

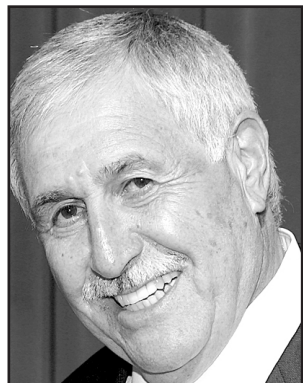
Cutler Bay

MAY 3 - 9, 2011

SERVING SOUTH DADE

Do you remember? Thinking about those 'good old days'

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Vice Mayor

"Do you remember... Well if you remember... Well, Dearie, you're much older than I."

If you remember those lyrics, well maybe you are older

than I, or close to it.

As I get older, I tend to want to look back to the "good old days" and they were really good. Just wait. You will be saying the same thing someday. Here's what I mean.

I kind of liked it when I had one telephone firmly wired to my wall that always worked. When someone really wanted to talk to me they would keep trying until they caught me at home or were able to leave a message with a family member or any other live real person.

I miss switchboard operators and receptionists. They were much better than, "Our menu options have changed. Please make your selection from the following 24 options."

It was fun having a party line. Most average people had these. On a rainy day you could sit back and listen in on other people's conversations, unlike today when you are forced to be by people yakking too loud on their cell phones. Of course there were times when you really needed to make a call and in that case you had to wait until they were through or say something like, "I have to make an emergency call."

I liked driving my car with the little vent windows open and pointing towards my face.

On a really hot day, this was paradise. If you are really old, you might remember even being able to open the windshield with a crank at the bottom. Stopping for gas was almost fun. You drove across a rubber hose that rang a bell telling the attendant to rush out and clean your windshield, check your oil, and give you the Green Stamps for your \$3 fill-up.

When you were making a turn or stopping, you used hand signals. Today that is unnecessary because we have directional signals that we don't use anyway.

I remember when having a Raleigh three-speed bicycle was the tops. I never had one but I sure envied those kids who did. I had a lightweight bike with no gears and no handbrakes. To stop you simply peddled backwards and hoped. I rode literally thousands of miles on my bike, named "Black Beauty" — and without a helmet. I guess I was just lucky.

We had pornography back then — at least we thought it was. There was a book called *The Amboy Dukes* by Irving Shulman. I had it hidden in my dresser drawer so my parents wouldn't know I was reading such trash. The big draw of the book is that it used the word "reefer" in it referring to marijuana cigarettes. Wow! I snuck out to see a movie that was banned by the Catholic Church in Boston. When they banned a movie, it became an instant success. This dirty movie, *The Moon is Blue* with William Holden hinted at seduction. Oooohhh!

Before computers, I was a technology geek. I made my own radios so I could listen to *The Shadow* with headphones. "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?" Or *Mr. District Attorney*. "And it shall be my duty etc. etc."

Dinnertime was different in the old days. People actually sat around a table and discussed the day's goings-on but only after

daddy got home and washed his hands to get ready for dinner. That was when moms stayed at home, cleaned the house and had dinner ready, made in a strange device called a stove. Of course now mothers must work so that we can afford the three or four HD televisions, cable TV, several cell phones and computers, and whatever else every modern family must have. How can you live without them? Somehow we managed and I loved it.

Every street corner had a drugstore. This was a place where you had prescriptions filled and sat at a soda fountain for an ice cream soda. Somehow, I remember those sodas tasting much better than a smoothie. Perhaps you wonder why every street corner had a drugstore. Well the truth is that during prohibition, this was the only place you could get anything with alcohol in it so they were in reality mini taverns until the repeal.

Nowadays a drugstore is more like a supermarket-toy store-stationary store.

Today we have all kinds of drugs readily available on the street, so who needs drugstores to get high. It was fun knowing the baker, fruit man, egg man, etc. Each shopping street was like a farmer's market only with stores. Supermarkets had not come along yet.

My mother had a little jar where she saved money to buy things. We never knew about credit cards then. You bought what you could really afford. The mailman came twice a day and there was a morning and evening edition of the local newspaper. If you bought a house or a car, you bought one that you could actually afford. The banks saw to that. Who ever heard of a mortgage broker back then?

We truly got to know and talk to our neighbors, because on a hot night you had no choice but to sit outside, catch a breeze, and see who walked by.

Well...do you remember? Yes, I remember!