

The Odyssey Times

THE ONLY ONE WE'VE GOT

Vol. 1 No. 3

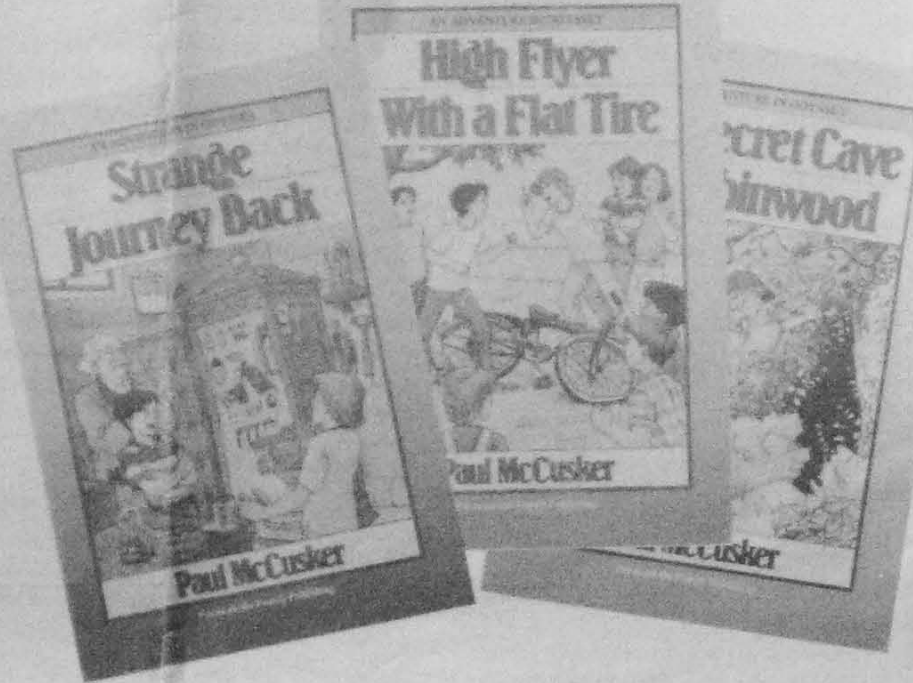
ALWAYS **Free**

"Adventures in Odyssey"® Captured In Print

by Campbell Freed
Times Staff Writer

First, the citizens of Odyssey listened as their lives were chronicled in dramatic episodes on cassettes featuring John Avery Whittaker (better known as Whit). Then came the animated videos. Now, Whit and his friends at the ever-popular "discovery emporium" called Whit's End can be found in a new series of novels just released by Focus on the Family Publishing.

Written by "Adventures in Odyssey" scriptwriter Paul McCusker, these generously illustrated books contain original new stories about Mark Prescott, a young boy who moves to Odyssey after his parents separate. Hurt and lonely, Mark faces the difficulty of making new friends, feeling accepted and coping with the many changes in his life. It isn't easy for him and he has to learn some difficult lessons as he encounters Whit's Imagination Station, an unwanted "girlfriend," a "whodunit" mystery, a mysterious gang and a secret cave.



"I was quite impressed," John Whittaker said after reading the books. "They're a lot of fun. And I think young people will relate to

Mark and his problems. They'll also find a good dose of hope weaving throughout, which is rare in a lot of books they read now. Though I can't

figure out how the author knew I once kept the Imagination Station in the basement."

Tom Riley, who is mentioned in the first novel, said that he was particularly pleased with the book's sensitive handling of Mark's broken home. "It's about time somebody dealt honestly with that sort of problem in a book for young people," he said. He added that "they're realistic, but the author never loses sight of a basic Christian viewpoint."

"I like the pictures, too!" one younger reader was overheard saying. Well, actually, it was my youngest daughter.

Best read in order, the first three books in the series are: *A Strange Journey Back*, *High Flyer With a Flat Tire* and *The Secret Cave of Robinwood*. Look for them at your local Christian bookstore and at Frapp's Books & Dry Cleaning, with a new location now open at Trickle Lake Mall.

Disciplinary Action Taken At Camp

Increase in Pranks and Rule-Breaking at Camp What-A-Nut

There has been an increase in disobedience, misconduct and insubordination at this year's Camp What-A-Nut, according to a report issued by the camp's board of directors.

"We're alarmed by what appears to be an upward increase of an alarming trend," said Joseph LaGard, director of the camp. "When one compares this year's figures with last year's, it's very clear what's happening. Last year, we only had to send one child home early for blatant disobedience of camp rules. This year we had to send *three* children home early."

When asked what sort of rules were being flagrantly broken, LaGard

explained that the most common problem was children sneaking out of their cabins after "lights out" each night. "We also had one instance of theft this year, which is unprecedented. And one child was caught reading a book behind the equipment shed when he should have been at archery practice."

LaGard attributes these problems to the overall decline of moral values in society and a very liberal attitude towards child discipline by most parents.

Weather:

Today we can expect more seasonal weather with a high pressure system bringing the expected temperatures well into the night. There's a chance of rain in some parts of the city, but not enough to worry about if you dress properly. As the day progresses, temperatures will drop suddenly in both Celsius and Fahrenheit bringing surprising wind.

Rathbone Wrecks

Rodney Rathbone, 15, received a broken collar bone when the car he was driving careened off the road and smashed into a sign post in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Allegedly driving without a driver's license, Rathbone was heading south on Walker Street in his father's car when he lost control of the vehicle and hit the stop sign at the intersection of Walker and Edmiston. Rathbone broke his collar bone when he collided with the steering wheel on impact.

Police spokesmen explained that the accident occurred when Rathbone took his eyes off the road in an effort to change stations on the radio.

Rathbone denied this, claiming that he wasn't listening to the radio but was trying to fix the cassette tape in the player. "It was eating my tape," he said. "It was one of my favorites, too."

Police will charge Rathbone with driving without a license and are expected to fine him for the cost of damages to the stop sign.

Bart Rathbone, the victim's father, reported that "Rodney is in stable condition... for now."

Evolution Debate

Students from McCallum Junior High and Odyssey High School will participate in a debate over the merits of the Theory of Evolution vs Creationism at the Odyssey High School gymnasium during the half-time break in the wrestling championships next Tuesday night.

Sponsored by the Right to Know Campaign in both schools, the debate will center on whether mankind was created by God or evolved from apes, with both sides planning to bring conclusive proof for their arguments.

The concessions stands in the gymnasium will be open during half-time for those who don't wish to watch the debates.



by Dr. Petronius Lawler
Historian, Campbell County

On This Day in History

On this day in history in 1946, the town of Odyssey was rocked by an unexpected act of thievery as the Odyssey Bank was broken into and robbed of \$25,000 in a late night burglary.

It was believed at the time that the \$25,000 was stolen by one, possibly two thieves, according to bank manager Percival Fenwick. "They got in through a back window, cut the alarm system wires and crawled through," Fenwick said.

In the subsequent investigation, it was revealed that new police recruit

Ralph Howards was doing his rounds of the street surrounding the bank when he was knocked unconscious by the robbers as they were coming out with the money. Howards couldn't confirm the number of men or what they looked like.

The mayor was shocked by the robbery and said in a radio broadcast that "the whole town is in a state of grief and disbelief that this sort of dishonesty could happen in Odyssey. Nothing has ever happened like it before and we can only pray it won't happen again."

The days that followed deepened the mystery and the scandal. Percival Fenwick was accused by the President of Odyssey Bank for

letting information about the alarm system "slip," thus enabling access into the bank. Fenwick was given temporary leave from the bank while police investigated the incident.

During that time, Fenwick made a statement implicating Police cadet Ralph Howards in the robbery. Fenwick claimed that Howards must have been involved in the theft since Howard's story that he was "knocked unconscious" was unfounded by a medical examination. Doctors reported that there was no sign of violence to Howards, nor reason for his sudden passing out at the scene.

Howards later endured intensive questioning by the internal affairs department of the Odyssey police department and was cleared of any wrong doing. In their report, the Odyssey detectives determined that Howards passed out as a result of "delicate nerves, common among new, inexperienced police recruits."

The police continued to be

baffled by the theft until it was discovered that Spencer Barfield, a drifter who had only recently been employed as a maintenance man at the Fillmore Recreation Center, had disappeared the same night as the robbery. Police suspected that he was the culprit and sent his description to police stations all over the country.

To this day, the police believe that Barfield stole the money and left the country.

Long time residents of Odyssey will remember the emotional impact of the robbery on the whole community. Tom Riley, one of our city council members, remembers that "it was the first time Odyssey suffered at the hands of villains. It was as if we lost a little of our innocence."

Many still wonder about the case — and will think about it again on this day in history.

(Editorial note: Developments in this exciting case can be heard on the "Adventures in Odyssey" episode, "The Case of the Secret Room".)

Contest Winner Announced

Christopher Jameson was the big winner of *The Odyssey Times*/Whit's End-sponsored "Mayor for a Day" contest. Jameson's name was drawn from a barrel by John Whittaker at the festive proceedings at Whit's End on Saturday.

Jameson shouted, "Oh wow oh wow oh wow" upon hearing his name called. As contest winner, Jameson will spend a full day in the office of the Mayor, making decisions about legislation as the real mayor would.

Dale Jacobs, editor of the *Times*, announced Jameson's name after a stirring speech proclaiming the contest as a means to "help young people learn that the heart of our democracy is the involvement of its people in its processes."

Mayor Daniels said he is looking forward to the day off.

Pesticide Company Gives Money to Environmental Cause

The Edgebiter Chemical Company announced today that it will give an undisclosed amount of money to the Save Trickle Creek Fund. "It's our small way of helping Odyssey stay clean and healthy for all its citizens," Jeremy Dimble, a spokesman for the company, said.

The Save Trickle Creek Fund was created by Tom Riley to keep Trickle Lake and its tributaries free from pollution. Riley was

The Odyssey Times

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Fine Print Dept.
Copyright © 1993 Focus on the Family. As much as we'd like to tell you it's all real, we have to admit that Whit and the Odyssey gang are actually fictional characters living in a town you won't find on any map—at least any map we have! In fact, "Adventures in Odyssey" is produced by the Audio Resources division of Focus on the Family under the direction of Executive Producer Chuck Bolte. The rest of the team includes:
Paul McCusker, Producer
Dave Arnold, Production Manager
Phil Lollar, Writer and Director
Bob Luttrell, Production Engineer
Rodlyn Davis, Administrative Assistant

Up Close & Personal

An Odyssey Times Interview

With Eugene Meltsner

by Campbell Freed,
Times Correspondent



Times: Are you really a genius?

Eugene: That, of course, depends entirely on how one defines such a word. And once it has been defined, if that definition is indeed an accurate measure of one's intelligence. Is intelligence measurable at all and, if so, is it measured against a quantitative norm or measured in and of itself, which, of course, raises the question of how valid such measurements might be? [TRANSLATION: That depends on your point of view.]

Times: Do you like working at Whit's End?

Eugene: I find my involvement at Whit's End to be satisfying in both an academic sense and in the sense that it allows me to fulfill basic needs for companionship and, perhaps, to help me expand beyond a strictly intellectual or logical point of view into more, shall we say, mundane responsibilities and activities. [TRANSLATION: Yes.]

Times: No other questions, Eugene. Thanks for talking to us.

Times: You're welcome. Can you give our readers a little bit of your background?

Eugene: I am not terribly inclined to relinquish personal information about my history or that of my family, of which I am the last. However, I would be most gratified to discuss any other topic you might wish to pursue. [Translation: I'd rather not talk about myself. I'd rather talk about other things.]

Your Own "Adventure in Odyssey"

For Parents: Some Helpful Hints for Using "Adventures in Odyssey" Cassettes.

"Adventures in Odyssey" was created to bring families together for a time of entertainment and learning. Each program was originally written for children between the ages of 8 years and 12. We encourage parents to listen to the cassettes in advance to be sure the subject matter is appropriate for younger listeners. May we suggest a few ways you might use these "Adventures in Odyssey" cassettes?

• For Family Discussion

Ask questions that will encourage children to talk about their feelings or their understanding of what they just heard. Use the time to communicate your own thoughts about the episode's subject matter. Occasionally, the principles taught in "Adventures in Odyssey" episodes may differ from your own views on a particular subject. We encourage you to use this as an

opportunity to teach your young listeners what you believe is right.

• For Travel

Listeners have written to tell us how much they and their children enjoy "Adventures in Odyssey" stories while driving to and from school, church, activities and, especially, during long vacation treks.

• For Bedtime

Many parents have found "Adventures in Odyssey" cassettes to be ideal for children as a "wind down" time before bed.

• For Church

Sunday school, children's church and vacation Bible school teachers have discovered "Adventures in Odyssey" tapes to be helpful in the classroom. With proper planning, the theme of an episode may coincide with the day's lesson or it can be used simply for its entertainment or discussion time value. We've even heard that "Odyssey" tapes are being used in public schools!

Continued from page 2, Whit's End

In 1981, a newer recreation center was built on the north side of town and the Fillmore Center was abandoned to disuse and disrepair. Some thought the building should be torn down. Others, lead by Jenny Whittaker, wanted it restored.

Whit was mystified by Jenny's attraction to saving the building. "The shell of the old place was in fair shape, but the insides were almost rotted out from lack of use. Many people saw the building as a fire hazard and wanted it torn down. In fact, a development firm had made a generous offer for the land. They thought it would make an excellent site for a mini-mall, while others, including my wife, felt that the center was a cultural landmark and should be saved and protected by the city."

The battle dragged on for months. At first, when he thought about it at all, Whit came in on the side of those who wanted to tear the place down. Jenny poured herself into the battle to save the Fillmore. Her efforts would cost more than anyone could have realized.

In 1984, during a meeting of the city council to decide the outcome of this issue, Jenny suddenly collapsed from a serious kidney ailment. She died later that same day. Once again, death spread a dark curtain over Whit's life. Emotionally devastated, Whit shut himself away.

A month passed. Another city council meeting came around and, with it, a final vote on the Fillmore Recreation Center. With the death of Jenny, the building seemed doomed. Who would champion its survival? Who could keep the building from becoming a giant pinball and video arcade at the hands of self-serving developers? The answer came just as the gavel was about to fall.

Whit burst into the room and made a startling announcement: he would buy the Fillmore and turn it into what he called "a place of adventure and discovery" for all the kids in Odyssey. The city council approved unanimously.

So in 1984, John Avery Whittaker opened Whit's End. At the time, Whit explained his goal this way: "Whit's End is a place full of adventure and discovery, filled with books and activities, fun and games, arts and crafts, uplifting conversation and some of the best ice cream in the state. It's a place where people can experience the excitement of learning, and build character and confidence; a place to make friends and learn how to keep relationships healthy; a place to find what the Bible says and what God wants us to do with our lives. But most of all, Whit's End is a place where kids—of all ages—can just be kids."

For those of us in Odyssey who love and enjoy Whit's shop... the rest is history.

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From Where I Sit

Guest Editorial by Jerry Phillips,
Times Correspondent

Standing up for what one believes in is rarely an easy task, particularly if one has to do it with intelligence. For that reason, I applaud the participants in next Tuesday's debate over the belief in Creation versus the widely held but mostly regrettable Theory of Evolution. They are putting their beliefs on the line in front of the entire city and, as one who does that day in and day out, I know it's a tough thing to do.

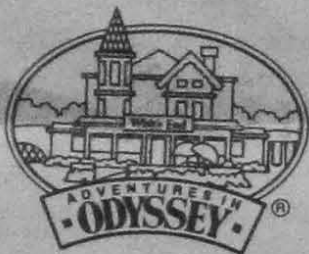
Of course, it is made even more

difficult by the decision to hold the debate during the Wrestling Championship half-time. Is that somebody's idea of a joke? Don't the decision-makers realize that half-time at a Wrestling Championship is not the place for such an intense discussion? It will throw the momentum of the championship off and, perhaps even distract the wrestlers from a long overdue win.

Besides, it gives the pro-evolution side a definite edge. Who wouldn't believe we were descended from apes after watching them in action?

Shop of the Week:

Whit's End



Portraits of the people and places of Odyssey

by Jerry Phillips
Times Staff Writer

At one time or another, most of us in Odyssey have enjoyed eating or "just hanging out" at Whit's End, the popular ice cream parlor/ discovery emporium founded by John Avery Whittaker (or "Whit" as he likes to be called). Kids love the place because the food's good, and it's packed with exciting activities created exclusively for them by Whit. Parents love it because it's a safe place for their children to play and learn.

Yet, as well known as Whit's End is throughout the county, few people know the behind-the-scenes drama that nearly stopped Whit from establishing this mainstay of our community. The *Times* thought it would be of interest to its readers to share that story now.

In many respects, the story began 20 years ago when Whit, an established author who lived and worked in California, received word that his oldest son had been killed in the Vietnam War. It was devastating news for him, his wife Jenny and their remaining two children, Jana and Jason. What had been, up to that time,

an idyllic life together, was suddenly torn asunder by the tragedy.

"It was a very dark time," Whit remembers. "Jerry's death seemed to take the life out of our whole family. We fell apart."

Realizing the need to get away from their home and painful memories in Pasadena, California, Whit moved his family to the peace and solitude of Odyssey for "a time of healing." He recalls: "We spent our first year in Odyssey keeping mostly to ourselves. It was a time to get to know each other again."

It worked. The family turned their attention to their new surroundings. Whit recalled how "the kids got involved in school activities. Jenny was very active in civic, volunteer and church work. And I began teaching English to seventh and eighth-graders at McCallum Junior High School." Whit became one of the most popular teachers at McCallum. He also continued to write, publishing several books for youngsters.

Teaching junior high English was an eye-opening experience for Whit. He soon noticed that many kids even in Odyssey were suffering from the "signs of the times": broken homes, single-parent households, crumbling morals and the pressure to grow up too fast. "I wanted to do something about it, but didn't know what," Whit says. The answer would come in an unexpected way.

Jenny became involved in a rather large controversy raging around Odyssey concerning the old Fillmore Recreation Center in McCalister Park. Rich with history, it had been built on the sight of one of Odyssey's original churches, subsequently used as a town hall and meeting place, then a recreation center for public use.

Continued on page 3

THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE

See if you can find the names of some of Odyssey's characters from the cassette programs!

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 H G E O R G E B A R C L A Y K Y F D S R Z

CLUES:

John Avery Whittaker, Whit, Lee Frapp, Tom Riley, Lucy Cunningham, David, Goliath, Kirbans, Jimmy Barclay, George Barclay, Mary, Connie Kendall, Billy Barton, Freddie, Mike, Chester, Grace, Brad, Eugene, Jack Davis, Jonah, Jami, Sherman, Karen, Donna.



The Truth About the Times

An Editorial for Those Who May Not Be Sure

Perhaps you've seen *The Odyssey Times* but haven't been sure of what to make of it. Well, we'd like to help. You see, the *Times* is only as real as Odyssey itself. The various articles, interviews, even the Classified Ads, are directly related to "Adventures in Odyssey" episodes we've offered. Astute readers will recognize the many in-jokes and references to the characters and situations found from cassette to cassette.

We hope you enjoy *The Odyssey Times* and, apart from taking advantage of the great offers, make a game of finding all the "clues" about the shows. Somehow, it seems to make it all the more real.

Don't Miss A Single "Adventures in Odyssey"!

Now there's three great ways to enjoy "Adventures in Odyssey"!

See 'Em

These award-winning animated video adventures entertain while teaching kids valuable lessons for life. **A Fine Feathered Frenzy** (V1712) and **Shadow of a Doubt** (V1084) are full of excitement, fun and truths about the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions and being faithful to God and friends. Ages 4 and up. (VHS only) \$15* each



Hear 'Em

These six-audiocassette albums let your kids journey to Odyssey from just about anywhere. With **At Home and Abroad** (AL715) and **It All Started When...** (AL714), you'll always be ready for another action-packed adventure! Ages 6 and up. \$25* each



Read 'Em

Your youngsters can travel to the mythical town of Odyssey by reading three tales exclusively written for this three-book set. Written by Odyssey producer Paul McCusker, **High Flyer With a Flat Tire**, **Strange Journey Back**, and **The Secret Cave of Robinwood** (CB708) are your child's passport to values-packed thrills, chills and spills. Ages 8 and up. \$12* (3-book set)

*Suggested donations



To request these or any other Odyssey items, write to Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO 80995. In Canada, write P.O. Box 9800, Stn. Terminal, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4G3.



Classified Ads:

Help Wanted: Stockclerk at Finneman's Market. Call Joe at 555-8754.

For Sale: Kirban Carpets. Fine hand-made rugs and carpets made here in Odyssey from the Middle East. Call 555-9902.

For Sale: Jimmy Barclay is selling an old bike given to him by his grandfather. Best offer. 555-2980.

Lost: Large, grey tabby house cat. Beloved family pet. Answers to the name of "Boswell." Reward. Call Gladys Fishbine at 555-2138.

For Sale: 1974 Dodge Dart. Formerly in perfect condition. Needs front-end work. Great fixer-upper! Best offer. Call Bart Rathbone at 555-9807.

Help Wanted: Data programmer. Computer room at Campbell County Community College. Call Mr. Burglemiester at 555-3465.

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