

Change is always in the air

By Mark Mattmiller

I was walking around the grounds at the Henry Clay home the other day, and once again, I became intrigued with the old ice house. You can look straight down into the 20 foot deep hole where, years ago, the ice was stored. When the rivers or ponds froze to a depth of about twelve to eighteen inches, the ice was cut by special saws made just for that purpose. The results were big square slabs that weighed 100-150 pounds each. The cut ice was taken by horse drawn sleds to the ice house.

The ice was lowered into the deep stone lined caverns. A thick layer of straw and/or sawdust was added over, under, and between each block. The sides between the ice and the stone wall had an extra thick insertion of this insulating material. A domed roof with a door in it kept any warm air from circulating into the big pit. The ice would stay frozen through the summer and sometimes as long as into the next winter. These old out-buildings are pretty rare.

For some reason, I cannot imagine old Henry going out to the house and getting up a block of ice for his mint julip. And this has led me to these thoughts.

You do remember when your ice maker broke and it seemed like the end of the world, don't you? "Oh-my-gosh, what will we ever do now?" For sure it's been a long journey from the ice house to the ice maker.

I remember before everyone had electric refrigerators when blocks of ice (made with pure city water) were delivered to the homes by the Arctic Ice Company. The homeowner's ice boxes had to be on a porch or somewhere else out of doors so that the iceman could leave the ice if nobody was home. The large one foot square blocks were heavy and it wouldn't do for the man delivering the ice to have to carry it back to his truck if nobody was home. The customers had signs with a big arrow on them that were placed in a window that could be seen from the street. The sign was rotated and the direction that the arrow pointed would advise the iceman how many blocks were to be delivered. The blocks were carried with ice tongs.

The big blocks of ice kept the homeowners well-insulated ice box cool enough to store food just as our refrigerators do today, and the blocks could be chipped into small pieces to use in cold drinks. You do remember the "ice pick" don't you?

With the electric refrigerator (or as Granny called them all, the “fridgidire”) came those aluminum ice trays with the lever that we pulled to break the cubes loose. Now we have the plastic ice trays that we use today, and finally the ice-maker. What an evolution, from the ice-house to the ice-maker.

You don't suppose we've allowed ourselves to become just the slightest bit spoiled, do you?

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Chamber of Commerce for the
Jingle 'N Mingle Gala

Festive fun with dinner, dancing, & a live auction!

Enjoy the sounds of the band Caribou
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Saturday, November 22, 2025
Lewisport Community Center
Appetizers 6:00pm Dinner 6:30PM

Tickets available at Independence Bank (Hawesville)
& First Financial Bank (Lewisport) now.

Individual Tickets: \$30 per person.
on sale Oct. 30th - Nov. 7th to Chamber members
then sales open to the public. Sponsorship options
with special ticket pricing on the back.

Auction benefits local non-profits.

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The Invisible American



Unit 1: Introduction to the Course

Little Big Country. I arrived in Australia in 1967 intending to stay for about two years. Life in tropical Townsville with Daphne soon changed my mind. I still like it here. Things like driving for two days without passing through a single large town is nice. Beaches stretching for miles without a crowd is another. Living in a region with no likely enemies is great. But I have to admit there are some drawbacks to living in a very big country with both a very small population and a small economy. Back in the 1960s the population was about 14 million in a land mass equivalent to the continental 48 states of America. This presented the Australian government with a challenge in providing essential services such as phone lines, potable water, energy, and infrastructure. Today we are about 25 million strong but that still results in a very small population density, 3.5 per square kilometer compared to 38 in

Most of the country remains empty or extremely underpopulated. Some private enterprises simply would not and still cannot countenance the thought of investing vast amounts of money in the hope that such investment might pay off in 40 or so years. Capitalism tends to demand instant gratification.

So back in the day the Aussie government shelled out to build roads, provide telecommunications, gas, water, electricity etc. to many underpopulated areas of remote Australia. But much later a Liberal government decided that it would both privatise these essential services and not control their behavior

over much. About the same time a fool of an economist announced that “a little greed is good”. Naturally greed might start off little but it never stays that way. Even mom and pop investors demand increasing profits year after year. A few years ago a CEO was sacked because his firm had garnered only 260 million dollars in profit whereas the forecast had been for a bit over

The net result is that the CEO, directors, and stock holders controlling our essential services demand increasing levels of profit. When the CEO of our postal services looked set to miss out on his performance bonus due to a lower than desirable level of profit he simply put up all fees and prices by 60%, announced that he'd increased profitability by that amount, resigned, and took a multi-million dollar bonus with

Later my corner of Australia endured a severe drought. At government behest we all saved as much water as possible. Hosing down your driveway or porch attracted hefty fines. After the drought end-

gratulated our effort to conserve water but the CEO of the water corporation complained that since it had sold much less water its profits were down and it would regain a high level of profitability by greatly increasing prices.

Just recently the huge uptake of solar panels, 60% of houses here in Canberra, has prompted the electricity board to make savage increases in charges to regain an increase in profitability. My own bill for the quarter covering last winter more than doubled. My daughter's bill tripled. So the federal government which originally caused the problem, albeit under the control of a different party, has now announced moves to cap energy charges. But it may be years before we feel as if we have escaped from the heads they win tails we lose economy. Still, gun violence is extremely rare, we have vast stretches of open bush land. In Australia it is so easy to find someplace to go to get away from it all. And many modern problems are here very much less severe than in most countries. Our political scene is sometimes aggravating but not a circus. Boring really. And at 81 I'm not inclined to consider moving. But Hancock County was my original home and maintains a hold on me. I'll return to see the old place as

often as I can.

