

The East County Journal Circulation Group II

**NEWS DIVISION
332 Feature Page Design**

March 9, 2022, page 10

SENIOR LIVING

Mossyrock author Goodwin enjoys the good life

BY CATHY KANE
East County Journal

Growing up in the Bear Canyon community just seven miles west of Morton on Hwy. 508, 75-year-old Mossyrock resident and children’s book author Bill Goodwin knows firsthand what it was like to grow up in “the good old days.”

“It was great. The only thing we had to go to town for was school. We couldn’t wait to get done with that and get back home,” he said. “There was always something to do. We were swimming in the swimming hole. We were fishing. We were picking berries.

“We could run to any neighbor’s house. We were everybody’s kids. The ladies were all fantastic cooks. It was any little boy’s dream - the cakes and the donuts and the cookies and the pies.”

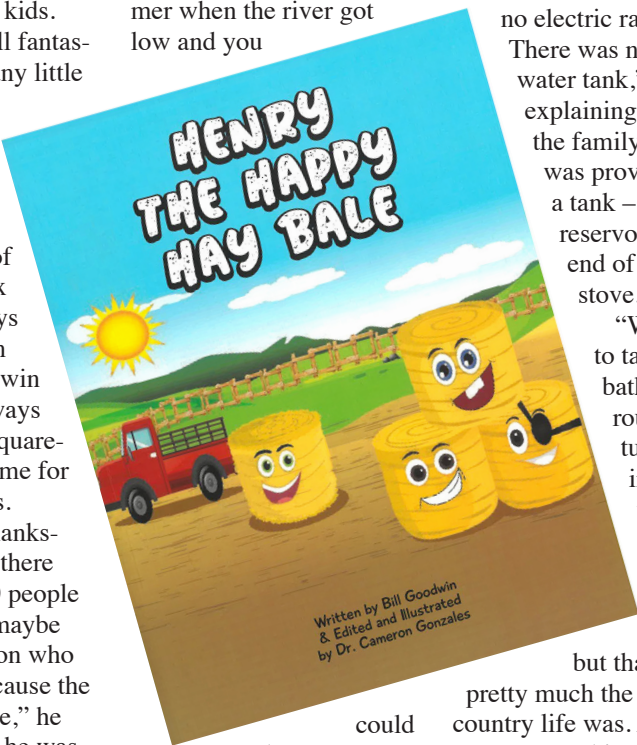
The youngest of nine children – six girls and three boys – born over a span of 15 years, Goodwin said there was always room in his 898-square-foot childhood home for family and friends.

“Christmas, Thanksgiving, whatever, there would be 20 to 30 people in the house and maybe more, depending on who would stop by because the kids were all home,” he said, noting when he was very young, three of his sisters had already married and were beginning their own families in Randle, Auburn and Tacoma.

“The family was all pretty close. And there was not a weekend that went by that one or two of the sisters and their kids

would come by ‘grandma’s house.’

“The house was kind of set right up against the hillside and the Tilton River was right in front of our house. Back in the old days, there was a swinging bridge that went across there. There were a couple of homesteads across the river. You couldn’t drive there, except in the summer when the river got low and you



could take a tractor or a truck across,” he said.

“There were four bedrooms in the house – the girls shared two rooms, us boys shared one room, my parents had a room. There was no indoor plumbing. We had only wood heat and a wood cook stove in our kitchen. There was



Bill Goodwin courtesy photos | East County Journal

Born in Morton and raised in the Bear Canyon community, children’s book author Bill Goodwin and his wife of 56 years, Mary Lou, are currently enjoying life at “Pooh’s Corner” in Mossyrock. Inset below: Bill Goodwin’s children’s book, “Henry The Happy Hay Bale,” is available at local retailers and online.

no electric range. There was no hot water tank,” he said, explaining water for the family’s needs was provided by a tank – a water reservoir – at the end of the wood stove.

“We used to take our baths in little round wash tubs sitting in front of the stove. It’s almost comical,

but that was pretty much the way country life was. And if you were making two bucks a day and trying to take care of 11 people, it was kind of tough. But I would not trade it for the world. It’s a lot of good memories,” he said.

“I can remember my dad getting up at 4 o’clock in the morning to get the fire going and then going down

to milk the cow. Then, off to work he went,” he said. “We had chickens. I don’t remember ever having a pig, but my grandpa – who lived close by, had a couple of pigs.

“We had no phone. No one had a phone in the valley until 1962 or 1963,” he added.

“The first television in the valley belonged to folks just up the road from us and we got to go to their house after school for a half hour to watch “The Lone Ranger” – sometimes, it was “Hop-along Cassidy.” Then, we actually got our own TV set,” he smiled, a collaborated gift from the older sisters. “Back in those days, the big excitement was ‘The Wonderful World of Disney’ on Sunday evenings. That was like going to the movies.”

Goodwin graduated from Morton High School in 1965 and began his career in the logging industry, which took him to several communities in Washington state.

In 1966, he married his wife, Mary Lou, and the couple went on to have four children, eight grandchildren and three, soon-to-be, four great-grandchildren.

After working more than 32 years, Goodwin retired. Four years ago, the couple moved to the Winston Creek area of Mossyrock. They have dubbed this special spot “Pooh’s Corner.”

“It’s peaceful. We have nice neighbors. It kind of reminds me of home,” he said.

Beginning at Morton High School, Goodwin said he has enjoyed writing and telling stories, many featuring his memories of “a simpler time with less stress and worry.”

He also enjoys passing down the story of his family’s Washington state roots – including the grandparents who came from France in the mid-1850s and raised four sons, living

first in Cinebar and then in Roy. And the Goodwin family, who settled in Bear Canyon area in 1903.

“I have been told that I have always had a way with words,” he said.

At the request of granddaughter Mary-Marie Goodwin, Bill wrote the children’s book, “Henry the Happy Hay Bale.”

“She was 6 years old at the time. Now she is 21 and graduating from college,” he said, noting the book was inspired by the cross country trip Mary-Marie took with her mother and grandmother and reported to her grandfather every night.

The book is the first of four that Goodwin would eventually like to publish in a four volume set.

“Every little person I know who has read the book, loves it,” he said.

“Henry the Happy Hay Bale” is available at Smith & Son Grocery in Mossyrock, Colton Pharmacy in Morton, Blanton’s Market in Packwood and Stanley Store in Onalaska. The book can also be ordered online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

Going Home

by Bill Goodwin (2000)

Yesterday was a journey to the past. The old house was still standing, but just a shell of 2x4 walls, the kitchen was empty and the living room that had been filled with love was a soggy mess. In my mind, the old radio was still in its place. The Friday Night fights were still on the air. The woodstove was saying welcome home. How quickly the days of our youth desert us. But in our memories it was just yesterday. If we could just return for a little while all would be well. The smell and taste of fresh homemade bread and donuts. The pancakes with fresh blackberries and cream from our own cow. The house filled with friends and family. The love of a mother who could make anything well with just a kiss and a hug. Yes, a journey into the past that made me at home. The trails that were such an adventure when I was little and still etched into the hillsides. Paths that were worn deep by my older brothers and sisters. Left to be explored by other generations. How small the old house looks after 30 years. It gave life and comfort to nine children and now is going the way of all who finish their journey. Thank you for the memories.

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