

READING YOUR OWN PROFILE TAKES GOOD BIT OF COURAGE

08/29/00

The day this first will be seen in print will be my 73rd birthday. There have been many perceptions of me over, lo, these many years. Some have been painfully true and others I prefer to believe are not entirely false, but misunderstood. Those of you who know me only from my writing have no doubt formed your own impressions.

Two of my granddaughters in a guest column in this paper portrayed me in a manner I have best described above. It left me with conflicting emotions too difficult to dissertate further upon.

I recently was asked to participate as part of a Town of Webb planning committee. Bob Wheeler, chairman, asked each member to provide a biographical sketch. My young business partner, Steve Bick, came up with one I would like to share with you. It is not entirely true but for the most part painfully accurate.

Biographical Sketch of Mart Allen

I am a sagacious figure, often seen dispersing advice in local diners. My counsel has been sought by generals, governors, Indian chieftains, and most notably, world champion boxers. I once successfully mediated a sticky dispute between a beaver and a shopping mall. I am an award-winning forester and naturalist.

My life is virtually interwoven with Adirondack folklore – I met both Noah John Rondeau and C.J. Strife, visited French Louie's gravesite and I know where Johnny Leaf died and where Drid was assassinated.

I enjoy frequent trips to the barber and dentist alike, yet I have no hair and a scarce few teeth. If it walks, crawls, or flies, chances are I have kept it as a pet, made a stew of it, or used it as bait (often sequentially).

My stories will top your stories, each and every time. I am a published author and yet I've never seen fit to write about the weather. I administered euthanasia to sick cats while veterinary science was still in its infancy. I was once proclaimed King of all Otters. I know every stream in New York that used to contain trout in 1958.

I can drive a two-wheel drive truck in places where few would dare even walk. Turkeys are easily fooled by my calls. I have no discernable athletic ability, yet I am in

better shape than any man my age. I am pessimistically negative at all times and yet positive things keep happening to me.

I can spot a cherry tree out of the corner of my eye through a thousand feet of dense woods while driving by at high speeds, but I often misplace small objects within plain sight.

I'm a skilled woodworker who can replicate any wooden object ever built with my Shopsmith. I measure twice and cut once. I suffer fools, gladly at times. My real talent is in personnel and there was a time when I found jobs for every misfit within 100 miles.

My clothes match. I once made a silk purse out of a sow's ear. As a younger man, I wore a half dozen pairs of snowshoes to a frazzle each winter.

I'm a closed-mouth sort and few can guess my political affiliations. Children like me. My twist-off caps are inevitably winners. I'm a ranger and a roofer. I'm on the Web, but I don't know where. I am intolerant of dogs and therefore they worship me like a God.

Though mild mannered at all times, I can curse like a teamster. My bark is worse than my bite. My wife is a patient woman, many years my junior, who bakes the best apple pies in the county. My skill with a rope, pulley and chain saw is legendary. I was a guide when a gut pile counted for more than a license. No one ever took advantage of my good nature.

But I have never before been part of a Town of Webb planning committee.