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“Pardon me but can you spare a little change?”

This request was heard many, many times during the Great Depression and these or similar words are still heard in today's “economic downturn.” That question is, of course, an appeal for a handout of “pocket money” or “change.” But that's not the kind of change I want to explore here.

By the time you read this issue of *The Dawg*, many dramatic changes will have taken place in Arab countries, aided by and accelerated by the use of communications and computer technology, including Internet “social networks” such as Facebook, and by the ubiquitous cell phone. Printed media cannot match the information delivery speed of the Internet or of television, which relies heavily upon computers and communication technology to report news, including the airing of amateur on-the-spot cell phone videos uploaded to the Internet.

Technology is changing really, *really* fast! Starting in 1940 and 1990 respectively, the powers of computers and of supercomputers have each grown exponentially. Other technologies show similar growth. Starting in 1990, a graph of the curve of “mass use of inventions” is nearly vertical. So is a graph of Internet use in the last decade. And improvement in the cost performance of computers and communication technology is astonishing—hence, kids in High School can now afford their own cell phones (haven't you noticed?) and laptop computers, both considered by many students to be indispensable. My kids and grandkids rely on computers at work and school and home.

So *many* changes!

As a boy, I pumped by hand buckets of family drinking water from a well outside

the back door, used my little red Radio Flyer wagon to haul blocks of ice for the family “ice box,” paid a dime to watch black-and-white movies shown by a noisy reel-to-reel projector in the upstairs room of the town general store, clicked up and down on the earpiece cradle of our wall-mounted telephone to ask the local operator (who knew everyone in town!) to connect my call.

Several years and many changes later (including electric refrigeration), I and my fellow 1955 AHS graduates could have hardly imagined the changes to come in the half century ahead: human footprints on the Moon; instant worldwide communication, including visual media; transplants of human hearts, kidneys, livers and faces (!); nanotechnology; an International Space Station; the Hubble telescope's astonishing gallery of interstellar photos; new nations emerging while old ones disintegrated or reformed; and much more.

Even though much has changed since I was a boy and since I graduated from AHS, I don't long for the “old days.” Many changes have been very beneficial, even life changing. (Well, having to “converse” with the recorded voice of an automated phone answering system to finally get to talk with a real human being can be, hmmm, *frustrating*.)

I write using my home computer system. I rely on my word processor's “spell checker” to catch my spelling errors. I submit articles for *The Dawg* by e-mail. I rely on e-mail to stay in touch with friends, and to exchange photos, website links, and documents. I use the Internet for news and information, research, entertainment, and continuing education. I used Skype to make free online video calls to my daughter when she was studying in England. I use my website to share my thoughts and writing worldwide.

Change in the world around us is accelerating at a breathtaking pace! I suppose the high rate of change seems normal to the youth of the world. Personally, I could use a slowdown—but don't expect it.

So, what has changed besides science and technology, medicine, the huge amount of information available worldwide, the state of

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nations, rain forests, glaciers, etcetera?

Well, I have, of course, as have all my 1955 classmates and the rest of the people in the world as their lives go on. There is not space here to list all the ways we and the rest of humankind have changed in the last fifty plus years, so I shall speak only for myself.

My waistline has grown like the national debt and I long ago left behind my AHS graduation weight of 125 pounds. My beard is now grey and I wear eyeglasses. Injuries ended my long distance running so instead I walk daily. Regular exercise is no longer an option, it is a necessity. I am a better and safer driver than when I was a teenager. Those changes are observable.

Less obvious are inner changes. My youthful idealism has been replaced by an optimistic pragmatism (although my idealist still dwells in the back of my mind). My world view has expanded *enormously* since graduating High School fifty-six years ago, thanks in large part to the global Internet and other worldwide media. Now I may witness daily the adventures and conditions of other human beings anywhere in the world. I may see their perils and their progress. I may view the faces of fellow humans struggling with hunger and oppression and natural disaster. I am more aware of my world.

Even so, I very much enjoy my quiet retirement comprised of slow and mellow routines most people would find boring. Still, change continues all around me. My children continue to mature and pursue their life goals. My grandchildren are growing up. My oldest granddaughter bestowed on me the title of *great* grandfather, an honor I did not seek but which I contentedly accept.

But I find it ever more challenging to install and adapt to the required periodic changes (“upgrades”) to my home computer software. There will most certainly come a time when I am not up to making those changes and my keyboard will fall silent. But until then, dear reader, you may still find me on the pages of *The Dawg*, editors willing, of course.