

## Reflections on the Merry Month of May

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In previous columns I've called May my very favorite month, but upon reflection, although "May was full of promises;" she kept just enough to keep me hoping.

In fishing, May always delivered to the max. I can't remember ever being skunked on a May outing; in fact I often brought home more fish than I wanted to clean, tired from fishing too long.

May overflows with celebrations, like proms, and 'field days,' celebrating the last day of school. The one in "Grease," complete with Ferris wheels and Tilt a Whirls, was a bit much, compared to the sack races and three-legged stumbles we had at Fairmount Public.

It was also the month of the NDSCS faculty's notorious "faculty fishing trip." Sometimes "the trip" was a three day week end some barely survived without hangovers and not a few regrets, although "A great time was had by all." Those who actually fished usually came home with few regrets, and awards for fishing well, because they stayed out of the honky-tonk lakeside dives a few visited.

Many famous ladies have "May" in their names: Daisy May Yokum, from *Li'l Abner*, Louisa May Alcott from "*Little Women*," Ellie May Clampet, from *Beverly Hillbillies*.

But Mae West was the queen of all the Mays. Her Mae was not an indefinite article, she advertised herself for real: "Don't mind if I do, come up."

But now days May has become a season of fearful storms. Shakespeare was right, "Rough winds *do* shake the darling buds of May." But I don't think the Bard's England had twisters like the one that surprised us in May of 1963, and blew my Mamma off her front porch down in Fairmount, leaving her "shaken but not stirred," while it took out a quarter of the town, including the house of my 4th grade "dream lover," Joann Faulkner, after she had moved to Tennessee. I still feel pangs when

passing the bare lot where her sacred house and balcony once stood. Now that “rough wind,” really shook some “darling buds” of maybe.

Literary traditions remind us of elaborate May-time celebrations, like those in “*Camelot*,” where noble knights wooed hopeful ladies with posies and Maypole rituals, after risking their lives in a joust. Now that was a “Tilt ‘a whirl” for real – which Sir Thomas Malory sang about in *Le Morte de’ Arthur*.

Today, Robert Frost’s May is upon us, wearing the gold he so brilliantly engraved: “Nature’s first green is gold/ The hardest hue to hold/ Her early leaf’s a flower/ But only so an hour/ So flower gives way to leaf/ So Eden sank to grief/ So dawn went down today,/ Nothing gold can stay.” That poem is so perfect in its simplicity, I quote it often. William Blake likely gave that poem an “A.”

This morning Joyce Meyer taught us that as you age you will have to give up some of your idols. She quoted lines from Ecc 3 that are so fine in the KJV only God could have spoken them, and He did, through Solomon: “To every thing there is a season,/ And a time to every purpose under heaven./ ... A time to weep and a time to laugh/ A time to mourn, and a time to dance/ ... a time to win and a time to lose/ A time to keep silence, and a time to speak” ...

Those lines haunt me today, as I drag myself around trying to “do things like I used to do.” But it’s time to obey Paul: “forgetting what is behind, press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” That won’t be easy; some behinds are hard to forget. Ask Solomon. Forgive me Lord; my jesting habit is hard to shake. And dear sweet “golden lads and girls,” keep on; our *truly* golden days are just ahead, just over that rise where the sun first shows his face to light our way.