

Tall Tales from the Editor

Twitching or Praise the Lord

I had just finished watching the last DVD of the first season of HBO's "Deadwood" when I realized I was hooked on yet another soap opera. At that point our border collie, Tuesday, stood up on the foot of the bed and started gagging. "No, no, no, Tuesday, let's go outside. Come on, hurry." But she didn't listen to me. Women rarely do. She proceeded to regurgitate some god-awful, dreadful, smelly, watery substance that had me gagging and running to the bathroom. After I recovered, I stripped the bed before the mattress was tattooed with yet another stain.

Poor little Tuesday had more than a minor tummyache. Her eyes were dilated, she held her head up so that her nose was pointing towards the ceiling, her nose was dry but runny, her body was cold to the touch, and she had developed a dreadful body twitch. Oh my god, help!! My bride and private nurse, Sioux, was out of town. I was on my own.

I was afraid that since it was 11:00 pm, our vet wouldn't be available. I was very relieved after I called the vet and she said, "Bring her in." All I needed now was a police escort with flashing red lights and screaming sirens for my midnight emergency room vet run. With county budget cuts, I figured that wasn't going to happen!

I was telling Tuesday, "Everything will be okay, baby" as the vet drew blood and ran some tests that showed her white blood cells and t-cell counts had bottomed out. I was told that Tuesday needed to stay at the vet's office, where they immediately started her on a couple of antibiotics. They would re-run the blood test in the morning and let me know her prognosis. I told Tuesday, "I'll come get you tomorrow. You'll be fine, don't worry." As she stood there twitching, she sure didn't have a look of "I'll be fine." The next morning, though, she was fine. We never did figure out what the problem was, but Tuesday was back playing ball without a twitch.



Little Ms. Tuesday after her speedy recovery.

On the drive home from the vet on that traumatic evening, I feared the worst. It was strange how Tuesday's twitching brought back memories of another "twitching" event. Boyd Uselton and I had been at the Waffle House in Plainfield, Indiana, where, over a pot of coffee, we were once again plotting our future. Out of the blue, I got up and boldly walked to the other side of the restaurant where I introduced myself to a table full of exquisite girls. The next thing I knew I had committed our band to

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play the following Sunday at the girls' Pentecostal church in Indianapolis. This happened right after the folks at the table next to the girls introduced themselves as the "exquisite ones" church elders. It is amazing what one will do for a hopeful date!

When I returned to our table, Boyd asked, "Well, how did you make out?" When I told him what I had done, he pointed out that we didn't even have a band. Boyd and I were a duo at that time called "Roadside Table." We really weren't even a duo—Boyd would play a set and then I would play a set. To bail us out I now had to convince a couple of Avon, Indiana, dudes that Boyd and I had been bandmates with the fabled band called "The Hand Me Downs." This was a band that had conquered Indiana's rural world of rock and roll. These "trendsetting" places included Lake Bean Blossom, Cuba and Gnawbone, Indiana. Yes, we had been the reigning kings in our minds!

To save myself, I wooed Carl "The Moose" Allen on guitar and Mardy "The Chick Slayer" Wilson on drums. Their response was "You did what, Rogers?! You are more brain dead than we thought!" When I pointed out that we would only have to play three songs, they reluctantly came on board. "Rogers, you owe us big time now." I am still

working that one off. We worked up The Byrds song, "Jesus is Just Alright" (later recorded by the Doobie Brothers), a song Boyd and I wrote called "Lord I'm So Weary" (about a guy on death row), and reworked the Spencer Davis Group song from "Gimme Some Loving" to "Gimme Some Jesus." Come show time we were all a little nervous. None of us had ever been in a Pentecostal church before, let alone played Pentecostal rock and roll.

I was told by one of the church elders that there would be a hymn followed by a prayer. He would then introduce us. I was to go to the pulpit and give my sermon. He told me he was thrilled that a young man such as myself was walking in the light. I had failed to mention the sermon part of our show to my bandmates. They all screamed in unison, "You're doing what?"

After our introduction I found myself standing at the pulpit with a completely blank mind. Although that was no different from normal for me, I suddenly blurted out, "And now Boyd Uselton will deliver the sermon that you have all been waiting to hear tonight." I walked back to my guitar. Boyd, whose frantic eyes looked like a wild beast caught in high-beam headlights with no place to run, slowly walked up to the pulpit to a congregational chorus of "Praise the Lord." He spoke about five words and passed out cold, falling down from the pulpit. He lay there under the cross, twitching away. The congregation erupted with cheers of "Hallelujah" and "Sweet Jesus." People then began running up to Boyd, placing hands upon him, looking to the heavens with a vociferous "Praise Jesus!" There also were people running around the sanctuary speaking in tongues, a new language for me.

Carl was found hiding behind his guitar amp, tightly squeezing his beloved Rickenbacker 12-string guitar as if the end were near. Today he is a very religious man. Mardy sat paralyzed behind his drum set fortress. As for me, I wondered, as Boyd slowly stirred and came around, might he be ticked off? But he passed out again, continuing on with his twitching.

There are a great many other things that can cause one to develop an uncontrollable or involuntary twitch such as a tax audit, flashing red lights in your rearview mirror, a court subpoena, or finding out your job has just moved offshore. Then there's the eviction notice from the county that might be posted on your front door to make room for yet another tasteless, cheesy, foreign-owned strip mall. Of



Mardy "The Chick Slayer" Wilson, J.D. Rogers and Boyd Uselton pictured 30-plus years after playing at the Pentecostal church.

course we all know that in Oregon the country really owns your home anyhow. Just try not paying your property taxes and see what happens. You might have developed your twitch after receiving a scorpion sting, a hornet bite or a kiss from a "no-see-um" gnat. Or after the wall street bankers rewrote the bankruptcy laws for everyone but themselves, followed by new legislation that will bail themselves out of the subprime lending fiasco that they created. Oh yes, that bailout will be with our tax dollars. Maybe your twitch started about the time you realized how under-reported the inflation rate really is in America. Maybe your twitch started when you figured out that our security has been sold to China. This sellout has allowed the moneychangers to build themselves a bigger Wall Street money vault.

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Just recently it was me who developed a sudden twitch—after reading the quote below. I realized how close to reality these words currently echo. This has happened because we have let it!

"I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency . . . the banks and corporations that will grow up around them will deprive the people of their property until their children wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs."

~ Thomas Jefferson, letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Galatin (1802)



The Editor, J.D. Rogers
541-846-7736