

The Perfect Summer Job For A Child

BY TOBIN BARNES

Rocky thought it'd be a good summer job for me. He was more than right. It was perfect. And it would continue to be perfect for four summers when I was a kid. But I didn't know it yet.

Rocky, a local car dealer, and my old man were buddies. They'd known each other from boyhood. My old man liked Rocky because Rocky remembered when my old man was a great athlete even though everyone else had forgotten or never cared.

My old man also liked Rocky because he was a BSer just like him. Neither could out-BS the other no matter how much they tried. And, man, they tried. But it was a draw, except in one area.

My old man would drop in at Rocky's office on a whim, and they'd go at it...verbally. It'd be thick and heavy, and it'd be about everything, whether they knew anything about it or not. I'd sit there amazed, dazzled at their total lack of regard for facts.

Only advantage one had over the other that I could ever see was that sometimes my old man would end up driving off Rocky's lot with a new car. My old man always thought he was getting a deal, and Rocky always knew he wasn't.

Gotta admit, though, Rocky did steer my old man into the best deal of his life. Talked him into leasing a motel. That's when my old man was quitting his latest job, so he was desperate, didn't know what to do. Didn't have any money to do anything other than look for another job.

Rocky said he ought to lease this motel. The motel was owned by Rocky's old man's corporation. Rocky's old man was loaded, but he needed someone to take on a motel.

Now my old man at the front desk of a motel wasn't a picture you'd envision if you knew him. He was a big, burly, barrel-chested, former pro football player with a buzz haircut and usually a day or two's growth of beard, who sported bibbed, striped, Osh Kosh B'Gosh overalls and a white t-shirt. Sometimes, on a hot day, he didn't wear the t-shirt.

My old man standing at the counter of a junk yard with a mangle, nicked-up, wild-eyed dog at his feet would have made sense. My old man



Barnes

charming guests at the front desk of a motel three blocks north of "The World's Only Corn Palace"? Not so much.

But, huh, it worked. Turned out that traveling salesman (no joke coming here) liked to BS, too. Who would have thought? And it also worked because my mom was there to handle the details.

I was only seven at the time, but that was the beginning of my work-a-day-world. There would be many chores I would perform around the place.

For example, a box of printed hand-bills advertising the motel had been left in the office. My old man thought they shouldn't go to waste, so he had me take a goody stack every day three blocks south to "The World's Only Corn Palace" and put them under the windshield wipers of tourist cars.

It was an ignominious job for a shy kid. I soon discovered that travelers didn't necessarily want some strange little kid putting stuff on their cars. But although I got shooed away plenty, I'm sure there was a tourist or two who upon reading the hand-bill said, "Gee, Marge, now that we've enjoyed looking at the world's only corn palace so much, let's drive three blocks north to this fine motel."

But only a tourist or two. Thankfully, there wasn't enough evidence to justify the cost of another printing, so this excruciatingly painful introduction to the world of work mercifully ended.

Blessed, little, parochially instructed innocent that I was, it never occurred to me that I could have just as well tossed that stack of ads every day, waited an hour or two somewhere enjoyable, and then showed up back at the motel afterwards.

Nope, I was destined to be a truthful, respectful, and responsible worker there at the motel and in my future perfect summer job that I will surely get to next time. But, then, truthfully and respectfully? Maybe not.

Tobin Barnes, a high school English teacher, gets his skewed viewpoints of life from staring too much at Crow Peak, which looms above his home a few miles outside Spearfish.

SDYC Explores The Challenges And Effects Of Poverty On Youth

VERMILLION — The South Dakota Youth Congress (SDYC) under the Chiesman Center for Democracy, W.O. Farber Center, and the USD School of Law will host a Poverty Simulation on July 28, running from 1:30-3:45 p.m. at the University of South Dakota, School of Law.

College students and adults are invited to participate with youth from around the state in this simulation. This year's topic for SDYC is "The Challenges and Effects of Poverty on Youth." Student leaders will have the opportunity to discuss the issue and how it impacts their lives, community and state. They will express their thoughts in a roundtable format focusing on deliberation and learning how to come to consensus about each issue discussed. Youth will make recommendations to state and national leaders regarding their ideas on important public policy issues related to poverty in South Dakota.

The poverty simulation learning tool has been created as a way to help people understand the realities of poverty. During a simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families. Some are TANF recipients, some are disabled, and some are senior citizens on Social Security. They have the stressful task of providing for basic necessities and shelter on a limited budget during the course of four 15-minute "weeks." They interact with human service agencies, gro-

cers, pawnbrokers, bill collectors, job interviewer, police officers and others.

Although play money is used, Poverty Simulation is not a game. It is a simulation that enables participants to look at poverty from a variety of angles and then to recognize and discuss the potential for change within their local communities. The simulation was designed to sensitize those who frequently deal with low-income families, as well as to create a broader awareness of the realities of poverty among policymakers, community leaders and others. The simulation was created by the Missouri Association for Community Action, has been made available by the Community Development Division of the City of Rapid City.

For more information, contact DeVee Dietz at 605-341-4311 or e-mail ddietz@chiesman.org by Friday, July 16.

Delving Further Into Monitoring Devices

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI

TOM: A few weeks ago, we answered a question from Blair, the mother of a 16-year-old girl, who wanted to find a device that would help her keep track of her "spirited" daughter's driving.

RAY: We suggested a convent. **TOM:** We actually suggested one of the Global Positioning System (GPS)-based black boxes that can track a driver's speed and aggressiveness, and report violations to a parent instantly by e-mail or text message.

RAY: These devices are called Event Data Recorders (EDRs), and there are a number of them on the market.

TOM: But driving fast isn't the only danger to new drivers. Cell phones provide a whole new smorgasbord of ways to crash a car. There's the distraction of conversations, and even worse, the sending and reading of text messages, which multiplies the risk of an accident many times over.

RAY: Well, now there are cell-phone applications that you can install on your kid's (or parent's, or spouse's) phone to cut down on these distractions.

TOM: They all work pretty much the same way. They use the phone's GPS to



CLICK & CLACK

determine when the phone is moving faster than walking speed. Then, it presumes, you're driving.

RAY: Of course, if you're riding the school bus, you're out of luck. But nothing's perfect, right?

TOM: Once the application senses that you're moving at vehicle speed, it shuts down some or all aspects of the phone. One app might turn the whole phone into a brick.

Another app blocks texting. One is highly customizable.

RAY: In all cases, once the car is stopped for a certain amount of time, the phone is released again to fully function for the user.

TOM: A few of these apps have override systems so that, presumably, a passenger can program in some numbers and then text and chat while the driver pays full attention to the road. Of course, teenagers will figure out how to scam that one in no time.

RAY: They all allow you to dial 911 any-time, and allow certain "emergency numbers," like parents' numbers, to get through under all conditions.

TOM: They're not perfect, but they're worth a look. Their names are iZip, CellSafety, ZoomSafer and TXTBlocker.

Used cars can be a great bargain, and reliable, too! Find out why by ordering Tom and Ray's pamphlet "How to Buy a Great Used Car. Secrets Only Your Mechanic Knows." Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Used Car, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk Web site at www.cartalk.com.

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Deadline Extended For Eligible Homebuyer Credit Purchases

WASHINGTON — Eligible taxpayers who contracted to buy a home, qualifying for the first-time homebuyer credit, before the end of April now have until Sept. 30, 2010 to close the deal, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

The Homebuyer Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010, signed by the President July 2, extended the closing deadline from June 30 to Sept. 30 for any eligible homebuyer who entered into a binding purchase contract on or before April 30 to close on the purchase of the home on or before June 30, 2010. The new law addresses concerns that many homebuyers might be unable to meet the original June 30 closing deadline.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that special filing and documentation requirements apply to anyone claiming the homebuyer credit. To avoid refund delays, those who entered into a purchase contract on or before April 30, but closed after that date, should attach to their return a copy of the pages from

the signed contract showing all parties' names and signatures if required by local law, the property address, the purchase price, and the date of the contract.

Besides filling out Form 5405 (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/5405.pdf>), First-Time Homebuyer Credit and Repayment of the Credit, all eligible homebuyers must also include with their return one of the following documents:

- A copy of the settlement statement showing all parties' names and signatures if required by local law, property address, sales price, and date of purchase. Normally, this is the properly executed Form HUD-1, Settlement Statement.

- For mobile home purchasers who are unable to get a settlement statement, a copy of the executed retail sales contract showing all parties' names and signatures, property address, purchase price and date of purchase.

- For a newly constructed home where a settlement statement is not available, a copy of

the certificate of occupancy showing the owner's name, property address and date of the certificate.

Besides providing a tax benefit to first-time homebuyers and purchasers who haven't owned homes in recent years, the law allows a long-time resident of the same main home to claim the credit if they purchase a new principal residence. To qualify, eligible taxpayers must show that they lived in their old homes for a five-consecutive-year period during the eight-year period ending on the purchase date of the new home.

Homebuyers claiming this credit can avoid refund delays by attaching documentation covering the five-consecutive-year period:

- Form 1098, Mortgage Interest Statement, or substitute mortgage interest statements,
- Property tax records or
- Homeowner's insurance records.

There are three options for claiming the credit on a qualifying 2010 purchase:

- If a 2009 return has not yet been filed, claim it on Form 1040 for tax-year 2009. Though these returns cannot be filed electronically, taxpayers can still use IRS Free File

(<http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,id=118986,00.html>) to prepare their return. The returns must be printed out and sent to the IRS, along with all required documentation. The IRS urges taxpayers claiming refunds to choose direct deposit.

- If a 2009 return has already been filed, claim it on an amended return using Form 1040X.
- Whether or not a 2009 return has been filed, wait until next year and claim it on a 2010 Form 1040.

More details on claiming the credit can be found in the instructions

(<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/5405.pdf>) to Form 5405, as well as on the First-Time Homebuyer Credit page (<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,id=204671,00.html>) on IRS.gov.

RIVERS

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steady through the weekend before dropping about a half foot a day by midweek.

"Assuming we don't get any more big rains and that forecast holds true, 10 days from now we should be in pretty good shape there," Hofer said.

This week, the water level at the Lake Francis Case reservoir dropped out of its exclusive flood control zone, which encompasses the top several feet of the spillway gate. The storage zone is designed to be used only during extreme flood events.

The Oahe reservoir near Pierre remains in its exclusive flood control zone, but every boat ramp is open for recreation, Hofer said.

Lake Oahe was at 1,617.4 feet above sea level on Friday, which is about 10 feet above its flood pool and is more than 4 feet higher than it was last year at this time.

"The lake is brim full, and that is a good thing in terms of boat ramps and boating," Hofer said. "There is a little bit of shoreline erosion issues that this high water will create, but those are kind of long-term issues we'll have to address."

Releases averaged 19,700 cubic feet per second during

June and will average 22,400 cubic feet per second in July to evacuate water from the exclusive flood control zone. Higher releases will continue throughout the summer to help position Oahe to capture next year's spring runoff, the corps said.

The Oahe's water level is expected to drop about a foot in July, ending the month near elevation 1616.2 feet, 12.4 feet above average for this time of the year.

Garrison reservoir in North Dakota rose 6.7 feet in June, ending at an elevation of 1,847.7 feet. The reservoir is expected to climb 3.5 feet in July, cresting near 1851.2 feet, 11.9 feet above normal.

The corps expects the reservoir to enter its exclusive flood control zone by the middle of next week, Farhat said.

Fort Peck reservoir in Montana rose nearly 6 feet in June, ending at an elevation of 2,233.3 feet. The reservoir will rise about 2 feet in July, ending at about 2.7 feet above normal.

The corps said the higher releases will provide additional flow support for the commercial navigation season, which has been extended 10 days for the first time since 1999.

The new closing dates are: Dec. 2 for Sioux City, Iowa; Dec. 4 for Omaha, Neb.; Dec. 5 for Nebraska City, Neb.; Dec. 7 for Kansas City and Dec. 11 for the mouth of the Missouri near St. Louis.

CHINA

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to place teachers in American schools to help teach the Chinese language and culture. Currently, more than 4,000 schools in the U.S. offer Chinese language courses.

While Gertsema admits he has no doubts that the tour only saw the best of the best in terms of schools and universities, he still found the trip very educational and eye opening.

"When we arrived, they split us into several groups and then each group would visit a separate province of the country," he said. "We toured the Henan province. We went to Tiananmen Square. We went to the Great Wall of China. Everything we saw was on such a large scale, it is hard to describe."

Gertsema said one of the more striking aspects of being in China for him was the sheer number of people and vehicles.

"Drivers from around here would never survive," he said. "(The Chinese) just go wherever there is a space — cars, buses, bikes — they will all be fighting for a space I would not think to try to drive in."

Another difference that he noted was the way agriculture was done.

"If there is an available spot of land, they are farming it," Gertsema said. "But, I don't recall seeing one large piece of equipment. I don't think I saw a tractor while I was there."

Taking what he learned while visiting the country will be a challenge that Gertsema is excited to face.

"If I had my way, (Yankton School District) would offer Chinese, German, Spanish — every foreign language we could," Gertsema said. "The country of China is just massive. They have a huge number of people, and as we move on, we are going to be dealing with them in a global economy more and more. It just makes sense to learn about their culture and language."

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