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Hometown Ramblings

By **Bobbie Smith Bryant**
Contributing Columnist



Our Neighbors

It is rare for my Daddy to be at home on a weekday. Even more unusual is the spectacular 12 inches of snow splayed across the frigid countryside. There will be no English, history or math lessons for me this week, school will be out for several days in our farming community of Calloway County.

With our morning chores complete, Daddy proffers, "Let's me and you drive to Kirksey and check on Granny and Granddaddy. It shouldn't take too long, and we can check

out the snow."

I eagerly tug on my long johns, scarf, boots, and gloves, and waddle out to his truck. We carefully inch down the drive, flabbergasted by the amazing drifts of snow piled high above the tires of the truck.

Farmers in the area have worked all through the night, trying to keep the Kirksey Highway passable. The road is the main artery connecting everyone with Murray, the largest town within several miles. We motor along for about two miles. In a few minutes, we

come upon a tractor blocking the road, stuck in a seemingly bottomless drift. The driver is a family friend and neighbor.

Dad brings our truck to a stop, climbs out into the snow, and offers to help. As the two men discuss possible strategies, another neighbor arrives in his pickup truck and he too offers to help. Together, the three men decide to hook heavy chains to the tractor and attach them to the neighbor's truck.

The first man climbs into his tractor seat and lets out the clutch, pushing forcefully for more diesel. We are astounded, as black smoke pours forth and the tractor tires spin, uselessly. While the tractor remains decisively stuck, the helpful neighbor's truck is now mired hubcap deep as well. Dad slogs back to our truck to go home and get our tractor so he can pull them both out. To his dismay he discovers that our truck is now wedged in the massive snow drifts as well.

Sarcastic laughter erupts as the three hapless men grasp their plight. The closest farmhouse is



Photo provided

Bobbie and her brother Billy and their snowman in 1968.

at least a half-mile away. Walking in the knee-deep snow is really out of the question, they'll simply have to be patient until someone else comes along to help.

The tractor driver climbs into the truck of the neighbor while Daddy and I talk and pass the time in our truck, listening to the local news on the radio, keeping warm as we wait. Within the hour, the roar of a gigantic road-grader is heard in the distance.

The three men gather once more to discuss different options of how to get out of this fix. Eventually, an enormous tractor with a snowblade emerges through thick sprays of

snow, as it clears a path on the road. The driver is yet another neighbor that instantly comes to our aid. With his help, in time, we are all mobile once again.

Back at home, Momma is so frantic she cries when she sees us. Granny and Granddaddy hadn't seen us all morning. Phone calls among neighbors and friends up and down the Kirksey road had been going back and forth for nearly three hours, but no one had spotted us. Everyone was worried sick and couldn't imagine where we'd disappeared.

I felt bad that such a ruckus was raised; we had been warm and safe all along. I'm just guessing that with his moth-

er and his wife both so upset my Daddy was probably in the doghouse for a few days afterwards. But for me, it had been a fun time, just the two of us together in a magical winter wonderland.

**Bobbie Smith Bryant is a native of Calloway County. She currently serves as a Community and Economic Development Advisor for the Kentucky League of Cities. She is passionate about western Kentucky and is currently working on a commemorative history to celebrate the 2022 Calloway County Bicentennial. For more information about the author visit bobbiesmithbryant.com.*



Photo provided

Smith Farm on the Kirksey Highway.