

Bayside old-timers hang around at 'Domino Hall' waiting for mail

BAYSIDE (AP) — The mail isn't ready, so Ross Downs said, "Let's go across the street." Over there, just across from the Bayside Post Office, is what some people call Knox's Domino Hall. It used to be the biggest grocery store in town. Now it's where some of the old-timers hang out when they are waiting for Postmaster Dan Sawyer or his assistant Myrtle McCutcheon, to sort and put up the mail.

On weekends, some of Ernest Knox's friends will gather to play a few games. They don't gamble, he said. It's just for fun.

Knox and Lee Greer were sitting at a table under a ceiling fan shooting the breeze. Knox had to talk quite loud, because Greer can't hear much nowadays. He will be 90 years old Jan. 7.

"I open this place up in the mornings so some of these fellows can have a place to wait for the mail," Knox said. The lobby of the post office is not much bigger than a stamp, and there is no place to sit down.

Downs, who is 88, gets around with the aid of a cane. He lives a couple of blocks down the street.

"I can make the trip walking, if I have a place to rest before I start back," he said.

Greer also uses a cane. He has a bum knee he got when playing football for Mississippi A&M (now Mississippi State University). He drives to the post office, though.

"They laugh about me and my bum knee," he said, "but I don't know what I would do if it weren't for my friends to help me."

"He's a bug man," Downs said. "He used to inspect cotton for the government."

Greer was an entomologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 40 years. He's been in Bayside since 1951.

Some others came in. There was Ethan Wicks, who used to farm but decided he had it made when he was 72 and retired. He is 78 now and still likes to kick up his heels when he hears some good music.

Bill. They came to Bayside from Seadrift right after Bill was born.

"His daddy and his uncle were bringing the family down here in a boat," Downs recalled. "It was a day like this. No wind. They sat right out there in the bay. His daddy and his uncle got out in a skiff and towed the boat across the bay. Bill and his sister were burned up."

Downs knows a lot about Bayside and its people. He's been around since 1909 when his family came down on the railroad from Sedalia, Mo.

That was when Bayside was just getting started. The promoters sold five-acre tracts and with each sale went a lot in town. "There's people all over the country who own lots in Bayside because they bought those 5-acre tracts," Downs said.

Law partners coexist as friendly political foes

EL PASO (AP) — Politics make for strange law partners in El Paso, where the county Republican and Democratic chairmen are partners with their opposing political party's local presidential campaign manager.

Ron Ederer, chairman of the El Paso County Republican party, is a law partner with Bob Neill, who is running Michael Dukakis' campaign in El Paso. And Tom Diamond, the county's Democratic chairman, is a law partner with Alan Rash, county chairman of George Bush's campaign.

The situation gives rise to mischief at Ederer, Holmes & Neill. Republican campaign material shows up regularly on Neill's desk, but the devout Democrat always has a prime suspect.

"That's OK. I have been known to do the same thing to Ron," Neill said.

Over at Diamond, Rash, Leslie & Smith, the rhetoric gets more heated as election day approaches.

Diamond described his relationship with Rash as being "kind of like a husband and wife with different political viewpoints."

In 1964, Diamond and Rash were chairmen of their respective parties. Diamond worked for Lyndon Johnson; Rash rooted for Barry Goldwater. Four years later they teamed up in a law practice.

Diamond describes Rash as his closest friend, but he still disparages Rash as an elitist Republican who prefers to meet with friends at the country club.

"Other than that, he has many sterling qualities," Diamond said.

Diamond characterizes Republicans as the silk-stocking set — a stereotype that Rash disproved by pointing out his nylon-acrylic socks.

"I go to two or three dances a week," he said. He refers to himself and his friends as the senior citizen action group.

Knox isn't much on dancing, but he said he likes to go up to Refugio now and then on Wednesdays for the senior citizen get-togethers. He sits out the dances and concentrates on the potluck suppers.

Bill McCutcheon came in. He's Myrtle's husband. You know, she works over at the post office. Bill worked for Reynolds Metals for 22 years before he retired.

"He was a cow puncher when he was a young 'un," Downs said. "He rode bulls."

No, he didn't make the rodeo circuit. "It was local," Bill said. "Just us boys around town in those days," he said.

"Yeah, he slings more bull than he's rode," Knox said, drawing a laugh from everybody, including McCutcheon.

Bill was the youngster in the group. Only 74. Some people call him Little Bill. His father was Big

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