

Editorial & Opinion

Roadblock to collar drunks

Cheers for the state and county police! We speak not of the cheers found in a bottle, but the good feeling in your heart from helping another person.

State troopers and county deputies expect to deter many drunk drivers this holiday season by scaring them off the road with unscheduled road block checks.

State police are beefing up night patrols and putting every available trooper on the road in the cooperative effort with Clackamas and Multnomah counties.

They'll put up appropriate flares and signs to flag traffic over in a line to check drivers for licenses and sobriety. After working one spot a couple of hours, they'll move to another spot, with no particular pattern.

State police locally are more concerned than ever with danger strips like Highway 26 between Boring and Rhododendron, new station commander Lt. David Quillan reports. New statistics show secondary highways produce more wrecks than freeways, so that's where emphasis has been shifted. State police have assigned 13 troopers to work the road block program here.

Some 10 percent of all 1,937 county drunk driving arrests in 1981 involved under-age drinkers, while nearly 40 percent involved drivers 25-39 years of age. Sandy Police Department alone arrested 56 drunk drivers last year.

Clackamas County Sheriff's Department crime analysis suggests at least 9 percent of all fatalities or serious auto accidents

primarily are due to alcohol. The county's also quick to note that number may be low, since deputies often are hesitant to attribute alcohol as primary cause of road accidents, for fear of proving it in court. Also, the count's based on analysis of 445 random serious accidents countywide.

If you want to dodge trouble on the road this yuletide, the county also has pin-pointed when serious accidents occur here. The worst single hour time turns out to be 8 to 9 p.m., while the worst day is Saturday. Most common weather condition for serious accidents here, however, happens to be clear and dry. Surprisingly, some 58 percent of serious accidents here occur during daylight hours. So maybe there's no way around trouble.

Hopefully, the road block checks this yuletide may discourage drivers from one last glass of party cheer or even attempting to get behind the wheel. A crackdown by troopers in force here in 1979 certainly slowed drunk drivers.

Troopers in force then dogged drivers who pulled out of bars and handed out 23 DUI citations the first week during the 1979 crackdown. The number of drunk driving citations slowed to just one per day toward the end of that campaign.

Their new roadblock check campaign should capture attention of all party-goers here this holiday season. Drive drunk here, and they'll pull you over for a ticket—no matter how well you think you fake it. (VB)

Make your home yuletide safe

Christmas can be a warm time of year with the family cuddled inside with the tree, lights and a fire. Be careful things don't get too warm, however, with tinder-box trees, dangerous light fixtures and runaway fire.

The local fire district and electric company list the following guidelines for a safe and sane holiday season:

1. Keep that tree dry with water in base.
2. Candles should't burn unattended or on a combustible base. Fire Chief Bob Rathke recalls past fire here, due to unwatched candles
3. Miniature lights are best, because they throw off less dangerous heat.
4. Don't put cords under carpets, since wear could lead to overheating.

5. Old light strings with cracks and frays should be replaced.

6. Unplug tree lights when gone or sleeping.

7. Be sure extension cords outdoors are designed for outdoor use.

8. Look for Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) seal of safety approval.

9. Let airtight stoves burn free with screen (not door) periodically to burn off chimney buildup.

10. Beware when burning wrapping paper, because light paper burns hot and fast.

11. Radiant heat in wood stoves will dry tree faster than before. Unfortunately, too, people locally seem to be putting uptrees earlier each year, officials note. Throw out tree when needles begin to drop.

The Post gratefully acknowledges essays and written opinions from readers to appear on this page—separate from the unbiased news reports on other pages of this newspaper. Your opinions generally will be printed as letters to the editor, while ours generally will appear as editorials. Occasionally, we are able to print guest editorials. We attempt to print all signed letters of good taste, legible form and reasonable length. Our deadline is noon on Tuesdays.



Letter to the editor:

AuCoin explains Congress pay vote

I'm damned mad at the way my vote in opposition to the Congressional pay raise has been distorted and misrepresented by the news wire services and others. I am writing so your readers can clearly understand what happened and why in the House of Representatives.

By law, all members of Congress would have been given a \$17,300 pay increase, if the House had taken no action. As a member of Congress opposed to any pay increase, I had opportunities on two consecutive votes to strike a blow at the size of the increase and then try to kill the whole kit and kaboodle.

On the first vote, the choice was between \$17,300 or \$9,000. I voted to lower the raise to the lower

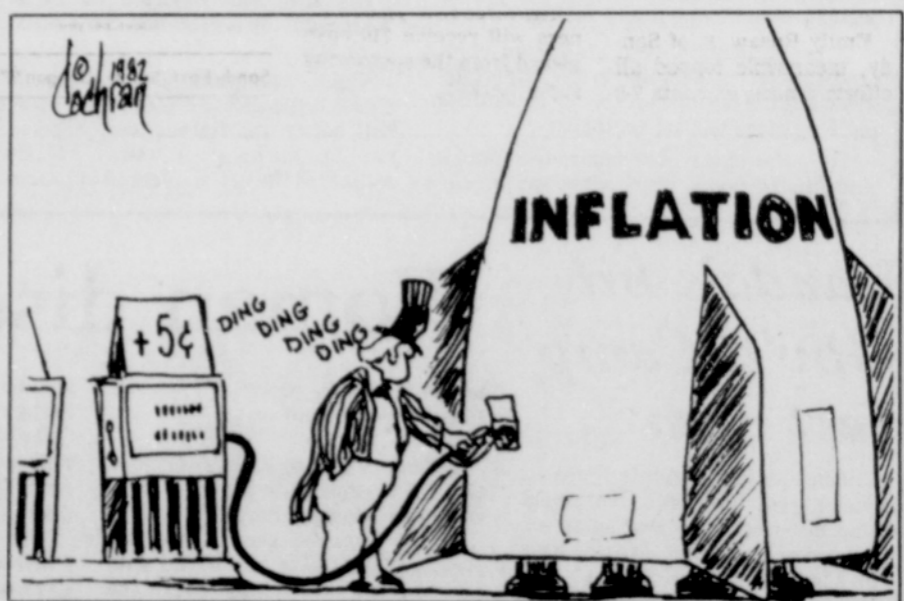
figure, limiting the damage if—God forbid—the attempt to kill the raise failed entirely.

The second vote was on the question of killing the pay raise or leaving it at the \$9,000 level. I voted to kill it, just as I've voted against every pay raise since I've been in Congress. Unfortunately, that attempt failed on a tie vote of 208-208.

That's the chronology and my strategy on the votes. If the wire services can't understand that, then they belong in a strait-jacket. More important, the issue isn't over yet, and I'll continue to work against a pay raise for members of Congress at this time, when so many of my constituents are out of work, running out of

unemployment benefits, and with so many other living in fear of losing their jobs.

Les AuCoin
Member of Congress



Personally speaking

Christmas magic 'metered'

Sometimes Christmas gifts take strange forms. The unexpected gift, like a wild rose on a trail, glows with a rare beauty. So it is with people who surprise us with such unsolicited gifts of love. Perhaps they give from love overflowing, while the rest of us give what's expected from an inner emptiness.

I got a taste of the difference a few years ago at Christmas. My wife and I were trying to scrounge up enough nickles and dimes to buy each other something special. It wasn't easy. We were broke, just starting out in the city. Also, we wanted the gifts to be uniquely heartwarming. We scrimped and saved until it hurt.

She had this deep, dark secret about what she was getting me, saying only that it was precious, one-of-a-kind and something I'd keep forever. To earn money for this gift, this very pregnant lady took a job babysitting for a roughneck kid on the other side of town. She'd walk through the city streets in the dark and cold to catch a 4:30 a.m. bus. Exhausted, she'd return home again in the dark, trying not to slip on the icy sidewalk in her pregnant condition.

I wasn't even that lucky in finding a job. I'd walk the streets in a second-hand raincoat and silly spaghetti tie, trying to pawn off poor resume carbon copies at ad agencies, pr firms or any newspaper that might hire me. My only references were limited schooling and a desire.



by VON BRASCHLER

Somewhere along the street my shoes gave out, and my desire became hunger. I settled on a minimum wage job greasing cars in an all-night gas station midnight to eight. That didn't give me much sleep when I came home to cram for afternoon classes and breakfast chat with my bride. We were almost too much in love to where it hurt.

The station was a riot, though—literally a riot. It was a wild integrated neighborhood where almost anything happened. My graveyard partner actually rented out the tire loft or women's john for professional girls to use a few minutes or longer, depending on number of customers. What they did in there, I didn't want to know. But I had an idea.

Then one night close to Christmas a black dude and a

white neighbor fought over our last bottle of 30-weight bulk oil on the pump island. The debate ended when one customer smashed the quart jar over the head of the other.

Putting up with all these antics in fun city, I still couldn't save up enough nickles and dimes to buy my young wife something wonderful our first Christmas together.

So we ate macaroni and cheese almost every dinner and simple coffee cake from a jiffy mix every breakfast to economize. Our average twice-weekly sacks from the supermarket then totaled only \$4 in macaroni and coffee cake mixes. Because I bought coffee, she gave up milk. Probably not smart for a pregnant lady, but what did I know about that?

Toward the final countdown of days before Christmas, a small miracle happened to me. It was a small thing with no explanation, except it happened at Christmas. Because it saved me nickles and dimes enough for a gift I wanted almost more than anything, I didn't question the source. I chalked it up to Christmas magic.

The parking meter that devoured my nickles and dimes in front of the downtown hotel strangely stopped expiring. In fact, it never ran out. Now that's no small change, if you're broke and dropping \$30 each month down those meters just to have a place to park.

Every time I'd run outside in the cold to plug the meter, there was plenty of time remaining. It almost looked as though some

kind person was plugging the meter for me, watching it all day long that Christmas week.

So on Christmas eve I beamed to tell my young wife that I had waited at the late minute to get her some very special gifts up the street. I ran through the crowds of last-minute shoppers to beat closing time downtown.

Really, it wasn't much I brought back to her in a bag. Only I was proud, because the act of giving her something had grown so important to me. So I gave her a pair of nylons that lasted a month or so, a bottle of cologne that lasted until summer, some candy she liked and a copy of the Sunday paper—because she liked it, and we usually had to swipe it and read fast before our neighbor got up.

My wife, however, produced a lovely white gold wedding ring for me. I almost cried. Later when we stuffed our dried fir tree into the hotel's alley dumpster, the ring slipped off my finger. I had held it only two hours altogether.

Then she almost cried, and later got a bit angry at my carelessness in wearing an unsized ring that was too large while throwing out trash in the dark. She was right, of course. Only I was so proud and happy, I couldn't take it off that night.

The real magic of the night, however, came from the phantom do-gooder who plugged our parking meter out front. I know it was Christmas magic, because the next day the red flag started popping up every four hours on expiration without mercy.