

End of the road for Margie and me

This is it. This is the end of the road for Margie and me. At 15 years old she's dying. I nicknamed my car "Margie" after my grandmother. It was her car first. She used to let me drive her to Asheville in it for her regular doctor appointments.

It wasn't long after my grandmother died, in my senior year of college, when the truck I drove suffered its last wreck. That truck was an accident magnet. Mom would say that it was because it was the same color of the road.

Dad would always say we should drive our cars until the wheels fall off. But even that motto didn't stop my father from driving that truck when a wheel, poorly fastened, literally fell off and passed him in a parallel field as he drove down a mountain road one day. That was one wreck. A few others followed until the front grill of the truck looked like it was permanently frowning.

The last wreck that did it in happened when I was driving. The fender had long been warped, but when the man hit me — head on — and asked, "Gee did I do that?" I told him, "Well it wasn't like that before."

We received just enough to scrap the

truck and buy my "Margie" with that one.

Riding in "Margie" was like riding with my Grandma Marjorie. I thought in some way this was her graduation present to me for finishing college. Somehow she worked it out upstairs for me to have a wreck without an injury — a scrap to trade for a prize.

It got me to my first job out of college — working with my sister in Greenville, SC. It carried me to about 13 job interviews throughout the Carolinas while I searched for my first gig in journalism. It drove me here to Kings Mountain, when I got that first chance I'd longed for. It's taken me to places I'd never been, helped me meet others I'd never met, let me see things I'd never seen and been my one silent companion in a lonely journey to adulthood.

She has carried me many miles. Friends, family members and even a few boyfriends have ridden "shotgun" with me and my "Margie". But now her transmission is going. Her brakes are shot.

The air conditioning and the motor running the front passenger side window have long since stopped working. (Summers are practically unbearable.)

Still, I've prayed for more time with "Margie". But then, I've prayed for that before. Letting go is hard. I know my grandmother is still looking out for me, because somehow Margie lasted long enough for me to find another car.

As I stood there and stared at my "Margie" for one last time, tears came to my eyes. I saw all of the loved ones in the front window who've ridden with me. I wasn't crying over a car. I was saying goodbye.

I think we all come to a mark in the roads where we know we can't go back, but we hesitate to move forward. That next step is all of a sudden more uncertain. That last one was so familiar. But time nags us for a decision.

I said goodbye to "Margie" on Monday...and said hello to my new companion. With air conditioning!



EMILY WEAVER

Editor