

New tire traction law in effect this winter

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

Motorist driving through mountainous areas in Oregon this winter are advised to obey all state highway signs concerning traction devices, such as chains and traction tires.

If not, one could be fined up to \$50 for a class D traffic infraction because of the passage of a recent bill by the state legislature.

According to Barbara Seerist, Oregon State Police dispatcher, the bill was passed because of the traffic problems caused by motorists and skiers who ignored the warning signs requiring chains. She said their ignorance of the dangers that lurk during icy and snowy conditions caused numerous accidents, traffic snarls, injuries and even death.

"If motorists pass a sign now requiring snow chains without being waved through by a police officer," said Seerist, "they could be fined and held responsible if they get into an accident. The accident will be their fault because they failed to obey the signs."

Major Harris Kirby, the administrator of the State Police Traffic Division, explained that prior to this time Oregon did not have a chain law but "did have signs that only requested chains for motorists in order to get them safely through inclement weather."

Kirby said that the state police have "wanted a traction law for years, but it

wasn't acceptable to the legislature."

Kirby said, "Under severe weather conditions people attempted to traverse the mountains without proper traction devices and chains, and ended up blocking off the roads."

Kirby estimated that the number of people who ignore the signs and cause the problems to be only about two percent of those who drive through the mountains. He said that "the majority of the people who drive the mountain roads on a regular basis recognize the problems and do not take chances."

Kirby said that people have even been known to pull trailer houses over the mountains with regular highway tires. He said that if they did make it over, they'd still have an accident on the other side because "they couldn't brake."

He said, "Our men end up having to stand out in snow storms and blizzards

in an attempt to correct the traffic problems caused by these few people. But in spite of their efforts there still have been injuries and fatalities due to traffic jams."

"The wreckers can't get through, the police can't get through, and even the ambulances can't get through," said Kirby. "It ends up a real mess."

He said that despite the large numbers of California tourists coming to Oregon to vacation at such resorts as Mt. Bachelor, the old saying about how careless California drivers are is not true in this case. On the contrary, "they are not the problem because they are the ones who are best equipped."

Kirby said, "We get letters by the dozen from California. They spend a lot of money to vacation here and end up being inconvenienced by a major traffic jam in the mountains of Oregon."

He said that complaints from ski

associations and Chambers of Commerce, as well as the growing traffic problems associated with the ski seasons, prompted the state police to get the tire traction bill passed in the legislature.

Venita Howard of the Department of Motor Vehicles feels that the new law will be a major asset to curtailing accidents associated with snow and icy conditions. She said that the new law would go even further "by preventing the kinds of traffic tie-ups that result in people being detained for hours on the road because someone didn't put on chains."

Howard said, "A tremendous amount of manpower is invested just trying to get traffic moving. This should save a lot of money and time for everyone involved."

Last year, as snow years go, was a light one. In spite of this, of the 52,554

accidents that occurred in the state, six and a half percent, or 3,364 accidents, occurred during snowy or icy conditions.

Of these, 1,242 produced injuries, and 20 resulted in one or more deaths, according to Howard.

Kirby said that the state highway division will be putting up three types of signs, labeled "A", "B" and "C" to differentiate between types of driving conditions and the required traction devices.

"A" would require motorists to carry traction devices in their vehicles, such as tire chains, studs or snow tires.

"B" would recommend vehicles to be equipped with traction tires anywhere or in a mountain pass in the state of Oregon.

"C" would mean that traction devices would be required.

Kirby said that the "C" requirements

were designed primarily for the four major ski areas—Anthony Lakes in Baker County, Ashland ski resort, Mt. Bachelor near Bend and Timberline Road above Government Camp.

Kirby said that anyone caught ignoring the signs will be held liable in the event of an accident. In addition, they will be cited for reckless driving and "for not having a proper traction device or traction tire."

Kirby said that when the new law goes into effect on Nov. 1, the new traffic signs would not go up until after the Department of Transportation holds a public meeting "to discuss the rules pertaining to this law." The meeting is scheduled for Nov. 3. The location for the meeting has not yet been set.

Kirby said the state police "will use very good judgment in applying this law," especially since the signs will go up sometime after the law is in effect.

Wy'east Day Lodge will relieve pressure on Timberline, saving it for posterity, says Atiyeh

The Wy'east Day Lodge, which covers 44,000 square feet on three floors, was dedicated Saturday by Governor Vic Atiyeh, who saw the 1937 dedication of Timberline Lodge, which is just north of the new day lodge.

Atiyeh said the new lodge is worth the cost if only because it will relieve the pressure on the historic old lodge, preserving it for posterity.

The day lodge, located at 5,900 feet and designed to reduce the problems of snowdrift accumulation with the use of special wind tunnels, will accommodate 10,000

skiers.

Speakers at the dedication included Dick Pilf, supervisor of the Mt. Hood National Forest; Dick Worthington, regional forester for the Pacific Northwest Region Forest Service; Jack Mills, executive secretary of Friends of Timberline; Atiyeh and Dick Kohnstamm, manager of the Timberline ski area.

Kohnstamm said that with the addition of the day lodge, "We are well on our way to making this one of the outstanding resorts in the world."

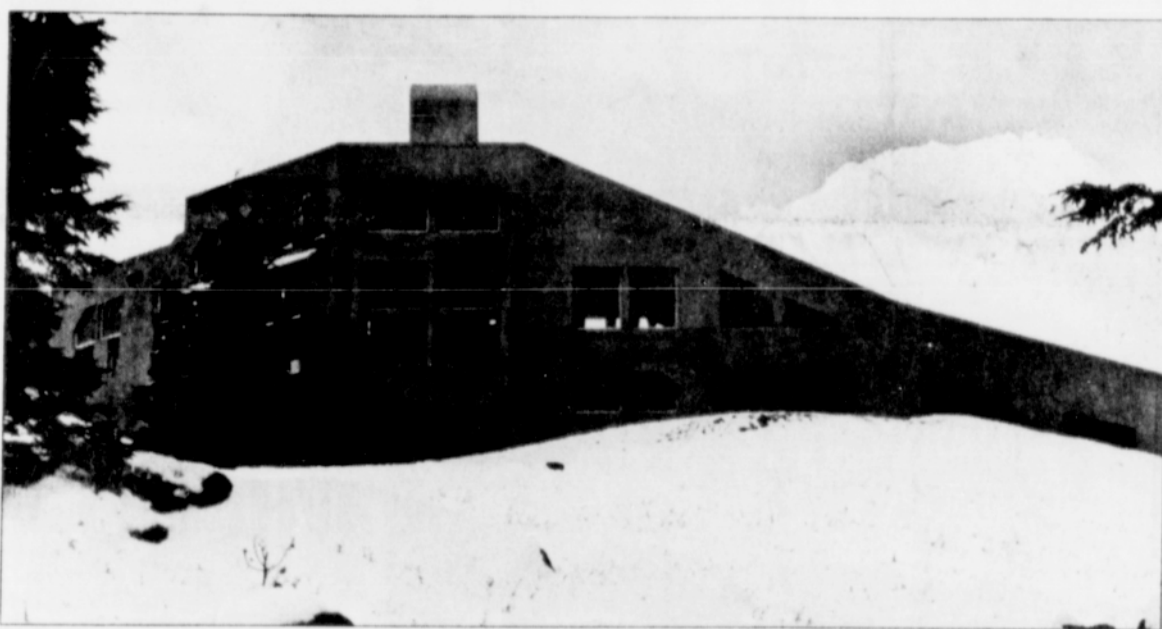
He added that big is not

necessarily better, and said that they will not keep on building forever.

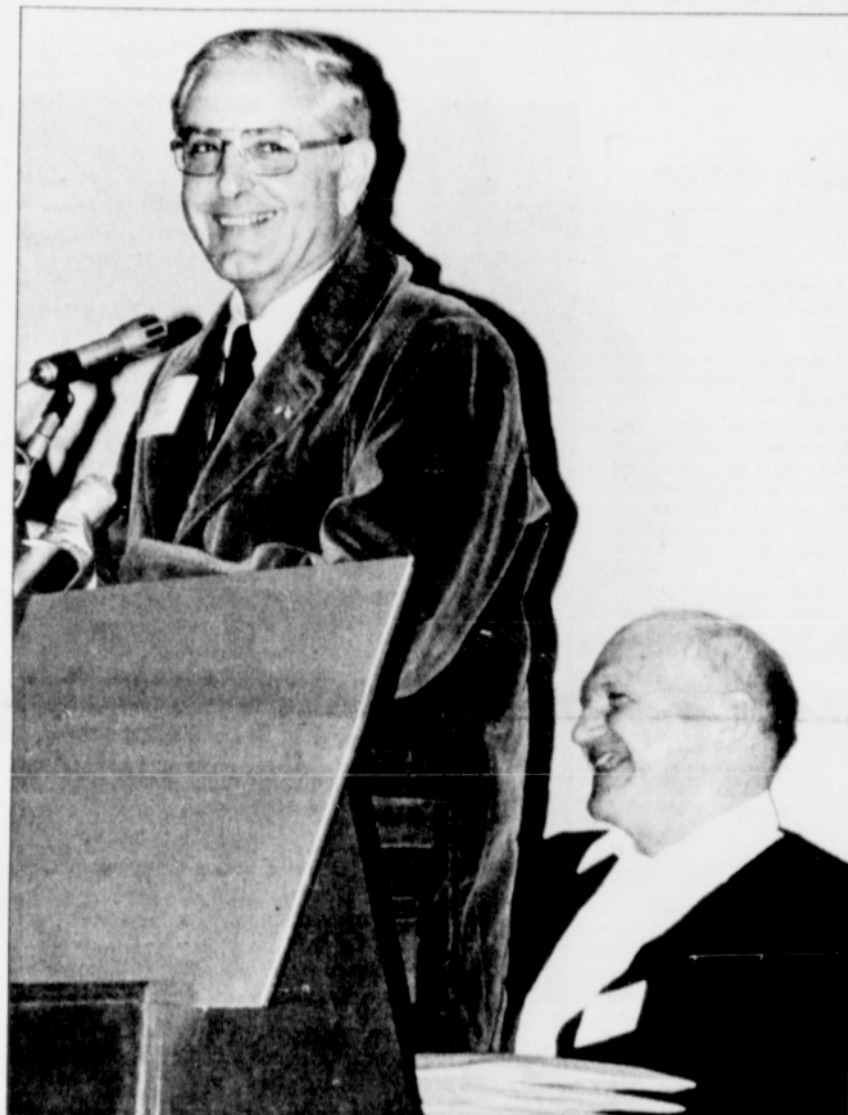
He concluded by saying he hopes that the Governor will take their enthusiasm for Mt. Hood and tourism back to Salem.

That remark brought enthusiastic applause from the more than 200 that attended the dedication.

"I've never seen Dick Kohnstamm when he was satisfied," Atiyeh responded later, eliciting laughter. He went on to explain his commitment to the project, and praised Friends of Timberline for the work they've done.



The Wy'east Day Lodge



Governor Vic Atiyeh

Overloaded vehicles dangerous

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

Firewood cutting season is here, and with it bad weather and careless wood haulers, which makes driving potentially hazardous.

According to Sergeant Mike O'Grady of the Oregon State Police, pickups and trailers carrying wood pose many dangers to their drivers, as well as others, if their loads are not properly secured, which can cause them to shift or fall onto the roadway.

The greatest danger, however, lies with overloaded vehicles.

O'Grady said that overloaded trucks will raise the front end of the vehicle up, causing problems with steering and increasing the chances of tire blowouts, not to mention breaking an axle.

O'Grady said that an average three-quarter ton pickup weighs about 6,500 pounds, which legally leaves only 1,500 pounds of wood to be loaded. He said that the law allows for the vehicle and its loads to place only 8,000 pounds on the axle. Any person caught driving an overloaded vehicle could be cited for improper licensing and for carrying an unsafe load.

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Thousands of houseplants to be auctioned this weekend

by SCOTT NEWTON

The sale bill calls it the sale of the century, and for plant lovers it just may be.

Toney's Plants Inc. will be auctioning off thousands of house plants, three greenhouses' worth.

Of course there is a story in Fred "Toney" and Ann Wickersham's total farm operation, which includes the farm, Toney's Farm Market, and Ann's five greenhouses.

That story begins with Toney, who more than 30 years ago began building the operation from scratch, to a place that now employs 21 people, not in-

cluding seasonal labor.

Ann's portion of the business, however, is no less remarkable.

Seven years ago she was working out of an eight-by-10-foot combination greenhouse and porch, selling, and taking in sick plants.

And then one day a man, who had brought over his wife's plants, told them he had a greenhouse they ought to "come and get."

"We failed to ask him what size it was," Ann Wickersham said. "We got over there and it was 28 by 64 feet."

They tore it down, took it home and set it up, and thus began the houseplant business.

"It's actually a hobby that got out of hand," Mrs. Wickersham joked Friday, on the day that happened to be the Wickershams 11th anniversary.

The business, whether due to Mrs. Wickersham's knack for growing or to the public's interest in plants, has prospered, although things have gone at a less rapid pace recently.

It wasn't long after acquiring the first greenhouse for \$200 that they built a second, a 20 by 76 footer constructed out of materials they got salvaging a barn.

A short time after that they acquired a 20-by-54-foot greenhouse.

In the fall of 1979 they added a 40-by-108-foot greenhouse, which includes a

24-by-60-foot lean-to.

And then last year they built a 24-by-40-foot cold house, where they raise plants in the winter, like tomato and cabbage plants, to put out in the field in February for an early spring harvest.

There are a number of reasons Wickersham is having the auction.

First of all, she wants to specialize in fuchsias, both hanging and tree fuchsias, and they require a lot of room.

Besides being her favorite plant, her "dear love," they're also a high quality plant that's always in demand, so it's a smart business decision, in her opinion.

At least 36 varieties of plants will be auctioned off Oct. 17 and 18, and each species of plant requires different care. So, by specializing Wickersham will be able to better utilize her time.

She also wants to concentrate on her cool house. A cool greenhouse uses less electricity, for one thing. Another business decision.

She also wants to concentrate on scrubs.

Asked how she learned the horticulture business, Wickersham replied, "Trial and error, and boy, there are a lot of errors and you learn the hard way."

She's looked at "thousands of books" at one time or another, and no two of them give the same advice. "When you get down to the greenhouse, you're going to call that book a liar, believe me," she said.

Tom Cox of Zigzag, the auctioneer handling the sale, said, "There is more to this than just an auction."

"The part that's going to be good, I hope, is that we're going into this thing together. It's difficult, I think, when strangers come together and zero in on a project."

"And for the duration, you go through the thing together, and you accept what's on the other end. You accept the consequences in all good faith and friendship, and I think that's unusual today."

Cox, a forester as well as a trained

auctioneer, said that the more he learns about houseplants the better off he'll be this weekend, when he'll auction off plants from 10 a.m. till probably about 4 p.m.

"It's a new challenge for me," he said.

"It's a new challenge for both of us," Wickersham threw in, later adding that "30 days ago I didn't even know who he was."

Although Cox hasn't known the Wickershams that long, it hasn't dampened his enthusiasm for either of them.

"There's an art and a science (to growing plants), and you must have both to make it successful," he said.

"You don't just go out there, flip the switch to 50 degrees and start planting and growing."

Plants are sensitive, Cox said. "They know Ann."

Wickersham pointed out that several years ago, when studies came out explaining how plants are affected by music, that she did her own study.

"You turn a radio on be-bop," she said, "and two days later you can see your plant pushing away from (the source of) that sound."

"Yet you put it back on soft, mellow (music), opera or something like this, and it will lean right toward it."

Cox continued, talking about a different but, to him, not dissimilar relationship.

"The other thing I see operating here," Cox said, "is two people working in harmony."

"Toney, (at least) my concept (of him), he's like a visionary person. He looks at things ahead."

"And that's fine. You need those dreamers, or those people who have an image. But you also need the Anns, to come up and make sure those things are mechanically worked out to obtain them."

Cox turned to Wickersham. "Is that all right to say?"

"Yes," she replied with a laugh, "because that's the truth."

"Most people can't dream, and then back up and start hammering it out," Cox said.

The Wickershams and Cox are in a "hammering-it-out" stage. They've advertised by mail, and have sent notices to other greenhouse owners and plant wholesalers and retailers that might want to participate.

Plants will be sold both individually and in groups.

From 8 to 10 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, interested persons will be shown around. Some people might be interested in the greenhouse construction alone.

The Wickershams were the first, in the area anyway, to use an "A" frame construction inside the greenhouses to better utilize the light, as well as the first to use clear plastic packing material to insulate, a move which cut their electric bill in half.

"I think they want to make some money," Cox said, "and I want to make a commission, but it's also an opportunity, a rare opportunity, to come and buy some real fine plants that have been nurtured at what I call a fair market value."

Wickersham has advice for people that always seem to kill whatever plants they buy.

"My only suggestion to them is to get something that does not bloom."

"And for the person that waters one week, and then forgets to water for another month?"

"I'll tell them, 'Okay, stick to rubber trees or something like this that's got a heavy stock.'"

Regardless of how many people show up, or what kind of prices are paid, count on Ann Wickersham to keep working with her fuchsias.

Her 87 varieties, including valuable pure white ones, need lots of space. After this weekend, they'll have that space.



Tom Cox and Toney and Ann Wickersham