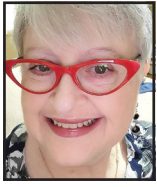


Finding a flower in the desert

My mom always anticipated At Wit's End, the newspaper humor column by Dayton, Ohio native Erma Bombeck. So mom clipped the column from the paper, read to others, and stuck the by-then dogeared column on the fridge. Bombeck, who once admitted wanting to sell her kids, was a mainstay of American culture for decades, writing three weekly columns for hundreds of newspapers. She was also a regular on "Good Morning, America" and the author of many best-selling humor books, including "The Grass is Greener over the Septic Tank."



AMY ABBOTT

Erma Bombeck left us too soon, dying after a kidney transplant in 1996. Bombeck's family has donated her papers to the University of Dayton, allowing her readers and fans another look at what made her work so special. A \$50,000 gift accompanied the truckload of items saved primarily by the late Bill Bombeck, Erma's husband, whom she met as a student at UD.

Moms across America related to the woman who said, "When my kids become wild and unruly, I use a nice, safe playpen. When they're finished, I climb out." There were always Bombeck books on our shelves. My Mom belonged to a South Whitley literary club and reviewed "If Life's a Bowl of Cherries, What am I Doing in the Pits?" for the club. She practiced reading some of Erma's quips and quotes to my brother and me, and even as children, we got the humor of a mother's challenges with her children and the changing world.

I've been a columnist since 1979, and Erma Bombeck is my role model for writing and life. Writers whose mothers read Erma in real time now embrace a lively community called the Erma Bombeck Writer's Workshop. Every two years, the group holds what the world calls a writing workshop. But that's not it. It's a love-in, but not in the Woodstock sense. Instead, it's a love-in dedicated to a woman who understood life. For example, check out this Erma quote from a 1981 commencement speech at Benedictine College, Humor makes it so you can survive. To find humor in tragedy is finding the flower in the

desert." Those who attend the EBWW are exposed to a faculty of well-known writers. But what everyone has in common is the desire to write like Erma, to make readers laugh and cry in a single sentence, to find joy in simple words that live large. The first evening at Erma features a

tribute song of "Our Love is Here to Stay," Erma's favorite song. In 2018, Maureen McCormick, who made the song "The Morning After" from "The Poseidon Adventure" a hit, sang Erma's song. Then, by tradition, we all had cake. We all have cake at every meal at Erma. It's a tradition, as is wearing tiaras, sometimes boas, and the occasional exciting hair color. First-time attendees are known as Erma Virgins, and the rest of us are simply Ermites.

All three Bombeck children, Andy, Matt, and Betsy, attend most workshops, and until his death, Bill Bombeck was a regular. I cannot imagine what Erma would say if she could witness the bi-annual soiree and ongoing publishing activities and understand the excitement around the exhibit of her papers.

And now, thanks to the generosity of the Bombeck family, visitors to the University of Dayton Library can see firsthand the legacy of a life well-lived. In 2016, when I arrived as a faithful Erma Virgin, knowing no one at my first Erma, I encountered her lone IBM Selectric typewriter at the entrance to the workshop. This may sound crazy, but it stopped me as surely as standing on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. I suspect many Erma readers will have the same reaction visiting the exhibit.

What's in the exhibit? Teri Rizvi, the executive director of EBWW, shared: 4,500 original columns, 1,158 photos, 915 "Good Morning America" scripts, 120 speeches, 41 pieces of art, and frame material, including the LIFE magazine cover proclaiming Erma Bombeck the "Socrates of the Ironing Board," 34 awards, including 16 honorary degrees, 32 foreign editions of books, 14 commencement addresses, 13 New York Times Bestseller List plaques, 12 book manuscripts and notes, 12 "Maggie" TV scripts, 11 calendars, five boxes

of articles about Erma Bombeck, including interviews, ERA speeches and Rose Parade clippings, three unproduced scripts (two plays and a sitcom with screenwriter son Matt), and of course, one

vintage IBM Selectric typewriter. Scholars, writers, students, and Erma aficionados can only view the Erma Bombeck Collection, now primarily cataloged, by appointment. A major

exhibit is planned for 2024. Dayton, Ohio, is about a three-hour drive from Columbia City. **AMY MCVAY ABBOTT**, Whitley County native and long-time columnist, is a

colossal fan-girl of the late Erma Bombeck, whose work leaves a tremendous legacy. Abbott will participate(virtually) in her fourth Erma Bombeck Writer's Workshop starting tomorrow.

TEEN DRIVING Safety

KEEPING TEENS SAFE

Acquiring a driver's license is a huge accomplishment in your teen's life. While they will be ecstatic, parents may become struck with worry over their new independence. Teaching a new driver about safety on the road can ease some of the stress. Take advantage of the time you have before your teen tests for his license. Going over study courses and leading by example while they are accompanying you on the road are great ways to instill safe driving habits. Point out what other drivers are doing irresponsibly. Parental guidance leaves a lasting impression on a learning teen.

AVOIDING THE CELL PHONE

The Department of Motor Vehicles reports that studies have shown using a cell phone while driving is equally as dangerous as driving drunk. Everyone knows that drinking and driving is illegal, and most states also prohibit cell phone usage when behind the wheel. Make sure your child knows a phone is for emergencies and to be used when safely parked. An average text message causes a loss of focus on the road for 4.6 seconds. A lot can happen in under five seconds, especially when you consider that is about the amount of time it would take to drive the length of a football field. The road has many obstacles and being distracted by a phone can make them even more hazardous.

OBEYING SPEED LIMITS

Speed limits are enforced to keep drivers safe on the road. Tell your teen to not feel pressured to keep up with speeding traffic. Speeding is a big factor in fatal-teen accidents on American highways. Experts believe this is due to inexperience and peer pressure. Explain to your child that even if speeding doesn't result in an accident, there also is the possibility of getting a costly speeding ticket. They should be aware that you will not foot the bill and that their insurance premiums may skyrocket.

DRIVING SOLO

Give your teen some time to adjust to driving without your supervision before you allow other passengers in the vehicle. A full cab of teenagers can be distracting to a seasoned veteran, let alone someone who is just taking their first steps on the highways.

YOUR CHALLENGES

OUR SOLUTIONS

Insurance is about much more than protecting yourself. At its core, insurance protects your future, your assets, and can provide your family with financial security that they can count on. When you work with a Hilb Insurance professional, you will receive seasoned advice and the private consultation you deserve. Layne understands what it means to protect your family and livelihood from whatever the future might bring. Give Layne a call today!

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DIRECTIONS TO PROPERTY: From SR 109, head west on W 600 S (also W 700 N) across from the old Crooked Lake Golf Course. Continue for a mile and the property will be on your right.

TRACT DESCRIPTIONS:

TRACT 1: 37± ACRES of productive tillable farmland. Has blacktop road access from the north and south and could potentially be a good scenic build site. There is a well and septic system on the southeast corner of the property along with a small structure.

TRACT 2: 3± ACRES with an 1,800 sq. ft. 4 bed, 1 bath farmhouse. House is tucked up on a hill surrounded by mature trees and woods around the north and eastern borders of this tract. A beautiful country setting!

TRACT 3: 20± ACRES of woods and wetlands. Plentiful with many deer and turkey activity. Would make an excellent hunting property. Check out the trail cam photos taken fall of 2022!!

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