

## John Newhouse, Jr.

Recently I met Jim Hawkins and found we had many things in common. I really enjoyed talking to him about the people we both know and the stories he had to tell. One of the individuals we both really liked and had worked for was John Newhouse, Jr.

Junior was a mechanic in the town of Arlington, Indiana. In the late 1950's, he and his wife, Velma, were in the process of building a house located south of Arlington. They decided to build the basement of the house first and finish the main floor later. They built the living quarters within the south section of the basement and built a large garage in the north section to be his mechanic shop. Jim's mother and his two brothers moved to Arlington in 1959 and Jim became acquainted with Junior. Jim was only in the sixth grade, but he started mowing the yard for Junior and Velma. During Jim's junior high and high school years he worked for Junior as a helper and started to learn how to work on cars, etc. For the most part, Junior was a very mild mannered person with great manners. However, sometimes, there were bolts that he could not break loose or parts that he could not get removed. At least one time, Junior got so frustrated that he threw a hammer and it went through a window. Jim said he learned how to replace the panes in a window because of Junior.

Junior really liked horses. His favorite breed was the Tennessee Walker. He and Velma owned 10 to 15 acres where they lived and owned 2 to 3 horses most of the time. Jim would help feed and clean up after the horses as part of his job. Junior always made Jim back the wagon or trailer with a load of hay to the shed where it was stored. This was good training for Jim to learn to back a wagon or trailer. Another job that Jim learned from Junior was how to sweep the floor. With this training, Jim could sweep any floor and get all of the dust up off of the floor. David Mann told him "you must have learned how to sweep from Junior Newhouse".

In the late 1950's or early 1960's, Junior and Velma purchased the gas station located on the northeast corner of the intersection of US 52 and the Arlington-Homer Pike. This is the time that I worked for Junior. He needed someone to attend the station while he and his employee mechanic worked at his garage south of town. I had graduated from Manilla High School in 1961 and was looking for a job in January, 1962. Junior hired me and I pumped gas, changed oil, maintained the inventory, and various other things that needed to be done at the station. I learned some very valuable lessons while I was there. One customer came in for gas and told me he wanted 5. After I pumped five dollars worth of gas, he told me he wanted 5 gallons. At that time the 5 gallons cost around two dollars. So I ended up paying the additional three dollars out of my pocket. With the hourly pay rate at that time, it took me a few hours of work to make up the difference. Moral of the story, make sure you know what the customer wants before you provide the service or product. I worked for Junior only a couple of months before I started attending a trade school to learn about data processing.

A couple of years later, Junior tore down the old station and built a new one at the same location. Then he was able to move the garage from his basement to the new building. He and Velma later finished building the main floor on their house. Jim told me that after the new building was finished, he and other employees would wash cars on Saturdays. They would clean the inside as well as the outside. This helped generate business for them and many customers used this service.

Sometimes, the new station became a gathering place for some of the older guys. Jim said he really enjoyed hearing the stories the guys would tell. Some of the guys were Raymond Overleese, Dutch Overleese, Jim Cadwallader, Jimmy Readle and John Newhouse, Sr. Jim said John, Sr. always had a

big cigar in his mouth but he never would light it. He just chewed on it. Raymond would tell the story of going west to harvest wheat. They would start harvesting in Kansas and move north until they were finished.

Jim and I were not the only young men that worked for Junior. A few of the ones that worked for Junior when they were young are Phil Dalrymple, and David Mann. I am sure there were others, but I do not have their names. Jim told me he learned a lot from Junior regarding mechanical repairs and wanted to pursue it as an occupation. As a result, Jim worked at various places before he started to work for John Deere in Rushville on June 1, 1973. He stayed there for 41 and one half years before he retired.

Junior not only had an influence on the people mentioned above. He had many customers and kept their cars, trucks, and tractors running. He treated his customers with respect and did the job he was asked to do correctly. He was very honest and taught his employees how to be good citizens. He also taught them good values and how to work.

Junior finished his career teaching about auto mechanics at the Rushville Consolidated Schools. I am sure his students learned a lot from him not only about mechanics but of how to treat others and about discipline.

I am really glad I was able to know John Newhouse, Jr. I may have only worked with him a couple of months, but I knew him much longer than that. I still remember and respect him for the person he was. He had an impact on the community and the community is much better off because of him.

Information submitted by Jim Hawkins

Story submitted by Larry Martin