



THE BUGGETTE

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Bare in Mind by Dick Bare

Hi, everyone,

A Life Well Lived is a wonderful piece by Michael Gartner, editor of newspapers large and small and President of NBC News. In 1997, he won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. It is well worth reading, and a few good chuckles are guaranteed. Here goes...

My father never drove a car. Well, that's not quite right. I should say I never saw him drive a car. He quit driving in 1927, when he was 25 years old, and the last car he drove was a 1926 Whippet.

"In those days," he told me when he was in his 90s, "to drive a car you had to do things with your hands, and do things with your feet, and look every which way, and I decided you could walk through life and enjoy it or drive through life and miss it."

At which point my mother, a sometimes salty Irishwoman, chimed in: "Oh, bull!" she said.. "He hit a horse."

"Well," my father said, "there was that, too."

So my brother and I grew up in a household without a car. The neighbors all had cars -- the Kollingses next door had a green 1941 Dodge, the VanLaningshams across the street, a gray 1936 Plymouth, the Hopsons two doors down, a black 1941 Ford -- but we had none. My father, a newspaperman in Des Moines, would take the streetcar to work and, often as not, walk the three miles home. If he took the streetcar home, my mother and brother and I would walk the three blocks to the streetcar stop, meet him and walk home together.

My brother, David, was born in 1935, and I was born in 1938, and sometimes, at dinner, we'd ask how come all the neighbors had cars but we had none. "No one in the family drives," my mother would explain, and that was that. But, sometimes, my father would say, "But as soon as one of you boys turns 16, we'll get one." It was as if he wasn't sure which one of us would turn 16 first. But, sure enough, my brother turned 16 before I did, so in 1951 my parents bought a used 1950 Chevrolet from a friend who ran the parts department at a Chevy dealership downtown. It was a four-door, white model, stick shift, fender skirts, loaded with everything, and, since my parents didn't drive, it more or less became my brother's car. Having a car but not being able to drive didn't bother my father, but it didn't make sense to my mother. So in 1952, when she was 43-years-old, she asked a friend to teach her to drive. She learned in a nearby cemetery, the place where I learned to drive the following year and where, a generation later, I took my two sons to practice driving. The cemetery probably was my father's idea. "Who can your mother hurtin the cemetery?" I remember him saying more than once.

For the next 45 years or so, until she was 90, my mother was the driver in the family. Neither she nor my father had any sense of direction, but he loaded up on maps -- though they seldom left the city limits -- and appointed himself navigator. It seemed to work.

Still, they both continued to walk a lot. My mother was a devout Catholic, and my father

Winter Care for Your Trees, Shrubs & Lawn

Here are a few tips for taking care of your yard this winter:

- If you're mowing your lawn in the winter, don't go too short, as scalping can kill a lawn in extreme conditions.
- Winter is a good time to prune your trees and shrubs and prepare them for new growth in the spring. The wounds from cuts will close quicker, and you won't have to worry about insect infestation. Call us and we can refer you to arborists in your area.
- Apply mulch around trees and shrubs to protect the roots from the cold and to provide nutrients

to the plant. Don't over-mulch the area, and don't let the mulch touch tree trunks. Leaves make a good mulch but should be composted if possible.



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Winter Care for Your Trees, Shrubs & Lawn

- It is important to keep the leaves off your lawn, so that the grass has a chance to breathe. Extreme cold weather can cause browning in some fescue lawns also. If you are raking your fescue, be careful not to rake it too hard or you will rip out some of the young grass.
- To rehabilitate your grass from the long cold winter, it's time to think about aerating in March. The soil in Georgia is so dense that it makes it difficult for air and water to percolate through your lawn. This will make it hard for the grass to grow and for the roots to spread deeper. Aerate in the spring for warm season grass and in the fall for cool season grass. Plan on giving your lawn a good watering two days before you want to aerate. This is an easy way to improve your lawn's health, and by aerating just once a year, you can ensure that your lawn's roots are strong. If you have any questions about winter tree, shrub or lawn care, please call us at 770-447-6037.

Fun Facts About the New Year

The new year has not always been celebrated on January 1. Starting around 2000 B.C., the original celebration took place in the beginning of spring.

Julius Caesar established January 1 as the start of the New Year when he created the Julian calendar.

"Auld Lang Syne," the traditional New Year's Eve song, is Scottish for "old long ago". It was written by Robert Burns in the 1700's.

The Babylonians established the tradition of setting New Year's resolutions – their most common resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment.

The most popular New Year's resolution in the US is to lose weight.

The very first New Year's Eve ball dropped in Times Square in



Kudos (lots!) from customers

David came by to apply our Zoysia Treatment and found too many leaves on the grass. We had just returned from a Memorial Service for a special friend of ours who had passed away after a short illness, and we were both sick (with what's going around). Our special tech, David, blew the leaves and went ahead and applied the treatment for our lawn. It seems like a small thing for him to do, but, under the circumstances, we really appreciated it and would like to give him our special thanks. - **Karen C., Marietta.**

This is the kind of service that is above and beyond. This is the kind of service that causes a person to sit down and write a letter of thanks. This is the kind of service that creates lifelong customers. We look forward to a long relationship with Arbor-Nomics. - **Rebecca L., Atlanta**

I had such a great experience with one of your technicians, Sam Thomas, I wanted you to put it in the next newsletter.

I had new zoysia sod installed at my home and then went on a short trip only to return and find it all completely brown. I was very alarmed and called the office right away. Within 10

minutes Sam was out and sprayed out the armyworm infestation. I thought this was exceptional customer service on the part of your office and of course Sam. I have had your service for over twenty years and it just gets better and better. - **Paul S., Dunwoody**

I just wanted to say how happy I have been with the service performed by Sam. He is so thorough and always shows such dedication to his job and always explains what is going on with my lawn. You have a great employee in Sam. - **N. G, Dunwoody**

We are new customers and really enjoy your representative's visits. Your quote "hire and train the best people, who in turn give the best service" is so true. We love The Buggette newsletter with advice and so much positive and uplifting conversation. Your whole organization is first-class. Thanks for your sincere efforts. It would be a nicer world if every businessman operated as you do!! - **A.C.B., Alpharetta,**



Application #1

What we did today

To your lawn:

- 1) We applied a pre-emergent crabgrass and broadleaf weed control. We are always working a season ahead and right now the pre-emergent and broadleaf controls we've put on your lawn are going to prevent weeds from springing up this spring. These two products will block the development of the weed root and prevent them from growing. If you see green weeds in your dormant lawn, you should see those weeds die within two weeks of the treatment.
- 2) Potassium Fertilizer: All of the lawns in Atlanta receive the pre-emergent and broadleaf controls. Bermuda, Zoysia and Centipede lawns will also receive a potassium fertilizer to enhance the root structure so your grass grows stronger and thicker.
- 3) Nitrogen: Fescue lawns will receive nitrogen for growth and color.

To your trees and shrubs:

(if you are a tree and shrub customer)

Believe it or not, we have such mild winters in Atlanta that certain bugs live through it. And they like to live in your trees and shrubs. That's why we put "dormant oil" on them. It encapsulates the leaves and stems and smothers the insects until the next time we visit. Protecting your trees and shrubs from bugs will make them stronger and healthier so they can resist disease and drought in the future.

What you need to do until our next visit

- 1) Remove your leaves as often as possible. They'll smother your lawn and damage the grass.
- 2) If you are going to mow your lawn during January and February, do not cut it too short or scalp it. You don't need to collect clippings as they "recycle" back into the soil providing some extra nutrients. It is safe to mow immediately after we've applied our products.

If you have any questions concerning your lawn, trees, shrubs or our service, please call our Customer Service Department Monday – Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm at 770-447-6037. If you call after hours, please leave a message and your call will be returned the next business day.

Helpful Phone Numbers

www.arbor-nomics.com

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Owner/President

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Humor for Lexophiles

(A Lexophile is a person who loves words and word play.)

- I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- Police were called to a day care where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off?
He's all right now!
- To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.



Bare in Mind...

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an equally devout agnostic, an arrangement that didn't seem to bother either of them through their 75 years of marriage. (Yes, 75 years, and they were deeply in love the entire time.) He retired when he was 70, and nearly every morning for the next 20 years or so, he would walk with her the mile to St. Augustin's Church. She would walk down and sit in the front pew, and he would wait in the back until he saw which of the parish's two priests was on duty that morning. If it was the pastor, my father then would go out and take a 2-mile walk, meeting my mother at the end of the service and walking her home. If it was the assistant pastor, he'd take just a 1-mile walk and then head back to the church. He called the priests "Father Fast" and "Father Slow."

After he retired, my father almost always accompanied my mother whenever she drove anywhere, even if he had no reason to go along. If she were going to the beauty parlor, he'd sit in the car and read, or go take a stroll or, if it was summer, have her keep the engine running so he could listen to the Cubs game on the radio. In the evening, then, when I'd stop by, he'd explain: "The Cubs lost again. The millionaire on second base made a bad throw to the millionaire on first base, so the multimillionaire on third base scored."

If she were going to the grocery store, he would go along to carry the bags out -- and to make sure she loaded up on ice cream. As I said, he was always the navigator, and once, when he was 95 and she was 88 and still driving, he said to me, "Do you want to know the secret of a long life?"

"I guess so," I said, knowing it probably would be something bizarre.

"No left turns," he said.

"What?" I asked.

"No left turns," he repeated.

"Several years ago, your mother and I read an article that said most accidents that old people are in happen when they turn left in front of oncoming traffic. As you get older, your eyesight worsens, and you can lose your depth perception, it said. So your mother and I decided never again to make a left turn."

"What?" I said again.

"No left turns," he said. "Think about

it. Three rights are the same as a left, and that's a lot safer. So we always make three rights."

"You're kidding!" I said, and I turned to my mother for support.

"No," she said, "your father is right. We make three rights. It works." But then she added: "Except when your father loses count."

I was driving at the time, and I almost drove off the road as I started laughing.

"Loses count?" I asked.

"Yes," my father admitted, "that sometimes happens. But it's not a problem. You just make seven rights, and you're okay again."

I couldn't resist. "Do you ever go for 11?" I asked.

"No," he said "If we miss it at seven, we just come home and call it a bad day. Besides, nothing in life is so important it can't be put off another day or another week."

My mother was never in an accident, but one evening she handed me her car keys and said she had decided to quit driving. That was in 1999, when she was 90. She lived four more years, until 2003. My father died the next year, at 102.

They both died in the bungalow they had moved into in 1937 and bought a few years later for \$3,000. (Sixty years later, my brother and I paid \$8,000 to have a shower put in the tiny bathroom -- the house had never had one. My father would have died then and there if he knew the shower cost nearly three times what he paid for the house.) He continued to walk daily -- he had me get him a treadmill when he was 101 because he was afraid he'd fall on the icy sidewalks but wanted to keep exercising -- and he was of sound mind and sound body until the moment he died.

One September afternoon in 2004, he and my son went with me when I had to give a talk in a neighboring town,

and it was clear to all three of us that he was wearing out, though we had the usual wide-ranging conversation about politics and newspapers and things in the news. A few weeks earlier, he had told my son, "You know, Mike, the first hundred years are a lot easier than the second hundred." At one point in our drive that Saturday, he said, "You know, I'm probably not going to live much longer."

"You're probably right," I said.

"Why would you say that?" He countered, somewhat irritated.

"Because you're 102 years old," I said.

"Yes," he said, "you're right." He stayed in bed all the next day.

That night, I suggested to my son and daughter that we sit up with him through the night. He appreciated it, he said, though at one point, apparently seeing us look gloomy, he said: "I would like to make an announcement. No one in this room is dead yet." An hour or so later, he spoke his last words: "I want you to know," he said, clearly and lucidly, "that I am in no pain. I am very comfortable. And I have had as happy a life as anyone on this earth could ever have." A short time later, he died.

I miss him a lot, and I think about him a lot. I've wondered now and then how it was that my family and I were so lucky that he lived so long. I can't figure out if it was because he walked through life or because he quit taking left turns. "

Life is too short to wake up with regrets.

So love the people who treat you right. Forget about the one's who don't. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it, and if it changes your life, let it.

