

Bob's Corner

A friend of mine is a retired San Diego Police Dept. officer, and we occasionally swap war stories (and possibly some tall tales) about our lives and times in San Diego County. Actually, I think that nearly all the experiences we share are true, but you know how age can affect memory.

One of our most popular topics involves the odd, sometimes humorous occurrences involved in contacts with police officers, sheriff's deputies and the like.

One of my true life experiences happened one night on Hwy. 78 in San Marcos (when it was only two lanes wide in each direction instead of its current four). I was a reporter riding with the contract deputy hired as traffic officer for the then-new city of San Marcos. He had a brand-new police special Dodge with a monster engine. He had pulled over a speeder and was writing a citation. I was watching the oncoming westbound traffic and noticed a pickup truck that was weaving. Toward us. The deputy spotted it too, and yelled at me to get ready to jump down the embankment. At the last minute, the pickup swerved away and continued on. I could see the driver spinning the steering wheel like a drunken sailor in a yacht race.

The deputy quickly finished the ticket, leaped into the patrol car, in which I was already strapped by then in the shotgun seat, dropped the transmission into low and stepped on the gas. Nothing happened. Something was goofy with the police special carburetor. The deputy made a couple of interesting remarks, leaped out, popped the hood, did something, and got the engine started.

Back in the car, back into low, punching that sucker, and we flew westbound, looking for the errant pickup truck. The speedometer was pinned at 130 mph; the fastest I've ever been in a car, let alone one with a big red light and wailing siren. Mile markers were flashing by like a picket fence.

We finally caught the pickup near Oceanside. The deputy jumped out and approached the driver, who wisely stayed inside. To make a long story short, it turned out that the steering on the pickup was bockety, which was pretty obvious to us, and the guy told the deputy that he was sorry about nearly hitting us, but he was only hurrying to get home so he could fix the steering problem. Did he get a ticket? You figure it out.

My friend recalls one night he was on an off-ramp near Del Mar when he heard the unmistakable sound of a high-powered car roaring southbound, probably from Los Angeles and headed toward Caliente in Tijuana. He dropped his paperwork, and got his Chevy patrol car up to 100 mph by the time he hit the freeway, just in time to see the tail lights of a Cadillac disappearing in the distance.

Meanwhile, a CHP unit -- one of the new, muscular Chrysler Corp. machines -- came whooshing alongside, gulping air into its carburetor system, and passed my friend, who then saw two sets of tail lights fading away. Eventually he caught up with the vehicles, as the highway patrolmen had stopped the Caddy.

My friend was going to stop and assist, but discovered that the Chevy, which had a tendency for brake-fade, was not going to halt. So he merrily sailed past the stopped vehicles, waving as he went by. Later, he and the "Chippies" had a good laugh about what happened. I guess one could say that those are the breaks. Or maybe one shouldn't.

Next week: The speeder who had to poop; the intoxicated man who tried to drive away in the police car; and the U.S. Marine who celebrated his 18th birthday party all over the dashboard of a 1950 Ford.

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Entered as second class matter June 11, 1937 at Post Office as Official Newspaper for Josephine County and Josephine County Three Rivers School District, published at 321 S. Redwood Hwy., Cave Junction, OR 97523

Periodicals postage paid at Cave Junction, OR 97523
Post Office Box 1370 USPS 258-820
Telephone (541) 592-2541, FAX (541) 592-4330
Volume 68, No. 8

Staff: Kacy Clement, Michelle Binker,
Becky Loudon, Nina Holm Consulting.
Advertising Design Consultant: Wonder Dog Graphics
Member: Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association

DEADLINES:

News, Classified & Display Ads, Announcements & Letters
3 P.M. FRIDAY

(Classified ads & uncomplicated display ads can be accepted until Noon, Monday with an additional charge.)

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters written solely to this newspaper are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.

About hemp and wood From Kalvny Evans Cave Junction

This is in response to Fred Krauss's letter ("I.V. News," May 4), which was in response to William Schneider's letter ("I.V. News, April 27).

Schneider implied that he was against cutting trees for the use of paper products or lumber. Krauss replied that if Schneider was so dead set against cutting trees that he should "quit using toilet paper and burn his paychecks because they were both made of trees."

Although nearly all our paper products are made from wood; wood is not the only way paper can be made, and that it is in fact one of the most inefficient ways to make it. The process is relatively new, dating to approximately 75 years ago. Before that, the number-one source for paper fiber was hemp.

On average, 1 acre of hemp will produce as much paper in one year as 3 acres of trees can produce in 30 years. All types of paper products can be produced from hemp.

Hemp paper manufacturing can reduce wastewater contamination. Eighty percent of wood is comprised of a compound called lignin, which must be removed in the paper process with acids and bleaching, which is why paper companies are rated as being among the largest environmental polluters.

Hemp is only 35 percent lignin, and its creamy color lends itself to environmentally friendly bleaching. Hemp paper does not yellow with age when an acid-free process is used. Hemp paper more than 1,500 years old has been found in remarkable condition.

During World War II hemp paper was used so extensively, and was in such high demand, that the government produced a movie, "Hemp for Victory," praising its virtues and encouraging U.S. farmers to grow hemp for the war effort. Its fibers also were used for clothing and ropes.

The only reason that hemp paper is not still used is that hemp (*cannabis ruderalis*) is a close cousin to the marijuana plant (*cannabis sativa*).

One could smoke hemp until his head exploded, and still get higher off a chocolate bar. However, perhaps due to ignorance or confusion, industrial hemp was outlawed along with *sativa*, and paper companies found it easier to move on to wood products.

Krauss suggested that Schneider burn his own house and live in a tent. I don't recommend the tent, but I say go for burning the house and build one of brick or stone.

Wood houses are by nature inferior structures. They are more difficult to heat; they degrade faster; and are susceptible to a host of problems including water damage, termites and fire.

I am not opposed to cutting trees or using wood. But in my opinion, wood products best lend them-

selves to such works as musical instruments, interior decorations, broomsticks and toys; items that make the best use of the true character of wood.

To me, the concept of using a beautiful piece of wood for something like a whole house seems as preposterous as grinding it into pulp for a sheet of paper.

The only reason we still do these ridiculous things is because the two sides of the issue have become so polarized that everyone is more concerned with being right than with doing what's best.

Tax statement apology From John Harelson Josephine County treasurer & tax collector

Traditionally, the county tax collector has sent courtesy notices to those who elect to pay their property tax bill in three installments.

Oregon law requires only that one tax statement be sent in October. In 2003 we began using a trusted business partner of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to print and mail first-class post card reminders, resulting in significant savings.

In April we sent 8,625

notices for the payment due May 16, using Postdigital, a USPS trusted business partner. Processing errors occurred at Postdigital, and taxpayers received incorrect information. At our request, the company sent corrected notices during the week of April 28 at no cost to us.

This second mailing was processed, printed and mailed correctly. Trouble was that the processing center reprinted and mailed the notices three times. Taxpayers ended up receiving four notices; one probably incorrect, and three correct.

The good news is that every taxpayer received am-

ple notice of tax due at no extra cost to citizens. The bad news is that 8,625 taxpayers received confusing information and had to sort out the mix-up.

I apologize to the taxpayers who suffered through this mess. I assure everyone that we will do everything possible to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Our next post card reminder notices will be sent in January 2006, giving us time to install processing safeguards.

I also have apologized to USPS and its employees for suggesting that Postdigital is a branch of the postal service.

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