

It was New Year's Eve, the ass end of 1969. Me'n Crazy Andy (don't confuse him with Stupid Andy) had decided we'd go to Midnight Mass at Saint Mike's, just for the hell of it. See who was there, ya know what I'm sayin'? Half drunk. We had put suits on for the occasion. As soon as we walked up the steps and in the door we heard a loud noise like somethin' real close suddenly broke, and Andy says, "Holy fuck! Look at that goddam crack in the wall!" I followed his shakin' finger to the wall. Sure enough, the wall *had* cracked. Whether it happened right then or not is debatable, but Andy wouldn't cross the threshold, and I said, "Well, we're all dressed up, let's go to the Dance!" He grinned. We back-tracked to his 1960 Bel

Air with the souped-up 348 and whistled through the stop-sign at the intersection of Bench and Spring Streets well over a hundred miles an hour and slid sideways all the way to Gear Street, where he jacked the thing into low gear with the damndest grindin' you ever heard, and shot up the hill with smoke blastin' off the rear tires like the tail on a rocket ship. Maybe he was a little *more* than half drunk. We miraculously achieved our goal, arrivin' safely at the Old Dance Hall just after eleven, and waded in. No shit, it was almost like swimmin', the way you had to jostle and shove your way through the place, but tremendous fun, with all them soft young wimmen in the crowd.

Poor Andy had sucked down about a pint of peppermint along with the

three six-packs he had brought in, and just after midnight, with the new decade barely begun, he left the Dance Hall and flew away in his hot rod. I was deeply involved in a slow waltzy thing with this sweetie and didn't notice he was gone for a while, and truthfully, would not have climbed in with him again that night for *no* amount of money, so I didn't find out 'til the next mornin' that he had slid down highway 20 toward the intersection with Main Street at over a hundred miles an hour *backwards* and slammed the car up and *into* the huge drain that used to carry rainwater like Noah's Flood under Main Street and into the Galena River. I still don't know what he was tryin' t o accomplish, though the deed reminded me strongly of the night the summer before when he and I had



The Dance Hall, and the sign I painted, with my Econoline van. It's pure luck the Hall is in the picture at all; I didn't plan it that way. The lights will go on tonight & there will be hundreds of cars in the lot parked so close you have to squeeze out of them. Listen; you can hear the band warmin' up...naw, it's just the wind...

bought a 1957 Ford from Windy for fifty bucks and Crazy Howard ran the beast down Main Street the wrong way, from where the Gold Room now is, to the flood gates, with the speedometer buried. In 1957 the speedometer on Fairlane Fords went to a hundred and thirty-five with five more little lines after that. Yes! *I DID* almost shit my pants! Almost.

Here it was, January first, 1970. Andy was in jail with a whole shitload of tickets, and me and ol' Abe, both neighbors of his, were discussin' the situation down at Boze 'n Maggie's Pool Hall. "Yeah. They wanted to catch him real bad for the last two weeks. He never shoulda bought that damn car. Sumbitchin' thing'll do ninety-five in low gear, and wrap the speedometer around

again to forty in third, scares the shit outta me!” Abe wasn’t lyin’ either. Well, it was junk now. We turned our attention to Boze’s weekend pharmacy and both sucked down a couple of bromos. Abe was four years older than me and had hit the bars to celebrate New Years and, though I didn’t believe him, had told me that he got laid. I had fifteen days to go and I would be twenty-one. Then, watch out! That was all we talked about the rest of the day. We had been raisin’ hell together for a long time now, but damn soon we would do it on Main Street. There were twenty-seven bars in Galena at that time, and they *all* would receive our attention! Bar Hoppin’. Unless you’ve done it you can’t truly appreciate the fun you can have, just havin’ one drink in

each one. *Everybody* did it! There were boisterous crowds good naturedly bangin' into each other goin' back 'n forth up and down Main Street all night long on the weekends, and every Wednesday night when The Tavern Mint drawing was held community wide in nearly all of the twenty-seven bars. Row-dee! Sometimes the drawing got as high as five or six hundred bucks and the winner would blow it all right there where he won the sumbitch, buyin' rounds for the bar the rest of the night.

It was a long two weeks, and I couldn't wait. The night before I actually turned twenty-one Steve, brother Bernie, Eddie, Louie, known affectionately as the Fly, Abe, and me'n Dick, packed ourselves into Ed's fabulous '66 red 'n



The neon cocktail sign from the original Gold Room bar when it was down next to the Elks Club. **It is the only surviving piece of its kind in Galena;** I've seen it since I was a kid and knew all the owners...it still works!

black Impala two door hardtop and went on a pucker on the back roads of Wisconsin. Naturally, the next day Boze, whose birthday fell on the same day as mine, drug me across the street to the Paradise, which was where Simply Elegant now resides, and force-fed me a half dozen Little Joe's. All of a sudden I had found the perfect hangover cure; stay drunk!

Abe wandered in a little later and my birthday party got under way. Yeah. I got arrested for disorderly conduct. I guess I was singin' way too loud, and usin' a lil' profanity where words kinda baffled me. Abe didn't think much of the cops haulin' me off when we were just startin' to have a good time and howled so loud about it that they went back and got him to keep

me company in the old Galena Jail on Meeker Street. When we went to court the followin' day the judge gave us both thirty days 'cause we didn't have no cash to pay the fine. Sat it out at five bucks a day. That's when I discovered that ol' Abe really *could* sing. The cells were made of quarter inch plate steel and a person's voice boomed and echoed all through the upper three floors. Sheriff Al Specht lived on the second floor. There was a dumb-waiter (elevator) that he sent food (?) up to us that sent Abe's voice (LOUD!) right down to Al's kitchen. "I hear footsteps...(that old Jack Greene song) sloooooowly walkin'..." the dumb-waiter door would open on the floor below-
"SHUTTHEFOKKUP!" SLAM! We would roll around laughin' for a time and

then be quiet as hell for maybe a half hour. That's about all it took for old Al to fade out into an afternoon nap. When Abe thought he might be sleepin' real good he'd do the whole fuckin' Grand Ole Opry to get the old boy stimulated again. It worked. Al decided to punish us, and every day made us come down and wash the squad cars. We didn't mind. Hell, we got to go outside and bullshit with our pals who, lonesome for our companionship, would rip past the jail and yell at us dozens of times a day. I still think that's one of the reasons Al let us out for a couple of hours at a time. So he could get a good quiet nap! After a week of this strenuous activity he made us both trustees and never locked us up again. He wouldn't admit it to his dyin' day but he

His 'last time in jail'

GALENA, Ill. — Twenty-eight-year-old Frank Kennedy has been in and out of prison and reform schools for half his life. But he's determined that his present 18-month jail term here for "providing out a rig" is his last time behind bars.

Frank Kennedy, 28, said he doesn't remember those of these years, but he does know how to get out of trouble.

"I don't know how to get out of trouble," he said, "but I know how to get in."

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Work release gives Frank Kennedy to leave jail but to work at the Galena Aluminum and Brass Foundry.



Story in the Telegraph Herald came out the week Elvis died...

liked the both of us. While he and his son Marlo were in office, a span of more than twenty years, I personally spent a little more than two and a half years altogether in the Old Jail, and nineteen months in the New Jail, where I was one of the early Work Release Program prisoners, commencing in 1976. I must have been an amusing character because the Telegraph Herald in Dubuque, wantin' to do a story about the new program, ended up doin' a full page story about *ME*, with a big picture on the bottom of the front page, and four or five on the text page and a title that said, "Painting A New Life; His Last Time In Jail." It was a lie; I went to jail one more time after that, for thirty days in 1979. Ah well. Rowdy.

Now, I had been kicked out of the Palace Dance Hall for *life*, because of the small infraction I was involved in on that last New Year's dance of the Sixties, I mean... I didn't *know* she was goin' steady with that guy! She didn't *tell* me! Ya know what I'm sayin'? While Andy was slidin' down the highway backwards I was doin' a little slidin' on the dance floor myself. Guy didn't *like* it. The lady who owned the place told me, "You cause a ruckus every time you come out here. Well, this is the last straw; don't you *never* come back!" For six long lonesome years I stayed away, knowin' my friends were there havin' a good time and probly gettin' laid and fallin' in love and all kinda shit. It really drug me down, and later, in the eighties when they demolished

the old structure, I wrote a song about it, because it had played such an important part in my 'formative' years. Wanta hear it? Okay...

They're tearin down...the old Dance Hall...

That landmark in our town.....

Where they played the Waltz...

And the Rock 'n Roll...

And way back...the Big Band Sound...

All it took to set the place on fire...

Was a good hot Saturday Night...

Dancin' close... filled with desire...

Then the parkin' lot...in the pale moonlight...

It was there...the greatest love affairs...

Of my younger life took place...
If I lost a girl...I always had a spare...
Because of my pretty face...

Where I fell in love every Saturday
night...
At least a dozen times...
Where I got in most of my damn good
fights...
From the beer and Wild Mountain wine....

Like a wild horse they couldn't rein me
in...
Goin' through my rebellious phase...
I was a hot-shot...at the Old Dance Hall...
In my rowdy Rock 'n Rollin' days...

All it took to set the place on fire...
Was a good hot Saturday night...

Dancin' close... filled with desire...
Then the parkin' lot...in the pale
moonlight...
(Fade out).....

And there you have it.

I recorded it myself, in a very rustic fashion, (ahem) and it was the first one of my songs that anyone ever danced to. Admittedly, they were two of my great-nieces, but they *did* dance, and they made me feel very good. They thought it was a rocker.

I actually ended up with a Nashville Recording Contract for three of my songs, Soul Mate, Chains, and Shy Boy. No; they were never recorded other than by myself. (*Too rustic.*)

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Frank Kennedy

Galesia, IL 61036

RE: Publishing Agreement

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

I am enclosing three copies of your publishing agreement with SRH Publishing. Please execute all three copies and return them to my office. Once SRH Publishing has counter-signed the agreements, I will forward a fully executed copy to you.

Very truly yours,



Judd S. Keller

JSK:dep
Enclosure

cc: Stevie Ray Hansen

SOUL MATE
OHY BOY
CHAINB

Look at that shit; a real Nashville
song contract, made out to me...

I learned three chords when I was fourteen years old, and I seriously thought, hell, that oughta be enough, shouldn't it?

When I should have been studyin' Music Theory and spendin' all my time jackin' with a guitar I found myself jackin' in a cell!

Contrary to popular belief, they don't give you guitars and shit like that in Reform School and the Prison farm, *nor* the County jails across the country. My music remains rustic. When we ran the back roads drinkin' anything from Blatz to Hamms and Drewrys to Black Label we sang all the popular songs that were currently hot and all our old favorites like Patches, The Green, Green Grass Of Home, Wolverton Mountain, Mustang

Sally and I Fought The Law and stuff like that and had a hell of a good time. The only time we got in trouble was when we came back to town. Damned if I know *why*! If we ran into someone on the back roads or up in New Digginz or Shullsburg or Benton or *anywhere* there was never a problem. Well...sometimes. But, what I mean is, in *Galena*, when we were sittin' on the steps by Boze's, *that's* when we kinda got in a little trouble! There weren't many tourists to speak of runnin' around here in the Sixties, and those few were taken on tours, if they so desired, by Ted's Ma in her shaky old '55 Buick Special two door sedan, fully narrated. She has never received recognition of any kind for starting the robust Tourism industry of Galena and that irritates me. Her name

was Irene Spiers. Then, in the Seventies some poor soul got off the beaten path and wandered down Main Street and-WHAM! We were 'discovered'. "Hey," this fella says to his wife, "If I buy that neat old building over there you can jam all them antiques ya been hoardin' into it and sell some o' that trash. I'm tellin' ya, we got no more *room*! Why, I'll bet I can screw that old man right out of that store! Look; the damn thing's fallin' apart! I betya I can get it fer ten thou'!" "Whatever you think, dahlin'. Might be a good tax write-off."

A friend of mine bought the Capt. Gear when the raccoons and pigeons lived in it for a hundred and fifty dollars, and sold it a few weeks later for five thousand. I lived right behind it at the time in a run-



The Palace Dance Hall...
gone but not forgotten.

down shack that old Jack Gill ran moonshine from back in the Thirties. Brewed it in an underground room four hundred feet from the back of that old mansion, utilizing fresh Galena Spring Water piped up the hill from down near the Light Plant. I know this to be truth for my dear old daddy and two of my uncles hauled that shit for him, along with a bunch of other poor broke scudders way back when. Said it was *good* shit, but I can't testify to that. My daddy liked goin' to the Palace Dance Hall when he was young too. As a boy of seventeen he and a friend, whose daddy mortified the dead up in Shullsburg and vicinity, got a little drunk, probably on some of that shit of Jack Gill's, and swiped the damn ambulance and highballed it to the Dance

Hall with the lights flashin' and syreen wailin' all the way. That kid got beat near to death by his daddy, my daddy told me. I mean, he told me this shit when I was ten years old, when it was still relatively fresh in his mind, and laughed like hell in the telling. That was before he started to beat the dawgshit outta me for my indiscretions, if any. He was trainin' me, see. I was a big strong kid, and he was a skinny little shit, and I guess he figgered if he couldn't be a bad-ass, maybe *I* could. Or somethin'. He was an adventurous old sumbitch though, before him and mom got hitched. He and his brothers rode the boxcars across the country several times during the Depression and they related all kinds of tales of those times to us boys

when we were young. That was before Television, of course!

By 1971, at an advanced twenty-two years old, I was kinda getting tired of goin' to jail every time I turned around. My folks were among the poorest people in town, my sad old mother standing patiently in those long, long lines at the Fairgrounds every month, waitin' for the corn meal and big slabs of tasteless cheese, and bags of beans. Sometimes she was lucky and got a bag of flour, and worked miracles with the stuff, and people came from miles around to buy fresh home made bread and sweet rolls and cookies and....They were never able to bail me out of jail, and I never expected them to try. Bein' poor, and havin' *no* means of fightin' the Law, other than my

rebellious ways, almost every time I appeared before His Honor, he would say, "I'm going to make an example out of you!" and the gavel fell. In 1976 I asked him, "Sir, I respectfully ask just who you are makin' this 'example' to? So far, what the courts have done to me has never been written up in the paper other than in the 'Courthouse News', and then just a mention of my name and the finding of 'guilty' and the monetary fine. You have never mentioned that you *knew* I had no money and purposely set the fine at an extravagant fee so you could yank me off the street for an extended time. Most of the time I have spent in jail was sitting out your fines! If you're going to make an 'example' out of me, then *tell* somebody! I don't need the 'example' shown to

myself!” John, the State’s Attorney, argued on my behalf.

Instead of one to ten years in the Penitentiary he gave me eighteen months on Work Release, and, I have to admit it, that was the beginning of a different life. Bein’ in jail didn’t do it. That was the year they finally let me *back* into the Old Dance Hall!

The lady in the window said, that night I stopped to just say hello to her, “Frank, I’ve been keeping an eye on you. You aren’t anything like you used to be. If you promise me you won’t drink and cause trouble, you can come back in.” I nearly cried I was so grateful, and for the followin’ six months I never drank a drop, there or anywhere else, and renewed old friendships, and fell in love more than



Not only was I the bouncer at the dance hall in 1976, I painted the sign that stood out by the road until the place was demolished.

once, and had a fine time doin' it. Then one night her daughter said, "Mom said you can drink if you want, just don't overdo it. Hey, you know any tough guys lookin' for a job as a bouncer? The one I got ain't very good, and the old retired deputies can't handle it anymore." "Yeah. I know a *bunch* of tough sumbitches. I'll ask around." My pal Rick was standin' there listenin' to the conversation and had a quart of vodka and a jug of mix and a half dozen glasses full of ice and a big shit-eatin' grin. "You ready?" "Yeah."

Two at a time we polished 'em off, and on the third round, feelin' rather expansive, we decided to snake our way through the crowd and make the rounds. See, that was the big thing, other than bein' sweetly devoured by the beautiful

girls on the dance floor. Makin' the rounds. Visitin'. Every other table had four to six of your friends jammed into the seats and hangin' on the backs of the booths, and it was a *good* time. Sometimes people would make the rounds a dozen times or more, constantly on the move, and it was like people were comin' and comin' all night long from *somewhere*. Even the ones you had talked to an hour before had somethin' new to say, and it was like you were seein' 'em for the first time. Drunker ya got, the more fun it was. Except for the assholes.

Now, most of the kids that frequented the Palace were damn decent, people like (ahem) myself havin' been more or less kept from the premises. Yeah, but...*anyone* who gets really fucked

up can turn into an asshole in the blink of an eye, and it was a rare Saturday night when there weren't half a dozen damn good fights at the Old dance Hall. Just like it says in my song. I saw guys beat the shit out of their helpless little girlfriends for no reason many times, and fights bust out over spilled drinks, or because the other asshole wouldn't give the asshole a cigarette or share his weed and cocaine, or over the plain fact that there was no reason at all. Some of the people came to the Palace *huntin'* for a fight. Hell, I did myself, in my early years.

So there we were; we had made our way completely to the other side of the Hall, through a crowd that was shoulder to shoulder and thigh to thigh, bumpin' and bangin' and laughin' and



I'm the bouncer; I don't take
shit from *nobody!*

dancin' the night away. The sign that hung from the ceiling just inside the front door, maybe twelve feet from the ticket window (yeah, ya had to buy a ticket to get in!) said, simply, "Dance And Stay Young." They tried like *hell* to live up to that sign! Suddenly, three guys were slammin' the *shit* outta each other; one went *down*! The other two were gonna *kill* each other! I laughed and set my two vodka sours on the nearest table and snatched the pair of 'em by the throats and *crammed* them into the floor. Pinned helplessly, they looked at me with bulging eyes and faces turnin' deeper and deeper red, and I grinned and said, "Stop." They did. *Now*. Had to. I was chokin' the *shit* out of 'em! As luck would have it, at that very moment, the owner's daughter and her bouncer plowed through

the crowd. I looked up smilin', "This how ya do it?" "You're hired." She had a grin on her face like Santa Claus had just come through the window. The very next Saturday night I was there wearing a red shirt that showed my muscles nicely, that said 'security', and I will tell you right now, that is what I provided for those innocent fun-loving kids for five and a half years, never missing a dance. Yes. It changed my life. I felt it was my duty to protect these young people, and the life I had led up to that time gave me the tools. I was a bad-ass. An outlaw. I had raised more hell than most of the outlaw bikers that ran wild in those days, and I had paid the price. I had fought with or knew the truly bad, and before long there were three other good bouncers workin' part time

with us. Now the Old Dance Hall was a safe place for the kids, where they knew they would be taken care of by people that *cared*. I became a hero to many of them. I can't tell you how many people *didn't* consider me a hero. I know in those first two years I threw a whole lot of them out the door and down those hard concrete steps, and drug them kickin' and screamin' from the Old Dance Hall. But what was goin' on all of the other days and nights when there was no dance?

Allow me to enlighten you. It didn't cost a whole hell of a lot for gas or beer in those days, but nobody was makin' much. I thought \$2.65 an hour was alright for damned hard labor, but a case of beer and a tank of gas could be had for less than ten bucks. So, for the hundred

(roughly) that us young bandits made in a week we could eat good, pay our \$25.00 a week room 'n board, and go road drinkin' every night after work. About half of the crowd liked to smoke a little weed too, and of course that got a little expensive; I personally wouldn't buy the shit, but smoked a little more than my share. The roads we traveled on were gravel, narrow and twisting, through the prettiest country on Earth, Jo Daviess County and the minin' and farm roads of Southern Wisconsin. Every bar owner in Northwestern Illinois and across the border headin' North knew us and were (more or less) glad we stopped by on our rounds. The *first* day. Sometimes, on the *second* day, if it was a weekend or any two day period when three or four of us

didn't have to (or want to) work, they weren't quite as happy to see us. Some of us didn't care if we got fired or not; jobs were plentiful back then and we were kinda fishin' around for somethin' we liked that we would stick with. Some of the guys still got the job they had to begin with, and many are retired now. Me? I'm just *plain* tired.

Everybody liked hot rods. They were a lot of fun, but to really spread out and relax when you're road drinkin' you needed a big four-door sedan, a station wagon, or a *limo*! Dan showed up one day way back in the sixties drivin' a big gray '61 Caddy limo. Last time I had seen him was in his fabulous '61 Olds Starfire ragtop. The convertible seated four comfortably, or six crammed in. That limo

though, would hold damn near a dozen, and a keg of beer. We took it to the Drive-In a number of times, and it was great. The divider window went up and down just like it was supposed to, and gave young lovers a private piece (I mean *place!*) at the movies.

Nobody I knew in those days had a truck. Wasn't enough room! Well, I mean, I had my first 1957 Ranchero when I was twenty, but didn't keep it long. It was fine for just two people, but two people just *ain't* a party! Besides, it would go like hell and I got in a little trouble with it...

Now, my fifty-seven Chevy four-door hardtop, on the other hand, had plenty of room, along with the motor that had the power-pak heads and dual point

ignition, the famous 283. I got eleven movin' violations with that beast in less than two weeks, the last two weeks I owned it. I had it for a year, but got a little wild there at the end I 'spose. The cops stopped me 'n Wilkie at the intersection on Bench Street by the Fire House, and after takin' our cold case of Little Joes from the car and placin' it on the hood, proceeded to start writin' citations. Two gals from Hazel Green were with us. Wilkie, always an adventurous soul, grinned at me across the hood, and I grinned back. Quickly snatchin' the case of beer, he jumped in the car. The gals were still in the back seat, so I said to the cop, "See ya later!" The car was fast, a *real* Sport Coupe, and we boogied. Crossin' the highway almost as fast as



I wore the cam lobes round
on this poor old Chevy from
the wound-out runs to East
Dubuque and my job at Kelly
in Freeport...finally quit the
job, but that's *another* story.
Find it in 'Galena Grafitti'.

Andy had done that New Year's Eve, I slid to a halt at the foot of Gear Street and told the gals, "You better get out of the car. I think they're gonna come after us." They did. Chased us out the highway toward the Y goin' to Dubuque on that narrow old blacktop. Down through the twistin' gravel roads toward Menominee. Up near the State Line. Down past the historic Vinegar Hill Lead Mines. Around the dangerous curves that took us through Council Hill and wound through Bawden Furnace. Back into Galena, where, thoroughly enjoyin' ourselves by this time, we stopped on the hill in front of the old Jail and laid a hooker, startin' the chase all over again. It was three ayem in the mornin' when we flew through East Dubuque and crossed the bridge, goin' to

a friend's house on Elm Street where, to our delight, we found the very same gals we had dropped off at the foot of Gear Street in Galena several hours before. I got laid. It was wonderful. The next day we snuck back into town and I decided I was gonna go to Texas. Loadin' my stuff at my sister's house on Adams Street on the East Side I suddenly found myself surrounded and the street blocked off by squad cars. No. I didn't go to Texas. I went to jail.

Abe pulled up at the stop sign by the Desoto House one day in his fifty-six Merc, across from Burbach's, where there were twenty or more kids hangin' out. Started goosin' the gas pedal. Windows up and down Main Street started vibratin'. "What the hell did you do to yer car?"

someone yelled, and Abe started grinnin'. "Fixed the exhaust!" "Fixed it, my *ass!*" He had gotten a ticket for loud mufflers the day before. "I tried to tell 'em, I didn't *have* no mufflers, but they gimme a ticket anyhow." I had watched as he pounded the two eight-foot sections of one inch well pipe into the manifolds, and he had said, "The Kernel told me these will sound just like machine guns." They did.

One night Eddie got plastered and took off from the pool hall in that pretty '66 Impala and wasted three cars before jumpin' the sidewalk in front of the theater. After they towed his car away I discovered that the trunk key for my fifty-seven chevy fit in the ignition of 'Ralph's' '60 chevy and parked it about halfway up the block for him. When he came out of



Boze 'n Maggie's Pool Hall.

Boze's he went nuts thinkin' somebody swiped his car, and after laughin' like hell somebody in the crowd ratted on me and he found it, but was secretly *not* amused. He traded that car off for a '66 Chevelle with a beefed 396 four speed and we put about twenty thousand miles of road drinkin' on it over the next few years. Yeah; he's *still* got the beast! You'll see it on the road again in the next year or so.

Those sweet Galena girls from back in the sixties, many of which were just little tykes when I first went to reform school, had grown up. Now though, they had friends from Dubuque who came to visit and party with them, as well as from our neighbor State to the North. Keg parties began to blossom like wild flowers in the fields. Road drinkin' would never

fade away, but you gotta have a *destination!* Sam's camp. Trapper's camp. Blanding. Wooded Wonderland Campground. Bradshaw's Bottom. The Abbley House. Al Bailey's. The list is long. A lot of times those keggers got their start as the Old Dance Hall closed for the night, and either the Benton mob would throw one at Horseshoe Bend up near Leadmine or everyone highballed it to Trapper's, down on the backwaters of the Mississippi. Sam's place and Trapper's had some of the damndest poker games you ever saw inside in the kitchen, and some of the drunkest people you ever saw wanderin' around outside around the big old bonfire. I always picked a spot close to the keg. Didn't wanna wear myself out travellin', ya know what I'm sayin'?

Besides, eventually everyone came back for refills and it was the best possible spot for shootin' the breeze.

The three chords I had learned on the guitar when I was fourteen had grown into six by this time, and sometimes I drug an old guitar out of the trunk and would try to sing. Before long someone would suggest that the guitar would entertain them better as firewood, and I lost more than one in that manner. Al Bailey liked my playin' though, and would often ask if I had brought the guitar with me, and if I had he would drag out the battered accordion, and half a dozen inebriated guests would try to accompany us. I think I know now why it was always my guitar and not the accordion that went into the fire.



Whatta ya mean throw it in
the fire!

Friday night was my weekend party night, 'cause I had to work at the Dance Hall on Saturday night after November of 1976. Don't let me mislead you; after the dance it was run off to a party or head to East Dubuque, though as I have mentioned, when I got hired it was with the understanding that I would soon be going to jail on the Work Release Program. Let me tell you, for those eighteen months it was a very hard thing to do, goin' back to a cell from the rowdiness of the Dance Hall, and tryin' to sleep. And, there was a girl. I know she loved me, and I was feelin' a little emotional about her as well. I shut her out of my life, though saw her every week at the dance. Very hard. I foolishly thought

that she could do *way* better than waitin' around on me, and hurt both of us.

The next year, two girls who both liked me decided to kick the shit out of each other. Ya ever have wimmen fightin' over ya? It is really not all that pleasant, especially when *you* are the poor slob who has to break up the fight! They can be *mean*! I mean, I was the *bouncer*! They *hurt* me! I thought they wanted to kick *each other's* ass! I ended up with the one who liked me a whole lot, but didn't really love me. Such is life. She was my gal for three years and then drifted away. Maybe I'm the one who drifted. I didn't take notes.

Cars were dirt cheap in the 'good ol' days', and one day Mr. Bautch says, "Hey Frank, my mother-in-law don't want

them cars o' mine layin' in her yard no more. What'll ya gimmee fer 'em?" "What's wrong wif 'em?" "Nothin'! Why hell, you throw a battery in 'em is all ya need! Well, might have a flat 'er two is all." "How much ya want fer 'em?" "Well, ain't nothin' wrong wif 'em, kin ya gimmee ten apiece?" "What are they?" "I gots three '59 Fords, one's a wagon, one's a two door." "What's the other one?" "Uh, damned if I know. Runs good though. With a battery." "Ya ain't got no batteries in all three cars?" "Naw. Put it in my boat." "Awright. I'll give ya thirty dollars for the three of 'em then. I got a good battery in my '50 Plymouth that the clutch went out of. Think I'll swap that one back to Keene." I did too. Had Bommer chase me to New Digginz with his old man's

Olds 88. Had to push me half way, but I drove home in a '56 Dodge Royal hardtop that only cost me the Plymouth business coupe and ten bucks. Found out later about the blown piston in the big hemi. My pal Bob let me and a few other guys keep a bunch of cars in his yard and up in the woods about a block from Dillon's Tavern, and that's where all the Fords and the new Dodge acquisition went. I had a '55 Ford that was customized into a souped up fake Ranchero by Faye Bro.'s Body shop in Dubuque tucked away up there too. Had a 364 Buick engine drippin' chrome under the hood and a Olds rear end. I owned that animal for three years and only drove it a dozen times; it was way too fast for the road. Way too fast for *me*. I finally took it apart

for the goodies that were installed in it, right before my pal Bob decided to clean up his yard, while I was in the middle of a thirty day stretch in the Galena jail. He didn't tell *any* of us that he was cleanin' the place out. I got outta jail and didn't have a fuckin' car. None! We weren't really pals after that.

One night way back in 1968 I got arrested for some foolish thing, drunk, and when mornin' came some asshole was shakin' the shit out of me as I lay on the top bunk in the cell. "Get up! Breakfast!" I rolled over fast and elbowed the jerk in the face sayin', "Quit fuckin' with me!" Then I saw the face that had been on the front page of the newspaper for weeks. Jim Pierce. The killer. He had been in East Dubuque one night followin' the stripper



Misty Black liked rockers;
not crazy fuckers that were
OFF their rocker.... Pierce
shot ‘em dead right in front
of Schnee’s Lounge...right in
front of Misty, sayin’, “Take
that, ya whorin’ bitch!”

Misty Black in and out of the bars, and was jealous as hell because she had rejected his attentions, choosing instead three members of a band to hang out with. He fondled the gun tucked in his belt, and when they came out of Schnee's he was ready. He emptied the gun into the three young men, killin' them all, and Jiggs, the old chief of police happened upon the scene. Pierce turned when Jiggs yelled and pointed the gun right between the old boy's eyes and started yankin' on the trigger. It was pure luck on the old cop's part the gun was empty. Jiggs retired soon after, never wantin' to see shit like that again. I had to spend three weeks in the same cell with the crazy sumbitch. He bragged about killin' those boys, and wished he had had more bullets for the old

cop. He told us that when he was seventeen he had been stopped by a deputy on a lonely back-road in Iowa, and had beaten the cop to death and drove away. He had a damn strange gleam in his eye when he got talkin' like that, and made us people who *thought* we were outlaws feel kinda nervous. Every Sunday, back in the Sixties, some fellas from Wisconsin, evangelists or somethin', came to the old jail to spread the wordagawd and sing gospel songs and shit with an electric guitar and amps and all that stuff. The fat bald guy with the microphone panted and puffed, sweatin' profusely, as he yelled at high volume, "*REPENT!*" Jim Pierce, along with his new pal, a guy who had also been arrested in east Dubuque for *tryin'* to kill someone by stickin' a six

inch knife in a man's back at the Townhouse were at the cell door purely enjoyin' the show. Jim Pierce, a cold blooded murderer, went into an act of contrition and cried like a baby, *loudly*, about how sorry he was and he sure didn't want the Big Guy pissed at him no more and if the good reverend would *please* come and save his poor lost soul he would be forever grateful, or some shit like that. The fat bald *silly* fuckin' evangelist went close to the cell door, and Pierce had him by the throat in a death grip in the blink of an eye. He was gonna kill that sumbitch, and the fat boy's eyes and tongue proceeded to eject from his head. He couldn't scream; he was *dyin'*, but his pals with the electric guitars *did* and within seconds a herd of deputies ran up the three

flights of stairs with canisters of gas and billyclubs. Pierce didn't care, and laughed as they tried to pry the nearly dead preacher from his grasp. Did I or the others in the cell try to stop him? *Fuck* no; you think *we* were crazy? Pierce was six-four and two hundred and sixty pounds of *NUTS!* What finally persuaded him to let go was the twelve gauge the last enterprisin' deputy had grabbed on his way up the stairs, and jacked a shell into, and jammed into his face. They put him and his new friend in their own cell, on the far side of the jail, and everybody was a lot happier.

I yearned for the beautiful '50 Merc that I had foolishly parted with when I lost my first driver's license when I was seventeen. That car was so pretty.

Everyone in both Galena and Dubuque drooled over it. It was midnight blue metallic and the chrome was in excellent shape, and after I attached the chrome rocker panels and baby moons and tinted the windows blue too I had a cruiser. I had been workin' for Mike at the gas station on Dodge and Nevada in Dubuque (ain't there no more) and one of his customers came in one day and asked if he could drag it in and try to sell it. Motor was locked up, he says. "Sure, put it out back outta the way." Next day the car was there. It looked pretty bad. It had been the guy's father-in-law's fishin' car until twelve years before, when it was parked behind the barn and forgotten. When the old boy died the son-in-law inherited and immediately began to liquidate his new



'50 Mercury Monterey. The finest car I ever had (other than using a case of oil a week) it was midnight blue and almost *just like* James Dean's beast in 'Rebel Without a Cause'...I was 17 and it was close enough...

holdin's. A few days after bringin' in the Merc he stopped by for gas. "Anybody askin' about my car?" I shook my head no. "If somebody does, whatta ya want for it?" "I'd take a couple hunnert probly." "The hell. Pretty rough." Yeah. It's been sittin'." "You got the keys for the door? I was gonna look at it the other day but it's locked. Damn windows are so dirty inside 'n out ya can't see nothin'." "Yeah. C'mon, I'll open it up for ya. Didn't wanna leave it open. Damn thieves, ya know." "Yeah." When he opened the door it smelled strongly of mouse piss, dead rats, batshit, and a three month old corpse of a raccoon or somethin'. "Oooh-hoo *MAN!* And you think somebody's gonna *buy* this?" "Well, it's a Fifty Mercury! Like James Dean!" "James Dean had a '49

two door in that movie ‘Rebel Without A Cause’,” I informed him, cocky as hell for knowin’ that fact. “Yer shittin’ me!”

“Nope. I’m kind of a rebel without a cause myself. Been in Reform School twice already.” “How the hell old *are* ya?”

“Seventeen. Hey, I got a hunnert saved up. I’ll give ya a hunnert for that Merc. Ain’t nobody else gonna buy it in that shape. Yer gonna have to spend a week cleanin’ the sumbitch if you wanna get any more for it.” “Damn,” he says. “Well, I don’t wanna fuck with it. Gimmee the hunnert. I got the title in my car out front.”

I acted serious as hell and as if I doubted my own sanity for buyin’ the thing until he had driven out of sight, then I went nuts. Two of my pals from up the street had stopped in just as the transaction

took place, Paul and Pat. They had been out back with me the other day checkin' the old girl out and goin' through the James Dean thing right along with me and wishin' just as hard as I had been, and Paul says, as the guy drove off, "You *lucky* sumbitch! A *hunnert!* Ya *stole* the fuckin' thing!" Within minutes we had ripped off the tainted old seat covers and discovered the most fabulous crushed velvet blue and gray seats we had ever seen, and by the time we turned the lights on for the evenin' it no longer smelled, the like-new carpet had been shampooed right along with the seats, the windows sparkled, and I was on my third can of rubbin' compound. It had been a tasteless shade of faded gray but now was an incredible sparkly midnight blue and the



3 or 4 cans of good rubbin' compound, and a couple of friends helpin' out, put the old girl back on the road... and the *party was on!* Best 'road drinker' I had as a teenager.

chrome would blind you if the light hit it right. It still didn't run though, and had no brakes and gawd knew what else, but it sure was pretty. Every day we jacked around with it, spit shinin' it and stuff, and my boss came out back about three days after I bought it and near shit himself. "I don't fuckin' believe it! That don't look *nothin'* like the car he drug in here! Get it runnin' yet?" I said dejectedly, "Naw. Motor's locked up tighter than a mouse's asshole. She ain't gonna run." "Hmmm. Hey, you wanna drag it out the highway with my truck?" We had just installed a Pontiac 347 with a four barrel carb in his '56 GMC half ton, and the truck would do wheelies. "Yeah!" "Awright! When I get ya goin' about fifty or sixty, ease the clutch out in third gear. That oughta do

it!” We chained the beasts together, and about ten o’clock that third night I owned it went west on highway twenty out of Dubuque, after lockin’ up the station for the night.

Five miles we drug that old girl, kickin’ and screamin’ all the way. Every time I eased out the clutch the ass end of the car would go sideways and the smoke from the meltin’ tires was nearly chokin’ me, but she wouldn’t bust loose. We peeled the back tires right off of the car and still she was froze. I was gettin’ desperate...I jammed the shift up into second and jacked the clutch half a dozen times and she bucked and jumped around on that old highway like a wild animal....It was never meant to wind that high, seventy miles an hour in second

gear, but that's what popped her loose! I started wavin' my arm like a madman at Mike to slow down! I didn't wanna roll the sumbitch *now*! He saw me flaggin' him and pulled off to the side of the road, and we opened the hood. All the old belts had broken, and water was runnin' out of both pumps on that old flathead 8 engine, but it *looked* alright. "You ever work on a flathead 8 Mike?" "Nope. Looks fairly simple though. Let's drag her back to the garage and see if there's any life left in her."

We found a couple belts that fit (almost) and were able to latch onto the motor and turn it. Mike says, "If it'll turn over it'll run." It was midnight, but there were seven people in the garage, and all of the lights of the station were on. A squad

car pulled in to see what was wrong. They all liked Mike and both cops laughed like hell when he told them about draggin' the car out the highway at seventy miles an hour and slidin' all over the blacktop for five miles. One of them said, "I saw a car like this in that movie that James Dean and Sal Mineo were in. Nice lines. Sure is a pretty old thing. Who does it belong to?" There is *indeed* a Santa Claus. "Me," I said, with a big shit-eatin' grin. The only difference between my car and the one in the movie was the dash, front parkin' lights, and the doors. Same color. My new ride had 'suicide' doors as opposed to the famous '49, meanin' that the back doors opened from the center so that the whole interior was exposed when all four were open. It was cool as hell, but dangerous as

hell if the car happened to be movin’ when you opened one of them and *stepped out*. It would slap you flat on the ground in the blink of an eye, hence the term ‘suicide’.

James Dean had been portraying a moody high school boy of seventeen in that movie. A rebel. I was that age. Now I had a car like *his*! I still have one of the tickets (citation) that I got with that car one night in Galena, still seventeen, when it stalled on me and I got nabbed for *curfew*!

Almost a year after I bought the Merc I lost my driver’s license and, not thinkin too far ahead in those days, sold the car to one of the boys up the street, a deputy sheriff’s son, who promised he would take good care of her, and a week



Roomy...soft...cozy...warm.

later he rolled it end over end, totally demolishin' a fabulous original. I was sadder'n hell for a long time for ever partin' with it. Abe knew how I had loved that car, and in 1971 sold me a 1950 Merc two door sedan for *forty dollars*! Some old farmer in Elizabeth had owned it forever, havin' bought it new, and Abe got it from him for twenty bucks. I'm talkin' about the *good* old days!

I went on a scavenger hunt and found one just like it out near Menominee, and another four door up in Benton, and tried my best to snag 'em but those guys had seen the movie too and were 'gonna fix 'er up'. Neither one ever did, and years later, after rotting away, they were 'salvaged'. Havin' read my book about Galena In The Sixties, you may remember

the picture of the '51 lead sled I found in Leadmine Wisconsin, and purchased for peanuts. In 1994 I snagged one out of a junkyard near Mount Carroll, Charlie Wolf's, for two hundred, a fifty two door, and layin right next to it was a dark blue '49 just like James Dean's, with the side smashed in and beyond repair. In '92 I found one in the Freeport junkyard that someone had tried to chop the top on and had butchered too severely to ever fix. I had four of the Merc's, countin the '51, down through the years, but none were as nice as number one.

I guess that's kinda the way it is with girls, too. I had girlfriends in seventh and eighth grade, and high school, that I loved *soooooooooooo* much, carryin' their books and holdin' their soft warm hands

and sittin' in the dark at the movies with them, wantin' *real* bad to find out the whole story. I had to wait until I was drivin' that Merc when I was seventeen. *Girls* loved that car, too! I gave a *lot* of girls a ride in that car. All but the one I wanted. She belonged to someone else.

So, I tinkered with that old Merc Abe sold me and got her goin' and ran hell out of it for a few months, but it just wasn't the same. My dream had been tainted and I decided I needed somethin' a little newer, a little faster, you know; a 'sports car' type or somethin'. I swapped it in for a '62 Dodge Polara, the first of that line, a two door coupe with bucket seats and a wedge engine with 305 horsepower. Yeah. Now we're *talkin'*! I could do some road drinkin' in *this*! All

them guys who spent big bucks for the Roadrunners and Chargers were madder'n hell when we cut the quarter mile up near New Digginz. That fuckin' old Dodge would *trot!* It'd lay rubber for half a mile and throw you back in the seat like an astronaut blastin' off for the moon. Yeah, yeah, I got a few tickets with it. One day me 'n L'il Blink woke up in the sumbitch on the hill above Dillon's, where the earth had been bulldozed, parked in a mud-hole and sunk down about three feet. Damn near buried to the windows. We had been hoistin' a few the night before....(oh alright, the whole day before), and I guess we both passed out about the same time when we went around that corner. Deeply embarassin'.

About that time Paul O'rourke came strollin' back into Galena from California by way of Washington State. He'd been paintin' signs and all kinda shit across the country, and havin' a damn good time visitin' all the Hippie communes wherever he happened to stumble across one. Up there in Washington, with the Love Family, he was known as Barnabus Love. He set up a shop in the buildin' next to Benjamin's, known then as Nell's Lamplighter, and pretty soon he had a bunch of dope smokin' hippies thinkin' they were gonna open Galena's first shoppin' mall, and they tore hell out of the inside of it and put up a bunch of funky booths. It didn't fly. They did, though. You didn't even have to smoke dope around there, just walk by



and take a deep breath. Suddenly, your feet had wings.

Anne's Gay Nineties (which had a whole different meanin' in those days) was a fine establishment that had one of them pay pool tables that actually was level and a guy (like me for instance) could make some serious money shootin' on it. Sometimes Teddy Bear would roll over when he was sleepin' under it and mess you up when you were tryin' to line up a shot by floppin' his legs or arms out. When he was awake and sittin' at the bar with his ol' bloodhound eyes lookin' like they were bleedin' to death he'd tell his favorite story from when he was a teenager. The one about his brother throwin' him off the farm for pokin' the pony one too many times. Said it was

pretty damn *good*. A Shetland, not one of them new miniatures. Said, every time he came up behind it in it's stall it would go; Neeeeeehehhhehhhhhhhyayehhhh. Got everybody in the bar goin' when he told that one. He was not ashamed; didn't know any better.

Paul and I started hangin' around together a little more in '71 and took our sketch books and stuff with us every time we headed for a bar, and drew so many pictures of people you could not possibly count them. Five or ten bucks a shot, and the people bought the drinks too. Paul was left handed and his pictures kinda reflected that. I always thought it was a handicap until I saw the end result. His brain was left handed too, some people thought. Left handed or not, he was a

gifted painter and poet, had been on the stage in New York for a year, and painted his way across Europe in the sixties. He walked across America four times that I know of. Ambitious? Not really. He would paint a rash of signs and when he thought the community he was in no longer needed his services, throw his shit in a bag and stick out his thumb. In 1988, after a year of bad health, he died in Carmel California. He had painted all of Clint's campaign posters when he ran for mayor there, and written a book before he passed away, but it disappeared. While he was in Galena in the seventies, however, Paul was consumed by the idea that he could start a commune like the one in Washington, and made himself a tent out of an old parachute and moved in, and had

every stray cat in the Midwest cookin' on his sterno stove and enjoyin' his brand of hospitality.

Every bar had its own set of patrons. 'Characters', I s'pose you would call them. Any given day, they could be found on the same exact stool you saw them on the last time you wandered through. Like they lived there. Always together. Always drunk. I still don't know how they financed it. Sometimes they popped up in Hanover and Hazel Green at the taverns there, and in New Digginz, then they kinda petered out in the late seventies. DUI's took 'em off the roads. Old age got to some of 'em, but booze killed 'em all.

One day in 1973 Paul says, "How come you don't paint signs? You can draw

any damn thing.” “Don’t know how.” At that time he had a sixteen foot long framed-up board layin’ on the sidewalk in front of a new shop next to the old Ben Franklin that he was just gettin’ ready to letter. He said, “I’ll tell you what; I’ll lay it out and you paint it.” He handed me a long stringy floppy little paint brush that wiggled like it was alive, and proceeded to draw, in charcoal, Grant Leather Store. I dipped the brush in the paint can and slapped it on the board. By the time I got to the A in Grant I was a Sign Painter, and have never stopped or slowed down. Paul gave me three old brushes that day, and I was in business for myself. I had to go to him a couple times to learn how to make patterns and such, but otherwise I am a self taught man, and have painted

thousands of signs down through the years, many of which were prominent in picture spreads by Life magazine and a lot of others in the later seventies, eighties, and nineties, and in every photo that was taken of downtown Galena in that time. Thanks, Paul, my friend.

Paul and I were the only real 'Galena Artists', and later when a lot of other artists 'discovered' Galena and moved here and started the 'Galena Artists Guild', they didn't want nothin' to do with me 'n Paul, and wouldn't let us *join*. Well, they *still* can't join *MY* Galena Artist club! I have documented roots to the community since 1828, and the Lead Mines, the Homesteads, and the Black Hawk War. Documented. I am the only Life-Long Resident Galena Artist.

And, what kind of art am I capable of, you may ask...? All of it.

No. I've never had any training. My mother used to amuse herself tellin' folks that I started drawin' people in the dirt with a stick when I was sittin' out in the yard shittin' in my diapers at less than a year old. I just *knew* I could do it, and didn't have to *wish* I could. In school, in the itty bitty art classes Galena had, I showed the teachers how. Am I braggin'? Why, do I sound like I am? Just the facts ma'am.

I had my hand trained though. It knew *exactly* how to hold a can of Blue Ribbon, regardless of whether or not the can was in a beer can cooler or bare, both right *and* left hands. That night Eddie rolled the '66 and Paul tried to cut his way



out through the metal roof with a pocket knife I never spilled a drop. Weedhopper was there too, and I thought we were all gonna die when the smoke started rollin' through the upside down car that the roof had suddenly gone flat on.

It was a good night for a stroll, and we wandered away from the wrecked car in the moonlight. "Hey Paul; ya got any of that dope left?" "What?" The blind leadin' the blind. We had gotten that way at the Shiloh in Hazel Green, Fritzzy's place, where I had been a bouncer when I was a young lad of twenty. The sign I painted for him had a Civil War battle scene depicted on it, and perhaps it was appropriate, for the battles that raged at the Shiloh in Hazel Green are talked about to this day.

We got a ride with some unknown farmer, in the back of his truck. “Where at y’all wanna git dumped out at?” “Rodden’s,” we all answered. The Truck Stop. Clark’s Restaurant. We had worked up a good appetite by then, and like every time we went road drinkin’, it was our last stop before goin’ home to bed. The café had the best damn food in the Tri-States, served on platters, piled so high you would think it was impossible to eat it all. Everybody ordered a double-order of ham ‘n eggs, hash browns, and extra toast, and coffee and milk. We were growin’ boys. Cost less than five bucks, and Wanda still cooks that kinda food with the same skill today, though her restaurant is downtown now and ‘road drinkers’ *don’t go there*. It is known today as the Victory Café.

Rodden's was a full service Truck Stop, where the garage fixed tires and miscellaneous stuff, and the lot was full at any given time, big rigs parked for the night or the drivers in the café dinin' and flirtin' with the girls. The juke box was every bit as good as the ones downtown at the Cozy and the Edmar and Burbach's. Music to eat by. Every great song from the sixties, Country, truck-drivin' stuff, and Rock, and it was loud enough to hear. You could still talk and be understood though. Sometimes you had to get a little loud, yellin' for more coffee or somethin', and get your "JISTAMINIT!" reply. Outside, in the cool midnight air, one of those ol' trucks would be rockin' back and forth like a high wind was blowin', though the

weather was serene. Karen was back in town. She liked to wander off with one of the drivers from time to time, but always came home a few months later.

One night me 'n Ronnie B. sauntered into the restaurant at the Truck Stop and Wanda nearly dropped her skillet at the sight of us. We had been at the Hideaway up near Leadmine all day gettin' hammered and, when it was time to depart Ronnie says, "You drive; I'm too drunk." We were ridin' a big old Honda. "Awright," I said, and we ventured forth. It was a wild ride, and you would think all that cold air blastin' in your face would sober a person up somewhat. Didn't work...by the time we arrived in East Dubuque and started crawlin' in and out of the bars we were still drunk and not

gonna get no better. Two hours later Ronnie says again, "You drive: I'm too drunk." When you lose a motorcycle at over a hundred miles an hour you do one of three things; die, get horribly fucked up, or not get a scratch. Ronnie didn't get a scratch, havin' landed on me, and neither one of us died. I got the 'horribly fucked up' thing. The side of my face looked like it had been ripped off my head when we finally dragged the bike out of the weeds and got it goin' again, and made our way to the Truck Stop. This time Ronnie drove.

I had road rash you wouldn't believe, and Wanda, that girl with the heart of gold, rushed to my aid like an angel and doctored me up in one of the booths at the restaurant. I bled like a stuck

hawg for a while and made quite a mess for her to clean up, after she got the rips in my face taped back together. She did such a good job that I didn't bother goin' to the hospital for follow-up care, though I picked glass and gravel from the cuts for months. Well, she got *most* of it...

My shoulder, my knees, my gawd damn foot...hey, at this time I was tendin' bar at the original Market House Tavern on Back Street (across from the *Market House!*) Twenty-two years old. Every day when I opened the bar for business I would turn on *everything* and open the doors and then drop a quarter into the slot and punch D3. Immediately, as loud as the jukebox would play, the Duke Of Earl began his stroll. Within minutes the bar was full and goin' strong. Bunny D.

owned it then and had had Paul paint the piss out of it, including the floor which had oceans, islands, and a huge compass so you could never get lost. Some still did, however. Wilkie and Abe's brother Frank had come home from the joint, and every other bandit in town hung out there too, with a bunch of fun girls who were just as rowdy as the guys. We had several card tables and a good pool table, and, as you may have noticed, a jukebox. The first of our Mexican friends came to town to work in the foundries, and though we had a difficult time communicating it wasn't too bad for I could understand a little of their language; "T'ree mo' Oley's, Francisco!" They were great people, made a lot of friends, and never caused a disturbance,

whereas some of our Galena locals certainly *did*.

One cold winter afternoon my old friend Gary from Bench Street says, "Hey, wanna take a ride to Benton? I always get my hair cut at the barber shop up there." Grabbin' a twelve pack we hit the road. Stopped in New Digginz and had seven or eight. Got a six pack for the ride to Benton. Made it. "I'll wait for ya at the bar," I says, and Gary went into the barber shop. After gettin' trimmed up nice, he forgot I was with him and went home, leavin' me stranded. Three guys who I had thrown out of the Dance Hall several weeks earlier were in that bar and decided to pay me back, and kick the supreme shit outta me. They tried like hell, and when the cops came the bar was a ruin, blood all

over the place. My jacket and shirt had disappeared, and I looked like I was bleedin' to *death*. The guy who owned the place told the cops who had started the fight, and they hauled the trio off to Lancaster. There I was; no way home, and no shirt or jacket to ward off the cold. The owner Jim Cisco says, "Hell, I'll give ya a ride to Galena. My girlfriend lives down there. C'mon." After lockin' the destroyed tavern doors we headed south. Once back in town I had him drop me off in front of the Sportsman Tavern, where I had parked my '62 Impala two door hardtop, that my brother-in-law had sold me for a dollar, just to keep it legal, and climbed in. I wasn't quite ready to head for home and go to bed, so I cruised around 'til the heater got me thawed out, and found a

party goin' on at Pat 'n Dan's and went on up to the door. Sally answered my knock and screamed. I was still covered with blood and she thought I was gonna die on the doorstep and dragged me into the house. After her and my friends got me hosed down and clean we found, to my delight and surprise, that I didn't have a *scratch* on me! Sure, I had a whole lot of damned sore spots and a black eye, but I was relatively intact. I had a good time at that party, with my lifelong friends that night, and when I left they gave me an old jacket so I wouldn't freeze my gonads off, and I went down toward town. There at the Mobil Station sat the City and State Police cars, where they were bullshittin' the boring hours away. I pulled in alongside of them. "Hiyadoin'?" I asked

the man in the State car, Leo. "Hey Frank. What's up?" "Nothin' much. You guys look like you're bored." "Yeah. Pretty damn slow night." Guff, the City cop, says "I wish somethin' would happen. I'm about ready to fall asleep." Leo said, "I'm gonna run up to Rodden's and get me a coffee. See ya later." I looked Guff in the eye with a grin, "You want somethin' to do, come around the corner in a couple of minutes." "Why?" "I'm gonna leap the levee like Evel Knievel." "Yeah right. You better go home and sleep it off." "No shit; I'm serious! I bet I can get this old Chevy all the way across the damn river!" I took off. The Bus Barn was situated at the corner, and it had a driveway that allowed me all the space I needed for an angled shot at the river and, backin' into



Bus Barn, far left of image is where I backed in to get a good shot at the river...made it *halfway* across, anyhow.

position, I goosed hell out of that old hardtop and let the clutch fly and shot across the street like a cannonball, hittin' the curb and bouncin' off to the left. Shit. Didn't work...I'll have to try it again...I backed across the street and straightened the old girl out a little more, and gave it all she had. Yeah! I was airborne! When I hit the curb this time the car leaped into the air and I flew! Fuck.....only made it halfway! I had opened the windows just in case somethin' like this happened, and while the car was settlin' to the bottom out there in the middle of the river I was scramblin' out the window and up onto the roof, where I stood laughin' like hell as she found the mud. The lights were still on and glowed spookily up through the water as I leaped for the bank from the

trunk of the car. I stood there for a minute, expectin' Guff to come see what the hell I was up to, but he didn't so I hiked back around the corner and yelled at him, "Come on, man! There's shit floatin' all over the river!" Beer cans. Old sketches and pictures I had discarded on the floor of the car, not likin' to throw shit out along the roads. Trash of all kinds. I had opened all of the windows, not wantin' to get trapped, and the water was runnin' sideways through the car like a toilet flushin'. Now Guff got curious. He drove the squad car around the corner and saw the lights in the river, and me standin' there laughin', and he busted up. "Jump in! Leo's gotta see this!" We highballed it to Rodden's and caught Leo just as he was pullin' out onto the highway and Guff

yelled at him, “You gotta see this! Follow me!” We were laughin’ so hard it wasn’t easy for Guff to control the squad as we raced down the hill with Leo right on our tail, and when we got to the levee there were like forty or fifty people who had come out of the woodwork, standin’ there admirin’ my handiwork. Half an hour later, after Gronner’s wrecker broke the winch when the car got hung up on the rocks, they had Nath’s Garage bring in that huge old red wrecker used for draggin’ semi’s out of the ditch come down and it got the job done. I gave the car to Fred for the haulin’. Hell, it had only cost me a dollar, and when did a dollar ever buy so much fun? Guff, who had been a friend before joinin’ the department, said, “Well, I can’t give you a

DUI; you ain't drunk. How about 'too fast for conditions'?" I laughed and said, "Yeah. That sounds like a good one. Give it here." Bernie had everyone in town callin' me Aquaman for the next few weeks.

My little brother Bernie had finally turned twenty-one. Now, legally, he could hang out with the big guys. Us. In the *bars*. Naturally, he had been hangin' out with us all along, and between him and Hawk they kept us laughin' like maniacs at the jokes they told. I mean, that stuff they spewed out was original and gawd damn *funny*! Bernie liked to fuck around and pretend he was a half-wit sometimes, and would embarrass the hell out of Steve when they went to the Kmart, draggin' his foot and one shoulder,

eyes crossed and slobberin', whimperin' like a whipped dawg, "Don't leave me daddy!", and Steve would walk faster and faster to get away from him. One day he borrowed Ron's wheelchair down in front of Boze's on a busy Saturday and, painfully wheelin' it out into the center of the intersection, flopped over on his side, chair and all, and started yellin; "Help! *PLEASE* help me!" Cryin' like hell too. Scores of people rushed to his aid, all tourists, and did their best to get him and the chair back upright. Finally, tiring of his game, he got up, folded the chair and tucked it under his arm, and strolled over and returned it to Ron, who was laughin' hard enough to make himself sick, as were we all. Fifteen or twenty tourists, standin' in the middle of the street, didn't think it



Bernie's '73 Riviera GS...
parked next to the Hoyer's
Mobil Station, our hangout.
They sold ice cold beer and
Ethyl gas. The cool car is
pointing directly at Main
Street, 1977.

was so funny. I guess they missed the point.

Bernie had some talent with tools, and would fix broken-down cars for people who couldn't afford a real mechanic, lots of times for nothin'. We hung out at the Mobil Station, where Bat worked, and we all bought our gas. Carl liked the bunch of us and didn't mind loanin' us the use of his hoist and garage. He and Greta made life a little easier for us and were great friends in the Seventies, and when he got a license to sell cold beer *too* the *real* road drinkin' began. In hot rods. In four door sedans. In pick-up trucks. Campers. On motorcycles. In airplanes. You think I'm jokin'? You didn't know Duke! Yeah, boats too! The river was right behind the Mobil station,

by the bridge in downtown Galena, and we had ran that river since we were boys. Goin' fishin' *was* fun! Carl sold more beer than the bars on Main Street for a while.

The City Police were, of course, aware that all the cars full of youngsters were not headin' for a game of tennis out in the woods north of town. They *knew* we were goin' to Al Baileys or somewhere similar with those kegs of beer and sleepin' bags. They knew they wouldn't see any of us for a couple of days, and that, when they *did* see us, *they* might be the ones that have a little trouble! Though they watched us like hawks there was a mutual agreement; we didn't bother them and they didn't bother us. When Stantheman and Guff got on the force however, that came to a sreechin' halt.

Decent men, one and all, the Police of Galena in the early Seventies. But the tourists were comin'. Suddenly, there was a realization that Galena was actually a rowdy sumbitch of a town and they had better do somethin' about it. Already, at the Last Corn Boil, an event that drew people from all over the Tri-States for fifty years or more, a huge gawd damn carnival that was filled with excitement and fun for all ages, hordes of savages on motorcycles descended on the hapless village and took over the town *and* the Corn Boil. Main Street bars made a lot of money but suffered severe damage. Cars were smashed and windows broken. Honest gawd fearin' citizens had the stuffin's beat out of 'em. Sadly, several of our local girls were harmed. Small Town

America had ceased to exist. Now, we were members of a much larger community. Now, we needed a Police force that could handle such emergencies, should they ever arise again. Now, the Riot Squad was formed. (I was twenty-one when that happened.)

It was funny as hell, I thought. Here I was, a prisoner in the Old Jail in Galena, when the Sheriff saunters up to the cell door and says, “Uh...Frank...could I speak to you for a moment?” “Yeah, Marlo! Whatta ya want?” “(ahem) Well, as you know, the Corn Boil was a disaster...” “Yeah, I’m *sure* I know! I’ve been here in this cell for the last two weeks. I missed the whole damn thing!” “(ahem) Ah... Yes, I’m aware of that. Well, we have recruited a

number of the tougher fellows in the County, and at the meeting last night your name was brought up by several of them. I guess what I'm trying to say is, do you think that you, being who you are, might be interested in becoming a member?"

"Marlo," I says, "I'm a fuckin' *bandit!* You gettin' soft in the head? You yourself hauled me all the way back from York Nebraska in *chains!* You want *me* to be a cop?"

I joined. Six months later I un-joined, as there was nothin' excitin' goin' on, and I found myself, along with Abe, back up on the hill doin' time. I had been measured for the uniform but never saw it or the thirty-two inch oak club they were gonna give us. Lookin' back, I wouldn't have liked the job anyway.

My brother John came home from Viet Nam. A lot of our other soldiers did not. Their names are on the monument down on the Levee and on the stones in other small towns all over Jo Daviess County. Those who returned, many with wounds that would trouble them for the rest of their lives, and many that had not actually seen combat, had all been exposed to Agent Orange. It would eat them alive and ruin the remainder of their time on this earth. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, in an older time known only as 'Shell Shock', was perhaps even deadlier to them, an endless circular road that always and forever takes them back, inescapably, to Viet Nam. Every kind of medication known has been tried on those poor lost boys, and none of it has worked

at all. The nightmares and the blood will not go away. They were not welcomed home like our soldiers of today but suffered cruelly from the ones they thought they were protecting. They fought for *your* country, and for *you*. Cry for them.

Bernie, in late 1978, was hit from behind out in front of the Old Dance Hall on highway 20, when he and Burt were turnin' to go to the dance, and received the worst whiplash injury I have ever witnessed or heard of, not being able to sleep or eat or work or nothin'. I saw him nearly every day and felt so bad for him; the pain pills the doctors had given him didn't help, and the only release from pain was the occasional drag on a joint of marijuana. He still liked to shoot pool



Bernie and his fabulous Riviera with some of his best friends on the back roads one day...

though, and when he could, would go to the tournaments in the surrounding towns and either watch or play, dependin' on how he was feelin' at the time. If he had smoked enough, he would shoot. For a solid year he suffered, and of course the lawyers and the doctors wanted their money and were bein' very helpful tryin' to get a settlement for him. You know how some lawyers and doctors can be. Slow. Helpful, but slow...

Bernie's nice Buick Limited had been destroyed when it was struck from the rear and, not bein' able to work he couldn't buy another, so his friend Billy Joe gave him a 1970 Torino that had seen better days. Still, with no income, he couldn't buy much gas for it and it sat on Main Street more often than not. That's

where he parked it the mornin' of April 19th, 1980, and he just strolled around for a while. Then, a friend who happened to be on his way to the pool tournament in Elizabeth happened by. They picked up a six-pack at the Mobil Station, and headed north, intendin' to take the scenic route as they had plenty of time before the tournament began. When they got to Scales Mound they stopped for another six-pack, and headed for the Elizabeth road. I went out there a few days later and saw the tire marks where they had left the road at over a hundred miles an hour. Flippin' end over end, Bernie was thrown from the car, which then landed on him, crushing him to death. The Seventies and all of the good times of youth were gone.

Abe was gone too. Somewhere in Florida. He heard about one of the Kennedy boys bein' killed though, and made his way home. When I saw him it was a sad reunion for he had loved Bernie too, as had most of the people of Galena. He had the biggest funeral I have ever attended, and even people who I didn't really consider his friends came to see him off. Abe and I talked for days about the old town and the people we had known, and just before he left town again said to me, "When I heard it, Frank, all I could think was, 'Not you...Not you.'" Well Abe, my best friend, my buddy, I feel the same way, and I miss you.



Bernie 'n pop; graduated from 8th grade; he climbed in with me 'n Abe and we went to New Digginz that day 'n got him drunk...



Bernie in the mountains; he and brother John and his 1st wife in Oregon mid '70's.



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Not only could Bernie make it snow at Chestnut Lodge, he could make bacon, eggs, and toast too...



Bernie at Chestnut Lodge;
he was the main snow maker
for several years...



This is the place where Bernie died, April 19th 1980.



I wonder if he knows how sad I was,



and for how long...



Every one of Bernie's friends held this roach clip for more than five years. It was in his pocket when he died, along with the nearly empty Zig-Zag papers. Why did I keep them? Would *you* have?



Me 'n lil' sister in 1957.



Me 'n lil' sister in 1977.
See? Never changed at all!!



The dash of my '56 Ford. It was the coolest... I never did see one I liked better on any other car.



I bought this old '60 Comet from Elmer for a hundred when gas got so damned expensive. It had jumped to **sixty cents** and would soon go higher; I wasn't gonna pay that kind of money just to go out and have a good time...*so what* if the radiator was junk?



My '68 Cutlass convertible after the motor blew and we stuffed a huge 425 engine into it; she smoked the tires for three blocks...scary when ya got a little drunk!



My '56 Ford Victoria...even
standin' still it looked like it
was movin'... she was my
sweetheart.



My '57 rag top, made out of parts of five different cars.



21...nothin' I liked better
than a damn good time...



Chuck McD in front of the hot dawg stand next to Boze 'n Maggie's; his shirt design was popular for 20 minutes, rebelling against the Galena Noise Ordinance...



Freshman in High School, I
had about 4,000 miles of
back roads under my belt...



The summer I graduated
from 8th grade...already I've
been in jail *twice*.



At one point in time I was almost skinny and had hair...



When hand-made dolls were the rage I made the bag lady, a 'spirit of Christmas' old man in a coffin, and a 'cabbage snatch' doll; use your imagination...I did!



The bar at Benjamin's where old Elmer and I got together every Wednesday night for the Tavern Mint drawing. Barb kindly allowed my use of her pretty face.



The Tavern Mint drawing on Wednesday night became a tradition for me 'n Elmer as he got up into his seventies. He considered me as a son, and died in 1990 at 83.



Ya drink all that beer ya just
gotta let some out...
A pal, road drinkin' in the
70's with my brother Bernie.



Hangin' out at Bonker's bar next to the Stable Inn drive-thru liquor store, just up from the Desoto Hotel. Stan didn't mind if ya smoked a lil' weed in the back room but drew the line at choppin' coke on the bar...



Brother John; Viet Nam vet.
At the monument to those
who served and died for us
in the jungles, and we still
don't know why...
Washington D.C.



Sometimes
them old
cars needed
a drink too.
Bernie
thought it
was funny
as hell and
took nearly
a whole
roll of
pictures of
me givin' it
a
transfusion





This dead deer baby didn't die right away, as you can see from kick marks in the gravel. I drug it off road to keep it from being squished but buzzards were circling above already. I've never hit a deer in my life and don't think those that do should be lightly excused...



In 1967

I decided to put that tattoo on my arm; Destiny's Child. I drew it on with a ballpoint pen and proceeded to poke it in with India Ink. Drunk... got blood poisonin' but didn't die... a long time before the girls who used that name for their band were born.



Elmer died when he was 83, one of Galena's finest old gentlemen. Procento's Pizza is located in what was the garage of the Logan House right behind him. It was a horse stable in 1800s; cool huh?



Farmer's Exchange, where *Campeche Restaurant* is now located. *Mexican food at its finest*, served by Alex and Isidra, since 1978. Their food is authentic, prepared from family recipes from the Yucatan, and *delicious!*



Friends took
photos of everyone they met
on the back-roads of Galena.



Galena Cellars buildin' on south Main when it was a garage that fixed cars and did welding 'n stuff like that. It was a machine shop for a hundred years; still had real buffalo hide belts that drove the machines from pulleys mounted to the rafters on long shafts...yeah. The real deal.

Will Galena 'masterpiece' aid tourism?

By KIM YEAGER
Telegraph Herald Staff Writer

Galena, Ill. — This town's past is all yours at 322 East 2nd St. The historic building, French and Italian in style, is the site of a mural depicting the town's early years when French immigrants first came to the area.

The mural — a masterpiece of French and Italian style — is the work of a local artist who spent months in Galena to create the scene. The mural is the work of a local artist who spent months in Galena to create the scene.

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Allen and French Kennedy and the 322 East mural.

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Wall mural of Galena 322 feet long I painted in 1979



The girls feedin' the friendly horses out on Devil's Ladder Road in the mid-seventies. Never spilled a drop, either one of 'em...



Everybody liked Happy, deaf 'n dumb, he still had a fine personality. At the Gold Room 1972. Hat says Kennedy Construction and was a gift from my brother John.



In the 70's moms didn't have to worry about their children playin' in the yard. Kids were happy in Galena, and as you can plainly see, they loved one another...



One day Larry, who owned the Logan House at the time, talked me into paintin' some shit on the walls, and every person who was drinkin' beer that day in Galena came up to watch while I was paintin', and kept buyin' me drinks all day. I was standin' on the back bar, a shelf only a foot wide, and fokkin near fell off and kilt myself numerous times. The little murals had local people in them and everyone *knew* who they were. Notice me pissin' out the back door in the bottom one.



Lou 'n Bert, one night out
road drinkin' with me in my
Coupe De Ville...



Mack;
a veteran of the Korean War; he
never got over the trauma, and
died at age 53 from booze and a
bad heart just as he was teachin'
me how to finger-pick the guitar.



The Market House Tavern was on Commerce Street for a hundred years, across from the **Market House**! Made sense, didn't it?



30 years old in 1979 in San
Diego visitin' Ted on Ocean
Beach...



The Galena Trolley Depot when it was Foeking's Gas Station, and my '55 Ford 2 door sedan with the 302 four speed...



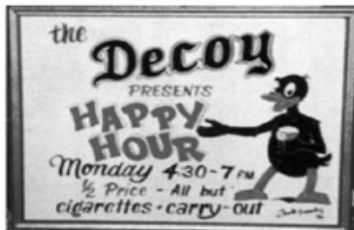
The second big sign that I painted; people accused me for years of putting myself in the picture...how could they *say* such a thing?



She was a sweet friend...



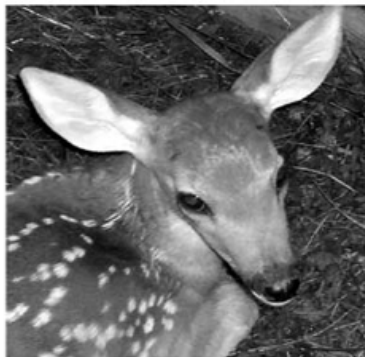
Used to be. Now it's Gobbie's and *nothing* is the same. Ted's Round Up had **live country bands** & plenty of good times & was popular as hell... I painted the sign hangin' under the big one.



If you could drink fast you could catch a damn nice social buzz in a short time & then get good & hammered at the regular cost of your suds; smokes cost a dollar a pack though and six-packs were outrageous at \$3.00...



The Hot Dog stand next to the Cozy Café, where the little park is now in the center of the city on Main Street.



When this little fella grows up he'll be shot and slung over the fender of an old jeep; the meat locker was on Commerce Street, and is now the Flying Horse steak house...rather appropriate.



Down the road again.... My pencil sketch of Willie.



Old outlaw, old guitar, old
hot rod car. 9-11-01



Ghostly dreams of '50
MerCs still haunt me;
shadows that rumble though
the valleys green...
memories that I will keep
forever... of that young
rebellious boy of seventeen.