

A Path Taken

By Hap Hansen

Most of us have taken different paths as we aged. For some of us, the path led to fame and fortune; for many of us, a variety of careers; and for others of us, we merely survived, but we're still here.

I remember at age 16 was when I took an early path. I had a new driver's license, a beat-up, old used Ford with fender skirts, curb feelers and steering knobs. Some cars also had rear bumper extenders and 'Continental Kits' that were supposed to make that old jalopy look like a Lincoln Continental! In those old cars we also used words and terms on that path to maturity like 'foot feed' (now 'accelerator') and 'emergency brake' (now 'parking brake'). I'll bet most of us remember a path driven when Buick came out with 'Dynaflow' and the newest model vacuum cleaner was an 'Electrolux'. The path would always turn and most of those words are no longer used, but I think most of us remember them.

Another example. Do you remember the path taken to the *\$64,000 Question*? As you recall your path to today, when was the last time you heard the term, 'In a Family Way'? In those long-gone days, the word, 'pregnant' was considered a little too risqué, a little too graphic. As I followed this old, worn path, the word 'divorce' was whispered in hushed tones. If someone called a man a 'Gay Blade,' it had nothing to do with homosexuality. He was simply a 'confirmed bachelor.' Do you remember when a coffee-maker was called a 'percolator'? When Admiral TV came out with a new model called 'Spectravision'? Apparently, 'lumbago' was wiped out with a radiothon, because no one complains of lumbago anymore.

I have many wonderful memories as I travelled my path, which is now old and worn down. My path has been full of deep ruts, dead-ends and start-overs. But overall, I am deeply satisfied. A marriage that lasted 56 years, three marvelous children and seven wonderful grandchildren. I could not have asked for more. Today, however, I still enjoy doing some community service work, and writing stories for Monday. But when the day is done, my path taken is to head to my couch, sit down, put my feet up, turn on the TV, enjoy a Scotch and water and wait for the kids and grandkids to call.