

Firecracker Makes Poor Smoke; Gopher Objection in Odd Mishaps

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Are you, perchance, the adventurous type?

Do you yearn for the unusual, the new and different?

Then you may find just what you are dreaming of in the odd happenings rounded up by the National Safety Council in its annual search for freak accidents.

Would you like, for example, to toss a time bomb back and forth with a gopher?

Or to be shot by a moody dog?

Would you care to smoke a firecracker instead of a cigarette?

Or would you prefer to have a horse run into your car?

Gopher No Fool

Those and many other dizzy things were turned up by the Council. To wit:

The gopher that kept pestering farmer Paul Thomas of Las Vegas, Nev., was no fool. When Thomas shoved a lighted concussion bomb down the gopher hole, the gopher shoved it right back. Thomas frantically hurled the bomb away. It landed near his barn, exploded and burned up 22 tons of hay. The gopher, loved every minute of it.

You can hardly blame the dog that shot John Beyreis in Pawnee City, Neb. After all, Beyreis, the city dog catcher, was taking

the pouch to the pound to shoot him. Riding morosely in the back of the panel truck, the dog looked meditatively at Beyreis' shotgun, reached out a paw, discharged the gun and shot the dog catcher in the foot.

Hunter Draws First Blood

Neither can you be too harsh on the deer that shot Ed Stanley, of Weed Heights, Nev. For hunter Stanley had drawn the first blood by shooting the deer. As Stanley bent over his prey, the deer gave a lusty kick, hit the rifle and—bang! Down went Stanley with a bullet in his knee.

Patrolman Fred Golden of Tallahassee, Fla., is glad his pants aren't as good a shot as a dog or a deer. He was holding the trousers with one hand and brushing them off with the other when a loose pistol bullet went off in one of the pockets. It missed him.

In Knoxville, Tenn., Golden Gibson reached absent-mindedly for a cigarette stuck a two-inch firecracker in his mouth and lit it. From his hospital bed he announced he had given up smoking.

House Hits Car

Roger Cole, of Alpena, Mich., wishes people who drive houses on public highways would stay on their own side of the road. Cole's car was parked on the shoulder of U.S. 23 when a house-moving crew approached

The side of the house clipped the side of Cole's car.

In Dallas, Mrs. Edward Lee Cowart investigated a noise in the bedroom, reported back to her husband, "Honey, there's a car in your bed." There was, too! The auto had missed a turn in a skyscraper parking garage next to the hotel where the Cowarts lived, leaped six feet through space and crashed through the wall of the third-floor bedroom. No one was injured, but Cowart made the car get out.

Mrs. Loretta Lewis, of Charlotte, N.C., considered herself lucky to be alive and conscious when her car landed at the bottom of a 50-foot embankment alongside a railroad track after plunging off the highway. She felt even luckier a few seconds later after a train roared by, side-swiped the wreckage of the car, and Mrs. Lewis found she had escaped a double danger with only a broken arm and a few bruises.

Patrolman Injured

No one was injured when four cars piled up in a collision near Des Moines—no one, that is, until Patrolman Elmer Van Note, investigating the crash, slammed a door on his finger.

Mervin Seamster, a butcher in Richmond, Va., was understandably confident as he took on the assignment of carving the turkey at a food dealers' banquet. But before he could even disjoint the drumstick, he cut his finger so severely he had to turn the job over to his wife.

Mrs. Mary Hastings Bradley, author and big game hunter, survived six African safaris without injury. But in the calm of the trophy room of her own home in Chicago she tripped over a lion's head and broke her arm. The lion had been shot by her husband, without accident.

Many a golfer shoots a birdie, but not as literally as 12-year-old Rick Pickard, of Baldwinville, N.Y. Playing his first golf game, Rick teed off on the third hole, hit a bird in flight, and killed it. Falls Into Quarry

Eugene Cromwell, of Milwaukee, was uninjured when his auto swerved off the highway. He stepped out to survey the wreckage, fell into a 50-foot limestone quarry, and broke his arm.

Ralph and Cecil Mason are brothers and live near each other in Covert, Mich. So it was not surprising that they ran into each other on a wintry day last January. The trouble was, each was driving a car at the time.

Leroy Henderson, a janitor at the Wyoming statehouse, Cheyenne, had always felt he was a pretty good window polisher. But he never realized how good until, just after diligently cleaning a window, he saw some boys running through the statehouse lawn, stuck his head out to yell at them and poked it through the spotless pane.

It is doubtful, of course, that Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of the U. S. Senator from Massachusetts, ever had any serious intention of trying out for varsity football at Harvard. But she is less than ever so inclined since she broke her ankle playing touch football with her brother-in-law Teddy, a Harvard end.

Zipper Breaks Arm

When 4-H Club girls modeled self-made dresses at a style review in Salina, Kan., Sandra Shilling wore something no other model had—a sling. Sandra broke her arm when a zipper stuck on the dress she had made for the exhibit and she gave it a yank to loosen it. The dress won second prize. The sling didn't place.

Richard Fleming, Woodland, Calif., had a good reason for momentarily losing his head while driving. A woodpecker was pecking away at it! The bird, a family pet, was in the lap of Fleming's son when it mistook the elder Fleming's cranium for a tree and went to work. The car left the highway and rolled over twice. Neither of the Flemings was hurt. The woodpecker found itself a tree.

One of the big things in baseball is to use your head. And that's exactly what pitcher Chuck Trosper did in a game at Lansing, Mich., when a batter hit a screaming liner straight

at him. The ball hit pitcher Trosper squarely on the forehead, bounced high in the air and was caught by the first baseman for a putout.

On Wrong End

Benjamin Morris became so annoyed at a tree limb blowing against his house in Kansas City that he got out of bed in the middle of the night, found a saw and climbed the tree to cut off the branch. A few minutes later he was back in bed again—a hospital bed. You've guessed it. He was on the wrong end of the limb when he did the sawing!

After 10 years and 750,000 miles of accident-free driving, Lou Murdock of Maywood, Calif., was given an award by his insurance company. He accepted it in the hospital. He had broken his leg in a fall down a flight of stairs in his home.

James R. Clark, of Palatka, Fla., had gone through his driver's license test with flying colors and, with Examiner Earl Gore as passenger, pulled triumphantly into the parking lot. He hit a car. It belonged to Gore. License postponed.

Two-year-old Jeffery McGuire should have been the driest boy in Cleveland, but he wasn't because of his tears. That was the day he crawled into the family laundry dryer and his young brother obligingly flicked the switch. Mrs. McGuire, making the usual rounds to see what her sons were up to, found and rescued Jeff in the nick of time.

Handy Package

In Chicago, Earle Heffley cut himself while opening a Christmas package he had received in

the mail. He found it contained a first-aid kit.

On an icy highway near Richmond, Ind., Mrs. Pauline Ellison crashed into a truck, was thrown from her car, and cozily and securely skidded 200 feet on her briefcase.

And it wouldn't be a vintage year for odd accidents if a certain gentleman in Los Angeles didn't make the news. This time he was charged with driving through a red light. His name? No kidding, folks, it's Safety First!

Still think you're the adventurous type? Or would you just as soon go back to your game?

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a women's editor and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual report. The Family Council does not give advice. It merely reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Mrs. L. F.—My brother should fight for his children.

Mr. H. T.—My ex-wife knows what's right for them.

Mrs. L. O. F.—My brother and his wife were divorced five years ago and have both since remarried. My brother's children by his first marriage are now 7, 9 and 10 years old.

My brother has visiting privileges and is supposed to have the three children for one month every summer. The first few summers his ex-wife did not send the youngest boy because she said he was too young. Then she didn't send the oldest girl because she said the child was well. Last summer she didn't send any of the children because she claimed there was a polio epidemic in our area.

My brother has given in quietly each time. I feel that he should insist upon his legal rights. He loves his children, but he is not doing his duty by them as a father.

Mr. H. T.—I feel that my ex-wife is a good mother and I respect her judgment of what is right for the children. The man she has married seems to love the children and they are devoted to him.

I love my children, but I don't want to tear them apart emotionally. The children are not very happy when they visit with me, although my wife and I do our best to plan good times for them. There is always a strain and my ex-wife says they are difficult to

manage for weeks afterward.

I want to be a good father to my children, but I don't think insisting upon seeing them is in their best interests. They were so young when my wife and I separated that they do not really know me or love me. When they get older, perhaps they will understand.

The Council: It is possible that these children's mother was right in the individual cases in which she withheld one or more of the children, but the father clearly indicates that he has not accepted these occasions as mere incidents, but feels that his ties with his children are weak, and appears ready to relinquish them entirely.

Mr. H. T.'s desire to avoid leaving the children apart emotionally is understandable, but it is possible that he is going too far in his self-sacrifice—too far for both his own and the children's happiness.

Right now these children find it hard to accept the fact that they have two fathers. Their loyalty is divided. This divided situation, however, is a fact of their lives. If their real father appears to reject them, but such a rejection could become a breeding ground for unhappiness in the future. In any case, it is very unlikely that the children will understand when they get older if stronger ties are not established now. Mr. H. T. is losing his children and should be aware of it.

It is possible that this father feels awkward about displaying affection to his children, but it is more important to do this than to "plan good times." It will do these children no harm to know that their real father has a deep, abiding love for them.

Mr. H. T. has to make a vital decision and frankly assume responsibility for it. He has to decide whether to reject his children or whether to play his role as a father by insisting on his legal and moral rights. He begs the question and fools himself when he reasons it is best for the children that he let the situation drift.

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