

## Rural Route 4 Remembering Ada

New Year's Day. Making resolutions that we know we won't keep. Eating black-eyed peas, cabbage, and pork for good luck (which pretty much does away with that resolution to lose weight!). Football games. One after another. That's the way it's supposed to be. But sometimes, New Year's Day doesn't include these long-held traditions. Other things get in the way, making for memories never to be forgotten.



Phillip Burgess

Such was the case in my 14<sup>th</sup> year on Rural Route 4.

It was frigid cold. The ground was frozen. Ice was shooting from the ground on both sides of the dirt road leading to the house. It was a day for staying inside and watching television. Good thing, too, because my favorite college football team was in a bowl game right after dinner. But that's when things went wrong. Ada really messed things up.

Ada was a big brown mule that we had inherited from my Uncle Arthel, who was Daddy Grand's younger brother. He had bought her the previous spring and intended to use her for planting and plowing his garden. Like Daddy Grand, he believed in large gardens and it made sense to get a mule to help with the plowing and planting. Mules are a rarity these days because most folks today don't have a garden, and those who do usually invest in a gas-powered tiller. So, Ada left one Burgess farm and relocated to another one a quarter mile away. Daddy Grand didn't mind having a new mouth to feed. He'd grown up taking care of Pa's mules and had spent many hours plowing the hilly fields on Rural Route 4. And I grew fond of her, too.

I had always wanted a horse but couldn't afford one, so by default Ada became my "horse." I didn't have a saddle, but I could ride her bareback in the pasture. That is, if she was agreeable to it. If she wasn't in the mood, she'd head to the back side of the pasture as soon as she saw me coming with the bridle. There were other tricks she had to let me know I had no business sitting on her old brown back. She'd turn her head and

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# Watts Happening

## Save Money on Your Energy Bill This Winter

**Use a programmable thermostat:** You can reduce your wasted heat by using a programmable thermostat that can turn down the heat at a specific time when you're away from the home and increase the heat shortly before you arrive.

**Air seal & insulate your home:** You can prevent heat from escaping or cold from entering your home by insulating and air sealing gaps and cracks.

**Install energy-efficient doors and windows:** Doors and windows are both places where cold air can easily come through, so by installing higher-grade doors and windows, you can save energy and money.

**Turn off the lights:** Turn off all lights while you are not at home to see savings on your electric bill. It sounds simple because it is.

**Use lighting controls:** You can save even more money on your power bill by using motion sensors and timer controls.

**Lower the water heater:** One significant way to reduce energy consumption is by lowering the temperature on your water heater. If you will be out of town for more than a couple days, lower your water heater to the lowest setting.

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try her best to sink her long, yellowed teeth in my legs. Or she would head to the barn at a fast walk that quickly became an all-out gallop. The barn door wasn't very high and she knew she could scrape me off by running through it.

But none of this mattered on that frigid New Year's Day so long ago.

I looked out the window from my warm perch and saw Ada lying beneath the big pecan tree in the pasture. She was dead. Perhaps it was old age. Or perhaps something else. But regardless, the bigger question was what were we going to do with her? And Daddy Grand provided a quick answer. "Bury her," he said. So just before my favorite football team kicked off, I found myself in the middle of the frozen pasture armed with a shovel and the difficult task of digging a grave for Ada's final resting place.

It took about four hours to give Ada a proper burial. I was so tired that I didn't give her a proper eulogy. By the time I was finished the sun was setting low in the west and my arms ached from all that digging. And the football game I had so wanted to watch was over.

Worse still, my team got beat.

## Now accepting payments at two locations to serve you!

Tulahoma Utilities Authority serves 12,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers—and many of them choose to pay their bills in person on the day they are due. This can lead to long lines at the South Jackson Street drive-through window. On five days each month, the line at TUA backs up several cars deep, extending the wait time for our customers. The delay has become even more notable during the COVID-19 health crisis. To address this, we will now accept drive-through payments at a second location. The former Citizens Tri-County bank branch at 501 W. Lincoln St. will be open on each of the five due dates every month and on the days before and after observed holidays.



Drive-through lanes at the former Citizens Tri-County Bank branch building on West Lincoln Street will be open on due dates to serve you.