



Prakash Bhandari
The writer is a senior journalist

Pyare Miyan, In spirit and deed (...3)



CM Barkatullah Khan

During the evening meal, as I disinterestedly pecked at the food, Dhondiyal got busy polishing his own as well as my notional share; and followed it up with a flippant dig at me. Catching the CM's attention he said, "Sir, different people react to situations differently", which was not by any means a profound observation. But then he became more specific. "Shekhar, for instance, when tense, goes off food. I, on the other hand, tend to overeat to subdue anxiety". Barkatullah Khan laughed, and critically eyeing Dhondiyal's generous girth and my thin frame, quipped, "I can see that. Come to think of it, I too love a peculiar response to tension. I just go to sleep: and on occasion, feel like never getting up".

#RAJENDRA SHEKHAR



Rajendra Shekhar before venturing into writing books, chose Facebook to express himself. As he himself used to say "In writing my posts on Facebook I have largely relied on my memory; and with this in view, I have 'culled' out many of my episodes from my books.

Rajendra Shekhar relied on Gore Vidal, the famous novelist who said "A memoir is how one remembers one's own life" and Shekhar relied on Vidal's pertinent comment so as to cater to the need of making them attractively readable. His book "Memories Are Made Up of This" has in all 59 episodes, and there is one chapter devoted to the late Chief Minister Barkatullah Khan under the name Pyare Miyan. Barkatullah Khan (25 October 1920-11 October 1973) was the Chief Minister of Rajasthan from 9 July 1971 to 11 October 1973, when he died in office.

Rajendra Shekhar thus remembers the Rajasthan's only Muslim Chief Minister:

Barkatullah Khan or Pyare Miyan was not at all hard pressed financially and belonged to an affluent family from Jodhpur. He could, if he so liked, strut about with his nose in the air caring two hoots for all and sundry. Yet, he shunned haughtiness and among his most endearing qualities, were his caring concern for fellow-beings and his general humility.

He was a champion Bridge player and was visibly proud of his expertise. Losing in Bridge was an unmitigated disaster and when it happened, all his sterling qualities went for a walk. He loved Bridge to distraction and suffered no fool as a partner.

He had been a prominent freedom fighter, was an eminent lawyer, a budding politician apart from a Bridge player. He had enough inheritance to keep him and his family going for generations. His self dignity, however did not permit him the luxury of twiddle, rather it goaded him to earn an honest penny at all cost.

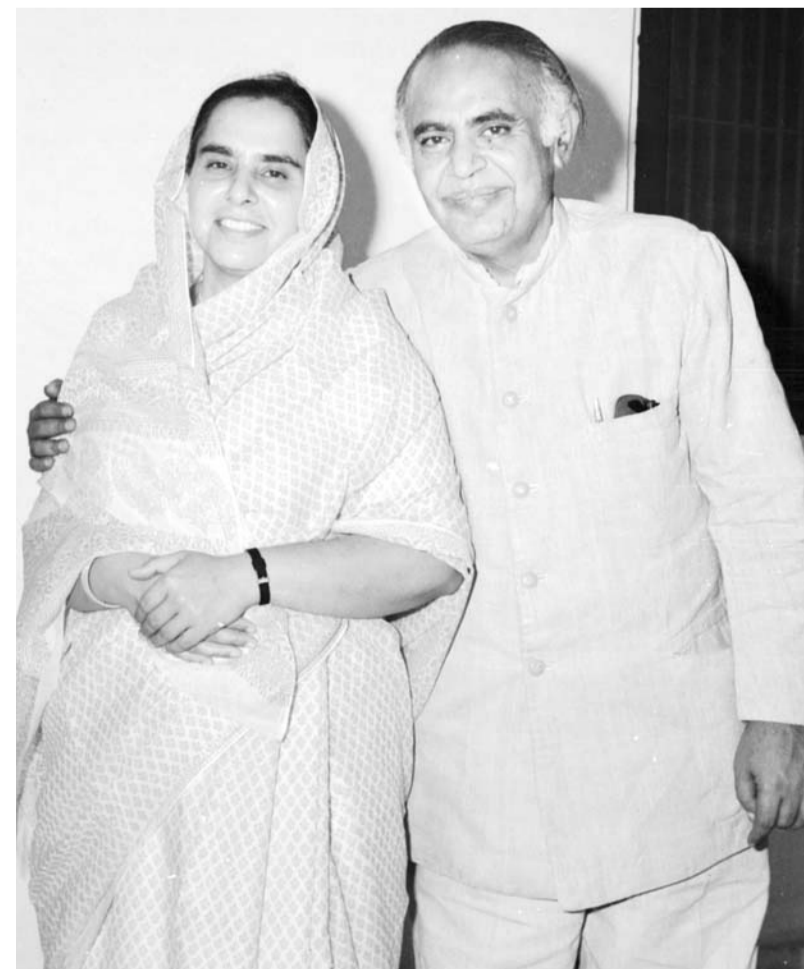
He had great interest in English literature. Books by English authors vied with law books and,

course books on Bridge, in his well-stocked library. Nonetheless, Law, Bridge and English literature notwithstanding, he was a fervid nationalist, and a democrat, that too despite his feudal upbringing. His dress preference was a generously grown up Khadi ensemble. An overflowing kurta reaching down to his shins and on his way down, attempting to fail to camouflage the expanse of his cute little paunch; the tubular ends of his commodious, expertly laundered, well-creased and modishly flared pyjamas draping on his made to order Jodhpuri mojris". And when the occasion demanded, he covered his baldness with a nicely starched, smartly angled Gandhi Cap.

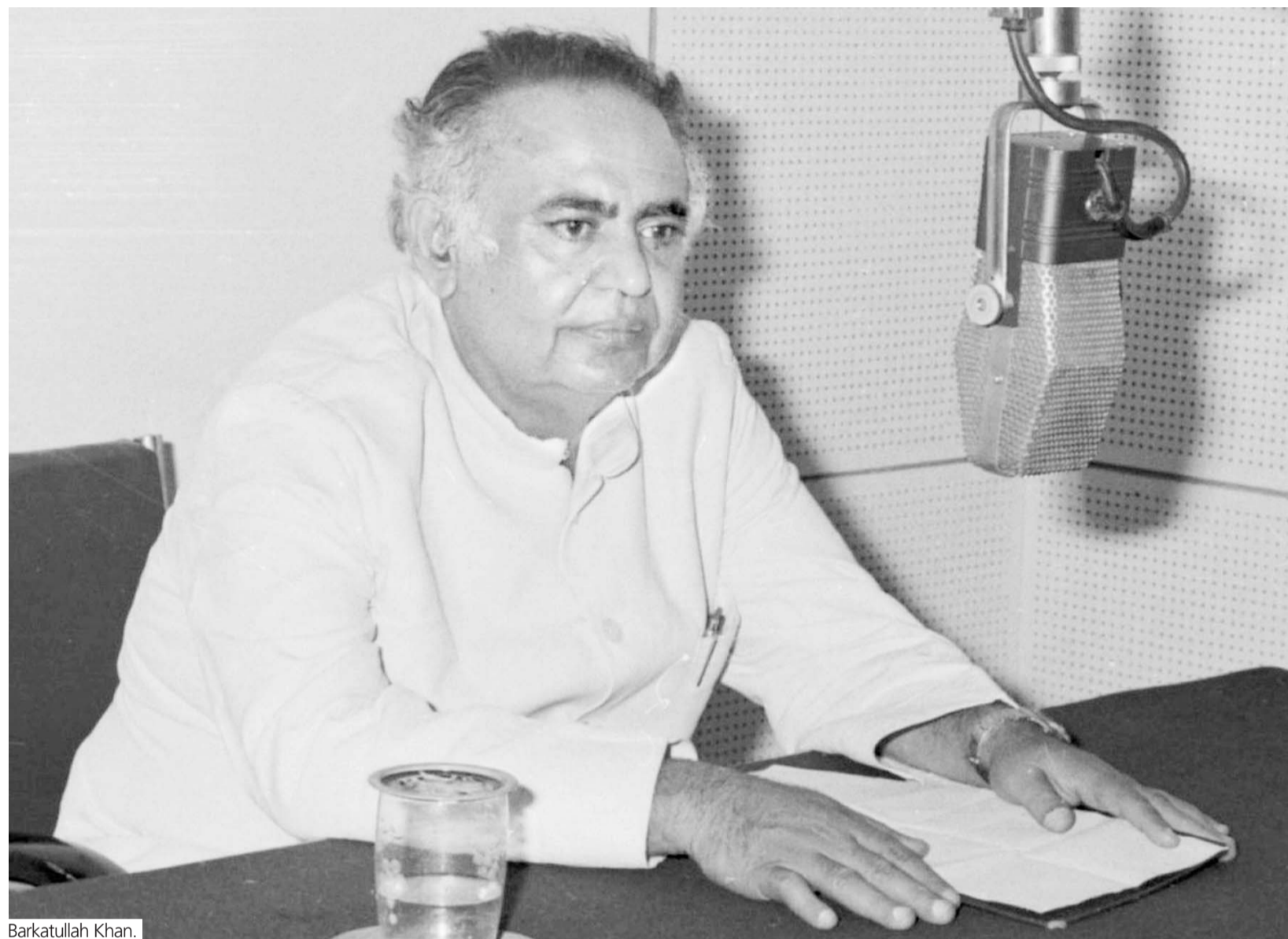
During his period of relaxation he let his hair down (whatever left of them) to have a Bridge session, for instance, with his pals and not so "pally" partners; or curl up with a book in his bed.

On one occasion when on a trip from Jodhpur to Jaipur, his car had engine trouble just beyond Kishangarh leaving him and his driver stranded. As the driver was trying to look at the fault by raising the bonnet, Pyare Miyan saw an Ambassador car going towards Jaipur. The car stopped at his distress signal, Pyare Miyan, then health minister, smiled as he saw a police officer inside the car. He was none other than Subhash Tandon, the SP of Jodhpur. They knew each other well and Pyare Miya did not hesitate to ask Tandonji for a lift.

When Tandon recognized Barkatullah Khan, he came out of the car, gave him a smart salute and said "Please". Pyare Miyan instructed his driver to wait for the mechanic he would arrange to send from Jaipur, climbed into the car. During the rest of the journey they discovered common passions for English Literature and Bridge. By the time, they reached the outskirts of Jaipur, they were laughing uproariously as they discovered another common trait: both were treasure trove of "subtle and not too subtle" jokes, and they parted with a warm handshake, which Barkatullah Khan realized too late was a lethal lapse on his part. For Tandon, when in his elements, had the habit of inflating Horlick's nurtured ample chest, extending his arm and vigorously "pumping" the hump palm of the unprepared victim.



Barkatullah Khan with wife Ushi Khan.



Barkatullah Khan.

Pyare Miyan dying to retrieve his palm from a crushing grasp suppressed with great difficulty the urge to seque. Pyare Miyan however was delighted and promised to meet again and their future meetings were full of bonhomie and literary expressions on the lines of " hail fellow well met".

Pyare Miyan and Tandon often played Bridge together, but Tandon was an atrocious player. The last time they partnered each other was when Pyare Miyan was "East" and Tandon was "West" and lost the rubber for the nth time. And Pyare Miyan fabled glare failed to make any dent on his friend's psyche. Barkatullah Khan signed resignedly and took recourse to Rudyard Kipling and said, "My friend, East is East and West is west and twain shall never meet".

Nonetheless, their friendship continued unbound except that as abundant caution, Pyare Miyan greeted his friend with a wide grin and a "hands off gesture" that ruled out the handshake.

Subhash Tandon was a gem of a person and not only because we were college mates though he was senior to me by five years. Thus our college companionship was only in name. His five years seniority did not come in our way of becoming



Subhash Tandon.

good friends. My last posting as an SP in Rajasthan state, before I took over as SP CBI, Jaipur branch in June 1972, was at Ajmer. Barkatullah Khan had come to the district to attend a function in Masuda. He was scheduled to proceed to Jaipur after a brief stopover at Circuit House, Ajmer.

VN Dhondiyal, the Collector and I were in attendance, when he received a phone call from Jaipur. The Chief Secretary was at the other end. He requested the CM to night halt at Ajmer as the non-gazetted officers were in belligerent mood. They planned to march to the Secretariat next morning and force their way in to meet the CM. The Chief Secretary, in an attempt to avert an ugly situation, had, unwittingly though, off-loaded the problem on to us at Ajmer.

The non-gazetted officers had their 'moles' in the Government, who confirmed the CM's change of travel plans. And, sure enough, a few phone calls between Jaipur and Ajmer, monitored by the district intelligence revealed that the agitating officers at Ajmer had now been entrusted with the task of forcibly barging into the Circuit House and confront the CM face to face. This development sent the

administration in Ajmer in a tail-spin. We huddled to formulate the strategy that would keep the employees' demonstration peaceful and in case it threatened to turn violent, to work out arrangements, forestall and foil their aggressive designs.

During the evening meal, as I disinterestedly pecked at the food, and less frequently, when I was in attendance, when he received a phone call from Jaipur. The Chief Secretary was at the other end. He requested the CM to night halt at Ajmer as the non-gazetted officers were in belligerent mood. They planned to march to the Secretariat next morning and force their way in to meet the CM. The Chief Secretary, in an attempt to avert an ugly situation, had, unwittingly though, off-loaded the problem on to us at Ajmer.

"Shekhar, for instance, when tense, goes off food. I, on the other hand, tend to overeat to subdue anxiety". Barkatullah Khan laughed, and critically eyeing Dhondiyal's generous girth and my thin frame, quipped, "I can see that. Come to think of it, I too love a peculiar response to tension. I just go to sleep: and on occasion, feel like never getting up".

Noticing our embarrassment at his concluding remarks, he chuckled and waved his arms, as if to say that his end-comment stood cancelled.

Then after a contemplative pause, he surprised us with the famous quote from Robert Frost: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep And miles to go before I sleep".

It is every well-read politician's favourite, an elixir to boost him every five years to keep him eternally youthful and forever pledging to deliver on the trot. The surprise was not the quote itself, we knew of his interest in English literature, but it was aptness, the way it fit the occasion.

Evidently there was a running conflict between his duty as a Chief Minister and his personal instinct to give it up all and relax: play Bridge, read English literature and have peaceful bouts of sleep in between.

We reluctantly shook him out of reverie and told him about the employees' plan to storm the Circuit House next morning and our plans to counter the situation. He agreed with our strategy in Toto and retired for the night.

We made 'midnight calls' to the leaders and conveyed to them in no uncertain words, that they should desist from defying law. We had clamped Section 144 Cr PC in the Circuit House area and if they agreed to play fair, we could arrange for them to meet the CM in small groups. They accepted our offer.

As per the plan, the CM gave each group a patient hearing the delegations emerging from the meeting they realized that all that they elicited from him was a vague assurance; his concluding words being, Bhai logon, I get your points but I am not in a position to commit anything here. After all, it is a state wide agitation. Let me go back to Jaipur, keeping your demands in view; I shall take appropriate decision".

When the leaders realized that the CM's rehearsed response was nothing more than part of a 'holding operation', they launched the second phase of their plan. The rally of protestors converged onto another hillock nearby and they threw stones at the police. However

Pyare Miyan dying to retrieve his palm from a crushing grasp suppressed with great difficulty the urge to seque. Pyare Miyan however was delighted and promised to meet again and their future meetings were full of bonhomie and literary expressions on the lines of " hail fellow well met".



Ajmer Circuit House.

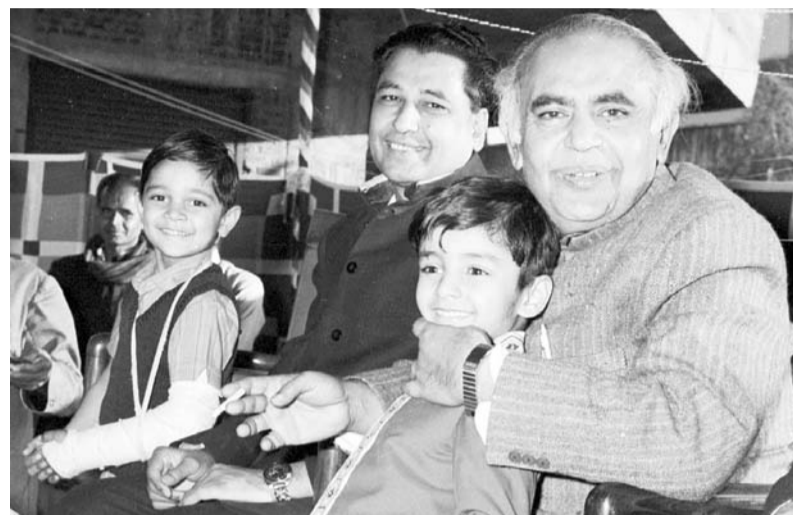
Jericho, Palestine



any archaeologists and historians agree that Jericho is the oldest inhabited city on Earth, dating back almost 12,000 years. Excavations at the Tel-al-Sultan ruins show Jericho settlements as early as 10,000 BCE. It has an abundance of water sources, and it is believed that the fresh spring water at Tel-al-Sultan is the reason for the site's early development. Its original name, Yereha (perfume), signified its lushness and is preserved in its present Arabic name, Arha.



Barkatullah Khan with congress party worker.



Barkatullah Khan with Seth Harish Chandra Golcha.

The police arrested their leaders. The proceeding ended up near the sunset and I accompanied Dhondiyal inside to inform the CM that it was now, all clear and he could now safely go to Jaipur.

He was in his bedroom but apparently not in a receptive mood. True to his word he was fast asleep; the tension got the better of him. My family and the family of my friend PP Shrivastav were holidaying in Pahalgam in Kashmir. I looked at my watch. It was 13:45 hrs, five minutes past the time for the All India Radio afternoon news, I quickly grabbed the radio-gram and fiddled with the dial to tune in to news.

The news reader said, "And now to end the news, the headlines again". The top story made me sit up "We sadly announce the untimely demise of the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Mr Barkatullah Khan. He suffered a massive heart attack at 9:30 AM while preparing to attend the Legislative Assembly session.

I remembered his memorable

observation about people having varied reactions to the same situation, "I just go to sleep, and on occasion never feel like getting up".

Assembly sessions in India are notorious for their acrimony and full of tense moments. The Chief Minister, particularly, has to remain perpetually wakeful and alert. The unrelenting pressure is too much of a strain even for a CM with strong disposition. Barkatullah Khan, for whom instant sleep was the only perfect antidote to tension, perhaps found the ceaseless bickering in the Assembly session unbearable and he fell a victim to the recurring urge of eternal sleep!

Next day his obituary made the front page of national newspapers. He had been ailing and intended to go on vacation to recuperate after the Assembly session. Sadly though, death preempted that claims of Pyare Miyan's casual wear, his sleeveless vest; commodious pyjamas and his flip flops.

Concluded
writoarbit@rashtradoot.com

#FOOD FESTIVAL

A unique food festival at Hotel Crowne Plaza Jaipur is celebrating the flavours of Northern India while recreating the vibe of a highway.



Tusharika Singh
Freelancer writer and city blogger

The National Highway 1 was a significant road in India, connecting the national capital New Delhi to the town of Attari in Punjab near the India-Pakistan border. It was also a part of the historic Grand Trunk Road. Taking inspiration from the destinations along NH 1, including Delhi, Panipat, Ambala, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar; Socorro, the global cuisine restaurant in Hotel Crowne Plaza, Jaipur is hosting a unique food festival that celebrates the diverse flavours of Northern India. Aply called, 'NH 1, The Taste of North', Paranthi from the streets of Delhi, Panipat ka Saag, Ambala ki Chaat, Ludhiana ke Kharode, Jalandhar ka Butter Chicken, and Naan Kulcha from Amritsar.

"Most of our guests who drive down to Jaipur and stay with us are from the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. Using the experiences they share about the culinary adventures on the highway as well as the knowledge of our chefs about the local cuisines of their region, this festival has been curated. We have tried to use the traditional cooking techniques like hand ground spices and smoked flavours of the tandoor as well as fresh ingredients to ensure authentic taste. There is a huge spread with options in both vegetarian as well as non vegetarian food", shares Chef Chandrabhan Singh Rathore, Junior Sous Chef of the hotel.

The restaurant has been beautifully transformed, with the incorporation of milestones, khaats of dhabas, trucks, and other elements that are synonymous with life on the highway. The attention to detail is evident in every corner of the restaurant, from the well-placed truck models to the wooden khaats that evoke memories of the many dhabas along NH 1. The result is a warm and inviting atmosphere that is both nostalgic and contemporary, and perfectly captures the spirit of the highway.

Pro Tip: Go with a hearty appetite and make a tour of the entire spread, who knows what culinary delight might be hiding in the far corner, waiting to be discovered!



Set up for the festival.



Badaam Ka Halwa.



Paneer Tikka.

Where: Socorro, Hotel Crowne Plaza Jaipur
When: 10 February 2023 to 19 February 2023
Time: 7.30 pm onwards
Price: 1700+ taxes per person

#ADDICTED

Social Media Craving

Social media cues such as the Facebook logo may affect frequent and less frequent social media users differently, sparking spontaneous hedonic reactions that make it difficult to resist social media cravings. The intriguing results are reported in "Spontaneous Hedonic Reactions to Social Media Cues," Guido van Koningsbruggen and Tilo Hartmann, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Allison Eden, Michigan State University, and Harm Velthuis, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, describe two ways. In the first, participants rated a series of images as pleasant or unpleasant after an initial exposure to either the Facebook logo or a neutral cue. The

researchers expected frequent social media users to react more positively to the images that followed the Facebook logo, whereas they did not expect the cue to affect the responses of the less frequent users. The second study replicated the first and added another dimension - measuring Facebook cravings among the participants, defined as a strong desire to use social media or a preoccupation with social media.

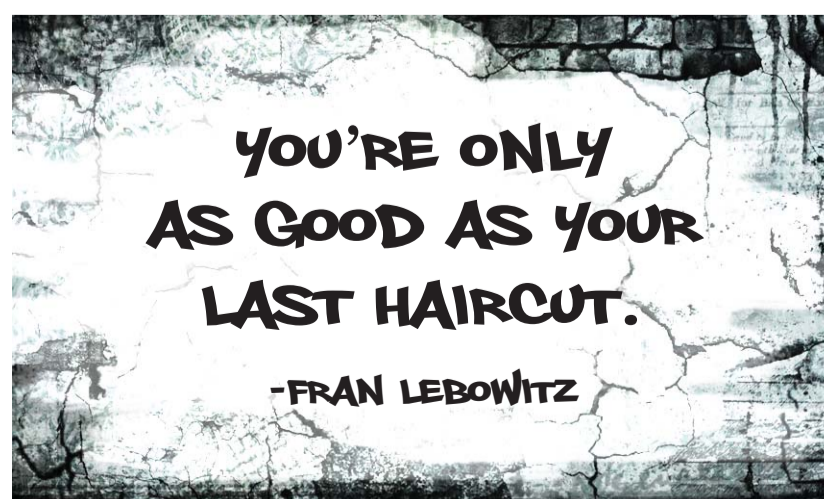
If spontaneous reactions to social media cues can trigger cravings for social media use, then together these could contribute to the difficulty people

might face resisting these temptations.

"Findings in this study seem to be in line with previous research on cues and cravings in foods (such as chocolate) and substances (such as nicotine)," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, PhD, MBA, BCB, BCN, in Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium. "Understanding hedonic reactions, both psychological and physiological, to social media cues can help us to develop more effective treatment and prevention protocols."



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman