

# Editorial

## From the Other Side

There comes a time when all good things must end.

The experts even say that sometime -- way, way, way off, the world, as we know it, will end. But then who cares.

I've got other problems.

If there is one thing people have come to know about me it's my Jeep. It's a conversation point. It's how people have known where I am. They just see the Jeep and know that I have to be somewhere very close.

It's black -- spray canned in my driveway with the wind blowing toward the woods for safety. It's old, vintage early '80's when cars were still cars and men were proud of them.

It also has more holes in it than a piece of very thin Swiss Cheese. "The Jeep," as it became known, was a car I could drive into the depths of Philadelphia -- or Reading -- and really know that



By Fred G. Phillips

no self-respecting car thief would soil his (or her) hands on it trying to steal it.

They would have been laughed out of the car thief union.

It was the one car that I owned where I could ride down the road and watch the pavement fly by underneath.

I was actually doing that one day and saw green leaves all over a section of road. The leaves turned out to be \$1, \$5 and \$10 bills. It wasn't around here, so don't call with a belated claim.

Besides, I used the money to buy putty and fill a couple of holes. It was a treat for "The Jeep."

The doors rattled when I put them on, and when it rained it rained just as hard inside as outside because the water laughed at the glass and rubber seals.

It leaked oil everywhere. And steering fluid flowed out the front and onto parking lot bumpers placed all over Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties.

It was a car that would visibly shake if you went above 50.

It, when needed, would start running by just doing a "Fred Flintstone" on it.

Whole generations of kids have asked me to take them driving so as I flew over a hilltop they could become weightless in the back seat. It was almost a right-of-passage to smack your head on Uncle Fred's Jeep roof. It was a badge of honor to be able to say you survived driving with the CJ-7.

But, finally, my mechanic, a man with no sense of humor except when he looked at my Jeep, said he would no longer inspect "The Jeep", something had to be done.

The God of Jeeps Past forgive me. I bought a semi-new truck.

I wanted a Jeep. I really wanted a new Jeep. But I bought a Dodge Ram that is so big my wife has to bring a step-ladder or be lowered from a tree branch just to get in.

My mother-in-law can't get in it at all and my wife's aunt, a really sweet woman now in her 80's, surprised me by practically leaping into the cab from the sidewalk.

It was a good deal. But, as I looked at the Jeep sitting in the driveway, waiting for the rust to finish its job, I wondered why not a third life for the car. After all, 120,000 miles (more or less) isn't that bad for a Jeep.

It still had life even though one summer it was lost under water for several days (I was told). And even though several large pieces of one side are in such a case of advanced rust that wind passes through the metal.

It had survived my oldest son, barely.

When the kid who installed the satellite television system on my roof recently looked at my Jeep -- it looked at him. It was pure love at first sight. It's a thing guys understand and women just shake

their heads at.

He saw something to fix up and turn into a "mudder."

I'm sure I saw someone young who could fight the rust, patch the holes, plug a few leaks, and go off to the races.

You can't keep a good Jeep down.

The last time I saw my Jeep, and it will always be MY Jeep, was as the kid proudly drove his "new" car away. He knew there was only one guarantee -- that it would coast to the end of the driveway.

But as it drove away, I felt a little sad.

People knew that car. Despite everything that car had hutzpah!

I could see them staring and they would always ask -- "is THAT your car?"

I would say, "Why yes it is, it's an early antique."

They would laugh, but when the snow was high, or the creeks overflowing, I would always be there waiting for everyone else, thanks to the old Jeep.

I'll miss it.

But then it has gone on to a better life.

# Opinion

## Regionalization?

There are some things that just us common folk may never be able to understand.

Like how the Montgomery County Commissioner Chairman stays in office or the Berks County Commissioner Chairman seems to stay a nice guy despite it all?

Or how some area local governments don't seem to grasp the basics.

Boyertown's town council tries, but over the last few months we are sure a few of the members would rather have been at home watching reruns of the Dukes of Hazard than sitting at a borough council meeting.

All of the talk and then the final action of the borough leaving the Boyertown Area Communications Center has served one major purpose. Maybe even fanned the flames a little.

The small fire that is burning a little brighter is -- regionalization of the local police departments.

Thanks to the Colebrookdale District, the Boyertown area is half way to regionalization already.

Thanks to Boyertown, it is evident that every little municipality does not need to have its own police force.

No one needs a bunch of chiefs and just a few Indians.

Maybe it's time that Larry Mauger become chief of a regional force and the other chiefs become lieutenants. No cuts in pay, just better operations, better purchasing and a whole lot of savings in other areas.

Maybe it's time to take the police departments out of the local political arena and make them do what they are supposed to do.

The plan really isn't hard. Just make the new regional force fall under the jurisdictional lines of District Justice Mike Hartman. A "police committee" could oversee things with a representative from each member-municipality.

And just for added fun, Earl Township would have to join.

We wish the township citizens well with their crime watch efforts. We will support them.

But crime watch groups rarely work, especially when it takes the State Police 15 minutes to an hour to respond. They rarely work because people grow tired or some miscreant mouths off to a member and the member tries to teach him some manners.

It happens, hopefully it will not happen here. Earl Township people are pretty savvy, so our concern is probably worthless.

But, like the TV program said, "Be careful out there!"

## Great weekend ahead!

This is the time of year when there is something going on everywhere, all at once.

Take this weekend.

You've got the Scottish Festival, firemen's games, open houses, more car shows, the Hay Creek Festival, and heaven knows how many church gatherings, dinners, chicken/ox/pig/whatever roasts.

Isn't it great!

Where else can you go from guys dancing in funny clothes to men and women dressed up in ancient (and maybe funny) clothes working with old machinery.

Despite the kidding, whether your thing is yard sales or learning Celtic dance or how to make wagon wheels -- this is your weekend.

It's all listed for you inside, or it's been listed, so there's no acceptable excuses for not going somewhere and doing something.

Go, have a good time, put on a kilt and flounce through Green Lane Park Saturday and Sunday, or walk through history at Hay Creek. Stop by Frederick Mennonite for a tour or pick any of a dozen other things to do.

The editorial board of the *Boyertown Area Times* welcomes input from its readers on issues of local interest, but we encourage all letter writers to adhere to certain basic codes of conduct.

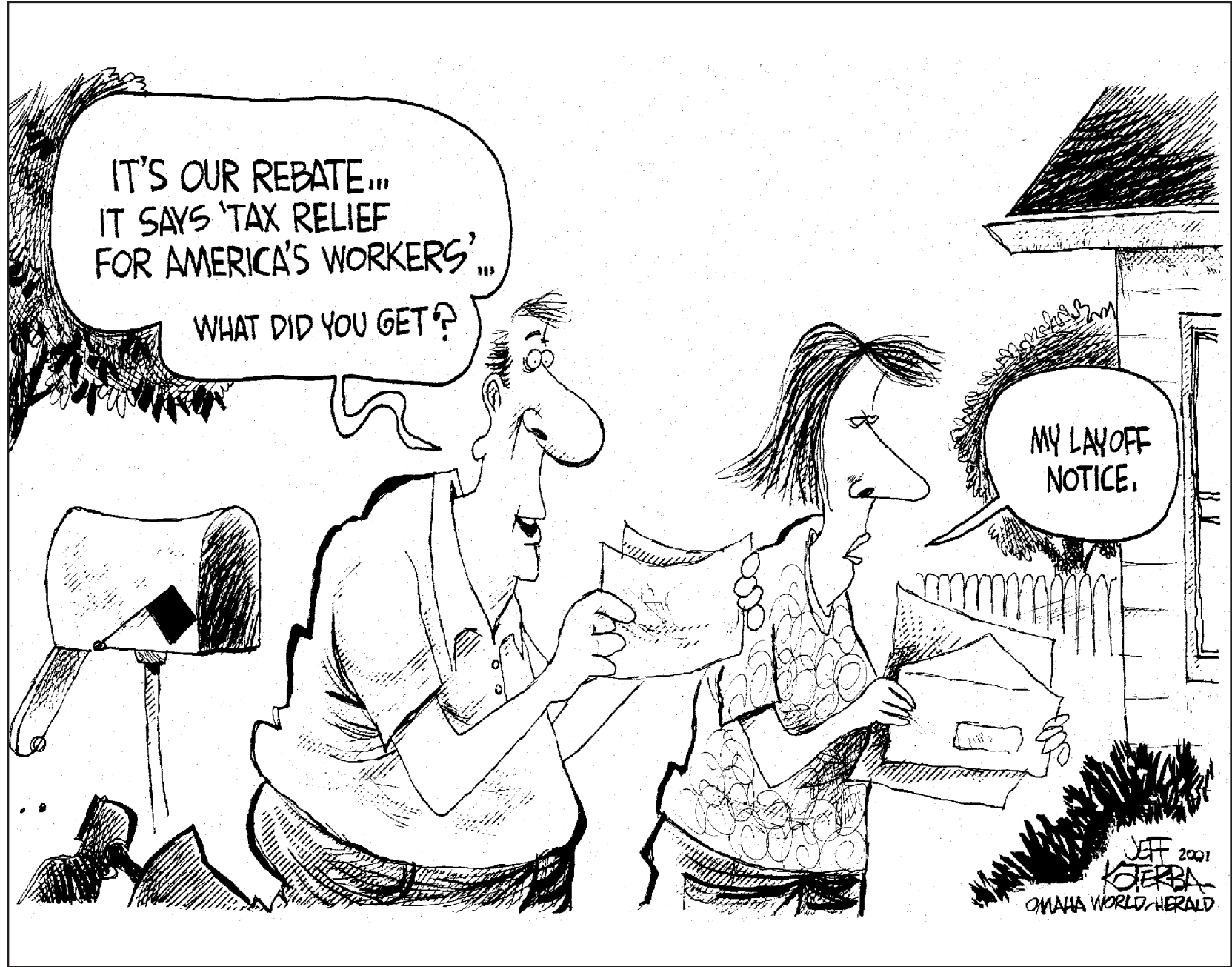
Chief among those tenets is the avoidance of personal attacks on non-elected officials. The public decisions of school board members and municipal representatives is open to scrutiny and criticism but private citizens will not be subjected to personal ridicule.

Attacks on private citizens will be omitted from letters to the editor. In the case of a letter composed solely of attacks, the letter will be resubmitted to the writer for changes.

Send letters to: *The Boyertown Area Times*, P.O. Box 565, 124 N. Chestnut St. Boyertown PA 19512-2000.

Letters must include the writer's signature, address and telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published.

## Farewell, old friend



## Adams' Apples

As I've aged, I'm happy to say that I have been pretty healthy. I feel fortunate that I do not suffer from the distressful physical ailments of some of the old shipmates that I correspond with over the years.

My only problem has been the case of Tinnitus (so-called ringing-in-the-ears), and some loss of hearing in my left ear.

However, recently I experienced a scary situation.

As I was pulling our car out of my driveway, I stopped abruptly. "Now what?", my wife blurted.

"I don't know", I answered. "All of a sudden something is in my eye." I rubbed it, and it was still there. "What's going on here?", I thought.

Thinking it would go away, I chose to ignore it for the moment.

NO WAY DID IT GO AWAY. It was all new to me. It was a sort of drifting (side to side) thread in my eye that I could only see peripherally. It appeared as a dry blood colored perception.

"What are you going to do about it?", my anxious better-half asked.

"I'll wait a week, maybe it will go away." But, it didn't go away. Call the eye doctor.

What followed was something I did not care to hear. The doctor's receptionist offered an appointment three weeks down the road.

Get outa here !!

When I protested, she put the doc's nurse on the phone. "Can you come in right away?"...and in I went, sweat shirt, shorts and all. (come as you are).

The doctor asked me if I ever had this "hair-in-my-eyes" prob-

## Charles Adams Jr.

lem before. I told him, "Yes, when I was a teenager, then I got a haircut." Oye!

He said, "And now you have handlebar eyebrows." Oye-oye!

The upshot?: The "thread" moving at random in my right eye is known in eye-doctor circles as a "floater." It's not new to them.

"What can be done doctor?"

"NOTHING!"

The prognosis? (love that word):

The eye exam established the fact that I need cataracts removed from both eyes, and have the cloudy lens replaced by clear artificial lens and then, new glasses.

However, first I must get a physical exam from my regular doctor, then if I pass that, the eye surgery.

All that is ahead of me. Don't ask about my "operation" unless you have time to read a book.

My eye doctor is a young guy, willing to ease my agitation with conversation.

Some of his chitchat went like this: He told me of a slightly tipsy patient that complained of blurred vision. He said he told him to "start drinking weaker drinks."

Another guy, suffering the

blurred vision, said "Doc, the world looks fuzzy to me."

Doc asked him, "How do you know the world isn't fuzzy?"

I had to get in my 2c. I told him, "Doc, I was a ship's optician in the navy. I scraped the eyes out of potatoes in the galley."

O.K., to a lot of people the cataract operation is no big deal. It's a 98% successful operation. I just hope I'm not in the 2%.

The "floater" in my eye is "a big deal" to me. It looks like I will have to get used to it the way I had to get used to the sounds in my ear. As they say, "What can't be cured, must be endured." Oh my!

Getting old Charlie me boy?

There is an alternative you

know. Life is:

A one-way street.

A shadowy and winding road.

A long headache on a noisy highway.

A dusty freeway with a detour.

Glad to be on the straight, albeit narrow path down this road-of-life.

I'll try to keep my eyes open and my mouth shut. No complaints. (Just what the doctor ordered).

Will keep you posted with a sequel. (should you care).

Comment: T281@AOL.COM.

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