

From This Corner
But Now I See

Larry Baird

I have always had an avid interest in cars. I believe this is not unusual for men of my generation. I have also been accused of being somewhat obsessed with keeping my vehicle clean. Well, OK, forget the “somewhat.” My present vehicle is one that I always pictured myself owning. It is a full size Buick. My sons always had advice about this desire. They said, “Dad, don’t get a Buick until you are old.” So, I waited, but determined that if Tiger Woods was endorsing them that they couldn’t be too stodgy. So I have my Buick Lucerne which is one sweet ride for the superintendent who has the furthest to travel to cabinet meetings.

Recently on a trip to Syracuse I approached the Lackawanna toll barrier. I had washed the car as is my custom for such a trip. Clean black cars are especially attractive. As I glided through the E-ZPass section it happened. “Splat, splat, splat, and more splats.” My assumption is that it was a flock of seagulls. How many of them I do not know, but my car was literally covered! I could not even see through the windshield. After smearing it around with the wipers I could see well enough to determine I was driving a desecrated vehicle. For the next half hour my mental stability was in serious doubt. When I came to the Pembroke rest area I stopped to see what could be done. The quantity of this stuff and its distribution was amazing. It looked as if I had won some kind of sick Kentucky Derby. I tried window cleaner and it just moved it around. To add insult another man drove in and parked next to me. He had a perfectly spotless Cadillac. He took one look, and for a moment I could tell he was considering moving his car. Then his look turned to a profound look of sympathy. He shook his head and walked away leaving me alone holding a towel filled with gull poop.

On my way to the hotel I looked desperately for a car wash, but there were none. I have heard that for some people their car is an extension of their psyche. This may be true. It was not until the following morning that I located a wash about a mile from the conference center in Cicero. I had left early determined I was NOT going to pull into a meeting covered in it. As the cleanser and water sprayed down on me I could only think of one thing. This seemed almost holy. I felt

like a new man with a new perspective. I was ready to take on the day! I was no longer obsessed with what had happened yesterday. Today was here and it was good. No, it was very good.

Do you remember the story of the man born blind who received his sight through an encounter Jesus? The Lord told him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." Then Scripture says, "Then he went and washed and came back able to see." (John 9:6) That is the way it is when a person has been given a new lease on life by God. All of the stuff they have encountered in life is washed away as in baptism. They come from the water saying things like, "I once was blind, but now I see." They feel cleansed and restored. A new day is before them, and they are so very thankful.

So when you meet a fellow traveler on the highways of life, and you see he has been through some bad stuff, show him where the wash is. People are so much more important than cars. If you do I guarantee you that he will be eternally grateful. I know in more ways than one.