

Re-tiring Made Easy

Written by Katherine Tandy Brown

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Like the majority of residents, I love living in Beaufort. And one reason is its abundance of “good neighbors,” people who go out of their way for strangers. This morning as I was turning on to the Woods Bridge, a woman pulled up beside me to tell me that my back tire was flat, that I was driving on the rim. I’d no idea. Contemplating the situation as I waited for a lovely sailboat with a mast that must’ve been 48 feet tall to pass through, I decided to limp across to the old White Hall turnoff and call AAA. This is the reason I pay for road service every year. Turns out, however, I didn’t have to use it.

As I pulled over, a young man named Jimmy on a yellow Moped with a cute Jack Russell in a basket followed me in and offered to change the tire. I told him I had AAA, but he said he’d save me the wait. Nice. We chatted as he removed my spare from the back door of my CRV and jacked up the vehicle on the tool that came with it back in 1998. Unfortunately, the jack wouldn’t lift the SUV high enough to remove the flat. Again, I told him not to worry, that I’d call AAA, and thanked him profusely as he scooted off.

I dialed the number and before asking if this were a road service call, the robot on the AAA line told me that first I’d need to take a short survey. On vacation spots. It would just take a minute. Did I want to plan a trip to Florida? No. How about a cruise? Definitely not. My patience was wearing thin while listening to the third question, when a big white Honda truck pulled in and a pleasant voice said, “Need some help, ma’m?” This one of those times when I want to call a young man’s mother to tell her what a nice job she did of raising her son.

I explained that I had AAA, and again, Michael said he could do it in a jiffy. He hopped out and proceeded to do just that. As he worked and told me about his wife, his year-old daughter and his job in the Coast Guard, another truck pulled in to see if we needed help. Coincidentally, it was Michael’s dad and brother. Concern for others obviously runs in that family. After assuring them he had everything under control, they left. Michael finished putting my spare on, spotted

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the culprit nail lodged in my tire, put that one on the back as a spare, and with a big smile, waved good-bye.

The generosity of these gentlemen warmed my heart and absolutely made my day. Chivalry is definitely still alive and flourishing in the Lowcountry.

Former Kentuckian Katherine Tandy Brown is a freelance writer, memoir writing instructor, workshop leader and writing coach who adores living in the SC Lowcountry more every day.