

PASSING THE BATON

After more than three decades...
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Springhouse Ink

This is the last *Springhouse Ink* I will edit. That doesn't mean I'm going away, though that could happen. We'll have to wait and see.

The firing was swift and without mercy. I know that for a fact because I fired myself. It happened this way: One moment I was the editor, the next I wasn't.

Simplicity served up on a platter.

Speed of light, if not faster.

The new editor is son Brian. I am convinced Brian will be better at this than I ever was, and for a number of reasons, not the least being he knows his way around computers, a necessity I never mastered. Never even came close.

There are other reasons as well. For the past two years Brian has edited *The Daily Register*, a newspaper in Harrisburg that this year is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Prior to that, beginning in 1999, Brian was a reporter for the *Register*, as well as the *Daily Journal* (Eldorado), both being essentially the same publication.

I know quite a few people in Saline and Gallatin counties; Brian knows a multitude.

Growing up, he found himself steeped in southern Illinois' lore. How could it be otherwise, having been raised in a part of the state where stories were (and are) of high importance, and where local history is anything but moldering beyond view?

When young, I hiked a great deal, got to know these hills and hollows from boot soles up, but in the matter of arduous treks Brian's efforts far overshadowed my own briary meanderings. He hiked the entire River-to-River-Trail twice, once alone. Not only that, but once upon a long ago time he had it in mind to walk all the way from the slick rock canyon country of southeastern Utah back to southeastern Saline County. Wisely, he decided to abandon that plan.

Parts of this thirty-year venture have been fun, and parts have been on a par with skipping through a thorn patch minus shoes or sandals. Always, though, I was aware

Springhouse means a lot to a lot of people, most of them folks I have never met. It means a lot to me.

As mentioned earlier, I'm not necessarily leaving the territory, thus the brevity of this "farewell."

Winding this up, sort of, I will likely continue contributing to *Springhouse* but am no longer editor and publisher.



Word reached us two Thursdays ago that the *Rebel without Applause* has officially turned up missing. Of course he is (was?) old enough to have breathed his last in one of our many hollows, only a few of which bear names. Had anyone else around here vanished, a search party would have immediately been out and about scouring the hidden places, but for a man who managed to insult just about everybody, no call of alarm was shouted, or even whispered. There was, in fact, a collective sign of relief. Could be that isn't fair because, after all, everybody is said to have some good in them. No, it IS fair. He's gone and life goes on, perhaps less interestingly, for, truth be told, this inveterate naysayer did have a way of turning a phrase every now and again, but occasional phrase-turning is a minor talent hardly worth mentioning.

Someone did say there is a rumor an old man was spotted in Stanley, Idaho, a human derelict bearing a striking resemblance to our missing contributor; and there was another report from Moab, Utah, indicating the Rebel was seen wandering in the desert muttering parables from Kahlil Gibran; and, finally, a tourist from these parts returning from three days in Paoli, Indiana, insisted he saw with his own two eyes the Rebel ranting about the government. Happened in front of city hall, he said. One intuitively

tends to discounts all three reports, thinking it far more likely our longtime critic has left us forever, while leaving his bones in a cove somewhere. One feels it is fitting that a man of near zero achievement should end up in an unvisited landmark, and a nameless one at that. Until learning otherwise, that's where he is as far as this former editor is concerned. (*Springhouse* readers should not be surprised if my hunch proves true, recalling how the Rebel walked his obituary to the local newspaper editor only to have it rejected. Fate may have whispered in his ear. Who knows, and, really, who cares?)

He was part of this magazine for a long time, too long some said, and it is possible remnants of his unpublished manuscripts managed to get misplaced in one of our overflowing filing cabinets; so to say this *Springhouse* will no longer be "graced" by the old man's wordage may be overstatement.

These few lines aren't much of an obituary. They will have to do.

The Adventure Continues

