

Sept. 11, 2016

# DAVY ... PHONE HOME

My wife and I recently visited Navanod Antique Store in Kinsley where I found an old dial wall phone. It was just like the one that hung in my folks' house in Colorado for decades.

There were no such things as cordless phones back then, unless you were a secret agent like Maxwell Smart, who not only had a *cordless* phone, but a cordless shoe-phone!

Instead you would buy a cord that was some 50 feet long. The cord from the receiver to the phone in my folks house could wrap around the entire house 16 times. Mom would sit in a rocker chatting with any of her nine brothers and sisters, the cord running out of the living room, through the hall, around the corner, through the kitchen, out the door, down the street, through a neighbor's house, and finally back into our house, attaching to the large, brick-like unit (owned by Mountain Bell -- you didn't own phones back then), just like the one I was looking at in the antique store.

Do you remember running through the house as a child while someone was on the phone, and being forced to decide at the last second whether to go over or under the cord, sometimes not making up your mind in time and plowing into it like a semi-truck? Boy, I sure do.

The phone in my Mom's grip would suddenly become like a fishing pole that hooked a whale. The receiver would come dragging out of the living room, the voice of my aunt still going on about her new hair treatment, my mom shouting, "Davy! What did I tell you about running in the house!?"

With those memories flooding through my mind as I looked at the phone at the antique store, I decided to dial my old phone number just for fun, and to get the feel of that old rotary dial. There is something therapeutic in it, don't you agree?

"Hello?"

"H ... Hello?" I responded, my voice trembling. It was kind of strange to get an answer at the old number. Plus, the phone wasn't plugged in. "Who is this?"

"This is the Myers residence," the man answered. The voice sounded very familiar.

"D ... Dad?"

"You must have the wrong number...."

"No! It's Dave, your son! You know -- *Davy!* I'm calling from 2016! What year is it there?"

"It's 1973. Say, if you're calling from the future, can you tell me if I ever get you to mow the lawn?"

"Dad, I'm ... I'm a newspaper editor now! A Catholic paper! In Kansas."

"A newspaper editor?" he responded, recalling my last spelling test. I always had trouble with words of more than two letters. "Okay, now I *know* this isn't Davy."

"No, it's true! Remember when I got the lemon drop stuck in my nose? Or when I ran away with Julie? We got all the way to the end of the block before I realized that I'd probably never get a job until I at least got a little Kindergarten under my belt."

"Wow! It's you, alright. But a newspaper editor? How did you manage that?"

"God. Blind luck. Patient readers. I really don't know."

He asked me to tell him about 2016. With Vietnam still raging in 1973, President Nixon already under scrutiny, and disco infecting the ears of youth everywhere, he was eager to learn how things had improved.

"Let me think, Dad. You've got two more years of Vietnam, one more year before Nixon resigns, and ... um ... well, Disco lasts pretty much through the 70s."

*Gasp.* "What about flying cars? What about people living on Mars? And robots! What are the robots like? And seriously, do you ever mow the lawn?"

I wanted so badly to tell him that we had cities on the moon, cars zipping around skyscrapers, and Rosie the Robots wearing aprons and doing the dishes. Oh, and that I mow the lawn now and then. But I didn't want to lie.

"Well, cars can't fly, but car radios get better reception. And we never made it to Mars ... well, except for the Mars lander. And we ... uh ... never make it back to the moon, either. On the bright side, we do have more TV channels."

Dad was silent for a minute. "Well," he said quietly, "at least you don't have Vietnam."

"Yeah," I said as my thoughts went to the Twin Towers, the wars in the Middle East, all the violence plaguing the world -- not to mention our bizarro-world race for the White House.

"Davy? Let me put Mom on. Hold on for a minute."

Mom got on the phone in 1973. "Hello? Davy? Is it really you?"

"Hi, Mom. Yeah, it's me," I answered in 2016.

"You sound down. What's wrong?"

Wow. Five years younger than I am now, but she was still my Mom.

"I just realized that as much as things have changed, nothing's really changed. *I don't know; it's just....*"

I thought about the world, its problems ... and about me. I realized that I'm still the insecure kid I always was. Still feeling isolated from the human race. Still struggling to fit in (but helped significantly by my far better half).

Mom didn't miss a beat.

"Are you still saying your prayers? And a Rosary now and then won't hurt!"

And like she said a thousand times while I was growing up, "When you leave for school ... er... work, hold your head up high and say I'm just as good as anyone else...."

I hung up the phone and the crash of years came falling back into place. It was a brief memory, a short glimpse into yesterday. Yet, the next morning as I left for work, I couldn't help but *hold my head up high....*

Mr Meyers,

Thank you for contacting us. We would be happy to provide you an estimate for the work you are interested in. Please feel free to contact us at 316-771-6700 or email us your contact information so we can set up a time to take a look at your project.

Thank you and have a nice day.