

GRANDPA PIKE'S NUMBER TWO~



DANGER

FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
GRANDPA PIKE'S OUTHOUSE READER

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DEDICATION

SOMETIMES I REFER TO MY DAUGHTER, LAURIE SHANNON, by her nicknames, “Duke” or “The Duke.” If you’ve read many of my previous stories, you will know why. I also refer to her often as my “onliest baby girl.” Onliest? That’s not even a word, you say. Well, it is.

Some sources define “onliest” as the emphatic form of only, others as the intensive form. I call it the superlative form. How can “only” have degrees, you ask? I discovered this word a half-century ago when I was hitchhiking in the southern USA.

My “ride,” a good-looking young guy about my age, wanted to stop at a diner just outside town for a bite to eat before we took off for Houston. As we were sitting, girls in nearby booths peered over at this guy with movie-star good looks. Naturally I speculated on which one he would choose and which one with whom I’d have half a chance.

Soon, other young women who were coming in or going out of the restaurant stopped by to speak to him. It seemed like he knew every good-looking female in the town—and the best ones twice, if you get my meaning. So I said to him, “I bet you have a lot of girlfriends.”

“No,” he said, taking out his wallet to show me a picture, “this is Michelle, my onliest.”

So . . . I asked him about onliest, as I’d never heard that word be-

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fore. Here's how he explained it to me. "She's the only one for me. The only girl I have. The only one I want. The only one I love. The only one there could ever be."

That's why I call Laurie Shannon my onliest baby girl. I dedicate this book to her.

DLHBG—and she knows what that means.



— CHAPTER 1 —
QUIRKS AND
QUARE HABITS

We all have quirks—mannerisms or figures of speech which have become part of who we are—how people remember us. All of us have some prejudices, although some of us term them as preferences. Wouldn't it be boring if we all talked, walked, dressed, and looked identical? I'd be sick of lookin' at ya, I know that, even though you'd all be perfect—just like me.

AWESOME AND THE SUPERLATIVES

SOUNDS LIKE A BAND, RIGHT? CLEARLY NOT A HUMBLE One, either. That's not what I'm talking about, though. When I was a kid, if you thought something was really good or you liked it, it was "neat." In Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, when I was a teenager, it was "some good." Then along came "cool," "groovy," and "far out." "Far out" became "far freaking out" or its more liberated cousin, "far f----- out."

My parents would have said "it's the cat's pyjamas" or "the cat's ass"—although I never understood how something you liked or anything good could be compared to a cat's ass. Name something good that ever came out of a cat's ass.

Later on in life "excellent" became popular, and then "totally" or "like, totally." I'm talking in the white culture here. There were many other slang expressions, in other cultures, for something really good—something which you liked.

For the last few years, the most popular synonym for "like" was "awesome" or "totally awesome." It is applied to everything—the mundane and the extraordinary. For example, a hairdo can be awesome, so can a piece of pie, or the fact that someone made merely a passing grade in something.

If it is totally awesome that someone qualified for the Olympics, what do you call it when they win the gold medal? We need a new word.

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These words are grossly overused to the point where absolutely anything can be “awesome,” i.e. can fill you with awe, cause one to be filled with wonder and reverence. We should show more respect for our language.

I urge caution in using “awesome” so that, if something really extraordinary happens in your life, you won't be speechless for want of words to describe it.

Take the very word “caution” (which I urged). That is a word you see on warning signs in factories, in the instruction manuals for power tools, etc. I learned a new definition of that word when I was a young man, and I have never been able to get the image out of my head. See how it works with yours.

I used to do some work for an old farmer who lived up the road from us. He used that word regularly. If something was unusual or worrisome, he'd stand back and say, “Well, ain't that a caution!” I guessed that he meant it was something worthy of further study, or something to which one should pay close attention. I asked him, one day, what he meant. He stared at me for a few seconds like I was totally stunned, and then he explained.

“It's easiest if I give you an example. Let's say you are in my barn, working in a stall behind a horse, like you are now, and you see his tail go up. If you stay there, by and by you'll see his ass pucker. Get out of there right away. A caution is any movement in that outside ring of the horse's ass.”

COMB-OVERS

THE *MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY* DEFINES A COMB-over as “an arrangement of hair on a balding man in which the hair from the side of the head is combed over the bald spot.”

That, I believe, is an inaccurate or at least incomplete definition. I've seen them combed from both sides, to meet on top. I've seen comb-overs combed from the back to the front—one in particular that I remember was so long he had it flipped back over at the front! How he kept it laying flat was a great mystery, and you don't ask the owner to explain. He has a secret—at least he thinks so. He's not likely to reveal his deception.

Somewhere there's a man with bushy eyebrows who is considering growing them out and combing them back over his bald head. Wait a minute—wasn't that what Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, did when he went bald?

I'm not picking on guys who dye their hair or buy “rugs” that look like dead squirrels. To each his own. I'm just talking about those marvels of engineering, comb-overs, that you sometimes see—mostly on windy days.

Some comb-overs are acceptable. I'm not entirely innocent. I have an acceptable comb-over. If you've always combed your hair straight

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back and you have only a small bald spot on top which is hidden by hair combed back in the normal way—is that wrong? What am I supposed to do? I should comb the hair away from the bald spot to highlight it?

Recently I was parked in front of a Home Hardware store, drinking my coffee, when an older man got out of his vehicle near me. He was wearing a ball cap.

As he turned to approach the store, the wind took his hat—and then went after his hair. The hair had been plastered flat across his head, and it suddenly flipped sideways, standing out about a foot and a half from his head. Slowly he manoeuvred himself around until the hair flopped back to where it was before. In an awkward sideways walk, with his head sitting about ninety degrees to his body, he moved toward where his hat had landed. As he bent to pick it up, the wind changed.

The green hat blew away and down to the end of the parking lot. He stared at it for a moment and then hollered: “To hell with you, I never liked Kent’s anyway!” With that he proceeded toward the door holding his head at the right angle to keep his comb-over flat.

I don’t know what the poor old gentleman was going in to buy, but if the staff saw the show and knew him, I hope they greeted him at the door with a free, brand new Home Hardware cap. Homeowners helping comb-overs. Proper thing, whaa?

FACEBOOK FRIENDS

FIRST OF ALL, ARE THEY REALLY FRIENDS? MOST OF US, IF we were to be brutally honest, could go down through our lists and eliminate the majority of our contacts and never lose a friend. Most are mere acquaintances. Some we have never met. Few could we message if we were down to our last dollar and needed rent money. Those few are our real friends.

We use Facebook for a myriad of reasons, some of which are: to promote our views, causes, or businesses, to keep up with gossip, to exchange recipes, to brag about our vacations, to share pictures of cute animals doing impossible things, or for posting philosophical “warm and fuzzies” written by others about concepts we don’t even understand. Why? Because everyone else is doing it.

Some of us are not working, and we use it to pass the time—to stave off terminal boredom. No matter what you post, someone will “like” it, and it gives us, or our views, a little bit of validation. I spend too much time on Facebook. I am interested in the views of others. Unless they are true friends, though, I am not interested in seeing pictures of their babies, their trip to Paris, or what they are about to eat.

This little rant is probably going to make me some enemies. Someone will now “unfriend” me, so I’d better cut this short and

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find something else to do. Maybe I'll go on Facebook for a while. Oh, look at this picture of a cute little puppy dog and a kitten snuggling on the sofa! I better hit "like" on that. What's not to like? That's just precious, so it is.

GETTING *BACK* IN SHAPE

I HAVE TO LAUGH WHEN I OVERHEAR A GROUP OF GUYS talking about getting back in shape. Usually they are eating in a fast food restaurant or drinking beer when the subject comes up. You know who gets back in shape? The guy who isn't there. He's quit talking about it and is doing it. He's too busy working, or working out, to hang around with these guys.

They'll bump into him a few weeks later and ask why they haven't seen him. They'll notice he's lost weight. He'll say he got tired of fast food, or the booze was bothering his stomach and he's laid off it for a while. The other guys will keep talking about getting back in shape and get no further.

After New Year's I saw many people out walking—every day—but now that number has dwindled. You see them out on a sunny day but not in any adverse weather. Most of them will drop out before Easter. Then a new crowd will start dieting and walking to get back in shape for the shorts and T-shirt weather.

I have no intention of getting back in shape, quite simply because I never was. Truth be told, neither were most of those who talk about doing it. I've never been to a gym and never ran or walked regularly. I lose weight during the summer if I have lots of physical work to do outside. I can lose it in the winter only by starving myself.

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“That means that there are too many things wrong with it and it will have to be stripped down and rebuilt,” she told me. I should have known better, but I had to ask.

“But what do the initials NFG stand for?”

“No f*****g good!” the lady told me—and she did not speak in asterisks.

At least I left the job on my last day with a smile.



Laurie Blackwood Pike, a.k.a. Grandpa Pike, was born in Stanhope, Newfoundland and Labrador. He is retired from his position as business development manager with a national chain of hardware and building supply stores. In 2017, he received the Estwing Gold Hammer Award—the industry’s recognition for his contributions. In 1986, he bought a rural general store, developed a logo, and branded the business “Grandpa Pike’s.” His unique store was profiled in the hardware industry’s *Hardware Merchandising* magazine. In recent years, Grandpa Pike has used his nickname for charity work. In 2007, he partnered with the Children’s Wish Foundation of Canada, Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter, to release a music CD. In 2009, he partnered with them again to produce a gospel Christmas CD. He is married to Kathleen Pike and has one daughter, Laurie Shannon. *Grandpa Pike’s Number Two* is his third book. His second, *A Man of My Word*, is the critically acclaimed biography of former premier Beaton Tulk. His first book, *Grandpa Pike’s Outhouse Reader*, has appeared in *Atlantic Books Today’s* bestsellers lists.