

Lab work leads to awkward interaction

It seems there are certain occupations where people think you're always on duty. I'm sure doctors get it all the time — running into patients at church or an athletic event. Some people think nothing of showing off a rash and wanting free medical advice.

As a journalist, I often have people approach me about doing stories — at community events (that I'm not covering), at the grocery store, at a restaurant eating dinner and even standing at Interpath Laboratory holding a container of my own urine.

Going to the lab to provide urine and blood samples already messes with my routine — especially the tests that require fasting.

It's a delicate balancing act to go the required number of hours without consuming food, while drinking enough water to provide a urine specimen and still be a civil human being in public in a caffeine-deprived state because I haven't had my morning Pepsi.

Because of my early week double deadlines, it's most convenient for me to do lab work on a Thursday or Friday. On Sept. 1, the stars were finally aligning. I woke up in desperate need of Pepsi, but it had been nearly two weeks since the doctor called in the order for lab work. I knew I had to take care of it.

I made it to Interpath and the phlebotomist draws my blood sample. Since the urinalysis didn't require fasting, she said I could take the bag and specimen bottle with me to do the UA at home if I wasn't able to produce on demand. If I had planned to go home, that may have been a viable option.

However, I was headed to

work and certainly had no interest in dealing with this in the work bathroom. The last thing I wanted to do was carry around a bottle of my own pee.

I produced the required specimen and exited the laboratory's bathroom. Standing there holding a clear plastic bag which contained a clear plastic container with my urine, a woman who was getting her blood drawn by a different lab worker was staring at me. I smiled, because despite the caffeine deprivation, I'm generally a decent human being.

She said hello and introduced herself. I was dumbfounded — remember, I'm standing there with a plastic bag with a container of my own pee.

"OK," I replied. All I wanted was for my lab lady to re-appear so I could unload my specimen and be on my way. However, that didn't occur and the woman then proceeded to tell me she was with some community group in town and she wanted to talk to me about her club.

I just stood there — flabbergasted that someone wanted me to engage in a discussion while I was standing there holding my own pee. Apparently, she noticed my reaction and asked, "Are you OK?"

It was surreal. I'm not sure how long the encounter lasted but the other lab worker interrupted the awkward interaction and directed me to my lab lady.

And, I wasn't OK. I hadn't eaten for nearly 12 hours. I was in desperate need of Pepsi and did I mention, I was holding a container of my own pee.

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Tammy Malgesini
INSIDE MY SHOES

Friends recall cross-continental trip

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Described as an amazing adventure, a pair of Hermiston men recently reminisced about a bicycle trip that took them from Seattle to Montreal, Canada.

Richard Hunt and Jerry Cullers met as grade schoolers at West Park Elementary School. The trip, which was just over 50 years ago, was almost derailed after an incident with a train.

"As kids in Hermiston, we always rode our bikes around town," Cullers said. "We also rode out to Sandy Beach and places like that."

Their families ended up moving to separate towns in Washington within a couple of weeks of each other — Cullers' family to the Renton area and Scarlett's to Tacoma. The fast friends maintained contact, often spending the weekend at each other's house. As young teenagers, the pair even rode their bikes to Hermiston on a couple of occasions.

Scarlett and Cullers had been to the World's Fair in Seattle and after seeing information about Expo '67 on TV, they hatched a plan to make the journey. Their parents told them they needed to make detailed plans, which included writing to Dan Evans, Washington's governor at the time.

The 17-year-olds received financial support from the governor's office, who also put them in touch with officials from the Seattle World's Fair. The connections continued, which led to the Leo Scherrer Co. of Seattle, who donated bicycles for the trip.

"We ran into a whole lot



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY WANDA HUNT

Hermiston residents Richard Scarlett and Jerry Cullers look through scrapbooks, articles and photos chronicling a 2,800-mile bicycle trip they took 50 years ago as teenagers.

of support," Scarlett said.

On June 17, 1967, a contingency of mayors attending a convention saw the duo off at the base of the Space Needle, the site of the 1962 World's Fair. During the trip, they camped, stayed in the homes of mayors and occasionally in motels. The most unusual accommodations included the back of a U-Haul type truck and a jail cell — although they weren't actually incarcerated.

The teens mapped out plans for the roughly 2,800-mile journey. It included stops to meet officials, speak at civic groups and participate in youth activities. They anticipated it would take 40 days — it ended up taking 62 days.

"We had a route laid out pretty good," Cullers said. "Then, once we got started, we found out that was pretty rigorous."

Between running into inclement weather and the constant riding, Cullers said they found themselves wanting to slow down to enjoy the trip. However, that led to them becoming behind schedule.

Train nearly derails journey

Eating breakfast one morning in Harlem, Montana, Scarlett and Cullers were trying to figure out how they were going to make up time. Noticing a railroad yard across the street, the teens decided to hop a train and ride about 200 miles to Culbertson, Montana.

They easily climbed aboard while rail workers were switching cars. However, when the train didn't slow down at their destination, Cullers and Scarlett were faced with the dilemma of how to get off. From opposite sides of the train car, the teens climbed down the ladders, dropped their bikes and then jumped off — but not at the same time.

Banged up and separated by several miles, neither boy knew where the other was. Fortunately, a woman and her daughter happened upon Scarlett. They drove until they found Cullers.

Relieved to be reunited, the boys were banged up. Their injuries resulted in an overnight hospital stay for

Cullers and three nights for Scarlett.

Serving as goodwill ambassadors, they didn't want to share about the misadventure with the train. When interviewed by newspaper reporters, they were faced with having to explain the delay.

"The articles about my injuries said I sprained my ankle when I stepped in a gopher hole," Scarlett said.

Their parents insisted they go back and pedal the distance where they had hopped the train.

"They said if we are going to do this trip right, we had to ride that stretch on our bikes," Cullers said.

When their pocket change dwindled, the teens worked for a few days at the North Dakota State Fair. Other fun along the way included water skiing, bowling and other activities with teens.

Cullers said that the people they met along the way were friendly and went out of their way to help them.

"It was probably the most adventurous thing I've ever done," Scarlett said. "It was the trip of a lifetime."

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