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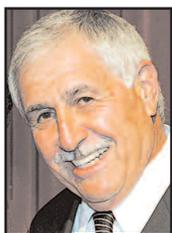
NOV. 24 - DEC. 7, 2015

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## The best part of being an author is meeting people

BY ERNIE SOCHIN



As many of you probably know, I have been called a lot of things over the years, some good, some bad, but I have taken on a new persona as an author.

You have by now probably heard about my book, *When I Was Your Age*, that, so far, seems to be doing fairly well.

I know I will never get rich on this venture but I am honestly having so much fun at my book signings that it doesn't seem to matter anymore. Those of you who have been to my signings have some idea of why I enjoy it so much.

I had some people at one of my recent signings say to me that they weren't expecting to see a stand-up comic and were pleasantly surprised at my presentation. It kind of just grew. I began using props to the point that I need a large suitcase to carry them all with me to my various presentations.

Firstly, I carry an old black dial telephone which I have used in the schools that I visit to illustrate the difference from the kids in school now with their iPads, iPhones and who knows what else. When I asked the teacher in the class to help me find a place to plug the phone and I get the strangest looks from the students.

I tried to explain that my black telephone was considered quite modern at one time in that it had an actual dial with which you could select the number you wanted to call instead of waiting for the operator to pick up the line and direct your call using an old-fashioned switchboard with plugs and hundreds of wires available to connect one person to another.

I also explained that even with this modern device you still had to wait on occasion for the other parties on the telephone line to allow you to make your call. It was not uncommon to pick up your phone and plead with the people talking on one of the other lines for a moment to make a call.

Of course there was a thing called a "private line" but that was only for the upper-class people who could afford it. I remember many folks making special reference to other people having a private line. This was quite a status symbol.

I decided that the props brought so much activ-



ity and interest from my listeners that I would bring another communication device to my meetings. I brought with me two tin cans connected by a long piece of string. In a quiet voice I asked the people in the last row if they are able to hear me.

When they, of course, answer "no," I bring out my cans. I bring one to the person that couldn't hear and begin talking into my can. I am about to introduce a new version of this. A third-party can connect to the string and hack your tin can line. Most older folks including myself spent many hours communicating with this very sophisticated device. My first Internet!

This brings me into other modern devices in which I show a bunch of old 78 records and, believe it or not, a device called a record changer that would allow you to stack up 6 to 10 records and

have almost a half hour of continuous music. Imagine that!

I then show them one of my 8-track tapes which were considered state-of-the-art at one time until someone developed the cassette, which was smaller and produced even better sound. This of course was followed by the CD and now the thumb drive which replaces all of the above. If you hadn't lived through the era before these things were available, you would really love seeing them once again.

Words have changed as well. I bring with me a pair of my old torn jeans. I ask everyone in the audience what these are called and about half referred to them as dungarees and some call them jeans. I explained the difference. Dungarees were something like \$4 a pair and you wore them till they fell off your body which gave you enough time to save up for a new pair. I told them that the difference in jeans is that once they were called that, the price went up tremendously and then even more if you are able to buy one with holes ripped in the knees and ankles. I never truly understood that, but you must pay extra for this feature.

I don't want to write too much more in this article because I would probably end up giving away all of the interesting parts of the book. It is available on Amazon, Kindle, and from me, if you happen to run into me in my many travels. Walking into a building "and having someone say, "oh, the author is here" is almost worth all of the time and effort that I put into this.

For more information about my book scan here.

