

A Calling for John

As a new bishop many years ago, I noticed a faithful sister who always attended church without her husband, John. I learned that he had previously been a branch president during the time their meetinghouse was being built. He received so little help from branch members that he burned himself out doing most of the work and became less active.

When ward members came to their home, he would light up his cigarette and set his beer can by his chair as if to say, “You won’t get me to come back.”

Eventually, I learned that John was an

appliance repair man. Older members in the ward often called me to fix things. Now that I knew of John’s skills, I would call John and ask for advice on repairs.

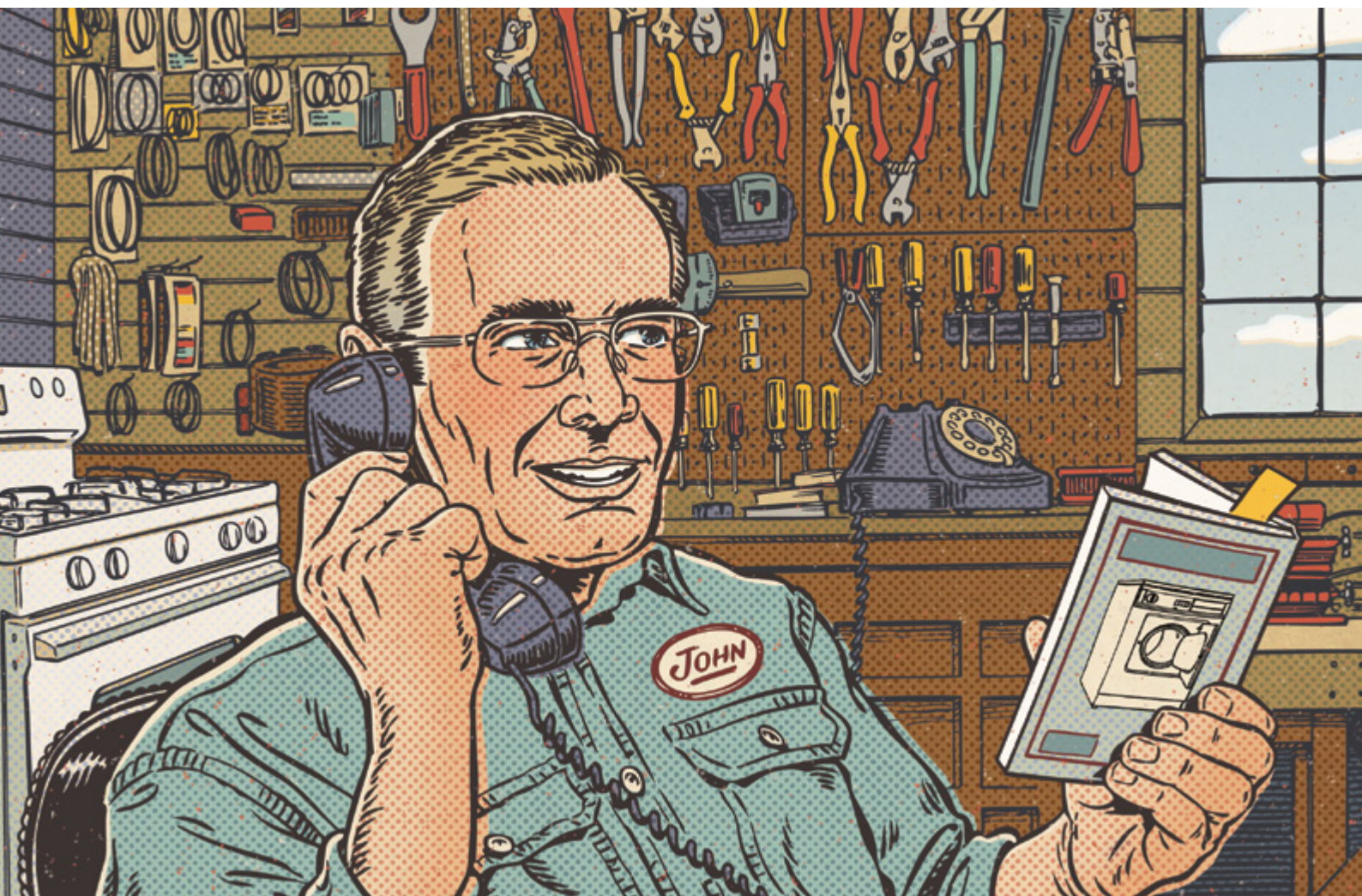
I continued this for maybe a year. At that time, we needed to call a ward clerk. After prayerful consideration, I felt impressed to extend the call to John.

I told the stake president and he said, “We can’t call him now! He smokes and has his beer.” I asked the stake president to call him in for an interview anyway. John came to the interview but emphatically answered, “No, I am not worthy.”

Things continued as before—John remained less active, and I called him for advice. During this time, I didn’t say anything to him about coming back to church. I asked the stake president to interview him a second time. Again, John said no, but this time he added, “I will tell you when I’m ready.”

After this I still called John for advice and fellowshipped him the best I could.

One day I answered the phone and heard, “Is this the ol’ Bishop?” He had started calling me by that title. “This

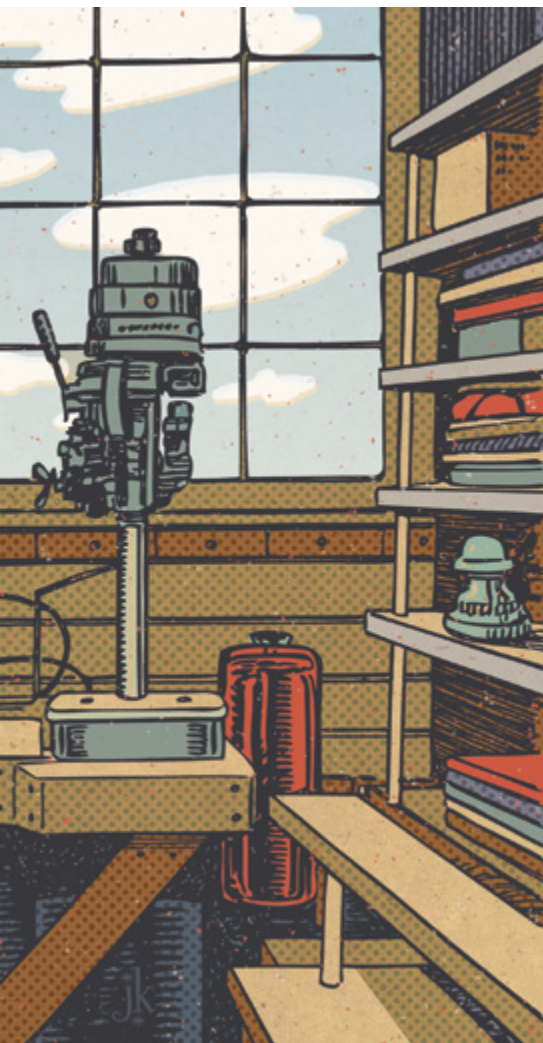


is John. I'm ready." He was then called and served as our ward clerk.

As the years passed, John served in a number of callings. He and his wife served a mission together, and now they serve in the temple. At my 50th wedding anniversary party, John wrote a note that said, "Bishop, thank you for saving my life."

I can't put in words the joy I feel knowing that John returned to church in part because I was patient and asked him for help when I needed it. ■

Burke Waldron, Utah, USA



I learned that John was an appliance repair man, so I would call him for advice on repairs. He would tell me what to do, and then I'd take care of the problem.