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Viva Memphis

Tyler, our youngest son, after almost a years search for a job (after receiving his masters from UT Arlington) was offered a job, accepted it and has moved to Memphis, Tennessee. He placed all his personal items and furniture from his Arlington apartment in storage when he came back home last year for his job search. He ventured (or maybe more appropriately adventured) to California and lived with friends (no luck there) and when back home he finally found a company that needed him.

We have only been to Memphis as a short stay between other trips. Some were going back to Purdue and once a trip to the Smoky Mountains and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. We will be visiting with Tyler in the coming years and this of course peaked my interest in Memphis once again.

A few years back I did a lecture for a Texas Health Association in which I used some information from the book, *The American Plague—The Untold Story of Yellow Fever, The Epidemic That Shaped Our History* by Molly Caldwell Crosby. Great book and full of interesting information like this city was to be the NYC of the Midwest. In 1878 the census for Memphis was 47,000. The city fathers that year staged a large Mardi Gras parade and celebration to show off their city, but sadly by the fall only 19,000 people remained from an outbreak of Yellow Fever and of those only 2,000 were free of yellow fever. The city was changed forever by this plague. There is a location in one of the cemeteries known as no mans land because the dead had to be buried so quickly. At the time the scientific community had no idea what a virus was or that mosquitoes spread the virus with their bite. The author reviews the work of Walter Reed and his committee, who discover the link to mosquitoes. Many researchers died in this process. Brave people trying to find a cure because they knew it was the right thing for the world. The book starts with a story of a black man finding the sole survivor of a family who would grow up to become a nurse for the Walter Reed group because she had some immunity to the disease. It discusses the “Waring System” developed by New York engineer George Waring. It was a straightforward plan to separate sewage and fresh water and was installed after the Memphis plague. This reduced the number of mosquito breeding locations. Twenty years later, George Waring was sent to Havana, Cuba to help that city at the request of President McKinley. After Waring’s visit to Havana he returned to the U.S. and died of yellow fever. Another sacrifice for the common good found in this book.

And now my Memphis story about Elvis. In 1987 I was teaching pest control classes at Eastfield College and a student was telling me about his dad’s electric fence techniques for wildlife. I thought it was better than using live traps so I bought the company. His dad was in his seventies at the time, but in his younger days Mr. Hawkins played professional baseball until he was sent to WWII. His son admitted some

of his stories were farfetched but he told me that the following story was true. His dad lived and worked in Memphis as a milk delivery person. (Believe it or not in the 1990’s Ann and I had a person deliver milk to our front door in Plano because we had 2 young sons and could not keep enough milk in the house.) In the 1960s it was more common. As you know, rock stars perform and record all night and once they’re done go out to eat, but then what? Elvis loved baseball so his buddies would get together and play in the early morning and they would pull Mr. Hawkins off his milk route to umpire their game. (There is a Graceland visit needed of course for more research on this story!)

Memphis has the blues of course (as did my wife when she left her baby there), and probably more stories to come so Ann and I look forward to seeing our son and also learning a lot more about a city that was shaped by the mosquito - *David*

Pest of the Quarter:

Ants—Help yourself with these DIY tips....

- Keeps limbs of trees off the home - they are the High 5 of the ant world
- Don’t use sprays - use baits to kill off the colony
- Keep a sample for our tech to identify - some are nocturnal and will not be around when we are
- If you have leaks in shower pans or sinks you may need to get your moisture problem repaired for a long term solution

Pharaoh Ant



When most people look at an ant their first thought is to kill it with anything they can spray on it. With Pharaoh Ants this is not smart. It will cause a process call budding. Basically, the ants split the colony for survival and in a couple of weeks instead of one colony to deal with you have two colonies and twice the headache. Remember the insect world has been out there longer than humans and they have ways to adapt to a lot of what we try. It is better to use

fresh ant baits to solve most ant problems. Let us deal with this headache for you.

If you ever have a possible bug or part of a bug PLEASE save it! That will help us to identify the problem more quickly, target the correct pest and begin treatment sooner.

We VALUE our customers!

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Graduation Day 1982—Purdue University

Boutique Pest Control

I never realized my company was so different from other pest control companies until I was talking to my friend from college, Bobby Corrigan, the leading rodent expert in the world. He told me that my company was a specialty pest control company. Paraphrasing Bobby, the things you do, the large companies just do not do, they have no desire to learn or the capability. I think of the big pco companies as Motel 6 s while A-All is closer to a Boutique Hotel.

Bobby would get ideas from me and tell the big groups he spoke to about what I did at my boutique pest control company. He would give my number to companies in NYC, with my permission, so they could contact me directly with questions.

Big companies have their demanding routes for their techs, as for our small Boutique Pest Control company, we have developed techniques and ideas to solve unique problems for customers.



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