

# Newsletter142

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

January 28, 2022

### Kid Time In The 30s,40s, and 50s.

Several young folks have asked me, just what we did in the “old” days,, before there was TV, internet, Iphones, MP3 and other such gadgets. My stock answer is that, thankfully, we weren't enslaved to those things. We actually used that grey stuff between our ears to play games like Monopoly, Pit, Uncle Wiggly, etc. and to create things with Erector Sets, Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys and a variety of build it yourself kits like model airplanes , leathercrafts and many others. We also scrounged a lot of materials.

During the WWII years, we made a lot of our own toys. We melted down lead objects to make our own toy soldiers. Yes, we were trusted with such dangerous things as soldering irons, lead melting pots, wood burning tools and even very, very sharp X-acto knives.

My brother Paul and I had a small steam engine that actually produced steam and ran some toy tools. It had a whistle just like a locomotive. Gee, no one got hurt that I can recall.

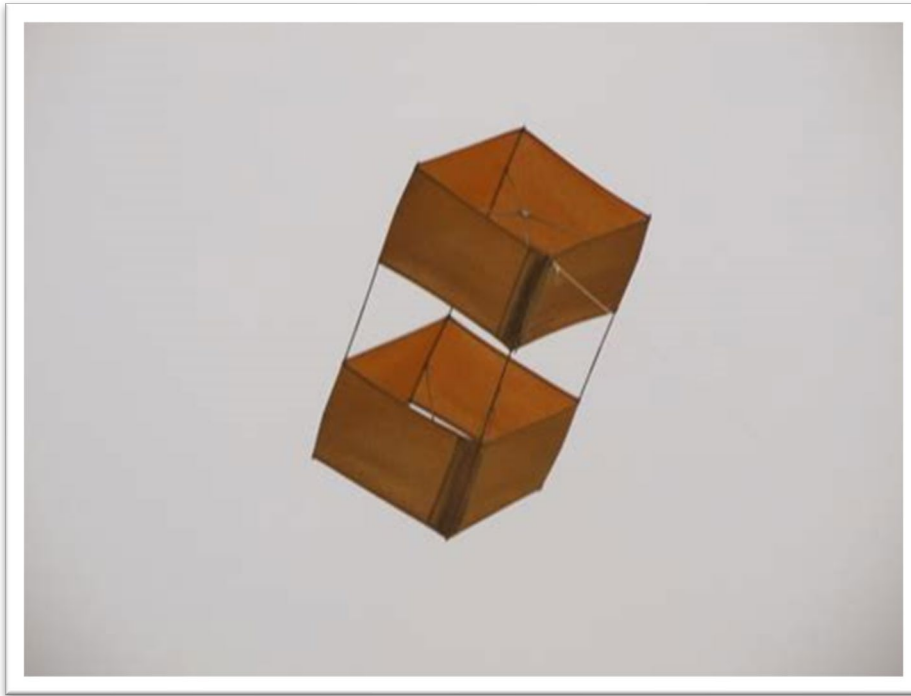
I still remember the utter joy of spending many hours in complete concentration while building model airplanes from scratch. We had to lay out the balsa pieces and cut them to fit on a blueprint.

Yes, we could read and understand some blueprints, while still in grade school. We then glued the pieces together and held them in place with straight pins. No, we did not sniff the glue to alter our thinking. The thrill of accomplishment in finishing a plane or other object is hard to relate to someone. You have to do it yourself to fully understand.

Our young lives were full of such accomplishments and so we didn't need any mind altering chemicals or enslaving devices.

We even made our own kites with butcher paper and carefully whittled sticks. We made our own glue from flour. It wasn't the strongest, but it worked for us kids. The hardest thing was to get enough string to fly a kite during the war.

After the war when string was available, a lot of us, McGill heathens, made box kites and could fly them very high.



Using the super power of our genius level of scientific abilities, we constructed a contraption using parts from our Erector Sets, to have some fun with our homemade kites. We built a small device that hung from the kite string by a small grooved wheel. A small platform was hung from the axle of the wheel. The platform held a small homemade parachute with a toy lead paratrooper we had made with our lead toy soldier kit. The parachute was made from a hankie or other piece of cloth.

The platform with the parachute acted like a small sail and so the wind would blow the contraption up to the kite. A trigger at the kite would push the paratrooper off the platform, to float to the ground. The platform without the parachute would then roll back down the string to be used again. Then there was a scramble to find the little trooper.

The higher we got the kite, the harder it was to find the parachute, due to wind drift. Our favorite place was at the small vacant spot at the bottom of F row, just above the railroad tracks.

Our Dad's taught us a lot about tools and how to use them. They also introduced us to hunting and fishing. Lots of cherished memories still with us.

We learned to use the old style soldering iron. It was a large piece of steel/copper with a pyramid shaped point, that had a twisted wire leading to a wooden handle.



The point was heated on a small blow torch. It was hard to use as the temperature varied. I used the soldering iron to make a squirt gun out of a tall tomato juice can that had been opened with two small holes punched in the top. I drilled one hole out and soldered in a valve gut deal, so I could pump air in and pressurize it. The other hole I drilled out and soldered in a small valve that hooked to a water pistol. I could fill the can half full of water and then using a hand tire pump build up pressure to make the water pistol work. It didn't actually work very well, but it was fun building it.

Every day was a challenge for us to create stuff. Especially when we were not confined in the local education camp.

# McGill News

Last week I called and talked with Annie Anderson, Director and Curator of 'The Country Doctor Museum' in Bailey, NC. She sent me some photos. If you are ever in that area, stop in and say hello to Annie. The address is—7089 Peele Road  
P.O. Bos 34 Bailey, NC 27807. Looks like a great place to visit.



## Oldies

1913—March 2—E. H. Ford, leases the Clark Drug Store located in the building next to the McGill Bank and renamed it the Ford Drug Store.

1914—January 18—Ford skipped town with \$2,000. Clark took the store back and renamed it, Clarks Drug.

## Old Photo



Two of the many girls that made the goodies that we all craved, like malts, milk shakes, Iron Port, Lime Rickies and huge banana splits at the good ole McGill Drug Store. Remember Joan and Thalia?