

JACOB'S LOG: Not so easy now

By Jacob Brooks

Another school year is under way, but something is definitely different this year. At first I thought it may be the lunches. Then I realized, "No, the lunches are still terrible." Then I thought it may be the homework. But I realized, "No, I'm still spending my evenings on five hours of homework." Maybe it's being a senior and the difficulty of choosing a college. But no, that wasn't it.

For a moment I thought maybe I had just lost my mind. I thought maybe I should send Dr. Phil an e-mail. He certainly could diagnose my problem.

Then it hit me: My best friend has left for college.

Some of you may think I'm referring to one of my buddies on the baseball team, but no. This is a friend I have known my whole life. Until now, everywhere I turned, he was there. We went to the same church, played the same sports, listened to the same music, drove the exact same car. We even shared a room our whole lives. Do you get it? My best friend is my brother Josh.

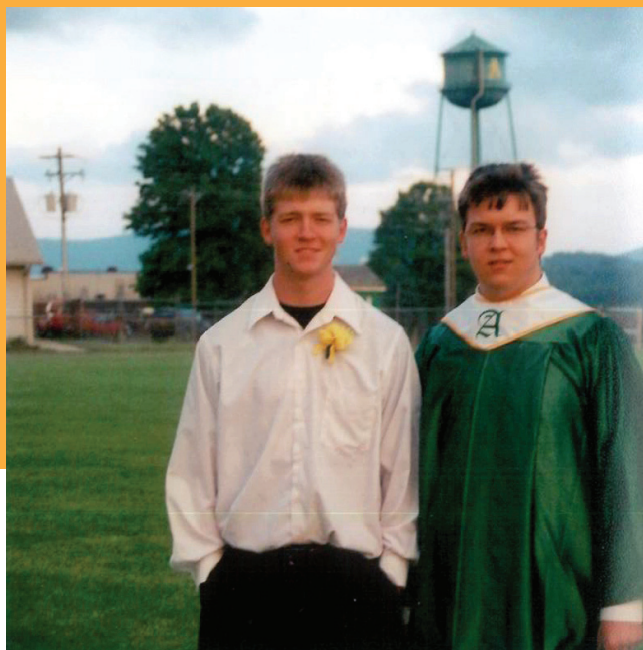
From the moment I was born, Josh and I were together. My mom reminds us that her boys, who now stand 6 feet tall, used to crawl around side by side. That's how I got my first nickname, "Easy."

Josh, who is one year older than I, apparently considered me a favorite toy when we were younger. I would be lying on the couch, perfectly content with my key ring, and Josh would come and sit by me just to make sure no harm would come to me. He would come near me, and my parents would say, "Be easy." Josh would look at me, pat me on the head, and say proudly, "Easy."

That period lasted for only a short while.

As we grew older, our differences grew as well. From the ages of about 7 through 12, we despised one another. We had the typical brother arguments. I was sick and tired of being Robin while he was always Batman. He was sick and tired of me always being sick and tired. We found a solution to our differences: fist fights. He is the one responsible for most of my scars. Also, he always won. I will say he did feel for me the next morning, and that is what counts.

Our ridiculous spats and arguments went away as we entered high school. We were in the band together, so we



Top: This was when Josh graduated from Allegheny High School last spring. Left: That's Josh on the left. Right: We are referred to as The Brooks Brothers, so at Halloween last year we dressed as The Blues Brothers. Josh is on the left with the sousaphone. I'm on the right with the quads.

shared the same good friends and hung out together. We talked with one another when we rode to school in a beat down 1970 Chevrolet that had only an AM radio. If that car wouldn't crank, we would sit in the parking lot and talk for hours waiting for our mom to come pick us up. Man, that car was piece of junk! But we grew as brothers inside it.

We've shared a room our whole life, so it feels different when I sit here at my desk when he's not around. I am reminded of the line in the movie "Shawshank Redemption": I just miss my friend.

I wish Josh the best of luck at Appalachian State University. I want him to know I'm proud of him. He gave me not only most of my scars, he also gave me most of my laughs. 📍

Jacob Brooks lives in Allegheny County. He is the national spokesman for the electric cooperatives' Youth Leadership Council.



Follow Jacob on the Carolina Country page on Facebook.