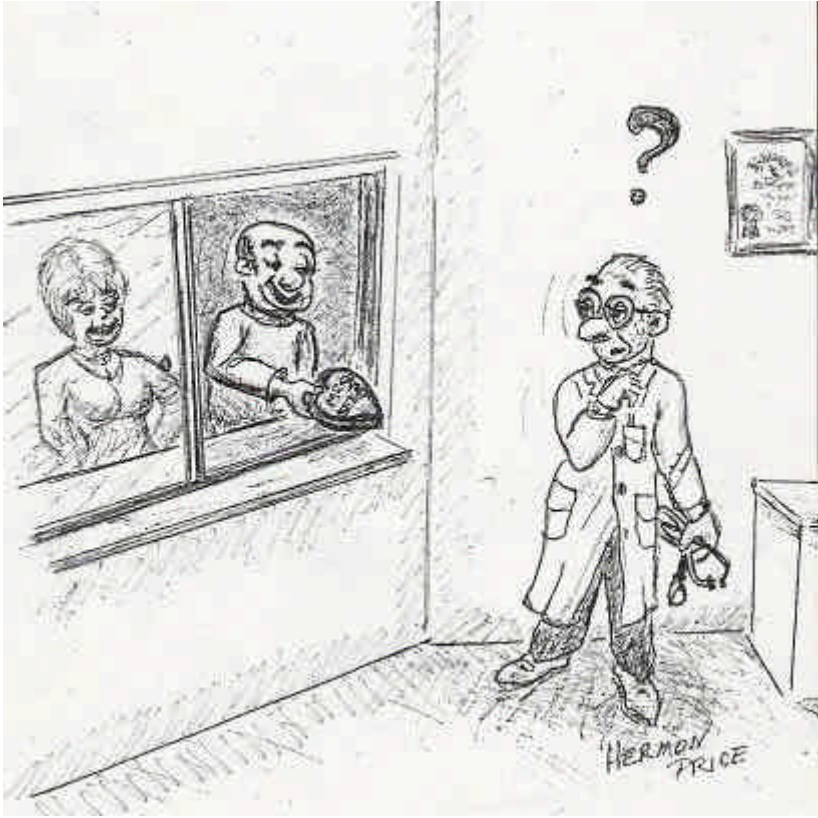
I would demonstrate the special syringe, and then inject the drug. A mere Five Minutes later, “Casper Milk-Toast” would be transformed into “Romeo.” (And in some cases, we’d end up with “Rambo“!) Based on the duration of effect, further adjustments would be made in the dosage, if necessary, and a supply of filled syringes would be supplied to the patient, to be self-administered at home.

Now, all this information is an introduction to an actual event that occurred on Valentine’s Day, February 14, 1996. I arrived at 0800 to see the first gentleman. I shall refer to him as “Mr. Lazarus.” As he entered the Examining Room he held out a folded newspaper and said, “This is the Astrology Forecast for today. I want you to read what my Wife’s Prediction says.” I suggested that he tear the Horoscope section out of the paper and lend it to me. I would read it later and return it when we were all finished.

He agreed, and we proceeded with the History, the Physical and my injection of the Alprostadil solution. Five minutes later his response was Excellent. In accordance with our Routine Instructions, I explained that he could spend the next hour reading or watching TV in the waiting room. Or if he preferred, he could walk about in the Shopping Center for the hour. But one note of caution, if walking was his choice. Some of the lady shoppers might call Security, suspecting the patient of being “Armed and Dangerous;” or at the very Least, appearing to be “Overly Pleased to Meet Them.”

The important thing was to be re-examined after one hour, which was the duration of time recommended for the drug to remain in effect. Mr. Lazarus hesitated a minute, then ventured to suggest, “I live just a few blocks from here. How about if I go Home for that hour?” “Okay,” I answered. “Just make sure to be back here in time for the Status Check.”

Later, I wandered into the Office Area, where our two female employees usually worked, but they were off somewhere else. Mr. Lazarus, accompanied by a pleasant-looking lady, entered the waiting room and approached the sliding glass window to the Office. Silently, he held forth a Two-Pound Heart-Shaped Box of Mrs. See’s Chocolates. “Well,” I said, “isn’t that Nice of you to bring some Valentine’s Candy for the ladies in the Office!” “It’s not



for the Ladies,” he murmured. It’s for You!” Well, I must have blushed, and mumbled something like, “Oh! You Shouldn’t Have!” But Mr. Lazarus shook his head and declared, “It’s Not from Me! It’s from my Wife! And by the way, did you read her Horoscope I gave you?” “Oh No! I forgot.” I fished it out of my pocket, (and as Humor Columnist, Dave Barry would say, “I am Not Making this Up”.) I read, “Sydney Omarr, L.A.Times Syndicate, Feb. 14, 1996. Valentine’s Day. CANCER (June 21-July 22): “What you thought was History will Once Again be Alive

and Kicking!”

So, does That prophesy hit the Nail on the Head, or What?

Significant Addendum: This entire Book came within a hair's breadth of being Abandoned at Birth! This was one of the first stories I had written in October 2001, as a reaction against the mental depression caused by the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks one month earlier. I had volunteered to read this tale to a group of Retired Physicians at the Carondelet Foundation on Tucson Blvd. Just as I was about to begin, someone said, "Don't start yet. Sister Kathleen Mary, the new Vice-President for Sponsorship and Mission will be here in just a Minute!"

"Oh, No!" I thought. "I can't read this raunchy story in front of a Sister! Especially a New Vice-Presidential one!" And I planned to cancel. But then Sister Kathleen Mary walked in. She had such a sweet, pleasant, and Tolerant Aura about her that I decided to go ahead and read this true story, in spite of my misgivings. It was received by all with laughter and applause, and this book was given a "new lease on life."

Being in an Infantry Replacement Pool is worse, in some ways, than Combat. You have no attachment to long-term companions, no meaningful tasks or activities, and no knowledge of what is happening. Nothing except an overwhelming dread about where you are being sent, and the reasons why the person you are to replace is no longer there.

HOW I THUMBED MY WAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

A recent email joke from a friend described a situation with an Airline Stewardess stationed at the departure gate checking tickets. A man wearing a trench coat approached. When the Stewardess extended her hand for the ticket, he flung open his coat and Flashed her! Without batting an eye, with a firm voice, she declared, “Sir, I need to see your Ticket, NOT your Stub.”

Would you believe that this story reminded me of an Army experience from W.W.II? I was in an Infantry unit, the 86th Blackhawk Division, on maneuvers in Louisiana. An urgent need arose for infantry replacements in Europe following the D-Day invasion with heavy Infantry casualties on the continent.

Now, any serviceman who was already in an established military unit could be shipped into combat with his unit,

regardless of his age (even as young as seventeen or eighteen). But a law had been passed by Congress that a person had to be at least nineteen to be sent overseas as a replacement. So our officers informed us that everyone in our Division whose 19th birthday would fall on or before the 20th of August would be pulled out of this Division and sent to bolster the depleted ranks of foot soldiers in France and the Low Countries. My birthday was August the nineteenth! (I “made the cut” by one day! How’s That for luck?)

We, the forlorn outcasts, felt like lost souls. We were shunted from one Replacement Camp to another in New York, Maryland and New Jersey. We awaited transportation to the battle area, dreading our destiny as “fresh cannon-fodder,” assigned to supplant those troops who had recently been killed or wounded.

Some of the fellows were concerned about problems with their health. One guy had an asthma condition that had been ignored by the medics. Another suffered from a recurring toothache in an emerging wisdom tooth. And I was sure that my near-sighted vision had changed so much that my glasses needed to be replaced. We mentioned these concerns to the “Neanderthal cadres” who were herding us around like little lost sheep from camp to camp. But they assured us, unconvincingly, that we would all undergo a meticulous, thorough examination, called “The Overseas Physical” to guarantee our fitness for the rigors of

the battlefield.

The time for us to be loaded onto a troop transport was fast approaching, and our health-related concerns were still unresolved. Lo and behold, one day we were marched, single-file, into a building where we were to receive our long anticipated exam! The column of fellows, fully dressed, extended down a hallway to a corner, then proceeded into another corridor to the right. I was absent-mindedly following along as the line moved slowly along. Suddenly I encountered an examiner, presumably a doctor, seated on a chair in a doorway just around the bend. He was conducting what is known in the military as a “Short-Arm Inspection.”

To those who are unfamiliar with the term, this is a rapid method of diagnosing the presence of a Gonorrhea infection. (The term “Short-Arm” is to distinguish it from the “Long-Arm” which refers to a Rifle.)

The fellow being “inspected” grasps his own male organ near the body between thumb and forefinger. Then, while gently squeezing, he slides the hand forward. If Gonorrhea is present in the urethra (the urinary tube) a purulent discharge will be seen exuding from the opening! (Dear Readers: If you have been able to tolerate this disgusting tale up until this point, fear not, for the worst is over.)



The doctor had already dismissed the man in front of me, and I had not even begun to unfasten my trousers! Hastily I struggled to loosen the unyielding buttons on my new pair of pants. I was using two fingers of the right hand, with my thumb extending forward. Alas, to no avail! (It was just one more disadvantage of being left-handed!) The drowsy examining person peered, with a bored expression, at my extended thumb. With a weary voice, he muttered, “Okay. - - - You pass. - - - Next.” And that, Folks, was the entire extent of the famous “Overseas Physical!” They were not concerned if we wheezed, or if our vision was blurry. It was of no consequence if a recurring toothache was driving us to distraction! As long as we didn’t have the “Clap,” it was “All Aboard” and “Bon Voyage!”

I have sometimes wondered whether the guy in the doorway was able to discern from my “innocent, boyish expression” that there was No Possible Way I could ever have contracted a venereal disease. Perhaps he had a hangover, or needed an eye exam, himself. On the other hand, it is conceivable that he truly believed that the protruding appendage, complete with its neatly-trimmed thumbnail, was “anatomically correct”! We shall never know. Anyway, that is how I was able to “*Thumb my way across the Atlantic.*”

Boat owners claim the two Happiest Days of their lives are: (1) the day they BUY the boat, and (2) the day they SELL it. The same situation exists with Trailer Folks.

R.V.ing IS NOT FOR SISSIES

Murphy's Law states that "If Anything can go Wrong, It Will!" But a Variation of this is that in Some instances, "Everything that can go wrong Will Go Wrong!" One example of this was when my wife Marge and I hauled our 21-foot travel trailer to a camp-site at Big Lake in the White Mountains some 240 miles northeast of Tucson. It was the late 1960's and we were accompanied by our three youngest sons, Harold, Steven and David, along with a buddy of David's named, ironically, Stephen King! No, Not the spooky Science Fiction author, although the weirdness of this adventure could accuse one to wonder!

Now, the camping, fishing, eating, hiking, games, etc. went very well for the week we were at the camp site. But as the time arrived to return home, that was when the Poltergeists sprang into action! Our two older children, George and Lorrie, had stayed at home. Of the youngsters who were with us, son David and his friend Stephen King were involved in Little League Baseball. It so happened that on the evening of our return to Tucson, they were

scheduled to play, for the very first time, Under the Lights! A Night Game! What a big thrill for them; they were quite excited about it!

So, after getting everything packed up, we started the five-hour trek home, to arrive in time for the Big Game! The Highway Dept. had been working on the last ten miles of dirt road between the Lake and the highway. There were football-sized boulders strewn all over the road. After we had covered about five miles on this Obstacle Course, we heard a “BOOM” and felt a Lurch of the vehicle. Pulling over, we discovered a Blowout on our International Harvester Travelall. (This was a vehicle our children had named “Sherman,” because it reminded them of a Sherman Tank!) After the wheel was replaced with the spare, we were “on the road again”.

Forty miles later we decided to take a break for some soft drinks. We extended the trailer steps, opened the door and retrieved some sodas from the butane refrigerator.³

The fuel gauge had indicated that “Sherman’s” gas level was a bit low. I had five gallons of gasoline in a jerry can, so this seemed like a good time to “top off the tank.” Back on the highway, I kept hearing peculiar sounds from time to time as we drove along. For example, there was a “Clinking sound” at one time. Later, as we crossed the very narrow bridge at Carrizo Creek, a dull “Clunk” could

be perceived. But on we went.

As we drew within ten miles of the big drop-off into Salt River Canyon, the trailer suddenly swayed to the right and emitted a sickening “Crunch!” Easing gingerly onto the very narrow shoulder of the road, we discovered three things. The “Clinking sound” had occurred when the cap to the gas tank, accidentally left on top of the hood, fell to the ground and was lost forever. The “Clunk” noise had been the metal step into the trailer. Since it had negligently been left extended, it now was severely smashed backward after colliding with the concrete railing of the bridge over Carrizo Creek.

The last and greatest discovery was a blown-out tire on one of the tandem wheels of the trailer! No doubt it had been damaged by that gauntlet of boulders, strewn on the Big Lake road. And, guess what: No Spare! The only thing to do was to remove the wheel with the blown-out tire, take it to the little “Convenience (?) Store” at the bottom of Salt River Canyon, and Pray that they had a tire that would fit the rim! (A lot of uncertainties!) One new complication: While removing the wheel, I accidentally smashed the crystal on my wrist watch. (Trouble comes in Bunches!)

I unhitched the trailer from “Sherman” and traversed the fifteen miles to the little store. Fortunately they had one Very “used” tire that was nearly bald, - - - but it Fit!

They installed it on the wheel and charged me about as much as a New tire would cost! (Another drawback of doing business in a small market.) Back to the trailer and the waiting group. They were getting rather concerned that all these delays could make the ball players late for “el Juego Grande de la Noche!” I suspected that the haste and sense of urgency had contributed to some of the goof-ups that had plagued us.



At any rate, the replacement tire was installed, the trailer was re-hitched to “Sherman” and we continued our ill-fated safari. Lady Luck finally seemed to be with us. The remaining 150 miles were traversed without any new delays or disasters. Pulling into the driveway at home, there was just enough time to grab a quick snack before “game time.” Nobody was at home as we entered the house. However, on the table was a note written by our

daughter Lorrie. The note read: “David, The coach called and said to tell you guys that the Night Game has been called off. So, Just Forget About It Lorrie!.” (Our daughter has always had “a sensitive, straightforward style” of communicating, especially with her siblings.)

All the haste had been “for naught!” Incidentally, the used tire had gotten us home, but was now ready for the scrap heap, (or perhaps a Trash Fire)! So when we later got a new replacement tire, we also purchased a Spare Tire and wheel for the trailer. And, Naturally, in all the subsequent years, we never had need of a spare, again! (Isn’t that just the way it goes? If you buy an umbrella, it guarantees that it will Never Rain.) But no one can say that the trip home had not been a Memorable One! (In a “Stephen King” Science Fiction sort of way!)

When my wife, Marge, read this story, she said, “You named this story ‘R.V.ING IS NOT FOR SISSIES.’ It would be better entitled: ‘R.V.ING IS NOT FOR KLUTZES!’” (I must admit - - - She has a point!)

A Man is Known by the Company he chooses. The Same is true of the Establishments he frequents. But it is unwise to pretend to be more sanctimonious than you really Are.

ANY PORT IN A STORM

Houses of Ill-Repute have not been among my customary hangouts. The same applies, insofar as I know, to most of my friends. In December 1946, many of the returned Veterans from Bisbee, Arizona, were at home on Christmas Break from College. We were seeking diversion from the “Heavy Grind” (no pun intended) of our University studies. Most of the girls we had formerly associated with were already married or engaged, and the others in town were “too young” for us. (If the truth were known, they were really too Sophisticated for us.) So the Vets tended to entertain themselves by assembling in bars, pool halls, the V F W or the Legion Hall, to drink beer and swap “War Stories” with one another.

One problem with that arrangement was that all these establishments closed for business too early to suit our needs. We were “just getting warmed up” when our “party place” would flash the lights at 11 o’clock or midnight, and usher us out the door. This occurred one night while I was

with a group of four or five guys at the Legion Hall at closing time. Somebody said: “Hey! Why don’t we go down to Naco! They have bars there that Never close!” Naco is Not pronounced like “Waco” or like “Taco.” It rhymes with Wack-o, with a Short “a.” It is a little border town some ten miles south of Bisbee. There were two or three establishments on the Mexican side of the line where we could go to continue our Tall Tales and conviviality, in addition to our consumption of adult malt-beverages). But I learned, after we arrived, that these bars were the “waiting rooms” for Houses of Prostitution! However, after we went in and settled down, the “ladies of the evening” soon learned that we were not there to seek their services. After accepting a beverage from us, they left us alone to our “all-male camaraderie.” We lingered until about 2 a.m., then returned to our homes in Bisbee.

The very next evening I happened to be socializing with an entirely different group of guys in another Bisbee “watering hole.” At closing time, someone suggested that we go to Naco to continue our party. I was very tired from being up so late the previous night, and said that I didn’t want to go. But my companions insisted that I accompany them, and they were driving. I didn’t tell them I had been down there before, but argued, “That’s a Stupid idea! I don’t care to be seen in such an establishment!” Unfortunately, my protestations fell on Deaf Ears!



The driver pulled into the parking lot outside the same “bordello” I had visited the night before! But then everybody developed “cold feet,” and refused to leave the car! Nobody wanted to lead the way! By then I was really disgusted with these Turkeys. I said, “For Crying Out Loud! You Drag me down here, Against my Will, and now you just Sit out here in the Parking lot! You all came here to go inside, so let’s Go Inside!” With that declaration, I resolutely strode out of the sedan. The other fellows hesitantly lined up close behind. As I swung open the door, the bartender glanced over at me. He flashed a big Grin and bellowed out: “Hey, Old Buddy! Welcome Back Again!” Well, you can just imagine the razzing I got from that bunch of guys, after the “Holier Than Thou” protests I had used, trying to avoid that trip! (In fact, I Still get teased about it, Sixty Years later)!

It takes a fertile mind to devise new methods for studying Disease. Some minds may have enough fertility to be downright Disgusting!

SOME MEDICAL TESTS ARE GROSS!

Medical testing is sometimes stranger than fiction. During my internship in 1953-54 I was training on the Internal Medical service of Dr. Cooley, a renowned expert in gastro-intestinal diseases. He had developed a test to diagnose Cirrhosis of the liver, which involves scarring within the structure of the organ. Normally, all the blood from the entire digestive tract flows back to the heart and lungs. But first it is slowly filtered through the liver, by way of the Portal Vein. However, when the tissue of the liver is partially blocked by the scarring of Cirrhosis, the blood is detoured past the liver in alternate vessels. It returns more rapidly to the heart, and from there through the lungs. Dr. Cooley's test was based on this phenomenon.

I was teamed up with another intern, named Ann Stitt. She was a pleasant, attractive young lady, a graduate of the University of Illinois. We were directed to conduct Dr. Cooley's special "Cirrhosis test" on a shy young fellow about twenty years of age. The examination involved

inserting a lubricated hose about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter for a distance of one foot up the subject's rectum. A 200 cc. plastic Syringe, into which 5 cc. Of liquid Ether had been drawn up, was attached to the free end of the hose. Next, the syringe was plunged into a bucket of hot water, causing the fluid Ether to be vaporized into a Gas, expanding to fill the syringe completely. This vaporized Ether bolus would then be rapidly injected into the "victim's" rectum and colon by Team Member #1. (Does this sound like a "Rube Goldberg game plan", or What?)

The patient would be lying on his side. Team Member #2 would be positioned with his or her nose in the face of the Test Subject, who was instructed to Pant rapidly, like a dog. The testing person would sniff the



exhaled breath while operating a Stop-Watch, and measure exactly how long it took for the Ether to pass from the rectum through the circulation, and be exhaled from the lungs. But in this case, for some reason the smell of the Ether was never detected by Ann, who was acting as “Chief Sniffer,” or Team Member #2).

Ann and I had both successfully performed this examination before, and we couldn't figure out why this one wasn't working. She turned to the embarrassed patient and told him how sorry we were. But we would have to do the entire test over again. She added, “We hope you understand that we are repeating the exam only because we didn't get any result on it; not because we Enjoyed Doing it!”

Just as we were ready to start again, the young fellow blurted out, “Of course I understand that you don't enjoy this test. I wasn't too crazy about it, myself. - - - Holy Mackerel! What kind of a Weird guy would I be if I Enjoyed something like THIS?”

Well, all three of us just cracked up, laughing at the outlandish situation we were all involved in. We tried several times to stop giggling long enough to repeat the test! When we finally did complete the procedure, once again we failed to obtain a valid result. So Dr. Cooley had to use other methods, including a liver biopsy, to diagnose his patient. In later years, Dr. Ann went on to become a

successful, respected Thoracic Surgeon. As for me, I resolved that in the future, I would endeavor to avoid becoming involved in in such an investigative procedure. Especially if it included an Ether syringe, a bucket of hot water, a stop-watch and a lubricated rectal tube.



There's SOMETHING FUNNY About That author Hermon Price, MD grew up in Bisbee, AZ, a small copper mining town located near the Mexican border. His adventures in life have brought about this collection of entertaining tales each with a comical illustration drawn by the author himself.

These hilarious tales take the reader through the life of Hermon Price moving through the expected juvenile goof ups and not to mention some "brushes with the law" to combat in Germany during WWII where he served with the Infantry. This led to a year spent in Army Hospitals due to injuries incurred from a land mine explosion. From there he went on to pre-med studies at the University of Arizona, then medical school and specialty training at Northwestern University in Chicago; after which he returned to Tucson, AZ to practice medicine for 39 years. Each journey brings its own hilarious tale for you to enjoy.

Now retired with his wife Marge and his Jack Russell terrier Bridgett, in Tucson, AZ, Dr. Price reminds us to look back at our life and find the humor in each experience and hopes you will enjoy his experiences as well.



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