

## **Blog 35 Missing**

*Not all Tales of Blawenburg are about the old days. This blog is a true story that I wrote and published in the Montgomery News in October 2016. Some of you have already read it, no doubt, but there is an update at the end of the story. I hope you enjoy my tale of my personal foibles.*

### **This Story Has a Certain Ring to It**

By David Cochran

This is a story more than forty years in the making. It's a story with the elements of a best-selling novel—mystery, pathos, history, and police action. Well, maybe that's overstating things. The story begins in the mid-1970s with a cherry tree gone bad. When we moved into our house, there was a vibrant cherry tree in our side yard. The first year we were thrilled with the volume of cherries, but before we could taste one of them, birds of unknown origin descended on the tree and ate them all in a day. The next year, the tree had leaves, but no fruit. It died the following year. So, like a famous forefather, I chopped it down with my ax. I cannot tell a lie; I did chop it down, but that's where the problem began.

When I hauled the limbs and trunk to the woods, I came back to the site of the excision, exhausted and eager for a shower. I looked down at my hand. My ring was missing! My wedding ring was gone! I looked all over—on the lawn where the cherry tree was, along the path where the limbs were dragged, and in the woods where the remainder of the cherry tree resided. I didn't find the ring.

I continued to look for it, but as weeks turned into months and months into years, I resolved that the missing ring would remain a mystery. I missed the ring, feeling incomplete without it. After two decades passed, I borrowed a metal detector from a friend, but alas, I still came up empty-handed. No ring.

#### **40+ Years Later**

Blawenburg Church was contacted by Nick Monello. He is a detectorist, a person whose hobby is using a metal detector, and he is also a police officer. As a member of the NYPD, Nick is trained to be on the lookout. He gained permission and scanned the 1832 Blawenburg Church yard, finding an old spoon and a square nail. While he was there, I happened to mention that I live in an old house that is nearly as old as the church. He immediately said he wanted to come back another day and scan my property. "Oh, by the way," I said, "I lost my wedding ring awhile back. Maybe you'll find it."

Without hesitation, Nick confidently said, "I'll find it."



On the day of the search, Nick arrived and began his scan in the area where the cherry tree once stood. Rather than hover over him, I excused myself and told him that I would be working in the garden if he needed anything.

About an hour later, Nick walked back to the garden. "I have a question for you, Dave," he said.

Skeptically, I said, "Yes?"

He opened his hand. "Will you marry me?" he said with a big smile. There it was in his hand, the missing ring.

I yelled and hugged him as I returned the ring to its rightful digit. Instead of marriage, I offered to buy him lunch!

So the mystery is solved. The ring was located about four feet from the cherry tree, very close to the driveway which had been paved twice in the intervening years, and near the brick sidewalk that was replaced twice during that time. It was only two inches below the surface.

I'm keeping a close eye on my ring these days, but I'm pretty confident that I won't lose it again. You see, over those 40 years, the ring must have shrunk. I got it on, but it's not so easy to get it off!



## Update

I had to resize the ring, and it has stayed on my finger for three and a half years since Nick found it. But in May 2019, I had another loss, ironically just feet from where the old cherry tree had been located. I was moving four mangy azalea bushes to make way for some new plantings. With great effort, I dug up the bushes and moved them to their new location. I dutifully dug the holes, and while I was at it, I moved several other smaller perennials. It took quite a while to move these plants, and at the end of the day, I reached up to adjust my glasses. I don't know why, because when I reached up, there were no glasses on my sweaty face to adjust. *Oh no, I thought, I did again.* I lost them right off my face without knowing it. My favorite titanium framed glasses were gone. I looked all over the yard with no luck. They were gone. It was like some apparition had whisked them off my head and took them to parts unknown. What's worse is that I was flashing back forty-some years to that missing ring. As Yogi Berra said, "Déjà vu all over again."

Well, I spent a considerable part of the next day digging up all those mangy azalea bushes and transplanted perennials to see if my glasses were beneath them. Alas, I could not find them.

My optometrist agreed that I should not get new glasses until I dealt with the cataracts that were ripening in my eyes and yearning to be freed. So that we did. I went for months without glasses, and after two surgeries and a new pair of glasses, I'm seeing better than I have in quite a while.

As spring approaches, I'll be on the lookout for those elusive glasses. My optometrist's office staff assured me from the start that I wouldn't find the glasses until I got my new pair. Maybe I should call in Nick to help me again!