

The Good Ole Days

The air conditioner, held up by Mom's bedroom window, was the only one in the house. So the rest of us had to feel a breeze from that old trembling fan which we all took turns singing into. An acquired vibrato would prevail as each of us sang into this bladed microphone. But you know, that fan, I wouldn't have traded it for anything.

Fussing over who would watch their favorite television program on Friday nights seemed to bring us closer. Even though a metal coat hanger served as the antenna and channels were switched with pliers, we had a picture to see and we all saw it together.

The radio worked but we barely heard a sound. However, long trips were never quiet. Our car was replete with songs as we became the voices of every famous singer we knew. And sure there was always someone off-key, but back then no one really cared.

When the wood wasn't plentiful and the cold cut through the barely insulated walls, it was an open oven that we all huddled around with praying hands between our legs. The heat migrated throughout the house but that was only half of where the warmth came from.

The recycled grease filled cans on top of the stove became a permanent fixture in our kitchen. We knew the oil that cooked Monday's chicken also fried Thursday's, and the fish grease was never mixed with the chicken's. As kids, we never realized how poor we were, because Mom made sure we saw a hot meal every night, even if it was leftovers.

Now as I look back, those were some trying times for my parents. No one was laughing at the hardship that seemed to plague us; we just endured and pressed on, because it was a way of life. Sure we were a family living in poverty, but now that I think about it, we were rich.

