

My Favorite Authors

By Nancy Mann

Lewis Grizzard wrote about changes in his small-town, Georgia world. He wrote chauvinistically about "women's lib."

Grizzard was used to gassing up his truck on a Saturday morning and going to the hardware store. He now stopped for fuel, and *a woman* attendant came out...

"Fill him up?" she asked...

"Please..." he said, somewhat in shock.

"Regular or 'Harold'?"

"Harold? What happened to...Ethel?"

"ETHYL IS RUNNING FOR CONGRESS, YOU MORON!" she replied, wielding a foam windshield squeegee...

Grizzard drove to the hardware store...where a female stepped up behind the counter...

"I'd like a garden hose" he stated matter-of-factly.

"What shade?"

"I'm not certain..." he muttered...

"So, what color is your lawn?"

"Green."

"Then, I'd suggest something in lavender, a melon...or...this delightful... pink."

He asked her if she knew where he could pick up a used winch...

"Try the bus station around midnight," she replied.

Grizzard's book titles are great:

Don't Bend Over in the Garden, Granny- Those Taters Got Eyes! And, Don't Git Near Mama, Sailor, She's Been Eatin' Navy Beans!

Then, there is William Ash, founder and perhaps only member of the British Maoist party. Born in 1917, Ash heard stories about Billy the Kid – from Kid's accomplice, the fingerless (from a shoot-out) George Coe. When he was twelve, Ash lost \$200 in the Stock Market (\$2,760 in today's money) and for the remainder of his life, he referred to himself as "a ruined tycoon."

Ash made 13 escapes from Nazi P.O.W. camps. His Spitfire was shot down over France; he was required to make his way to Spain and then England for re-assignment, but, he took "a break," to Paris. There, he visited the Louvre, swam, dined, sampled wines (he lucked upon funds) and walked through the Paris Zoo. He told his commanding officer he was picking up language, customs (to include food scarcity), and making observations "useful in espionage."

Ash made it outside the barbed wire. He went over, under and through fences. He tunneled through latrines. He was not among the 76 men who escaped from Stalag Luft III; he remained there, gathering critical intelligence. Ash called himself "The Cooler King;" he endured torture when caught.

He changed identities with another P.O.W. Both men climbed towers, removed their clothing, tying it around their waists, scaled the wire, and dropped down into opposite prison yards, changing into each other's clothes and speaking each other's slang, immediately. All was done to confuse the enemy.

Once, he escaped to the Lithuanian coast, and found a boat on a beach – it was too heavy to move. He carefully observed, then approached some men in a field, and told them he was an escaped, American pilot.

"Ja! Ja! We would love to help you – we have even ... heard of you ...but we are German soldiers, and you have trampled on.... our best cabbages!"

Ash went back in "The Cooler."

His book? *Under the Wire*. Ash's second? Not yet "de-classified."