



Welcome to
CECIL SOIL
Magazine™

“Down-To-Earth News For The Gentle People Of Cecil County”

From The Publisher, Ed Belote Sr.

“Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?”

It was 1932 and we were in the midst of the Great Depression. Bing Crosby sang a song about a down-and-out who was confused because he had worked hard, fought in the war, and now he was standing in a headline. Here are the lyrics (by Yip Harburg), in part:

*They used to tell me I was building a dream
And so I followed the mob.
When there was earth to plow or guns to bear,
I was always there, right on the job.
They used to tell me I was building a dream
With peace and glory ahead —
Why should I be standing in line, just waiting for bread?
Say, don't you remember they called me Al,
It was Al all the time.
Why don't you remember, I'm your pal —
Say, buddy, can you spare a dime?*

I'm not suggesting we're heading for another depression, how could that be ... all we have to do is print more money. I am suggesting that we have to realize that in these hard financial times we must support each other, keep our money here where we live, and work together for the betterment of our community.

More than ever I'm thinking local, and I'm thinking community. And when I say local I'm including areas on the border of our county boundaries; they're our good neighbors, and we trade business back and forth.

I was more a farmer than a businessperson when Carol and I started the *Soil*. And I learned from some of the best business people in the county. In 2004, I had my artist create a cover mock-up for CSM and an ad rate schedule. The very first place I visited was Western Auto (now Parts Plus) in Rising Sun, where I sat down and talked to the owner, **Bud McFadden**. I went there first because Bud had treated me like a gentleman every time I walked into his store ... I was very comfortable with him.

Bud was kind enough to listen to my pitch, and he said, “I love this idea you have, Ed. How much for your back page?” He ran that back page for over two years, but more importantly, we became friends. Bud has been my business mentor since I met him, and he has taught me much.

I learned that Bud treats everybody that walks into his store with respect and honesty. That is why he is so successful. People from all over the county pass up those big box-stores and buy their large and small ticket items from Bud. Many of them don't even set foot in the store; they simply give him a phone call and say something like: “Hi, Bud. Could you get a new refrigerator over here? Mine just died.”

If you have a business, you'll want to take a lesson from Bud. If you want to make a purchase, be smart and do business with a local merchant like my friend, Bud McFadden. I have created a new motto

for this holiday season: *Buy from Bud* — a metaphorical representation of all the small business owners in our county.

It is going to be a terribly tough holiday season for all our local small merchants, and I feel we should give them all the support we can. Believe me, you'll be paid back in spades.

Internet shopping is killing the Mom & Pop stores as well as the bigger establishments. Another one of my heroes is **Kathy Bender** of Bender Music ... she has the heart of a lion. Check out her ad on page 10 and you'll see where she goes head-to-head with those Internet stores! If I wrote a book about this wonderful business lady, I'd have her photo on the cover with clenched fists, an intimidating smile, and the title would be *Bring It On*.

Another business lady that has as much grit as Kathy Bender is **Mary Caldwell** of City Pharmacy in Elkton. She runs her business much like Bud McFadden—that is, with heart and honesty. I was in her store one day (Mary didn't know it) and this elderly little lady came in and timidly waved to Mary, who was working the elevated counter. Mary quickly came from behind the counter and embraced her visitor. The lady said something in serious, hushed tones, and I heard Mary assure her she had nothing to worry about as she guided her to the prescription counter. Gosh! Do you think Wall-to-Wall “Mart” treats their customers in a like manner?

Sometimes a decision about where to do business boils down to trust, and few decisions are more important than those regarding our personal health. We know we can trust Sun Pharmacy because we know its owner, **Tom Connelly**. He is our neighbor. He goes to our church, sings in our choir, volunteers in our community, and buys from our stores— in essence, he cares about us. Check out his ad on page 21, grab your Christmas list, and head over to Sun Pharmacy— his store has thousands of reasonably priced items and you really can find “something for everyone” at Sun Pharmacy.

What about the wonderful local restaurants we have? I know Carol and I will be visiting them, especially through the holiday season. Why leave the county for an expensive trip when we have everything here? Save your time and money— wine and dine close to home.

I could go on and on about the fine merchants we have in this county— **Carol (“Fireball”) Brown** at Perryville Outlets, **Rich Brooks** of R. Brooks Mechanical Inc., **Joan Eckman** of Hair N' Things, **Dr. Kimberly Packer** of Packer Family Dentistry, **Debbie Vogelsong** of Lighthouse Gifts on Route 213, Cayot's Corner, Chesapeake City, and so many more brave entrepreneurs—but I'll have to save something for another column.

In this season of giving, please offer your loyalty to our local businesses— the ones who employ our neighbors and support our community—here on Cecil Soil. —CSM

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