



Ron Isbell
Publisher

Front Porch Music

A slab of ugly ole river fish

Back in Rusty Springs the town is mourning the loss of one of its local legends. A little more personal for me, it's my brother's father in law.

Like every other soul who hails from Rusty Springs we knew Earl Williams very well. Earl and his wife Beverly ran Earl's Supper Club for more years than I can probably count. It started out as a bar on the banks of the Wabash River, right where the "spur" of Route 1 dead-ended within a jon boat's length of the river.

Earl decided, probably after one too many floods threatened his business, to move and bought a building farther from the river up on Route 1 that had housed a gas station then, later, a fruit stand. And, more importantly for the rest of the world, he began frying catfish.

As much as I enjoy the fish camps around here (and you'll get some mighty fine catfish at Loves and Blacks and I'm sure some others I've not tried yet), nothing is quite like Earl's catfish. How does it get that good? Earl always said there was nothing to it...just get the right catfish, the right coating and use the right oil. But I still suspect Earl's hand in all of it made some kind of a

difference.

It's a trait he passed down to Gary, his son, who can cook catfish as well as Earl did. He learned from a master and learned well.

Earl became kind of famous all around Rusty Springs. People would take a seat at what were nothing more than picnic tables set on a gravel floor and wait for Beverly to bring out platters heaped with catfish and fries and onion rings.

Pretty soon cars in his parking lot regularly were sporting license plates from places 150 miles away. I've met people from other states and told them I was from Marshall, thinking they may have heard of our county seat, a larger town that sits on the Interstate. They answer more than once was "yeah, I know Marshall. That's where I get off the Interstate to go down to Earl's."

Earl answered this success by moving yet again to "downtown" Rusty Springs where he bought Carmichael's supper club and renamed it Earl's. Even with year-round protection from cold and heat and more seats (at real tables) people lined up down the sidewalk to wait for their turn. Rain didn't stop them. Cold winds and blowing snow were

no deterrent. The wait just to get inside (by the way there was another line to wait out once you got in the door) could be an hour or more. Even when he bought the building next door and doubled his seating capacity the lines stayed.

Life was simple at Earl's. There were no menus. Waitresses simply asked, "whole catfish, fillets, shrimp, steak or ham. Fries, onion rings or both." And your choice of ranch, Thousand Island or French dressing on your salad.

He never got rich doing this either. All the catfish you can eat (and those plates of fries and onion rings never got empty either) cost just a couple of bucks more than a Big Mac meal. Earl knew his customers and knew what they could afford to spend. He wasn't about to charge them any more than that. And a lot of people ate free.

He was a big man with a big heart, but in this case size didn't matter. It couldn't sustain him any longer. He leaves behind a wife, a son and a daughter who has been part of my own family for almost 40 years. And a whole community of friends and customers. All that for a slab of an ugly ole river fish.

Pancake breakfast Saturday to help KM native in need of lung transplant

Kings Mountain native Terri Mullis deBruin needs a life-saving lung transplant and friends and family are planning a pancake breakfast Saturday, May 22, from 7 a.m.-11 a.m. at David Baptist Church, 2300 David Baptist Church Rd., to help with expenses. Admission is a suggested donation of \$6.

A lung transplant costs up to \$450,000 and even with health insurance deBruin faces significant medical expenses. For the rest of her life, she will need follow-up care and daily anti-rejection medications. The cost of post-transplant medications can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per month, and they are as critical to her survival as the transplant itself.

Once she receives her transplant, she must temporarily relocate more than 200 miles from her home in Delaware to be closer to the transplant center in Pittsburgh, adding to her financial strain.

To overcome these financial challenges, deBruin turned to the National Foundation for Transplants for assistance. NFT is a non-profit organization that helps transplant patients raise funds to pay for transplant-related expenses.

To make a donation in honor of DeBruin, mail a tax-deductible gift to the NFT Delaware Lung Fund, 5350 Poplar Ave., Suite 30, Memphis, TN 38119. Secure donations can also be made online at www.transplants.org. Donors should click on "Patients we help" to locate deBruin.

Before the final count Relay fundraising amounts looking good

Kings Mountain's Relay for Life 2010 has raised over \$50,000 and co-chairman Frank Burns says the total will be more when all funds are reported at the upcoming Bank Night by Relay leaders.

"We are optimistic that our goal of \$75,000 will be reached," he said, taking the

opportunity to thank all volunteers, teams, and supporters of the annual campaign for funds for research to fight cancer.

Said Burns, "Kings Mountain folks have always been generous in helping others and we are grateful for the outpouring of concern."

Shutterlight Group plans first photo contest for June 12

The Shutterlight Group, a photography club at the Kings Mountain Art Center, is having its first photography competition and will be accepting entries 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday, June 12. A complete prospectus is available online at photoclub.southernartsociety.org and at the KM Art Center in the old depot, 301 N. Piedmont Ave.

For more information, email photoclub@southernartsociety.org or call 704-473-9971.

Bicycle planning set for June 8th

A Bicycle Plan Public Meeting for the City of Kings Mountain is set for Tuesday, June 8, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Fire Training Room at City Hall.

The City of Kings Moun-

tain is exploring ways to improve bicycling conditions throughout the community, and invites all citizens and residents to attend this event. The public is invited to contribute thoughts and ideas in a highly interactive work session and to learn more about the issues involved in planning for bicycling needs. The public's input will go far in determining priority building projects in the months and years ahead.

The City Planning and Economic Development Department is sponsoring the meeting. Facilitation of the meeting will be performed by Centralina Council of Governments, a regional planning organization committed to a vital, prosperous and sustainable environment. Centralina is working with city staff and a steering committee made up of a variety of community members.

For more information, contact Blair Israel, Centralina Council of Governments, at 704-372-2416 or e-mail at blisrael@centralina.org

Thread trail to get first half of \$3M grant

The Carolina Thread Trail, which will one day tie the Kings Mountain Gateway Trail into a 15-county network of greenways and waterways, is set to receive \$1.5 million of the \$5 million North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund monies recently released by Governor Bev Perdue.

The \$1.5 million will be used to support local communities as they acquire land for trail segments along waterways through

out 11 North Carolina counties within The Thread's 15 county footprint. The \$1.5 million is the first installment of a \$3 million grant awarded to The Thread by CWMTF trustees in 2008.

The CWMTF award, the largest public gift to The Thread since its 2007 launch, will help protect water quality and create public recreation opportunities on an unprecedented regional scale. As N.C. communities self-identify

their sections of The Thread, many are selecting buffer lands along streams and rivers in the Broad, Catawba and Yadkin-Pee-Dee river basins.

These buffer areas filter pollutants, revive the water table and support wildlife habitat. Trails hosted on these protected lands provide freely-accessible opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, paddling, commuting and simply enjoying.

"We are grateful to Gov.

Perdue and the Clean Water Trustees for their continued support for this project that delivers so much benefit to so many people," said Dave Cable, executive director of Catawba Lands Conservancy, lead agency of the Carolina Thread Trail. "Public funding such as Clean Water is a critical complement to the private funds used to support communities as they plan for the protection of vital lands and waterways for generations to come."

The Thread is funded by private capital that then leverages public funding. Since its launch in 2007, The Thread's Governing Board and Grants Committee have awarded over \$820,000 in catalytic funding to communities from the organization's private capital campaign. Public funding, such as the \$1.5 million CWMTF award, supplements those privately-funded awards that communities use to protect land and build trails.

CRMC, Senior Helpers call attention to diabetes

Those at risk encouraged to talk to doctors

The Diabetes Center at Cleveland Regional Medical Center participated in Diabetes Alert Day by holding free screenings in the lobby at CRMC recently.

The "one-day 'wake-up' call" was meant to inform the public about the seriousness of diabetes and the dangers of letting it go undiagnosed or untreated.

Many Americans of all ages are diagnosed every year with diabetes. In fact 23.6 million children and adults in the nation are believed to currently have the illness, 17.9 million have been diagnosed with it, 5.7 million have gone undiagnosed and 57 million people are considered to be "pre-diabetic", according to the American Diabetes Association.

Of those numbers, which according to ADA predictions grow by at least 1.6 million new cases each year, an alarming 23 percent of seniors, age 60 and older, now battle the disease.

"The risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases dramatically with age," said Peter Ross, CEO of Senior Helpers - a local and national in-home senior care provider.

An estimated 50 percent of adult onset diabetes (type 2) occurs in those over 55 years of age, according to Senior Helpers.

In addition to fluctuating blood sugar levels that come with diabetes, the disease can also increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney disease, nervous system disease (neuropathy), and loss of limbs. ADA estimates that diabetes, in all of its forms, costs the United States over \$200 billion per year.

But there is hope.

"It's important for seniors and their families to realize that there are ways to reduce the potential impact of diabetes on quality of life," Ross said.

Research has repeatedly shown that physical activity is one of the best ways seniors can prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes and complications from the disease among those already diagnosed. As people get older, exercise becomes even more important in keeping the body healthy and able to fight debilitating diseases like diabetes, according to Senior Helpers.

For seniors, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 30

minutes of exercise at moderate intensity, five or more times per week.

Jon Weiner, with Senior Helpers, states that exercise in seniors has shown to improve the body's use of insulin; burn excess body fat, helping to decrease and control body weight; increase blood flow to reduce risk of related heart disease; and keep the heart and blood vessels healthy by lowering "bad" (LDL) cholesterol.

At Cleveland Regional Medical Center, nurses "sounded the alert" about the dangers of type 2 diabetes by asking the public to take the Diabetes Risk Test.

The Diabetes Risk Test requires users to answer questions about weight, age, family history and other potential risks for pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes. It shows users whether they are at low, moderate, or high risk for the disease.

Those who participated were counseled on their results. If they were at "high risk", participants were encouraged to schedule appointments with their healthcare provider for more tests. Information was available on both types 1 and 2 diabetes and blood glucose (sugar) checks were offered at CRMC.

Diabetes has been named the "silent killer" because nearly one-fourth of those with the disease do not know they have it, said Gudrun Novak, manager of CRMC's Diabetes Center and a certified diabetes educator. "Early diagnosis is critical to successful treatment and delaying or preventing some of its complications such as heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, stroke, amputation and death."

"Everyone should be aware of the risk factors for type 2 diabetes," Novak said. "People who are overweight, who do not exercise, and who are over the age of 45 should consider themselves at risk for the disease."

African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and people who have a family history of the disease are at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes.

For more information on how Cleveland Regional Medical Center's Diabetes Center of Excellence can help you manage your diabetes, call 980-487-3953.

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