

September 1, 2024

Special points of interest:

- **Selling the original Coenosium Gardens in Lehighton**
- **Digging a large tree by hand**
- **A yellow English oak**
- **The good old days of high school discipline**
- **Meet Snow Woman**

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Bob's News & Musings

Dismantling of the Pennsylvania Coenosium Garden

During the fall of 1985, Dianne and I decided to move from Pennsylvania to Oregon so I could join Jean Iseli at his Boring nursery. I could not take my garden with me, but I was able to take 10,000 plants propagated from it and other various Northeastern United States gardens and arboretums.

I had to make a big decision about the in-ground portion of my collection. It consisted of hundreds of rare and unusual conifer and companion species cultivars. My mentor and friend Layne Ziegenfuss offered to find me a buyer for the collection. Charlie Marder had a landscape business on Long Island, and Layne had worked for

him several times over the years. He told Charlie what I was up to, and Charlie visited me. We dickered a bit and he bought the collection as it sat. He hired Layne to put together a crew and dig everything. He also agreed to put the property back into grass for whoever the new buyer was.

Layne found some guys in town and taught them how to dig trees on the job. Everything was dug by hand and the burlap was wrapped on each ball and tightened with hog rings. Then, the guys laced each ball with twine for the journey to Long Island.

I shot pictures showing how Layne and his crew drum-laced the larger trees

for digging and transporting to Long Island. The photos in this issue of my newsletter show the process being done on two different trees. The pictures are interspersed to show the order of the steps.

One thing that surprised me involved a large *Acer platanoides*, 'Crimson King'. It had leafed out a few days before Layne's crew started digging it. They trenched around the tree and undercut the ball so it sat on a broad pedestal. The tree wilted for a day or two and then resumed a normal appearance. A week or so later, they drum-laced the tree and removed it from the pedestal. It wilted slightly and recovered overnight.

I'll make additional comments with the pictures.



Smaller plants ready for shipment.

Digging The Tree

The first step is digging a trench around the tree and undercutting it to create a large pedestal.



Doing The Skirt



The second step is draping pieces of burlap around the root ball and holding it in place with large nails.



Placing The Burlap Lid



The third step is covering the top of the root ball with burlap and wrapping the base of the tree.



Lacing The Side



The fourth step is running a cord around the base of the pedestal and then feeding twin up and down between the nails and the bottom cord. (Continued on next page.)



Inside Story Headline



Step four continued is to run a double line of twine around the top of the root ball, feeding it through the loops of the vertical lines already done. Then remove the nails and tighten everything.



Lacing The Top



Step five is looping twine around the trunk of the tree and passing it around the doubled twine at the edge of the root ball, being certain to constantly pull it tight.



Inside Story Headline



Step Six is to run a cord/twine around the tree halfway between the trunk and the doubled twine at the edge of the ball where the step five twines crisscross and make them snug.



Bottom Lacing: Lift From Hole



Then lift the tree out of the hole by securing the root ball with straps and chains, not the trunk of the tree.



Inside Story Headline



Move the tree to a place where there is enough space to cover the bottom of the root ball. The tree has to lay on its side.

Moving To Work Site For Bottom Lacing



Bottom Lacing



Step seven is to tie lines across the bottom of the root ball by using the cord that runs around the bottom of the ball.



Inside Story Headline



Step seven continued is to run lines perpendicular to the first runs, looping each one wherever it crosses another. That creates a tight grid pattern to hold the burlap and soil in place.

Ready To Move To Long Island



Clean Up For New Property Owners



Conifer of the Month: *Picea omorika* 'Buttermilk Falls'

During the 1980s, I was sent some scions from a plant in Saville Gardens. I had seen a weeping form of *Picea omorika* in a planting that showed no tendency to grow upward and grew much like *Picea abies* 'Reflexa' on steroids. It was called *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Major'. It was a cultivar I had only seen twice in my European travels. I had never seen it at all in America. It was unique, and I had to have it.

A good friend sent me a few scions, and I successfully propagated it by grafting. Within a few years, I was offering it through Coenosium Gardens.

About 1996, I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered a variegated branch on my original 'Pendula Major' in my Eatonville garden. I propagated it, and that plant is still growing where I planted it. I could not move it to Puyallup due to the rocky soil where I had planted it. (See picture below.)

If the variegated foliage is absent on scion wood, those plants will not develop any variegation. However, the mother plant is a great garden addition in its own right even without the creamy splashes of color.

As a young plant, the variegated foliage will burn, but the buds are not damaged, and new growth will emerge from sun-damaged shoots the following spring. Older plants are relatively resistant to sun scald, which often happens to yellow and white foliage in the conifer world.

This selection does grow slower than its mother plant. I believe 6" to 9" would be a good average annual growth length. However, as is always the case, growing conditions can significantly affect those numbers.

It can easily be grown with a single leader, but it must be staked to grow upward. Otherwise, it prefers to grow more horizontally. But this growth is unlike 'Pendula Major', which sends out multiple leaders in various directions.

Picea omorika 'Buttermilk Falls' is an excellent addition to a garden. However, it is still challenging to find in production. That is mainly due to the difficulty of finding nice, variegated propagation material on younger plants. Hopefully, it will become more readily available as nurseries working with it develop older stock blocks.



Conifer of the Month: *Picea omorika* 'Buttermilk Falls' (cont.)

The original sport is shown above on my plant in my Eatonville garden. The top right picture shows the *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Major' growing in the Saville Garden while the picture to the right shows another plant growing in Adrian Bloom's nursery at Foggy Bottom.



Tree of the Month: *Quercus robur* 'Concordia'

Growing in the Arboretum Musaviense and first described in 1864, *Quercus robur* Concordia has bright yellow foliage and actually originated in France about 1843.

In some climates the foliage burns when it is grown in the full sun. The specimen below at Trompenberg Arboretum shows a nice yellow-green color with no sign of burn. My plant, top of the next page, was very bright and consistently burned by mid-summer in the Northwest.

I am fond of plants with variegated or yellow foliage, so I was excited to get one of these for my garden in Eatonville. I was disappointed that it consistently burned every summer. However, it still put on a nice show in the spring.



Tree of the Month: *Quercus robur* 'Concordia'



The top two photos are of the same plant and taken years apart in my Eatonville garden. The photo to the left was taken at Gee Farms in Michigan.

An Excerpt From Stack 'Em Deep & Teach 'Em Cheap- Discipline: Babysitting with No Authority (Touch Me and My Mom Will Sue Your Ass)

Teachers must be creative and knowledgeable to present exciting and informative classes, but they must also exhibit other skills to survive in the classroom.

If a teacher cannot maintain discipline, every other skill is useless. For example, I taught with Hedley, another science teacher at Keithley Middle School. He taught physical science, but since discipline was always an issue for him, most of his students ignored his lessons. Eventually, an adult paraprofessional was assigned to his classes to handle the discipline issues. The principal also instructed Hedley to work on upholding discipline if he wanted to keep his position.

Hedley was into science fiction stories and started using some of these stories as vehicles for teaching his lessons. This technique helped with his discipline problems and strengthened his ability to hold students' attention, but he covered little of the science material his students were supposed to be learning. As a result, he became known as a storyteller, and his students reached high school knowing little physical science.

The other extreme was a United States Army Colonel hired to teach at Keithley before I joined the staff. He only lasted a few months. Being a high-ranking officer, he was used to giving orders and having them followed without any issues. He was speechless the first time an eighth-

grade boy told him to "get fucked". He had many discipline issues and was ill-prepared to handle them.

Maintaining discipline is an art that involves a wide range of techniques. The teacher needs lesson plans that students find interesting. They need not be entertaining or amusing, just not dry and dull.

A teacher must treat all the students equally and fairly. They should never single out a student in a way that causes embarrassment, such as poking fun at their childhood issues. If a student has a personal problem or issue, it must be handled quietly and not in front of the class.

Showing a genuine, not faked, interest in students earns respect and trust. One way to demonstrate that attention is by being available to help when they have problems.

When problems crop up in the classroom, keeping the office out of the picture helps develop a good rapport between the teacher and students. Only significant issues need to involve the office.

A teacher cannot show fear, dishonesty, or a lack of interest in students' lives without creating discipline problems.

At Weatherly Area Junior-Senior High School, where I spent my first three years teaching, discipline was an issue for me. I was only a few years older than some of

my students and had to work to get their respect. As I became experienced, I discovered ways to keep my class under control, with only an occasional student testing me. I handled discipline problems in a variety of ways. Punishment assignments, telephone calls home, detention, and office referrals worked with most of these classes.

However, I remember one completely uncontrollable science student, Ron. I racked my brains, trying to develop a discipline method that would work with him. Finally, I came up with an idea based on the head in the wastebasket incident of the previous year. (On that occasion, the principal made a misbehaving student keep his head in a classroom trash can until the end of the period.) One day Ron would not calm down during class. I drew a circle on the blackboard and made him put his nose in the middle of it, right against the blackboard. He started crying, and his nose started running, but I was determined to keep him there for five minutes. When the time was up, I made him clean the blackboard and chalk tray. I threatened him with a repeat episode whenever he started acting out again. He was not perfect afterward, but he was much improved.

As I matured into an experienced teacher, I realized that such a discipline method was demeaning and shaming the student. Therefore, I never repeated such a discipline technique.

Corporal punishment was allowed,

An Excerpt From Stack 'Em Deep & Teach 'Em Cheap -Discipline: Babysitting with No Authority (Touch Me and My Mom Will Sue Your Ass)

and some teachers used it regularly. For example, a teacher could paddle a student as long as a second teacher witnessed its application. A teacher could also slap or physically throw a student from the classroom without repercussions. If the student responded physically, the district immediately expelled that student. I did everything I could to avoid using corporal punishment but had to resort to it occasionally.

A few months into my first full year at Weatherly, the principal decided that corporal punishment would be administered by himself and witnessed by the guidance counselor. A teacher would call them, and they were at the classroom door within a few minutes to dole out a paddling. The guidance counselor, Jim, was new to the district. He was bothered about being involved with corporal punishment. He felt it hurt his relationships with the students.

One of the problems with disciplining students is determining when to involve the principal. For example, if a teacher always sends students to the office, that teacher appears to be a weak disciplinarian. Likewise, if the students are not doing what the teacher expects of them in the classroom, the teacher is assumed to lack the necessary authority.

At Weatherly, student discipline was maintained in different ways by different teachers. Some teachers were

very physical in the ways they handled students. Most were not. Either way, the threat of corporal punishment was always present.

During my 17 years at Tamaqua, I never saw a teacher or principal paddle a student for discipline reasons. However, I did see corporal punishment administered in other ways.

Paul was a biology teacher who had some problems with his students. Once I walked into his classroom as the students were leaving. He appeared to be angry and yelled for one student to stay put while the others exited. He rushed back to the student and grabbed him by the arms. Paul then threw him over a lab table and threatened him with other forms of punishment if he did not correct his behavior. Then he turned away, and the boy hurried out of the room.

Russ, the other biology teacher, had a problem with one of my science students in a study hall. He wanted to discipline that student in a private location. Russ asked me if he could use the planetarium. Before classes started, I was to send that student down to the room where Russ would be waiting. I needed a reason, so I asked him to go to the planetarium and get a red pen from my desk. Later in the day, I went down to check the room. There was a large wet spot on the

carpet in the middle of the lecture room. Russ had surprised the student and yelled at him to the extent that he peed in his pants. I doubt that he ever gave Russ any problems in the future. I also wondered if he would run any errands for me after that.

In my classroom, I kept a long paddle on my chalk tray in the front of the room. I had never used it on anyone. One day a student asked if he could sign it. I told him that a student signed it only after I swatted them with it. He asked, "Would you please swat me with it so I can sign it?"

That was too good of an opportunity to pass. He was a bit of a behavior problem, and here he was, asking to be paddled. I gave him a swat, and hands went up all over the room. The next thing I knew, most of the class had lined up for me to swat. They wanted to be eligible to sign the paddle.

I maintained discipline by earning the respect of my students and showing them that I cared about them. I always listened to them when they misbehaved and applied discipline fairly and even-handedly. My students knew my rules and the consequences of not following them. I never used corporal punishment after leaving Weatherly in June 1969 for Tamaqua. Students knew I respected them as individuals and had a genuine concern for their well-being and education. They responded similarly (most of the time). They also knew I

An Excerpt From Stack 'Em Deep & Teach 'Em Cheap Discipline: Babysitting with No Authority (Touch Me and My Mom Will Sue Your Ass)

was in charge.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of parental contact in maintaining discipline. I never hesitated to place a phone call to a parent who might be at work in front of an acting-out student during class. I seldom had to do it twice.

When I started teaching at Eatonville High School in 2001, I had to get used to some new behaviors on the part of the students. Luckily, I had thick skin and could tolerate some forms of disrespect without getting angry. Instead, I would get even or go one up on them.

One of the things that I considered disrespectful was being addressed

by a student in an informal manner. I quickly discovered that the students at Eatonville High School were a bit different in how they talked to some of their teachers. For example, only a surname was used when a teacher was "accepted" by the students. So I was just addressed as "Fincham" most of the time. However, I did consider "FinchDaddy" and "FinchDog" to be pushing it a bit. But I never felt disrespected, and when the situation felt a bit more formal, Mr. was right there in front of my name, especially when a student was speaking to me one-on-one.

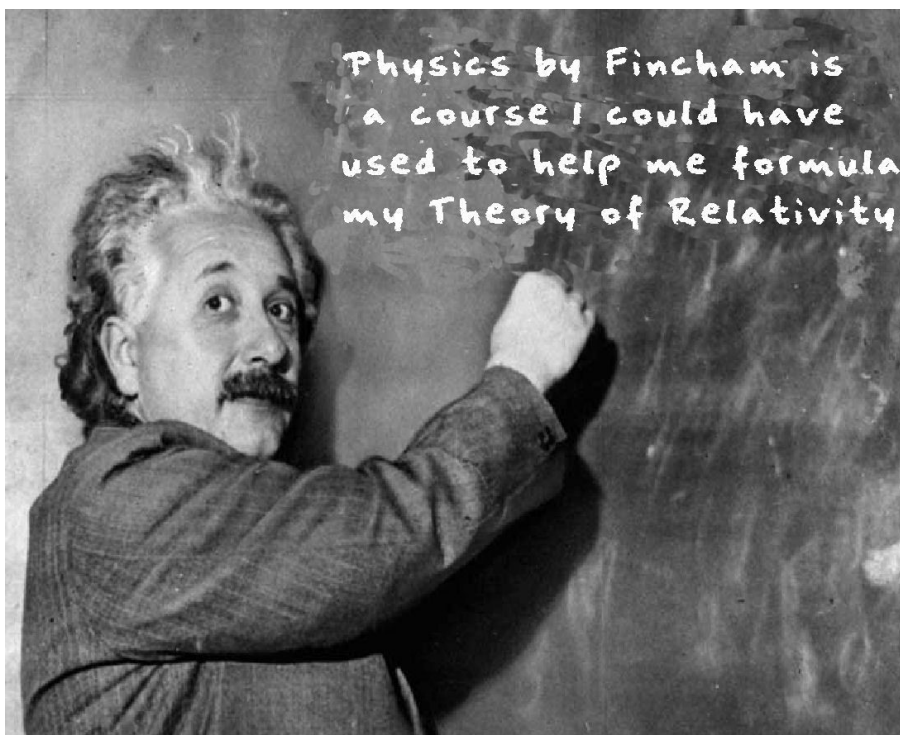
Outright insolence and cursing

at the teacher were rare during my early years. That was no longer true. Some of my colleagues consistently sent students to the office for these offenses. Sometimes the disrespect involved threatening the teacher with a lawsuit if they did not "back down".

Parents greatly influence student attitudes toward teachers. I taught kids whose parents practically made a living by regularly suing the school district. Since paying settlements often costs less than going to court, insurance companies are usually easy to intimidate.

Imagine a home where parents always tell their children, "If your teacher yells at you or touches you, we'll sue their ass." Students from that home are difficult to control and often repeat that threat to their teachers.

That kind of home did not exist when I started teaching. If a kid went home complaining about getting paddled by a teacher, that kid got a second paddling. We can say those were the "good old days."



Blast From The Past: Alfred Fordham

I did not get any remembrances to share from my readers about Joe Stupka, so I will move on to Al Fordham, a close friend who passed away in 2000.

Al was the head propagator at the Arnold Arboretum for many years and he was one of the big three who pioneered growing seedlings from witches' brooms. He was a research scientist who specialty was working with seeds and studying the processes that affected their dormancy. While at the Arnold Arboretum, Al introduced several *Pinus strobus* and *Pinus resinosa* cultivars to the world of horticulture.

Al's story is covered more fully in my book: [Gone But Not Forgotten](#).



Al is shown beside a *Picea abies* 'Reflexa' in the Arnold Arboretum as he showed me around during my first visit there. That was back in the late 1970s.

Below, Al is visiting when I lived in Canby, Oregon.



Al was a founding member of the American Conifer Society and here he is with Don Smith (left) and Syd Waxman (right) at the founders meeting at Joel Spingarn's home.

SNOW WOMAN: The Wolf (May 1869) Part One

Some years spring comes very late to the Big-horn Mountains, and this was one of those years. The snow was still clogging the passes and lingered in broad patches on the slopes. The game was scarce, and the Crow village was running out of food. May had come, but it felt like March in the mountains.

Night Buffalo, formerly First Sergeant James Washington, and his wife, Snow Woman, the adopted daughter of the village chief, had spent their first winter together in their lodge. They had been married for almost a full year and had become the parents of a baby girl on a cold winter night. They loved their daughter, and she went everywhere with them in a cradleboard made by Night Buffalo.

He finally had a family and devoted all his efforts toward their well-being and happiness. Back before the war, when he was a slave, he never dreamed of having a wife and child. Now that he did, they were his whole world.

Night Buffalo worked for several days in February making a cradleboard for his daughter. He selected a ponderosa pine for the back of it and made the footrest and rounded cover from the same tree. He looped buckskin laces through the frame to secure a trade blanket to cover the child. On cold days, Snow Woman could hang a beaver fur from the wooden cover.

Snow Woman wore the cradleboard whenever she left their lodge, even on hunting trips. She was able to keep pace with Night Buffalo, although she was not able to run very fast. They had not been having much luck on their hunting trips since the game had not yet recovered from the long winter. Even the wolves were having a hard time surviving, and one pack had been coming very close to the village. This pack may have been scaring game away from the area.

Seeing that they were almost out of smoked meat from their last hunt, Night Buffalo took his Henry

Rifle down from the tepee wall. As he checked its action, he said, "Snow Woman, I need to go out and get some fresh meat. I figure on using this rifle since I'll be in the forest and any shots will be fairly close ones."

"I go along. My arrows will be quiet and not scare other animals from where we hunt," she said in reply.

Night Buffalo had no objections. He knew she would not hold him back and that the two of them together had a better chance for a good hunt.

Snow Woman arranged their daughter in her cradleboard so that she would be warm during the hunt. Then she put the cradleboard onto her back and picked up her bow and a quiver of hunting arrows. Meanwhile, Night Buffalo had slung the Henry over his shoulder and wore his belt with its Colt Army Revolver and Bowie Knife. On his other shoulder, he carried a coil of horsehair rope about twenty feet in length.

If they killed a large animal, he planned to hang the main carcass from a tree above the reach of any wolves or other predators. Then he could return with a pony to bring it back to share with the village.

"Why are you bringing our daughter with us?" he asked Snow Woman as he stood by the tepee entrance.

"She must always go on hunts with us. That way, she will be a great hunter, like her mother and father. She will not be a weak woman depending on a man to survive."

When her mind was made up, he knew he could not win an argument when her, Night Buffalo turned and stepped outside. It was a sunny day, but the night had been cold, and the ground was frozen. It meant easy walking but poor tracking unless they hunted the north facing slopes where snow still lingered.

He and Snow Woman had hunted together many times, and they knew several places where elk and deer tended to frequent. As the snow retreated, they would go to those places to graze upon the new, spring grass.

As they walked together, he watched her progress

SNOW WOMAN: The Wolf (May 1869) Part One (Cont.)

with the extra weight on her back. She was moving as fast as he was without appearing to expend much effort. He also noticed her movements had become more sensual as they neared the forest. Just as he began to think that maybe they should have waited another hour to start the hunt, Snow Woman stopped and turned.

“You need to watch for animals. Perhaps tonight we can do other things,” she said, flashing a mischievous smile.

“I was makin’ sure you weren’t havin’ any difficulties. A hunter does not normally wear a cradleboard.”

“I not feel the weight of it. It is light, and the spirit of our daughter gives me more strength.”

“Maybe tonight we can see about adding the spirit of a little brother to our family.”

Snow woman resumed walking toward the forest, exaggerating the movements of her hips for a few steps. Her extra layers of clothing hid most of the effect, but the sudden glint in Night Buffalo’s eyes showed that he got her message.

The two of them made a capable hunting team, and they often hunted together without anyone else from the village. They did not speak when entering the forest and communicated with hand signals. This trip would be no different, even with the child.

As they crossed the north slope of a valley, snow was still present, but just in large patches. Since the air temperature was slightly above freezing, they stashed their outer layer of clothing in the crotch of a tree for later retrieval.

They both enjoyed the greater freedom of movement as they moved into a thicker patch of the forest. Wildlife had left the area. Night Buffalo was about to signal a halt when they heard loud snarling and the sounds of wolves fighting something.

Keeping their weapons ready, they approached the source of the sounds. Just when they came to a spot

where they could observe what was happening, the sounds quieted. Cautiously crawling around a large tree, Night Buffalo saw a wolf pack loping away from a pile of fur laying in front of an old, fallen tree. They quickly disappeared about a hundred yards down the hillside among some trees.

Signaling Snow Woman to follow, he approached what appeared to be the scene of a vicious fight. There was blood sprayed all about on the ground and up onto the fallen tree with a dead wolf lying in the open. There was another, injured wolf laying half in and out of the space under the tree.

Night Buffalo took out his Bowie Knife and said, “I better finish off this injured animal. We can use the furs from the two of them.”

Placing her hand on his arm, Snow Woman said, “Wait a moment, my husband. Look at her eyes.”

Startled, Night Buffalo took a closer look at the injured wolf. There was no fire in her eyes, just a pleading sadness.

“See her teats,” Snow Woman said. “She has been nursing her young. They are probably in a den beneath that tree. She was badly injured defending them from a hungry wolf pack.”

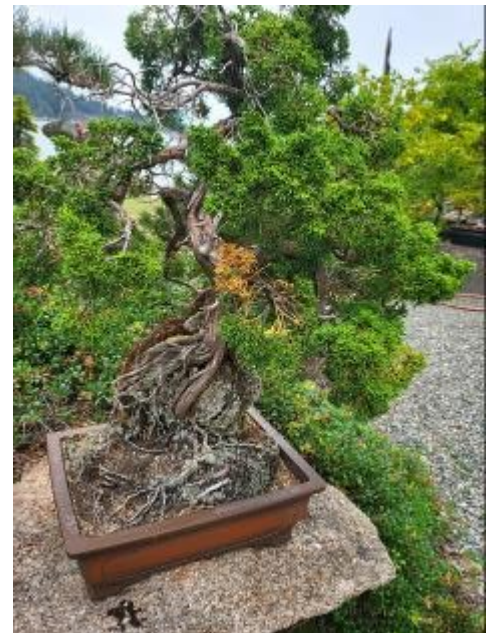
“We have to put her out of her misery and then see if their pelts are useful. They might be all torn up from the fighting,” Night Buffalo said as he moved toward the injured wolf.

Snow Woman moved to stand between Night Buffalo and the now whimpering wolf. As she looked into its eyes and reached in its direction, the wolf closed its eyes and died.

“That was foolish, Snow Woman. It might have had enough strength to attack you to defend its pups.”

“The look in her eyes showed she wanted our assistance and did not think of us as enemies. The Great Spirit brought us here at this time for a reason. That reason is beneath this tree.”

Western Region Meeting at Elandan August 10



Western Region Meeting at Coenosium Rock Garden August 10





Organization

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Eating in the 50s

1. Pasta was not eaten
2. Curry was a surname.
3. A takeaway was a mathematical problem.
4. A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.
5. Crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.
6. Rice was only eaten as a milk pudding.
7. A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.
8. Brown bread was something only poor people ate.
9. Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.
10. Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.
11. Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold. Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.
12. Fish didn't have fingers.
13. Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.
14. None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.
15. Healthy food consisted of anything edible.
16. People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.
17. Indian restaurants were only found in India.
18. Cooking outside was called camping.
19. Seaweed was not a recognised food.
20. "Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.
21. Prunes were medicinal.
22. Surprisingly, muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.
23. Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock!
24. And the things that we never ever had on our table in the 50s and 60s: elbows or phones!

shared by silversurfers.com

The cover of my upcoming historical fiction book about two Civil War battles is shown to the left.