

## HIS THOUGHTS

### Let the celebrations begin

Christmas is in the air. The holiday season is in full swing. For many of us, our calendars are filled with plans for merry get-togethers and other activities.

These holiday traditions are vital. They help focus our attention on the deeply felt meaning of the season. Festivities also help nourish and sustain relationships by strengthening our shared values. Through them we reconnect with our heritage, reinforce our sense of belonging, and reconnect with the understanding that we are working together for a greater purpose.

In addition, it's simply fun! We all need to take a break from the routine of our daily schedules. Celebrations let us take our minds off the task at hand for a few moments and recharge so that we're better prepared to move forward with renewed energy.

Unfortunately, during the past two years of COVID-inspired limitations, many of us had to step back from some of our usual traditions. The pandemic forced us to limit personal contact in ways that made getting together a challenge. At Southside Virginia Community College, we found it necessary to rely on innovative technology and creative strategies to stay connected.

One tactic involved digital video conferencing technology. New tools enabled us to participate in Town Hall meetings where we sang Happy Birthday, admired pictures of new babies, and shared moments of silence with grieving coworkers. Social media platforms enabled us to connect through announcements, videos, and group interactions. Even regular email offered opportunities to welcome new faculty and staff members, distribute newsletter updates, and



Quentin R. Johnson  
SVCC President

honor the achievements of our co-workers and students.

Although efforts such as these enabled us to share some meaningful moments, it wasn't enough. A computer interface lacks the face-to-face personal touch. As a result, the suspension of in-person events reinforced my belief in their importance.

For this reason, I am especially excited that SVCC will return to an in-person Holiday

and Retirement Luncheon. A committee is working hard to plan a fun event for our faculty, staff and retirees. It will be hosted at our Daniel Campus in Keysville on Dec. 20, 2022.

The luncheon provides an opportunity for people who work in different departments and on different campuses an opportunity to get together and reconnect. For some, this will mean putting faces to new names, and for others it will bring a strengthening of personal bonds that have been built over years of camaraderie. The event gives us a chance to look back at where we've been and acknowledge the growth that has occurred. It also offers an opportunity to look ahead with reinvigorated motivation as we pursue the goals outlined in our new strategic plan, *Aspire 2027: Pathways to Opportunities*.

One of our most important traditions is recognizing

employees for their years of service. We do this for all who have reached five-year milestones. A full list of all honorees would take more space than I have here, so let me mention three who will be recognized for 25 years of service to the college and our students. They are faculty members Mike Stinson and James Wilkerson and our Buildings and Grounds Superintendent, Eddie Bennett.

The festivities of the season remind me that there is so much to celebrate. I wish you happy holidays and an opportunity to celebrate in ways that bring you joy.

**Dr. Quentin R. Johnson** is president of Southside Virginia Community College, which covers a service area that spans 10 counties and the City of Emporia. He can be reached via email at [quentin.johnson@southside.edu](mailto:quentin.johnson@southside.edu).

## HIS THOUGHTS

### Unacceptable school situation

"A stunning lack of transparency." "They failed at every juncture." It's hard to understate just how damning the Special Grand Jury Report on the Loudoun County Public Schools fiasco turned out to be. Two young women were assaulted, and both instances were preventable.

Worse, rather than put student safety first, administrators circled the wagons to protect themselves.

What happened in Loudoun County is difficult to comprehend. The failure of leadership to protect children is massive and inexcusable.

Two young women were assaulted by the same boy, first while in the girl's bathroom

while wearing girls' clothes. Warning signs abounded in both cases. Worse, after the sexual assaults were reported, Administrators sought to protect themselves and the system rather than the victim and her family.

This fiasco represents a perfect storm of what happens when far left ideology is applied in the real world. The system's public decision on transgender bathroom usage backfired in exactly the way opponents had warned, all while the matter was a topic of white-hot public debate.

Administrators held a video call with board members not long after they were told of the assault. What took place



Tommy Wright  
State delegate

at that meeting became a case of 'institutional amnesia,' according to the Grand Jury. The board circled the wagons on a video call, and then promptly developed institutional amnesia as soon as they were asked

about that meeting.

It's difficult to find words to communicate how bad this situation was. The Special Grand Jury wanted to indict the school system's attorney for witness tampering but were unable to do so under Virginia law.

Teachers walked in on the assault but did nothing. Teachers warned administration that the student was dangerous, but they did nothing. While the school board has fired the superintendent behind this disaster, no one else has been held accountable. House Republicans are examining this report closely and will act this session to see that our children are kept safe and never again sacrificed on the altar of political correctness.

Horror stories like the ones in Loudoun County are what happen when woke policies meet reality. Republicans

will keep our children safe in schools. Even local governments run by Democrats realize that it's time for law and order in Virginia again.

Democrats want to turn concerned parents into felons when parents oversee their children.

What happened in Loudoun County was heartbreaking to see happen. Republicans always must clean up messes made by Democrats and yet people still think Democrats know what they are doing. They do not have a clue. I am not "woke" but I am awake, awake enough to tell you that the Lord can help us with all our problems if we start turning to him more often.

**Del. Tommy Wright** can be reached via email at [DelTWright@House.Virginia.gov](mailto:DelTWright@House.Virginia.gov) or (804) 698-1061.

## HIS THOUGHTS

### That red clay Christmas

What I remember most about the Christmas of 1961 was seeing natural ice for the first time (at least, the first time I can remember) in the form of a frozen puddle on a muddy red road, perhaps someone's driveway, in rural Georgia. Granddaddy was taking me up that drive and out of sight to relieve myself while my grandmother helped my little sisters with their little plastic potty closer to the car. Such stops were very common before the interstate highways were built. They had come to get us in Florida and take us to Jackson for the holidays, but we didn't know we would never go back.

We had moved to Ft. Lauderdale several years earlier when my dad was reassigned by Southern Bell to help tackle the infrastructure boom in South Florida. My mother was very young when I was born, and in 1961 she found herself with three children,

including a baby in diapers, at the age of 22. Today, we know much more about postpartum depression; back then the prognosis was a "breakdown." My grandparents wanted to have her committed, so she took off. We never lived with her again, but we did have some visits with her after a few years had gone by. I was glad that she later married a very kind man and had another son. She eventually made her way back to Tennessee and died in Parsons only a few years ago.

When I was 59, I sometimes thought about the situation my grandparents faced when we went to live with them. My father had to continue working in Florida until he could get a transfer back closer to Jackson, so they took care of us in every way for a year and a half. Once he relocated to northern Mississippi, my dad could visit every few weeks. My grandfather

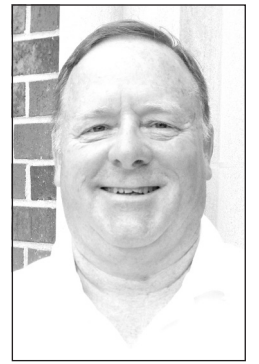
was 59 when we moved into their house, and I am certain that the sudden transformation from empty nest to full house must have been very challenging. They had a comfortable home (which, amazingly, Granddaddy had purchased and furnished with cash the year I was born), but it only had two bedrooms, so I slept with Granddaddy and my sisters slept with Grandmommy.

I still remember how she walked me to the pediatrician and then carried me back up the hill to her house after I had my ears lanced (I think they have since discontinued that practice). She also went along on school field trips. She didn't huff and puff even a bit when our third grade class went once to the Pinson Mounds site, while most of the thirty-something mommies were definitely dragging from climbing those hills. Since Granddaddy worked a

shift from 12 to 8 as a clerk at the Railway Express Agency, I could sometimes ride with him in his green van in the evening when he delivered the movies that had arrived on the train to the tv station.

I broke my heart to leave them when my dad remarried and the new couple settled on Memphis as a good location roughly halfway between their families in Jackson and Grenada, but we soon adjusted to life with our new mom, who interestingly was actually younger than our birth mother and thus found herself at the beginning of a new school year with three kids and no mothering experience at all. Think about that challenge! She brought to the mix a one-egg poacher from her bachelorette days as a long distance operator, and that little device certainly didn't get much use.

I have occasionally contemplated how my life might have turned out if I had grown up in Florida. I can't help but feel that going back to live in Tennessee was best. Church and Scouts or beach? Hmm... There is a beautiful song on one of Don Williams's last albums called "Healing Hands":



Mike Wilson  
Guest columnist

"My grandma and grandpa had wonderful hands/calluses and wedding bands/They taught me where there was love, there was always a way/A picture of the two of them/Has seen me through a lot of years/They were there when I reached up to them/And they're in my life today"

These lyrics encapsulate perfectly the enduring love of my grandparents: They are in my life today.

**Mike Wilson** is a former Hampden-Sydney Spanish professor, who now calls North Carolina home. He can be reached at [jmwilson@catawba.edu](mailto:jmwilson@catawba.edu).



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## HIS THOUGHTS

### The high art of the low crawl

I killed my first duck, a hen mallard, while lying on my belly in soupy mud under buck-bushes lining a creek that fed the Tennessee River. Turns out that over the years I have oddly become less accomplished at such feats, and not especially because I am girth-challenged.

My grandfather gave me a 20-gauge H&R Topper for Christmas when I had just turned 12. The Christmas before that, Santa had brought me an old bolt-action .410 that had once belonged to my other grandfather, and I had become a pretty good little wing shot. I could hit spent .410 cases thrown by my granddad and great uncle Johnny most of the time, and I must sadly say that I have never shot better. The .410 was fun for squirrels, but I needed heavier artillery to join in the duck hunts, and happily the Topper appeared.

The very next day after I had unwrapped it, we were off to the river. The plumbing at the cabin had been cut off and drained for the winter, so

no running water. (Yes, the bathroom was outside, a bit of a problem when Granddaddy fed me frozen kernel corn he thought he only had to warm up a little.) We rode out in the pre-dawn and set up in a creek a few miles upriver, and before long a Susie glided into the middle of a brushy point about 75 yards off to our right. Granddaddy said, "Well, go git'er!"

I knew perfectly well how to low-crawl thanks to Sgt. Alvin York (actually, Gary Cooper). I rested the gun across my forearms and slowly moved between the bushes. The water had receded from fall draw-down a while since, so the mud was sticky and pretty smelly. I would crawl about five yards and then stop and listen. Finally, there she was, waddling between two bushes, and I shot her with a load of lead 6's. (Let me pause to assure the reader that since then I have been better instructed in the more sportsmanlike approach of shooting

them in the air. At the time, I did not care. At all.)

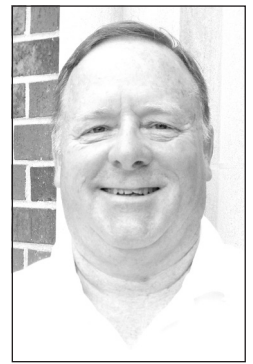
There is no picture of that signal moment in my life since it would have been impractical to haul the family Brownie around. As I mentally reconstruct the scene now, I see a grinning boy holding up a fat brown duck, perfectly eligible to be the "before" photo in a detergent ad. I will never forget that day nor the taste of that hen with my grandmother's delicious sage dressing.

Fast forward, now 20 years more. I live in the North Carolina Piedmont, where the early resident goose season has opened with extremely liberal bag limits and regs. I have permission to shoot over a newly cut cornfield, and I have seen a nice big flock in the area — apparently headquartered in one of the now-controversial Duke ash ponds — several times. This is gold!

We — my former student Arkansas Dan and I — set up in a tree line in a spot lying right on their usual lazy flight

path. They will fly right over our heads from behind us if we are favored by the gods and then drop into our decoys about 35 yards in front of us. Right on cue at 7:45 they announce their approach (this is before they adopted stealth mode, which is another story). We hold our breath as the honking grows closer and closer until there they are, their soft bellies virtual beacons right above our heads. Of course, we have agreed to wait until they all sit down to inflict maximum casualties, so you can imagine our horror when they take a long glide past our spread and drop 100 yards away...

Yet again, it seems there is nothing to do but low-crawl. The geese have begun to feed just past a slight rise in the field, so we set out to sneak up on them. It was definitely easier to do this forty years ago! We finally crest the rise and see they have moved a bit further away. We can't wait all day to see if they happen



Mike Wilson  
Guest columnist

to drift closer; my man has to get to his office by mid-morning. There is no remedy but to fire a couple of shots to speed them on their way. Even highly-touted tungsten — which is apparently also alloyed with platinum — fails to do the trick.

I am retired from low-crawling now — I hope — but you just never know what scenario you'll face next. Waterfowling wouldn't be nearly as much fun if everything went right all the time, would it?

Mike Wilson is a former Hampden-Sydney Spanish professor, who now calls North Carolina home. He can be reached at [jmwilson@catawba.edu](mailto:jmwilson@catawba.edu).

## HIS THOUGHTS

### Let's take time to reflect on our veterans

The Virginia General Assembly is gearing up for its 2023 legislative session. We celebrated Veterans Day November 11. I wanted to share accomplishments we made for veterans from the 2022 legislative session.

The mental health crisis being faced by our veterans has been a crucial issue that needed to be addressed in our Commonwealth. That's why we passed legislation that creates within the Department of Veteran Services a Suicide Prevention Coordinator to support and closely coordinate effective care services for military service members and veterans and their families.

We also instructed the Secretary of Transportation

to work with DVS to promote CDL and other certification opportunities for our veterans, so that they can continue to find good work when their active-duty service is over.

It's a small thing, but it's another way for us to thank you for your service to our country and Commonwealth.

I've included some other bills that impact veterans that you might find of interest. As always, if I or my staff can do anything to assist you, please don't hesitate to reach out.

HB 1203 created a Suicide Prevention Coordinator. This position, created in the Department of Veterans Services, will support and closely coordinate effective mental health care services for military

service members and veterans and their families. The bill directs the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to report on the work of the coordinator in the annual report to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Governor, and the General Assembly.

HB 553 directed the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation and working with various agencies of the Commonwealth, to promote and implement various initiatives related to commercial driver's licenses. The bill sunsets on July 1, 2023.

#### REMEMBER THIS, SWING VOTERS

During the 2022 legislative session, we worked hard

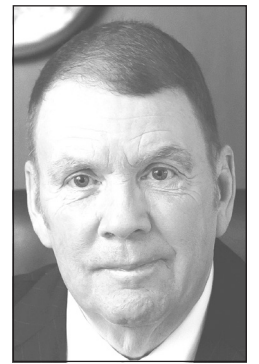
to make sure we followed through on the promises that were made during the campaign cycle.

Some of those big priorities include making sure our children are safe in school, lowering the cost of living for our families, and making our communities safer.

We passed legislation that once again made it required to report assault that occurs on school property, and that provides training for law enforcement officers to help victims of Human Trafficking here in the Commonwealth.

In the House, we passed a budget that includes record pay raises for teachers and law enforcement, that invest in our broadband and other infrastructure projects, and that will provide economic relief to families by providing a \$300/individual and \$600/joint-filer tax rebate. This is still being negotiated in the budget.

The 2022 General Assem-



Tommy Wright  
State delegate

bly Session was eventful, but we are still committed to making sure Virginia continues to move forward and be the best place to live, work, and raise a family. I am thankful for the trust you have placed in me to be a voice for our district here in Richmond.

Del. Tommy Wright can be reached via email at [DelT-Wright@House.Virginia.gov](mailto:DelT-Wright@House.Virginia.gov) or (804) 698-1061.

## HIS THOUGHTS

### The webs we weave

If I were a conspiracy theorist, I would connect the dots between President Biden, Hunter Biden, John Kerry, Al Gore, and China. All appear to be focused on solar power and electric cars for a reason. There is a time and place for some use of electric vehicles. As advancements have been and are being made, they may be the answer for the future, but we are not at that point in innovation.

#### THE CURRENT STATUS

We have a president of the United States making an all-out press for electric vehicles, while at the same time trying to force more of our country's electrical needs to be addressed by solar power. Interestingly, most of the elements needed for the solar panels and batteries are controlled by the Chinese government.

He does this in the name of protecting the environment, but the question is how?

Our country has made significant changes since the 1950s. Gone are the smokestacks that spewed clouds of pollutants. Scrubbers have been the law of the land for some time now capturing most elements. While at the same time, we are buying the fuel we need from other parts of the world that have ignored any serious concerns about harming their environment. Remember that we are one planet, what happens elsewhere will in time affect us.

Consider exactly what the Chinese are doing in Indonesia and other third world countries. Their environment and their resident's well-being are being sacrificed so that some can claim they are saving the planet.

A massive Indonesia industrial complex is managed by a Chinese-Indonesian joint venture. Operations have led to polluted waters. Water temperature has increased as a result of exhaust from the cooling system destroying the traditional fishing industry

Indonesia and Australia are home to the largest nickel reserves. For decades, the country enjoyed a nickel export industry. But Indonesia has stopped exporting raw nickel materials. Instead, it has its sights set on a newer industry, batteries.

Indonesia aims to secure its position in the global chain of battery production with help from a powerful partner, China. Chinese companies have partnered with Indonesian companies to export refined nickel products, which are a crucial component of many batteries.

What is happening in Indonesia is part of a global pattern where batteries and other rare earth materials are abundant. According to a report

from 'The Rest of the World', "Residents in Chile, Argentina, Congo, etc. complain of environmental destruction, and dangerous or exploitative working conditions." It is crucial to look at the material footprint of the solar and electric vehicle industry against the promised decrease in carbon emissions.

In the southern hemisphere, home of many raw materials for batteries, the rising demand for electric vehicles is threatening to worsen existing injustices in the extractive industry. Most poorer countries simply do not have the environmental regulations that American and European countries have. The regulations they do have are often ignored. Likewise, advanced countries pride themselves on worker safety standards and child labor regulations. These type things are not an issue in third world countries.

These places withstand the worst of the immediate environmental fallout, yet most benefits from the extraction



Frank Ruff Jr.  
State senator

and manufacturing are dominated by Chinese businesses.

Therefore, the questions arise. Why are some in our government so focused on something that sounds good while it is doing so much damage? Why are some in our government so focused on industries that enrich the Chinese Communist Party which is our greatest rival in the world?

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# Teams get jump start on 2023 with offseason testing

By Joe Chandler  
South Boston Speedway

It has not been very long since the 2022 season at South Boston Speedway concluded, but drivers and race teams are already gearing up for the start of the 2023 season.

South Boston native Stacy Puryear and John Goin of Brunswick, both of whom will be competing in the Sentara Healthcare Late Model Stock Car Division next season, 2022 South Boston Speedway Budweiser Limited Sportsman. Division Champion Kyle Barnes of Draper, teenager Zach Perego of Clarksville, who earned a top-five finish in the Budweiser Limited Sportsman Division point standings, and South Carolina resident Dusty Garus tested at South Boston Speedway December 12-13 to get a jump start on preparations for the 2023 season.

Puryear, who tested on Tuesday, said it was important for him to get in some test time on the .4-mile oval.

“We built a new car for the 2021 Martinsville race, and we have had an issue with this car from Day One,” Puryear said. “We have run well with it, but we’re trying some things to get better. The car has been extremely fast, but it doesn’t have the longevity in it that I need to win races. We’re a little bit off and we need to get better.”

Puryear, who had a pair of Top-10 finishes in four starts at South Boston Speedway in 2022 with a best finish of sixth-place, pointed out he needs to have better performances at his hometown track.

“South Boston Speedway has been my achilles heel,” Puryear said. “I’m frustrated with the performance that we have had at South Boston Speed-

way. I know we need to be better here. This is where we want to race. South Boston Speedway is home for me and we want to run well here.

“I never thought Late Model Stock Car racing would reach the pinnacle it is right now,” Puryear continued. “There are so many good cars and so much money involved in the sport now. Late Model Stock Car racing is now probably where the Busch Grand National Series and Hooters Pro Cup Series were. You’ve got to be on your game. You cannot say ‘okay, we’re good enough.’ If you do, you’re not going to win races.”

Goin, who had one Top-5 finish and four Top-10 finishes in nine starts at South Boston Speedway in 2022, was also looking to improve the performance of his car.

“I wish our season here at South Boston Speedway was better than it was,” Goin remarked. “I’m trying to get more consistency out of myself and the car.”

Barnes, who won eight of the season’s 13 Budweiser Limited Sportsman Division races on the way to winning the division title and the division’s Most Popular Driver Award, said it was important for him to make the three-hour drive to test at South Boston Speedway this week.

“You’re always trying to get out here and get that little bit of an edge on your competitors,” Barnes pointed out.

“You can try things and re-evaluate where you are. We’re trying a different shock package today than we normally run just to see if it works and see where a good starting point for next season will be. The weather is obviously going to be different (when the season starts), the rubber on the track is going to be different. If we can find

that starting point, we will be in a good spot.”

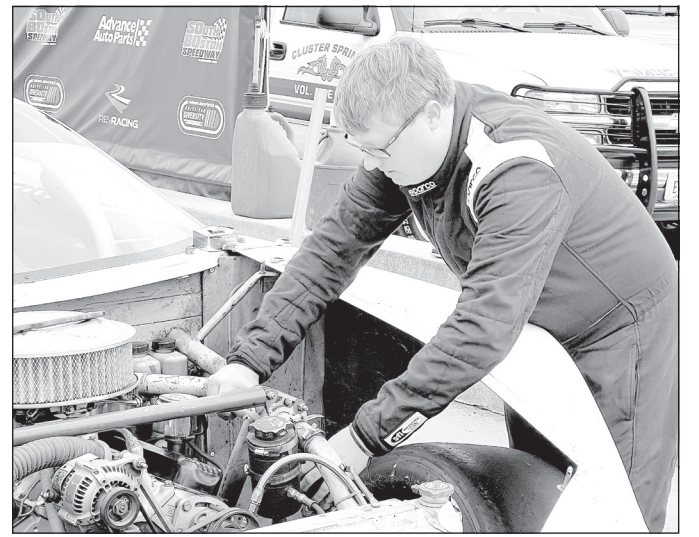
For Perego, the test session was about getting more seat time and trying different things with the car with an eye toward making performance improvements for the 2023 season.

“I’m just trying to get a little more seat time, trying to get a little more experience,” Perego explained. “The more track time and more seat time you can get the more you learn.”

Perego enjoyed a successful rookie season, landing three Top-5 finishes and 10 Top-10 finishes in his 13 starts enroute to a fourth-place finish in the final division point standings.

“I wish I could have won Rookie of the Year, but we finished in the top five in points and that accomplished our goal,” Perego remarked. “It was exciting racing in my first full year and finishing in the top five in points. I couldn’t have done it without my dad (former racer Tommy Perego), Chris (Elliott) and I thank them and my family for their support.”

Garus, from Summerville, South Carolina, plans to race in the Budweiser Limited Sportsman Division at South Boston Speedway in 2022. His car is maintained by Puryear, and he was looking this week to get some experience on the South Boston Speedway oval.



South Boston Speedway 2022 Budweiser Limited Sportsman Division Champion Kyle Barnes of Draper makes an adjustment to his car during a break in testing Monday at South Boston Speedway. Barnes was among a small group of drivers getting in some off-season testing this week at South Boston Speedway.

“Our cars and trucks are taken care of at Stacy Puryear’s shop, so it works out pretty well for us as far as getting up here and having an opportunity to test,” Garus said. “Having the opportunity to come up here and get some seat time is a huge benefit for us. We’re going to dabble in the Limited Sportsman division and hopefully make a good run at it.”

Garus said South Boston Speedway is a tough track.

“It’s a little different from anything I have raced on,” Garus pointed out. “It’s got a good bit of grip. It’s a fast track, but not real big. It carries a lot of speed. I’ve got a good coach in Stacy. He gets around here really well. Being able to come out here with him and learn the ropes is huge.”

A total of 13 racing events are currently in place on South Boston Speedway’s 2023 season schedule.

# OPINION

## HIS THOUGHTS

### Hammy New Year!

“Desert Island Discs” is a very popular and long-running (since 1942) program on BBC Radio. Each week the guest “castaways,” usually celebrities, are asked to discuss eight musical recordings, a book, and a luxury item they would want to have in tow if they somehow found themselves stranded on a deserted island—apparently one with electricity... It might be fun to start up “Desert Island Delicacies,” in which the guests could reveal the one food they would want to eat daily for a period of indefinite duration, but if I were a guest, they would need to recruit a few back-ups to take up the slack because my discussion would be short and sweet: ham. No close second.

My granddaddy used to get country hams and fresh tenderloin from a childhood friend, Jumper, who stuck with farming after the Depression and always kept a few hogs for his own use. It was a big day whenever we drove out to Jumper’s in the old black ’60 Chevy truck to pick up a ham. I loved redeye gravy on my grits and biscuits, and now that I know it is basically pan drippings and coffee, I love it even more. Why waste the drippings?

I didn’t even realize when I started learning Spanish and eventually became a Spanish teacher that Spain was the world leader in cured meats. Spaniards are extremely serious about their ham; I read an article in a Madrid daily just a few days ago that explained why the ham — and not a very big one — in the accompanying photo was worth 1300 euros. It had been aged for four years and made from the leg of the finest available breed of pigs, which had consumed only a certain subspecies of acorn their entire lives and nothing else. There is a retail store called “Museum of Ham” on just about every other block in most Spanish cities. The hams are hung from ceiling racks with a little conical stainless steel cup under each one to catch the drippings. And they don’t even know about redeye gravy! I don’t consume many tiresome grilled chicken breasts when I am there.

I even saw a television documentary about the number one ham slicer in Spain (yes, they are actually ranked), who traveled about the country with a retinue and attracted more attention at most stops than the starlets on Spain’s red carpets do.



Mike Wilson  
Guest columnist

I spent a summer once working in my uncle’s commercial kitchen at the Coca-Cola plant in Jackson. The main mission was to supply ham sandwiches to vending machines in the break room at a fiberglass factory just outside town. I was appointed chief slicer (though without retinue) for the 12 whole hams that were baked daily and converted into very large sandwiches on large buns. The mistake he made was telling me I could take home the hambones after I trimmed them. It pains me now to confess that my trimming got more and more careless — and the bones considerably meatier — as the summer wore on.

I love that scene in “For-

rest Gump” in which his buddy Bubba lists the many ways shrimp can be enjoyed. As for myself, I sometimes amuse (torture?) the girls by enumerating the various ways I like ham: country ham, jamón serrano, prosciutto, ham beans, ham and dumplings, ham croquetas, ham biscuits, ham omelet, deviled ham, ham and swiss, ham and muenster, ham and cheddar, ham stromboli, ham calzone, ham and gammon pie, ham and pineapple pizza...you get the idea.

It was a joyous day in my life when I discovered when they first opened that Hardee’s offered a hot ham and cheese sandwich with no poison (read: mayonnaise or mustard) slopped on automatically. My intense aversion (a locution I forged very early on thanks to my mama’s prohibition of the use of the word “hate” in our home) to these condiments by now must have kept me waiting for the necessary special treatment at least one full year of my life. I am pleased to report that they still offer that old favorite. Which reminds me: Why do so many people think that ham is only good for special occasions like Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas? And why isn’t the good old ham steak

with raisin sauce found on most restaurant dinner menus anymore? Maybe I have finally found a worthwhile cause to take up! Be on the lookout for [www.saveham.org](http://www.saveham.org) most any day now.

Consider the preservatives that modern “health experts” pooh-poo. Aren’t they preferable to food poisoning? I bought a pack of Black Forest ham just today with an expiration date several months away. “Organic, preservative-free, free-ranging” turkey breast starts turning green even as the deli workers are slicing it even though it costs \$15 a pound! If the old saw “you are what you eat” is true at all, I will be very well preserved, thank you.

I was feeding the baby lunch one day last week, and my heart swelled with pride as she pointed past her tray at my sandwich and clearly exclaimed, “Am!” I didn’t even mind that I wound up trading my ham for her leftover chicken pasta. I can see that little girl has a bright future ahead.

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