

View from Menzies Mountain, January 2013

By Bruce Menzies

2013—let it begin!

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other.”

So wrote Charles Dickens in his 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. To be sure, Mr. Dickens was quite a wordsmith to be able to articulate his thoughts in such a descriptive and colorful way. Undoubtedly, many today share the same feelings—the best of times and the worst of times—at the same time! How does that happen? There’s probably more than one answer to that question. However, let me advance a theory. It may happen because of the choices of what we watch with our eyes and listen to with our ears.

For instance, during this past presidential election I was pretty much of a news hound. I watched all the debates and then stuck around for all the analysis. I found myself in a state of “paralysis of analysis.” In other words I was in information overload. After reading and listening to the political ads I found myself distraught—facing a winter of despair.

There is a remedy for this problem. It’s found in the Good Book.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

What you have here is a check list of sorts to help you with your thought process. You’ve heard the phrase, “Garbage in—garbage out”? Apply this scripture to your thinking and see how it will help.

Johnny Mercer said it this way back in 1944:

You’ve got to accentuate the positive / Eliminate the negative / Latch on to the affirmative / Don’t mess with Mister In-Between.

There is a spring of hope coming around the bend. It will be here before you know it. The election is over so let's get on with living our lives without all the political ads and phone calls we all got about supper time. Maybe your candidate won or maybe not—but for better or worse this is the hand we've been dealt. Let's work with this and go forward from here. Just keep concentrating on the things that are lovely, just, pure, honest, a good report, and virtuous. If you do this, 2013 just might be a good year, an age of wisdom and a season of light and belief.

As I write this memo, Senior Moments is now distributed in thirteen counties. Here goes (in no particular order): Dade, Polk, Dallas, Webster, Greene, Wright, Texas, Christian, Stone, Barry, Lawrence, Taney, and just this week Cedar County. I hope by next issue to report being in Howell and Douglas Counties.

Could I ask a favor of you? I'd appreciate it if you would pass along this paper when you're done with it. I'll bet you know someone who would enjoy reading these articles too.

Are you ready to hunker down for the winter? Not so fast. Now is the time to tackle the chores that will help you ride out the bad weather. Tasks like closing the air vents in the foundation, removing or covering window air conditioners, cleaning storm windows and rain gutters, removing and draining the garden hoses from the water faucets, winterizing the vehicles, the flower and garden beds, storing patio furniture, caulking around windows and doors, cleaning the chimneys, insulating the attic fan, removing those wasp nests that now be safely removed, topping off the wood pile, winterizing your lawn and garden equipment, and putting a light coat of oil on the garden tools. Whew!

These last days of the year, when nights are freezing and days are yet comfortable, are dwindling down to precious few. Consider them as fall's last caress as we know they will be followed by old winter's song.

Speaking of this winter, as you look out your big picture window watching the falling snow and the Cardinals pecking away at their mullet, and you're sitting in front of a roaring fire with a good book or maybe the perfect cat nestled in your lap, all the while eating homemade banana bread and ice cream, you'll enjoy the fruits of your labor even more knowing all the chores have been done right. Having a root cellar full of a bountiful harvest from the summer's toil gives a body great satisfaction. Soon enough the big Bass Pro catalog will show up in the mailbox and thoughts will turn to fishing and hunting.

Afterwards the seed catalogs will arrive and March winds will begin to blow telling us spring is on its way. Warming breezes will scour the last of winter and spring rains will awaken the earth and call forth new life.

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

March will also signal it’s time to head for the local senior center or public library and pick up the new issue of Senior Moments Newspaper. It will be waiting for you there. Have a nice winter—Bruce Menzies.

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