

Slipper's Soliloquies

Fate works in mysterious ways

By Fred Slipper



When someone does something nice for a person it is often difficult to find a way to repay the favor. I had something happen yesterday that more than ever convinced me there is a Higher Power assisting me.

In order for me to explain my story I will have to go back a few weeks. In 1962 when John Higgins was manager of the local office of Seattle-First National Bank, he wrote a very complete history of banking in Skagit County. A couple of months ago he reviewed this at a Rotary Club meeting. I have attended some of the Rotary meetings as a guest but missed this one. Later some of the members told me it was too bad I had not been there, because included in Higgins' history was banking history of both Hamilton and Lyman. In the Hamilton account, he mentioned my father, who was not in the banking business, but as a pioneer merchant was interested in establishing banking there. And of course my wife's father, F.C. Fellows, was the founder of the Lyman State Bank before moving to Sedro and organizing the Skagit Valley State Bank, now Rainier Bank.

I thought all of this was interesting and asked John Higgins if I could have a copy of this history, not realizing what was involved. A few days ago I received it and it consists of 75 pages. John had made Xerox copies of each page and I know what effort this took. Included in the history is banking from the beginning in Mount Vernon, Anacortes, Burlington, Conway, Edison, Concrete and LaConner.

Now is where fate intervened. Yesterday I drove down to the river to see how the water might look for fishing. As I turned onto the Fruitdale Road I met a pickup pulling a nice looking river boat. Being engrossed in driving, I did not actually recognize the driver. About five hundred yards further toward the river I saw an oar in the middle of the road. I stopped and did not realize how long or how heavy this oar was until I picked it up. I was sure it had fallen from the pick-up I had just met, so I went on down to the steelhead park to find out who had just left there. Ewing Gehrke, the caretaker, told me John Higgins had just left with the boat I described. He also told me the value of the oar, which astounded me.

So I came back to the Courier office and called Higgins' home. John had just arrived home, and I told him I had the oar he had just lost. At first he thought I was kidding, and then said to wait a minute while he checked his boat. Sure enough, an oar was missing. I told him that I bet this was the first time he had ever been told something was found before he even knew it was missing....

So that's why I believe a Higher Power is looking after me - otherwise why would I happen along right after the oar was lost? And at the same time I solved my problem of how to return the favor John had done for me.