

Bob's Corner

There is not enough room in this issue, or any other, to list all the dangerous, weird and simply stupid actions taken by this writer when he was a young child. However, I remember them, and have decided to inflict a handful on you. Maybe they'll help prevent a disaster in your family.

And thank you for not saying, "What about all the dumb 'things' you've done after growing up?" See, I know how some of you think.

*When I was around 10 years of age, I had accumulated a collection of Revell plastic aircraft models. After a time, my interest in keeping them flagged, so with my cousin, Cliff, I hit upon a super idea.

We strung a wire from the roof of my parents' home to the backyard. Then we took a container of gasoline from the power lawnmower I used (that's another story) onto the roof, plus a sharp knife, and some model glue. And a book of matches.

The idea (mine) was simple. And stupid. And extremely hazardous, but we were too dumb to realize. We would pry apart the fuselage of my Lockheed Starfighter; reglue it around the wire; then douse the plane with gasoline and set it on fire. It would look really neat as it went down the wire in flames.

Fortunately the plan failed. The gas kept causing the glue to lose its holding power before we could set it on fire, so the craft wouldn't stay assembled. We eventually gave up and went back into the house to wash our hands, which smelled strongly of gas. When my Dad asked me what we had been doing on the roof, I told him, "Playing with an airplane." He bought it.

Looks like I'm not going to have enough room here to provide detail on some of my other youthful idiocies, so here are a couple of outlines:

*In the sixth-grade, after returning from a hike with the Raven Patrol of Boy Scout Troop 899, I had a can of pork-and-beans left over. Decided to heat the can in the backyard. Built a fire, put the can in the fire. Did not make any holes in the can. Fortunately, I was far enough away when the can exploded to avoid being burned by beans.

*About a year later, after being warned to get the brakes fixed on my English three-speed, I was roaring down a hill and discovered that I had absolutely no brakes. None. Nada. Zero. Zilch. And I was moving fast. My lightning-fast decision was to steer onto a lawn at the bottom of the hill and fall sideways. Didn't work that way. Instead, I ran directly into a cinder block wall. Fortunately, I only sprained one ankle and had some bruises here and there. The bike was a loss.

Fortunately, that's all the room I have this issue. Wish me well, please, as I still do dumb "things."

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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 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.

Health coverage anxiety
From Anita Savio O'Brien

Recently I had a difficult and sad conversation with my sister-in-law. A little more than two months ago my 20-year-old niece, her daughter, committed suicide through an overdose of drugs.

We had thought the death might have been accidental. But the medical examiner's report, issued this week, concluded – based on the sheer quantity of drugs in her system – that the overdose had indeed been intentional.

Why did she choose to kill herself? After seven psychiatric hospital admissions during the previous year and a half, my niece seemed to have stabilized, and was in the process of getting back on her feet. Among other positive steps, she had been planning to start community college the following week. She had wanted to start with just one, or at the most, two courses. Despite having a brilliant intellect, she was emotionally fragile.

But she would have lost coverage under her parent's health insurance if she maintained less than a full-time college schedule. The medi-

cations and psychiatric visits that coverage paid for were essential to my niece, so she reluctantly signed up for the five courses required of a full-time student.

Was the stress of starting as a full-time student one of the factors that led to her taking her life? Of course we will never know. But we could not help thinking of last week's passage of the landmark health-care reform bill, which allows young people to stay on their parent's insurance until age 26, and would have allowed my niece to keep her coverage, while taking only the one or two courses she felt capable of handling.

Perhaps, had the health-care reform been approved just two months and a half months sooner, my niece would be alive today.

Is Simon Hare 'the guy'?
From Linda J. Naydol Cave Junction

The commissioner candidates forum in Cave Junction Thursday, March 25, was enlightening.

Simon Hare says we should run our county finances the same way Douglas County and Jackson County run theirs. Simon says those counties are a model of fiscal responsibility that we should follow.

What Simon doesn't say is that Douglas County people pay twice the county property tax rate that people in Josephine County pay, and Douglas County is in dire financial shape. And Jackson County? Simon doesn't tell you that those people pay four times the county property tax we pay.

A moment later Simon said that we don't need to

raise county property taxes to pay for services. But Simon says we should do what Douglas and Jackson counties are doing. Thanks to Simon, I finally understand what "talking out of both sides of your mouth" really means.

Simon says that he has not lived here since he was in high school. He doesn't know the issues or the people, has never managed anything remotely close to a \$105 million budget, has never managed employees and especially not 400 of them. He has never done much of anything except work as a small cog in a big lobbyist organization.

Is this the guy we should hire to run our county? I say, no thanks.

Hare has know-how
From Mark Dickson Cave Junction

Currently we have a dysfunctional commission of two against one. I don't want to go through another two years of Dave against Sandi nor, heaven forbid, Jack or Dale and Sandi against Dwight. Radical zealots will only exacerbate an already unacceptable situation.

In 2005 the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture banned canola from the Willamette Valley because it's a noxious weed. Canola is grown in Canada where the weather conditions are conducive and there is sufficient farmland to cultivate it.

Introducing Canola in Josephine County will only produce another agricultural fiasco on a par with Russian Knapweed. That is not the solution to our community economic shortfalls.

What we do need is a commissioner by the name of Simon Hare who has far more

experience doing exactly what we need in Josephine County. Born and raised here, Simon knows our history and problems and he has the management/legislative experience to pull Josephine County out of the current fiscal sinkhole. Simon has worked across the United States bringing rural communities together for their economic well-being through rural electric cooperatives.

Simon knows we have to change our county's anti-business reputation, but in order to bring economic prosperity back to levels once enjoyed, we also have to go back to doing what made us prosperous in the first place. We have to responsibly harvest our most valuable renewable natural resource – our trees.

Simon will fight tooth and nail to bring responsible timber harvesting back to Southern Oregon. I will vote Simon Hare for Commissioner Position 1.

Facts from 'horse's mouth'
From Jack Alan Brown Jr. Grants Pass

There was One Who said long ago that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. I want to thank Anna Stewart for trying to put her words in my mouth with her letter to the editor (*Illinois Valley News*) published March 31.

When she warned everyone with a view that anyone wishing to build a five-story house to block that view would obtain my approval when the issue was appealed to the Josephine County Board of Commissioners, she displayed a misunderstanding of what land-use planning

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