

Walter Cronkite is gone, aged 92, wandered to that great big ol' newsroom in the sky. More important to me, though, Darcy Cors is gone.



Who, you might ask?

She leaves behind a loving husband, family, and friends. She was 44; fought a brave battle with cancer.

Of course you don't know Darcy. How could you? To my knowledge, she never spent a day in the Lowcountry.

For that matter, I only knew her for a very short time, nearly forty years ago. The last time I saw her was for about an hour when we were fifteen.

I'm not sure what I'm getting at. It has to do with an amalgam of things, I suppose. First, the papers on Sunday exhorted us to remember where we were when Neil and Buzz jumped out of their amazing rocket powered tin can and onto the surface of the moon. Great event. Neil and Buzz. The way cool Saturn V rocket. The moonwalk. And through it all, the mellifluous, soothing voice of Walter Cronkite narrating the entire event. I doubt at that age we knew much more about him than he was the guy on TV every night. But we knew him.

I remember being excited, wide-eyed, ready to go myself. And as I recall, I watched it on T.V. with two or three of my little friends from the neighborhood. Darcy, as I recall, was one of them. But what I remember most about that time in my life was walking out of a house in a new neighborhood, boxes and trucks everywhere, and seeing a bunch of kids – and parents -- playing a neighborhood kickball game across the street in a cul-de-sac. I can remember seeing that and walking across a subdivision street busy with suburban D.C. traffic to see what it was all about.

“Wanna play?”

She would be the first friend I ever made on my own. We were both maybe five or six years old. She was about my size and age, maybe a little shorter, with dark hair– I can't remember exactly how her mom had fixed it – but it seems like I remember a pair of pig tails. What I do remember was that she told me her name was Darcy Cors, that was her brother Brian over here and her dad over there and I was welcome to join the game. I think later we played on a swing set.

And I will never forget the bright, constant smile, the dimples, the infectious laugh that followed nearly everything she said and did. Everything was a hoot to Darcy.

“Hahahahahahaha....you got a peanut and I got a Crackerjack!” I remember her crowing once when we shared a little box of Crackerjacks. The thing was, if she said it, it was funny. Even now, I can laugh. I suppose delivery is everything.

And yet, behind all that is the mellifluous voice of Cronkite. You could hear him at the kitchen table from the television in the den. You knew, even without knowing, that Cronkite had the story. He was the deal. He KNEW.

Even we kids, at age 6-9 or so, knew that. If I ever live to see the millions I deserve to make before it's time for me to eat my dirt sandwich, I would spend quite a bit of it to find a tape Darcy, Brian and I made one day. We were little kids, of course, and the contents would be excruciating to listen to for anyone other than us, but this is the thing. I remember us playing with a cassette tape recorder doing a fake news cast. I guess we were pretending we were a radio station, with all the corny jokes, stupid kids songs, the works,

But one of us, I know, did a kid's impersonation of Cronkite -- “This is Walter Crankcase with

the Evening News, snerk, snerk, cackle – “ in as close an imitation as an eight-year- old can get – staccato words, huge pauses, the works. “This just in: “The president just met with the Chinese Prime Minister and here is what he had to say: “Chow Mein! Sukiyaki! Egg Foo Yong!”

The comedy got even higher brow as the tape went on, I’m sure.

Cronkite is gone and leaves a big void in American life. His time in the anchor chair was, in fact, an epoch, a standard to which we in the business should aspire. Sadly, too many don’t, having become too concerned with being sensational rather than being accurate. I watched some of the tribute Sunday night and actually got a little misty remembering events past and somewhat worried that future generations probably do not have such icons to emulate anymore.

But what really hurts is that little girl is gone, too – and far too early. As I said, I don’t know why it has hit me so – I have not been in contact with her or her family for nearly thirty years. But in reading tributes, in talking to people who talked to people – I guess you could say through osmosis – I have found out, too late, that she became a very accomplished adult, a loving wife, sister, daughter, and aunt and a much-loved friend. She apparently still had her sense of adventure and her sense of humor. In a few years she touched so many people so deeply -- even this kid remembering a couple of years of childhood some 40 years later.

As long as people like Darcy come into this world, the future looks a little brighter, indeed.