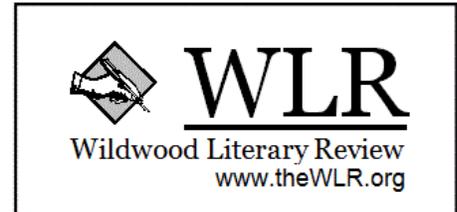




Memoir



Ric Gagelin

YOU DON'T KNOW S**T!

May 2017

Being 81 years old and observing the rapid rate of change in all things around me, I realize how little I know about some of the technology that is, by now, second nature to those who have come after me: Baby Boomers, and Millennials. I don't know of any other age groups. There probably are more.

So, I am willing to admit that some of the stuff that is second nature to younger folks today is beyond my range of thinking.

For instance, I haven't kept up with some of the aspects of computers and other digital devices, even though I began my career using large mainframe computers to carry out dynamic analysis of the separation of various components of space missions, such as the Lunar Orbiter or the Space Shuttle. So, I have to admit, when it comes to some of these devices nowadays, I don't know s**t.

Other stuff I am in the dark on: I don't text very much, my fingers just don't adapt to the keyboard on an i-phone. At one time, I could type up to 70 words a minute on a Smith- Corona typewriter (are they still around?), but now it takes me ten minutes to compose a one-line text message.

I am not a user of Twitter, Facebook or some of the other "social media". I don't know s**t about that stuff.

But as I think about today's younger people, I realize that there are some things that I, and others in my age group, know about and experienced that these folks haven't a clue about either.

As a young lad, I and my friends spent most of our time outdoors. We climbed trees, made slingshots, hunted blackbirds with our BB guns, rode our bikes out into the country, swung on bag swings, flew kites and had paper routes. At school, we played softball, tag, King of the Mountain, Anti-I-Over and Pom-Pom Pull-away, all with our female classmates. How's that for equality?

Starting when I was 14 years old, I became very adept in various welding processes through personal experience, working in my oldest brother's shop. I could weld steel with an AC electric welder, in various positions, vertical and overhead, and also with an acetylene torch. I could braze and repair cast iron castings. I even was able to repair broken white metal castings (that was the toughest). I could apply hard surfacing with a torch, to make implements wear longer. All of this I attribute to being brought up in my dad's and brother's welding and repair shops. So, when it comes to welding, I think that most of the younger ones nowadays don't know s**t about it.

When I was 15, I owned a '37 Ford coupe. It had a habit of blowing transmissions, and I repaired them several times. One winter, I pulled the V/8 engine of the vehicle and totally rebuilt it. I did other repairs on that and several other vehicles I owned as a teenager and young man. If you haven't rebuilt a car engine, you guys who are walking around staring at your smart phones, don't know s**t.

When I was of millennial age, I and almost every young man of my age was subject to the draft. Every boy in my class at a small town high school was either drafted into the Army as I was, or enlisted in another branch of the service to serve their time. You had to have some pretty good reason to not be drafted. If you haven't experienced some of the other fun activities that came with being "in the service", as a millennial, you don't know s**t.

My best friend Jerry, lived with his family on a farm a half mile from town. They had various livestock including cattle. I used to ride out to his farm on my bike and visit. Sometimes we amused ourselves by trying to ride calves. We would get onto them in the barn. They, being reasonably smart animals, would try to buck us off or brush against a pole to knock us off. If you haven't managed to ride a calf, you don't know s**t.

As a young boy, we didn't have indoor plumbing. Once a week on Saturday night, I got a bath in a galvanized tub. My mother took the hot water that had been heated on a wood-burning cook stove and poured it into the tub. I, being the youngest of the brothers, usually got seconds on the water in the tub. My older brothers had a better idea. During the summer, they would mount a tank on top of a shed, fill it with water and let the sun make it warm through the course of the day. Inside, the tank was hooked up to a shower head, borrowed from a garden watering can. You took a shower by first getting wet, sudsing up and then washing off. You also tried to save enough water for your next brother.

Back then, some folks, like our family, still used outdoor toilets (we had another name for them). Eventually we had indoor plumbing and a septic tank, but that came later. In our area of the country, the winters were really cold. Many days were below zero. But when you had to go, you had to go. But let me tell you, if you haven't taken a crap in an outhouse when it is ten below zero, YOU DON'T KNOW S**T!



Ric Gagelin is a longtime resident of Lake Wildwood and frequent contributor to this Review. You can send comments to the Author at: wildwoodwritersgroup@gmail.com

File: 517-M-Gagelin-YouDon'tKnow-14-pdf

[Click here](#) to return to Home Page and Table of Contents.