

"SMART PILLS"

1956 and now a big boy, 5 years old, able to help work, and share in on the fun, in the tobacco harvest on the Pelis farm 'out to Jericho.'

I was the driver (more like attempting to steer the tractor in a straight line up the field) of a '40s vintage Ford tractor, while uncles and cousins loaded the now cut and wilted tobacco plants onto the attached wagon.

When the loaders would yell, "Whoa," I would stand up while grasping the steering wheel, pulling myself down and with all my weight on the clutch pedal so as for the tractor to be out of gear and stop. When they would again now yell "Go," I would quickly release the clutch pedal and the tractor and wagon would lurch forward tumbling and jumbling up the prior neatly loaded plants.

Uncle Chester ("Kollegian" ...as all the Pelis men have unique nicknames ... Chelsea, Connie, Gila, Cinchie, Sonny, Noonie and Pike) wandered over to me, looking to be thoroughly enjoying a candy treat. He held out his open palm filled with little, round and brown "candies," saying: "**Smart Pills.**"

I was skeptical, but being a young and naive new tractor driver, and he being Uncle Chester, I was convinced/tricked when he proceeded (with slight of hand, pretend) to take a few, pop them in his mouth, enjoy chewing and then swallow.

He was willing to share and wanted for me to also enjoy, so he placed several in my little outstretched palm and told me to quickly pop all into my mouth and chew.

I did as instructed, chewing on a mouthful of the most dry, disgustingly distasteful "Smart Pills."

"POOH!" ... I gagged and spit and spit and yelled at him: "**That's not candy! ... that's rabbit poop!**"

Smiling, Uncle Chester (now *not* one of my favorites) replied: "**See, you're getting smart already!**"

Just one of many fond memories of "tobaccoing" (as my daughter, Meg, always referred to working in tobacco).

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