

## Knock at the Door.

10-26-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach  
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When did the doorbell replace a knock on the door at your house?

The home shared with my parents for nineteen years never had a door bell; in fact, when both parents were dead years later, there still no door bell to either their front or back door. No knocker either. Visitors used knuckles.

In the four years of delivering the Erie Daily Times newspaper, 1935-39, collections Saturday morn, it was my right hand knuckles banging on the door that brought subscribers to greet me, all smiles, their twelve cents in hand, mentioning my name, with some cheerful banter.

In the years of sharing home with my parents, it would be a very unusual day when a true stranger knocked on our door. In fact, each of us were accustomed to greeting any visitor by name, step aside, invite them in.

None had knocked on our door to deliver bad news. Never. It was universally a welcome visitor, maybe exchange of gossip, family adventure, a surprise coming events. There was never an anxiety in responding to any knock on the front or back door; incidentally these were never locked, even when we were not home.

Those halcyon long days gone, year later, Barbara and I retired, the children away from our home, doing whatever they always dreamed of, escape our restrictions. Make their own mistakes without hearing "we taught you better".

Then we began traveling.

On this, a trip to South Korea, we found military quarters east of Seoul at the U.S. Osan Air Base. The building was exquisite, a 1940's Quonset Hut, old, ragged on the outside, beautifully furnished inside, welcoming. We learned its history. A MASH Nurses Quarters during the Korean War. This land twice exchanged hands in the fight to control Seoul, as North Korean and Nato Forces waged war, saving South Korea.

Now, that base reasonably secure south of the 38th Parallel.

This day we had visited a restored 17th Century Korean Village, bought souvenirs, learned of Korean culture. This included a demonstration of making paper from mulberry. We even bought several sheets we had watched being made. Had four

imprinted by the local artist. He used a multi-bristled brush, each set of bristles dipped in separate small pots of different colored permanent ink. Then his strokes, rainbow-like on the rough-finish mulberry paper.

One, our name,

*O-BACH*

An aside.

The straight multi-lane cement divided highway southeast of Seoul passed through a fertile valley, vegetation both sides, took us the Korean Village. On these two roadways, arrow-straight, we came across many unfamiliar Chevron markings on its surface. Along both sides of each roadway, large signs announced 1,000 ft intervals for the next 10,000 feet.

We learn, In the event of war with their northern neighbor, this was an instant two-runway military airfield. That reminder to natives and guests, keeping peace comes at a price.

It had rained much of that day; evening rest was welcome. We decide to order a meal delivered to the Quonset. Comfortably there, reviewing that holiday highlights, losing track of time. Suddenly, Booming knocks end of Quonset. We had entered a door, center of the Quonset.

I go to that area, find another door; it won't budge.  
Much pulling to open that door, even part way. Before I can look out,  
a falsetto voice with a slight dialect, announces loudly,

*PIZZA HUT.*

What a relief.

Laughter from both Barbara and I.  
Later, delight with the food, and an understanding  
this was one more delightful South Korean welcoming.