

FEAR & LOAFING

Perpetual motion

Don't look now, but I'm pretty sure we're in for a recession.

Forget all the good news about strong economic indicators and a bull market. I've got inside information about a disastrous domino effect that's already in motion.

And, please, when things finally do collapse, don't blame George Bush, the Federal Reserve or the Japanese. Blame me. It's my fault and I want to apologize now, in advance.

You see, according to government figures, one out of every six Americans has a job directly related to the auto industry. That means if you have even a shred of decency, you'll buy a new car every year for the sake of the economy even if you're too broke to buy gas for it. Just because you can't afford it, or never learned to drive or don't have arms, or some other flimsy excuse is no reason to put your neighbors out of work.

For most of my life, I did the patriotic thing and bought at least one new car per year. Some years I had to pitch in and buy three just to make sure the midnight shift didn't get laid off.

Then back in 1982, I did the unthinkable. I decided to keep my one-year-old car a few extra months. So instead of buying a new 1983 model, I sent the UAW a check and skipped the middleman.

BELIEVE ME, I never meant to destroy the economy. I was only trying a financial experiment to see if there wasn't some arrangement where I could actually afford to buy food and shaving supplies in addition to making car payments.

The experiment worked. I gained weight. I paid bills. I moved out of the trailer park and into a beautiful home, a home vacated by an auto executive who could no longer afford the payments because of selfish people like me.

WARNING: Like any addictive behavior, staying out of debt sneaks up on you slowly and before you know it, you're hooked.

Soon, two years had slipped by since I last signed on the dotted line. Then three. Still, I told my friends that I could quit anytime. In fact, I promised myself I'd dump the aging car at the first sign of mechanical trouble.

Little did I know I was driving "The Car That Refused to Die." Year after year, mile after miles, this car broke every unwritten rule of automotive ownership.



Karl Nilsson

(1) A vehicle may not, under any circumstance, outlive its loan payment coupon book.

(2) The drive train will automatically explode into shrapnel three days after the warranty expires.

(3) If the engine should happen to exceed normal life expectancy, the body itself is obligated to corrode into a pile of rust flakes.

BY DEIFYING the laws of planned obsolescence, my freakish car was becoming a source of embarrassment. As body styles changed, I tried to ignore its chuckles and sneers. Soon my friends in desirable zip codes began requesting I park around the corner when visiting.

Still the stubborn machine rolled on, clocking 100,000 miles without a hiccup. Finally, in desperation, I broke into a dealership one night and jimmied the lock on a display model. For hours, I just sat on the front seat, sucking in the great lungfuls of new car smell.

By the time my car reached 150,000 agonizingly trouble-free miles, I was already wearing the Farmer Jack bag over my head. But even without peripheral vision, I began to notice that the drivers of the other older cars didn't avert their eyes, didn't wear disguises and actually waved as they passed.

Strange as it sounds, a new form of reverse snobbery was being born. Just as ripped-up blue jeans became a fashion rage, worn-out cars started catching on. Social status was being redefined.

OWNER: My car is older than yours.

INVESTOR: OH yeah? My car's worth half as much as yours.

COLLECTOR: Eat your hearts out, my car has higher mileage and more dents than both of yours put together.

Today, boredom on wheels is eight years old and despite neglect and abuse it still hums along. But don't worry, Wall Street. When it finally expires, I'll be right back in the showrooms to pump up the sagging gross national product.

I only hope it quits in time to turn things around.

STREET SENSE

Rude teen is the problem

Dear Barbara,

I read your column regularly and certainly do enjoy it. Usually, your advice is good, but once in a while you miss the point. You were so far off in your response of Feb. 12, I must ask you to consider a different perspective.

The problem in this family is not the adult son; it is with the friend's 16-year-old rude and difficult daughter. The son is an adult, Barbara, not a child or even the girl's peer. How much would you bend yourself out of shape to accommodate the 16-year-old rude and difficult child of your parents' friend?

In your response, you said the young man is:

(1) Socially insensitive. He is not the only one. So is the rude girl, her parents and the frustrated father for tolerating the rude behavior.

(2) His behavior embarrasses. Questionable. How much acceptance of rude behavior is required to be socially acceptable? This was an optional activity that did not include the second family. His refusal was not out of line.

(3) Father gets angry. Father is angry at the wrong target. Remember, it is the rude and difficult 16-year-old whose behavior is wrong.

(4) Stop humoring him. Who is humoring whom here? The father's expectations for his son are completely unreasonable, yet it seems that this young adult continues to humor his father by accepting and "putting up with" a considerable amount of someone else's bad behavior.

(5) and (6) If he doesn't see it your way, separate with him — but don't worry, sometimes the child will bloom. This advice absolutely blows me away! Barbara, even in our throw-away society we don't throw away our children! Children aren't discarded like some ill-chosen friend or mate. Children are loved, cared for, accepted forever.

Where is your sense of family? Your sense of values? Your priorities?

Who is the father really angry at? The son? Himself? The girl? Her parents? They, too, bear responsibility for this uncomfortable situation, too, you know.

Please give this father another answer before he does lasting damage to his family.

Jeri

Dear Jeri,

Thank you for your interesting letter. Just as you have to respond in keeping with your beliefs (which I respect), so too I have to respond with my convictions. These are based on the experience that I have had in working with such problems.

I am publishing your letter because it contains many helpful ideas and because many readers will agree with you.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,

I've been reading your column since it began appearing in Street Sense and for the most part agree with the advice you offer. However, I think you missed the point with the "Frustrated Father."

You were correct in advising a choice of staying home or joining the family on the outing and on not dumping the problem on the other family. But the rest of your advice was geared for a problem between a parent and much younger child.

The son is 21 and, I'm sorry, Barbara, that isn't almost adult. He is an adult and as such has his own opinions and makes his own decisions. And there are going to be times when those decisions won't be agreeable to his parents.

The son's decision was not to have anything more to do with an appar-

ently obnoxious person. Let's face it, most of us would probably make the same decision. His initial decision was to cut his vacation short, a very mature way of handling the problem. His parents, however, were insensitive to him in planning a "going away party" and wanting to involve the person who prompted his decision in the first place.

The father wants his son to be more tolerant. Well, that's a two-way street. The father should be more tolerant, and understanding, of his son's feelings and decisions.

It's also time he accepted the fact that not everything his adult son does will be in his father's best interest. Dad got into the position he did because he, not the son, chose to lie to his friends. The best tactic would have been to cancel the party.

I think the "frustrated father" should learn a lesson from his son and start acting in a more mature manner.

A disappointed reader

Dear "Disappointed,"

I am truly sorry that I let you down. But, as indicated in the above response, I have to state what I believe is correct. It may help you to understand the basis for my opinion. Even if you don't, I appreciate your letter and your opinion.

Consider these ideas. First, in psychotherapy, when a person has an overly strong reaction to another person, we recognize a problem in the overreaction and attempt to help the person resolve this defect. Often it is true that the overreactor is as obnoxious in his own way as the person that he can't stand.

Second, your statement is that the son is 21 and so should be considered



an adult. However, this is a chronological age, not an emotional one. If the boy were emotionally an adult, he would have been able to handle the younger peer with greater tolerance than he did.

As you are overprotective of this young man, you are putting a stamp of approval on his social inadequacy and thus, not allowing him the opportunity to mature to his chronological age.

Do you want the son to remain intolerant? A person can mature and become an adult in a creative way. Rebellion toward one's father is not necessarily a sign of independence and growth. Do you think the parents aren't people, too? Do they not have rights to their feelings?

Should the mother of the girl in question have written to me, I would be saying the same things to her about her obnoxious daughter, and probably would get a letter from a disappointed reader.

Barbara

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Jumpers go flying at peak

Continued from Page 1

Let's allow someone who has actually flown off Copper Peak give us a first-hand definition on what goes down.

Kris Severson, a Colorado transplant who grew up in Grosse Pointe, is one of only a handful of Americans who brave the jump.

"YOU TRY to close everything out, but you can hear your heart pounding," said Severson, a member of the U.S. Ski Team who flew for the first time two years ago. "When you take off, you concentrate on technique and faith. You have to be because you can't see where you're going to land."

"As you travel through the air (close to 50 feet off the ground at 60 miles per hour) everything you do is magnified. You move your hands slightly, like rudders, to keep your self on course. The feeling is similar to when you stick your hand out the window of a speeding car and use it like an airplane wing."

At this point, now that you have a general idea on how it feels to fly on a pair of skis, let's get into what can go wrong. In other words, what happens when these human missiles crash.

Fortunately, at this year's competition there were no serious crashes. And even though the high take-off speed that flyers are traveling at can lead to some very spectacular falls, the injury rate at Copper Peak is very low.

But many of the fans come to Copper Peak for the first time to witness the ideal crash? Spectacular with no injury to the skier seems to be the consensus at Copper Peak.

"The wipe-outs are harsh, but nobody likes to see anybody get hurt," said Thor Seaberg of Marquette.

"I GO TO ski flying events to see the 'agony of defeat' crashes," said his brother Eric. "Yet, the magnitude of the jumps is enough to impress those who come just to see blood."

"Impressive" is the first word that comes to mind when you visit Copper Peak for the first time to witness a jump. Impressive athletes.

"The relaxed attitude of the jumpers before they take off of a jump that will send them over 500 feet down a hill is what impresses me most," Eric said.

"I'm impressed by the sound of the flyers... like a jet landing," added Thor. "They're really whistling."

So the next time you head out to one of the local ski areas, stop for a minute at the top and try to picture yourself flying at more than 60 miles per hour through the air and down to the base of the hill.

Not only will you find it hard to believe, but you might want to check out the action yourself next year at Copper Peak. Seeing is believing, yet you won't believe your eyes.

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1. I'll more than one entry contains the most correct winners, the Grand Prize winner and subsequent prizes will be selected by random drawing.

2. Entries should be mailed to the address listed above the entry blank, deposited in the entry boxes in the lobby of any AMC theatre or at any Observer & Eccentric office.

3. Employees of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, AMC Theatres, Budget Rent A Car or Your Man Tours and immediate families are not eligible.

4. Entry deadline is midnight Friday, March 23, 1980.

5. Limit one entry per person.

6. No purchase necessary to enter.

7. Judges' decisions are final.

8. Winners will be announced Monday, April 9, in the Observer & Eccentric STREET SCENE section.

9. You must be 18 or older to enter.

OSCAR CONTEST ENTRY BLANK—CLIP AND MAIL TO:
AMC Theatres, 26028 Greenfield, Suite 411, Oak Park, MI 48237

BEST PICTURE

☐ Born on the Fourth of July

☐ Dead Poets Society

☐ Driving Miss Daisy

☐ Field of Dreams

☐ My Left Foot

BEST ACTRESS

☐ Isabelle Adjani (Camille Claudel)

☐ Pauline Collins (Shirley Valentine)

☐ Jessica Lange (Music Box)

☐ Michelle Pfeiffer (The Fabulous Baker Boys)

☐ Jessica Tandy (Driving Miss Daisy)

BEST ACTOR

☐ Kenneth Branagh (Henry V)

☐ Tom Cruise (Born on the Fourth of July)

☐ Daniel Day-Lewis (My Left Foot)

☐ Morgan Freeman (Driving Miss Daisy)

☐ Robin Williams (Dead Poets Society)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

☐ Danny Aiello (Do the Right Thing)

☐ Dan Aykroyd (Driving Miss Daisy)

☐ Marlon Brando (A Dry White Season)

☐ Martin Landau (Crimes and Misdemeanors)

☐ Danzel Washington (Glory)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

☐ Brenda Fricker (My Left Foot)

☐ Anjelica Huston (Enemies, A Love Story)

☐ Lena Olin (Enemies, A Love Story)

☐ Julia Roberts (Steel Dawn)

☐ Dianne Wiest (Parenthood)

BEST DIRECTOR

☐ Oliver Stone (Born on the Fourth of July)

☐ Woody Allen (Crimes and Misdemeanors)

☐ Peter Weir (Dead Poets Society)

☐ Kenneth Branagh (Henry V)

☐ Jim Sheridan (My Left Foot)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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STREET SEEN

Denise Susan Lucas

Our intrepid Street Scene reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 313.

Weight watcher

Everyone loves a delicious sundae — especially when it's calorie free. Australian artist Geoffrey Rose has created home decorative conversation pieces combining resin and plaster to make each piece come alive. "Frozen Moments" are available in themes of frothy flowing milk cascading from a milk carton onto a bowl of corn flakes to toothpaste wildly suspended from tube to brush. Each item is signed by the artist and ranges in price from \$26 to \$85. Available at AYS Office Products Inc., 3000 Town Center, Southfield, 358-7771.

Just for the halibut

The fish mugs by Vietri are hand painted and made in Italy. The bold, vivid colors will brighten your morning and are guaranteed to start a conversation at the office. \$19.95 at Gorman's Inner Circle, 29145 Telegraph Road, Southfield.