

Bob's Corner

We bit the bullet recently (because I'm always shooting off my mouth) and acquired a new motor vehicle. This was accomplished with creative financing and having a used vehicle that held its value.

So now we have probably the most luxurious set of wheels we've had in all our 63 years. It definitely beats, in more ways than one, my first car, a '52 Ford with a '54 Olds mill and tranny. It smoked and smelled bad. But it was fast, although the Ford rear axle kept snapping in half from the torque of the four-speed automatic transmission. Each axle cost me \$60, which was one week's net pay for me then (1960).

We were misled by the ad for the car. Among the notations were R&H and W/W. Turned out that R&H actually meant "Rattles & Heaves," and W/W stood for Wheels Wobble.

Back to the present, I had looked at a sporty Japanese vehicle. It had 650 hp with gears of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and Banzai! Also looked at a small electric-powered car. Took it home and my wife drove it around the living room a couple of times. Realizing that neither of these would be practical for hauling newspapers, we opted for another Japanese-brand vehicle, a Toyota Highlander, offering the best of Japan and Scotland.

Our new vehicle has all sorts of bells and whistles, as the saying goes (but neither bagpipes nor Samurai swords). I'm still working on figuring out the actual features. Discovered last week that there is even a "Low Tire Pressure" warning light. I took care of the tire, but the warning light stayed on. My engineer-brained son, Mike, had to find the reset button for me. He knows his Dad; made me push it (the button, not the car) so I'd remember where it is.

Sometimes I feel like Capt. Picard of the starship "Enterprise," what with all the controls. I tried shouting, "Red Alert!" but nothing happened, so I guess the car doesn't have that feature. I'm still working on the temperature controls, which seem to have a mind of their own. Maybe I should break down and look at the owner's manual or watch the CD that was provided to acquaint one with their acquisition. Nah. I'm a guy -- why would I want to do that?

Every so often I find a new feature in the car, like it actually has a glove compartment. There's storage available beneath the shift console, and another storage spot under the driver's right elbow. Took me a while to understand use of the cruise control, but I was determined to engage it. I know, read the booklet. Nah, I'd rather just stumble around like when you stay in a hotel and wake up in the dark and try to find the bathroom without turning on a light. Must be a guy thing.

Next, I'm going to comprehend the vehicle's remote door lock system and alarm. Might even look at the owner's manual. But probably not.

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.

'Thank you' submissions are not accepted as letters.

**See an 'emergency?'
 Stop and find out!
 From Tim Norman,
 Volunteer Firefighter
 Cave Junction**

I am writing about a sensitive subject that, I think, needs to be addressed. We truly live in a remarkable age, the age of the cellular phone.

Being a volunteer firefighter, I am affected by this innovation daily. It is truly remarkable. Cellular phones expand the contact area of the 911 system immensely.

Before this technology, if someone was in trouble in an outlying area, a phone had to be located to start the response process. This obviously meant that we were losing precious minutes (sometimes hours) where time is of the essence. We have a thing called the "Golden Hour," which is another discussion.

While I embrace this technology, it is not without its pitfalls. While dropped calls (disabling the ability of Dispatch to track the caller) and being out of a service area are problems in themselves, the issue I want to discuss is the Age of the Drive-by Good Samaritan.

Where the exposure to incidents has increased, the amount of false alarms has increased as well.

For example (I will not list names or locations due to privacy issues), we were called out for an "unconscious person" lying on the side of the road one day. Upon arrival, we found the person sitting on their suitcase drinking coffee from a Thermos. It turns out that the person had been walking all day and just decided to lie down for a minute.

Another incident was a "structure fire" that had our whole Cave Junction Station 1 scrambling. When our command vehicle arrived, the responder found the resident sitting at a campfire in his front yard, roasting marshmallows.

I'm not making this up. Anyone with a scanner could verify what I am relating. I might also add that the resident took exception to being swarmed upon by just about every piece of apparatus from Station 1. It is a traumatic experience, to say the least.

In both incidents, if the caller would have just stopped and merely asked the simple question -- "Is everything OK?" -- all of this could have been avoided.

I have listed only two incidents. The fact of the matter is, we receive at least five such calls a week. Some may attest that this is a conservative estimate.

In any case, we are being rooted out of bed or pulled away from the dinner table, as the level of adrenaline climbs with the prospect of donning breathing apparatus and walking into a burning structure, only to arrive to a legal-size burn pile with the resident looking at us as though we're crazy.

This really gets old. Don't get me wrong. Everybody realizes that this is the life we signed up for when we joined our Illinois

Valley Fire District, and most show up with vigor and conviction, but that doesn't dismiss the fact that these situations are avoidable.

I don't want to discourage people from getting involved.

This is one of the few saving features for the human race: a person helping another person in need. What I am saying is this -- If you commit to becoming involved, stop your car, get out and ask the simple question.

What would really help is staying on scene, and on the line with the 911 operator, until emergency services arrive. Most times, this means waiting around for a matter of minutes. While it will take a little longer for major apparatus to respond, you will at least see a brush truck/command vehicle or a medical unit in literally minutes.

That is all it takes to eliminate false alarms and the potential wasting of our resources and taxpayer dollars -- a few more minutes of your time.

Again, I applaud those who feel the need to get involved when a fellow human being is in trouble. I'm just asking for those people to follow through.

False alarms are not only wasteful of our resources; they have the possibility of being disastrous. I hate to think of a house being destroyed by fire, or someone dying because we couldn't get there due to responding to a burn pile on the opposite side of town.

**Volunteers sought for
 Takilma Fire Station
 From Cathy Ducat
 aka 'Sunshine'
 Takilma**

Now wait a minute.

I could have written that article -- regarding the house fire in Takilma (Jan. 17, 2007 "I.V. News"), that was full of nonfact -- way more interestingly.

First, although it is true that the co-owners of the property (Kitty & Edward Crow) are definitely out-of-town, they are even farther away than that. They are both no longer living.

And the second person believed to have jumped from the second-story window (Otis Jones) is housed in Josephine County Jail, where he has been for months.

Justin Leavitt, who did indeed jump out a window, ironically is one of the few people to have signed up as a volunteer firefighter for the Takilma Fire Station.

And someone has been trying to get volunteer firefighters together. It's me, the resident fire-dancer.

I was told by I.V. Fire District that I needed more people and to come back when I have enough people for a crew.

I was told that men with beards and mustaches cannot wear the fire turnout gear such as breathing apparatus. That's why I've only

got eight people to sign up. One of the other eight people to have signed up was Dudley, also mentioned in the article.

Some reading this have seen the flyers I posted since before last summer, asking people to sign up.

This is really frustrating. I am embarrassed to live in a community where there is a fire station and fire trucks and no one to man them.

So let's try this again. I want to drive the fire truck.

We had it more together 30 years ago when all we had was a phone tree, a pickup truck and the hand siren kept in the drawer at the Takilma Clinic.

To sign up, I can be reached at 592-6781. If I can get more than eight people to sign up, we can move forward and actually have a working fire station.

Your house or mine could be next. Let's not lose another home to fire. Sign up today.

**New undersheriff queries
 remark by former sheriff
 From Don Fasching
 Selma**

I was told by several people I respect to not reply to the letter from Dave Daniel ("Immediate past sheriff critical of tax plan" in the Jan. 24 issue), but I cannot stand by and allow these unprovoked attacks against the character of an honorable public official.

How dare Dave Daniel criticize Gil Gilbertson? When is Daniel going to be held accountable for his mistakes and the deplorable

conditions he created within the sheriff's office?

I believe that this is the same Dave Daniel who received a vote of "no confidence" from his deputies; I believe this is the same Daniel who failed to investigate citizen complaints; and I believe this is the same Daniel who elected to ignore his office and abandon his employees during the Kim search.


I believe it is the same Daniel who will go down in history as the best "part-time" sheriff in the history of Josephine County.

I have worked closely with Gil 10 hours a day for the past four weeks. He is committed to save the jobs of his employees; create a fair working environment; and provide the quality of law enforcement the citizens of this county deserve.

I accepted the position as Gil's undersheriff because I believe in his vision of law enforcement, and I made a promise to him and the citizens of this county. We will work to earn your trust and make this county a safer place to live.

Sheriff Gilbertson and I have been in office just four weeks. We are working hard to resolve problems that Daniel took eight years to create. I would ask that we be given the time and support we need to turn around this situation.

The intent of this letter is not to trade cheap shots with Daniel. My intent is to share the truth, and it is that Daniel failed at his job, and it's time he was held accountable for his actions.



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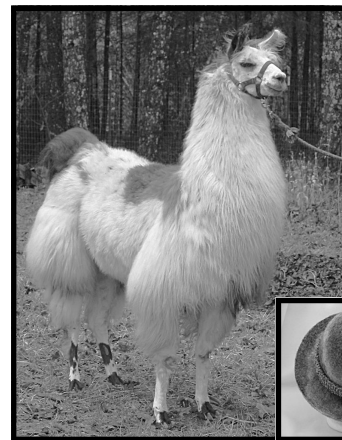
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