

Rabbit Tracks

By John Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

Someone out there has the answer, I'm sure. Let me explain. In this week's "Haire Net" I wanted to say that the sales tax started at 2 per cent. I didn't because I couldn't verify if it started at that figure.

I tried to find out by asking all the persons that I could think of that might have the answer.

Here's the way it went: Banker M. B. Auten, "I can't really say. My memory is not as good as it used to be."

Banker Fred Pinney, laughing, "I should know but really I'm not sure. You can't verify it with me." Manley Asher, retired businessman, "Seems to me that it was 2 per cent at one time. Funny how we forget."

And finally, Art Holmberg, retired Cass City High School principal, "I really don't know, but you could find out by calling the tax bureau."

If you know FOR SURE let me know and we'll pass it on in next week's column of trivia.

Here's a sequel to the story about the 11-year-old that was involved in the police chase in Bay City last week.

The boy was spotted by at least two area persons. One was Mike O'Dell, who met the boy as he was driving to Caro.

The other was Clark Boylan, who passed the youth as he was driving east on M-81. Clark says the boy would go on and off the shoulder of the road and at first he and his wife figured the driver was drunk.

When they finally passed they saw it was a youngster. We watched him go down the road and were thinking of calling the police when he turned north on Koepfgen Road.

When that happened we both figured he was on the way to his farm home up the road and dismissed the whole thing from our minds, Clark said.

Ken E. Jensen, administrator at Hills and Dales General Hospital, says the hospital staff is solidly behind President Carter. In a letter to interested groups in the community, Jensen writes:

"To demonstrate our total support of President Carter during this most difficult test of America's solidarity, Hills and Dales General Hospital will fly its flag at half mast until the American hostages are released."

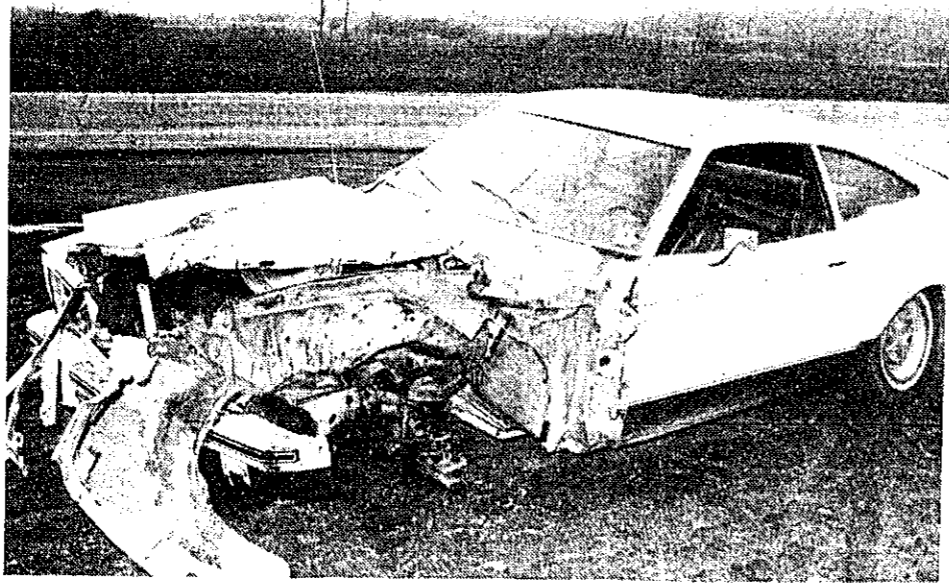
For this piece of trivia the column is indebted to Edsel Connell. He points out that leap year doesn't really come every fourth year. However, when it doesn't, you and I won't have to worry about it.

Leap year comes every four years except in century years such as 1500, 1700, etc., when the day is not added.

But there's an exception to the exception. In century years divisible by 400, the day is added. That means of course that the year 2000 will be a "normal" leap year.

It'll be another hundred years before we lose the extra day provided by the calendar makers.

Tell 'em you read it here first.



TUESDAY ACCIDENT -- Kelly Lapeer and David Kenward, both of Ubyly, were hospitalized after their car collided early Tuesday with a milk tanker truck at the M-53 - M-81 intersection.

Car-truck crash sends 2 to hospital

An early morning collision Tuesday at M-53 and M-81 between a car and a double-tanker milk truck sent two persons to Hills and Dales General Hospital.

Reported in fair condition Tuesday afternoon was the driver, Kelly Lapeer, 20, of 3800 Cumber Road, Ubyly. Her passenger, David Kenward, 21, of the same address, was reported in serious condition.

Sanilac county sheriff's deputies reported their car was westbound on Cass City Road, didn't stop at M-53, and was then struck by the northbound milk tanker of Isadore Vahovick, 50, of Harbor Beach.

Vahovick's truck continued on, went into the drive at Bartnik's service station and collided with a junk car there. The Lapeer auto was totaled.

Ms. Lapeer was ticketed by deputies on a charge of disobeying a traffic signal. The accident took place shortly after 3 a.m.

The two vehicles collided as she was turning north onto Phillips Road.

Ms. Gottler was ticketed on a charge of failure to yield.

At 3:10 p.m. last Wednesday, according to sheriff's deputies, Raymond Stachura, 43, of 1572 Crawford Road, Deford, was southbound on Cemetery Road, north of Delong Road, reached over to write in a notebook, and his vehicle went off the right side of the road. It struck a mailbox and then went into the ditch.

Kenneth B. Decker, 20, of Pine Street, Kingston, was ticketed by sheriff's deputies Jan. 8 on a charge of failure to stop in an assured clear distance after an 8:50 a.m. accident in Kingston.

Officers reported Sandra Lee Parker, 30, of 3336 Washington Street, Kingston, southbound on Washington, was stopped at State Street when the Decker vehicle slid on the slippery surface into the rear of her car.

At 4:30 p.m. last Thursday, according to deputies, James H. Glassford, 48, of Phillips Road, Kingston, northbound on Chambers Road, was stopped at M-81.

Stopped behind him was John Woloshen, 57, of Caro. Thinking that Glassford was starting to move, Woloshen started his vehicle and ran into the rear of the Glassford

OTHER ACCIDENTS

Carl R. Hartzman, 32, of Marlette, sought his own treatment after an accident at 12:15 a.m. last Wednesday.

Caro state police reported that Nancy Mae Gottler, 20, of 3673 Ross Street, Kingston, was eastbound on M-46, misjudged the distance of the Hartzman car, approaching from the east, and



There is a move afoot to cut property taxes and make up the loss with an addition to the sales tax.

It's an idea that will find plenty of acceptance around here and in the northern lower peninsula where land values are skyrocketing.

Economic theorists will tell you that the sales tax is not a good tax because it is regressive. It taxes the poor and least able to pay at the same rate as the wealthy.

I'm with the theorists on this one. Not for the same reason. As a property owner it's likely that a cut in property taxes and a raise in the sales tax would put more money in my pocket.

At least it would initially. I'm suspicious about the savings over the long haul.

Like a junkie on his first high the shot of a lower tax bill would be exhilarating. But when the initial charge

is gone what happens?

If you are a student of Michigan history or a senior citizen you perhaps can remember that when the sales tax was first passed it was a "temporary" tax due to be lifted after a short emergency. And it wasn't too long ago that the sales tax was 3 per cent.

That's the history of the income tax, too. Taxes always seem to increase and any cut proves temporary. Strictly temporary.

As long as the mechanism is set to collect property taxes the politicians will find a way to squeeze extra dollars from it. We'll wind up paying property taxes as big as ever and be saddled with a 5 per cent sales tax, too. The Headlee tax limitation is helping a little and thank goodness we passed it.

A real long range solution would be economy in government. But if you really think that's about to happen meet me at midnight at the south Cass River bridge and I'll sell it to you.

Take the "sunset" law for instance. It requires review of established government bureaus periodically. A Republican alternative of requiring that these bureaus be voted in again periodically to remain in existence was killed.

It doesn't take a genius to figure which method will keep draining away tax funds needlessly.

If the 5 per cent sales tax becomes a reality we can blame (or credit) no one but ourselves. It takes a constitutional amendment to put it into effect.

The reduced property tax carrot may be just enticing enough to trap the rabbits into more taxes, not less.



"If It Fitz..."

Peanuts and small potatoes

By Jim Fitzgerald

Lee Iacocca, chairman of the New Chrysler Corp., reminded me that peanut salesmen are often maligned.

At a press conference held after Chrysler received a \$1.5 billion loan guarantee from me and some other taxpayers, Iacocca talked about what an important job he has.

"I'm not going to give any details," he said, "but all I know is we're facing \$1.1 billion in disbursements in January. That'll show you we're not running any peanut stand here..."

Whenever people want it understood that they are big shots dealing in high finance, they say they aren't running a peanut stand. "This isn't peanuts," they say.

I have long suspected that the operators of peanut stands are treated as unfairly as used car salesmen. Whenever people don't trust some guy, they say they would never buy a used car from him, especially if he is Richard Nixon. But there is absolutely no reliable evidence that used car salesmen are any more liable than lawyers or newspaper reporters to sweat over the upper lip or pull the covers up over a break-in.

So when Lee Iacocca said he isn't running a peanut stand, I decided to find out if it's true that peanut stands are the epitome of small business. I interviewed a man named Peter who sells peanuts outside a sport stadium.

"I'm not running any Chrysler Corp. here," Peter said. "I sell enough peanuts

to pay all my bills and make a profit. If I don't, I'll go out of business."

Peter admitted that he was angry at Iacocca. "He implied that running a peanut stand is small potatoes compared to running Chrysler," Peter said. "But at least I didn't go broke and beg the government for help."

Small potatoes? Was Peter saying that farmers who grow small potatoes don't have as important a job as people who run peanut stands?

"That is a fact of life," Peter said. "My job is bigger because, as everyone knows, no one can eat just one peanut, but anyone can eat just one small potato."

I couldn't help wondering how a small-potato farmer might react to Peter's opinion, so I drove out into the country and stopped at the first sign of a small potato. The farmer behind the sign told me:

"I really resent it when anyone implies that growing small potatoes is chicken feed compared to running a peanut stand."

Chicken feed? Before I could find a chicken feed manufacturer to get his reaction to what the small-potato farmer said about him, my car ran out of gas because it was equipped with government regulations. That reminded me of Lee Iacocca, so I hitchhiked back into town to resume my conversation with Peter, the peanut-stand operator. I wanted to ask him about special bonds.

In full-page newspaper ads, Iacocca said that thanks to the Chrysler loan

guarantee, "a special bond has been created between the American people and one of its major corporations."

"If taxpayers co-signed a \$1.5 billion loan to keep my peanut stand operating, there would be a special bond between us," Peter explained. "People will buy only so many peanuts, no matter who is selling them. They would buy all their peanuts from me to help me stay in business and improve their chances of not losing \$1.5 billion. If my business went bust, taxpayers would not only lose dough, they would have to take over running the peanut stand, which is no small potatoes."

I pointed out that such a situation would be tough on the operators of peanut stands that didn't have a special bond with taxpayers. They could lose a lot of sales if everybody bought Peter's peanuts because they had co-signed Peter's note at the bank.

That special bond could cost Peter's competitors millions of dollars. That's not chicken feed.

"That's peanuts," Peter said. "But it could be worse. It could be Fords and Chevrolets."

Looking good

The search for ways to enhance the hair has gone on a lot longer than many people realize. Prehistoric primitives plastered their hair with clay and tied trophies and fadges to it to represent their feats and qualities and to "improve" their looks.

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