



NOW WHAT

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JUST SAYING!

Since I have now sold the company and do not write their newsletter any longer, I have decided to do a personal newsletter, once in a while, just for the fun of writing and as means of getting out general information Linda and I and our friends have found helpful and maybe even humorous. After discussions with friends at a recent gathering, the name "The Crapper Chronicles" seemed to be a favorite. Wine was, however, involved; but for now that will be the name.

This is the tenth newsletter of my retirement years. I am archiving all newsletters on my website at www.TompkinsPublishing.com.

"So, I Was Talking to My Buddy Jack"

The other day out walking, Jack the dog and I were talking about another dumb scientific 'study' one of us had seen. This one purported to say if you never eat bacon or drink any alcohol you have a 40% better chance of not getting cancer. Really! Both of us wonder what the science was here. What do these "research" people do: dream up a problem to solve, get the all important 'grant,' slam together a bunch of statistics, get it published, go collect their PHD; and leave the rest of us to pick up the pieces?

Not a word in the study about the background of the people tested. Were the ones studied who drank alcohol and ate bacon also morbidly obese? Were the ones who used alcohol and ate bacon involved in any physical exercise or were they sedentary? What were the ages of the alcohol-bacon eating subjects? Were the ones who did not drink alcohol or eat bacon fit and trim, young and not overweight? Who in hell knows. Jack brought up the fact that possibly this study was done by the same folks who did the now infamous and largely discredited: "EGGS ARE BAD FOR YOU" study of a few years ago.

It seems if you look hard enough there is a "study" which shows virtually ANY food is unhealthy, but on a positive note here is a statistic that is real: Just in my short 68 year lifetime the average lifespan of people in the United States has gone up around 30%. After I was done ranting about more BS statistics, Jack looked up and said: "since dogs don't use alcohol but do eat bacon, does that mean I have at least a 20% less chance of not getting cancer?" I told him I did not know but mentioned I had seen yet another "study" done recently that proclaims people who have a messy desk, swear, and drink wine; quite commonly tend to have higher IQ's. We feel we are both winners! Bon Appetite!!



Airline Woes Turn Into Political Statement



Seems there was an American Airlines flight where the toilets were stopped up, on a flight to Hawaii a month or so ago. Reason for the problem was someone flushed a diaper down the toilet and plugged the entire system up. Social media and the news were all over the "story" and the airline was busy falling all over themselves "apologizing." I am curious: How in hell is this the Airline's fault? How about the nitwit who, in spite of plac-

ards telling you not to, flushed a diaper down the toilet? How about the fact there was no way in hell the plane could land in the middle of the Pacific Ocean so the poor passengers could relieve themselves?

Too bad they didn't find out who flushed the diaper down the toilet and trash them all over the internet. Maybe the news should look for something other than the airlines and President Trump to beat up. Funny they don't investigate how a small group of nursing home escapees who have been in Washington waaaaay too long, combined with a group of largely uneducated movie stars and entertainers, want to tell the rest of us how to live while they are turning the Democratic party into the Socialist Party. C'mon reporters, there's got to be a story there somewhere.

Just a Thought:

With all the media hype over candidates running for office who are now proclaiming themselves as "Democratic Socialists," I was wondering: Have you ever seen, heard of, or been a witness to anyone trying to "escape" or "flee" or "abandon" a Capitalistic country in an attempt to seek asylum in a Socialist country? Me neither. People, if it looks like horse manure, smells like horse manure, and tastes like horse manure, you can call it ice cream all you want; it is still horse manure. You just can't put enough lipstick on the "socialist" pig to make it work. Don't believe me? Witness the millions of murdered people under socialist regimes, or how about the millions more in impoverished nations such as North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela. Remember, we did not impoverish these folks, Socialism did.



The Jack Knife



Up in our country, in the fall of the year, they hold events in the major towns called gun shows. These events consist of a group of gun and collectible enthusiasts who get together and have a large rummage sale. Of course, the main items are guns, knives, bullets, leather goods, gun cases, shell cases, and all of the attendant material that gun bugs like. I, along with many other people, enjoy going to these events to smell the gun oil and look at all of the fine grown-up toys. It was while I was at a gun show a couple of years ago that I became involved in a chain of events that led me to put this story together.

As I said, I was at a gun show, and while I was there, I stopped at a friend's booth. He was displaying his guns for sale, and his small boy was displaying a case of knives that he had for sale. These knives were the folding, one-bladed, jack-knife type and were of very good quality, such good quality that they were about \$75 each. I'd never paid that much for a knife, but they were excellent, and it is always nice to be able to help a young entrepreneur feel successful. So I handed over the cash and became the proud owner of a Spyderco jackknife with a G-2 stainless blade. I was showing it to everyone for some time, until the novelty wore off. For a couple of years, the knife and I were constant companions. Then one day when I went to get dressed, I couldn't find the Spyderco: my knife was lost.

As luck would have it, the season was fall and there was another gun show scheduled in our town. So on the appointed day, I hustled down to spend another \$75. I had become attached to the aforementioned knife, and I was determined to buy another one just like it. However, when I came to my friend's booth, his son wasn't there; he told me his son had decided not to be in the knife business anymore. So I walked to every booth at the show to see if I could find a new knife: no luck. Someone did tell me that a certain sporting goods store in town might have the model I wished, so I jumped in my pickup and went there. The first problem I had was that it was just before Christmas, and of course the place was packed. I was pushed and shoved until finally I stood before the knife display. Sure enough, there along with a bunch of other brands was the Spyderco I sought. But wait, the price here was \$130. Shocked at the cost, I carefully looked over the other knives as well. Eventually I saw a very nice-looking Boker for \$55, which I thought would take good care of me.

Now, to get a clerk to open the case: this was not easy; as mentioned before, the store was very busy and filled with people. Finally I was able to locate a clerk, who unlocked the case and handed me the Boker. As he did so, he said, "You know, there's a ceramic blade on that knife. They're very expensive." He further elaborated that the knife kept its edge forever, but he cautioned me that the blade was very brittle. I agreed that it was a fine knife, and was beginning to think the \$55 was quite a bargain. Anyway, I took my find and made my way through the crowd to get in line at a checkout counter. After standing in line for another long length of time, I got up to the nice college girl who was making extra Christmas money being a checkout clerk. She rang up the sale and said, "That will be \$211." As I now know, Boker makes many knives, some with and some without ceramic blades. Naturally the \$55 Boker I thought I was buying was the one without the ceramic blade. You know, there are so many occasions in our lives when we should walk away from a deal. But just like the deer in the headlights, we get mesmerized by the moment, or we don't want to look foolish or lose face. Or maybe we're just tired at the time, so we roll over and do the deal.

So there I was with a new ceramic-blade, titanium-handled, go-fast, deluxe jackknife. Silly me, who a few short minutes before had thought that \$130 was an outrageous price for a knife, I was now the owner of one at the unheard-of price of \$211! Of course, the knife did fit my pocket nicely, and it did have a ceramic blade. Also, nobody else I knew had one. The justification process was obviously at work. Before I knew it, I was showing it to people and actually telling a few close friends how much it cost. I now had \$286 tied up in knives; none-the-less, I did have a ceramic-bladed jackknife.

Things went on this way for several months, and the novelty of owning a ceramic jackknife gradually began to wear off. Then in the spring I was out trimming trees. I had a fine fire going out in the pasture burning up the branches, and was enjoying a nice day. My trouble started when I was cutting up a final branch and saw a length of baler twine caught in it. I was thinking the chain saw would surely slice right through the twine, but it was plastic and, in an instant the twine, had been drawn into the saw clutch and locked it up tight. Not to worry, I was done cutting anyway, I went to the house, got a couple of beers, and sat down to clear the saw. The day was warm and sunny, and I was in a good mood. So after having a beer, instead of getting angry, I just sat down in the loader bucket, took the saw apart, and started to cut the twine out of my clutch with my deluxe, recently new, ceramic jackknife. I know as the work progressed that somewhere in the recess of my mind, the warning of the store clerk was in my head: "It's a fine knife. Edge stays sharp forever, but remember, the blade is very brittle."

As I worked, I carefully refrained from prying or bending the blade. And true to its fine heritage, the knife was slicing effortlessly the twine out of the clutch. Finally, there was only one small piece of twine left. It was an insignificant little piece, down in one of the cogs of the chain gear that maybe could have even been left. But no, I had to get it out. I stuck the blade in, gave it just the slightest tweak and ping, the blade, true to the warning, broke. I just sat there and stared. I couldn't have done it. It had to be a mistake. But it was not a mistake; the tip of the blade was gone, and my beautiful Boker was a bird with a broken wing. For several weeks I carried the knife, but it just wasn't the same. I finally put it away in my desk drawer and began carrying an old two-bladed jackknife that was actually more useful, but had probably only cost \$5. I felt abandoned and cheap.

The story should probably end here, but as things go, this story was far from over. I found myself in Minneapolis a few months later, and lo and behold, walking through a giant shopping mall, I found myself in front of The House of Blades. My wife was more than happy to leave me there while she went into a women's store. Connoisseur of knives that I now was, I began looking over the wares. Imagine my delight when there, on the second shelf, was a Spyderco jackknife with the G-2 stainless steel blade. It was just like the original \$75 knife I had bought that started me off in the world of fancy jackknives. I was elated, I was back in the program! With my back straightened up, my eyes brightened, and a happy voice, I said to the clerk, "I'll take the Spyderco." He agreed that I had made an excellent choice and said, "That will be \$130." Of course I had been hoping for the \$75, but how could I let a few bucks stand between that fine knife and myself? No way: I dug for a Franklin and change and was once more a man carrying a knife of distinction. The fact that I was now into the program for \$416 was dust in the wind. I was happy.

Spring's breezes gave way to hot summer days, and summer became fall. Soon the cold gusts of winter came our way, and my Spyderco and I were still together. Many times I felt in my pocket for the cool steel of its handle. Many times we cut things together, and friends marveled at this fine tool. Yet, as it seems good things are all doomed to disaster, so too was this splendid relationship. I had been forbidden by my wife to wear polyester pants, so I was toggled out instead in that terrific yuppie product called Dockers: excellent wear, except for the large pockets that let things fall out. Sure enough, one day Spyderco disappeared. I absolutely could not believe it, not again! I was out \$416, and my pocket was empty once more. It was too much. After grieving a few days, I went back to the sporting goods store where I had purchased my original ceramic-bladed Boker and bought another knife, not a ceramic Boker this time, not a G-2 stainless-blade Spyderco, but a 440 stainless-blade Boker for the workable price of \$55. Maybe it wasn't in the same class as the other two, but far from the cheap, practical, two-blade standby I had in reserve. Now with a grand total of \$471 invested, I again was a man with a beautiful blade. This Boker and I got along well, and I still have the knife to this day.

Along the way, I got to thinking that maybe if I penned an especially good letter and sent it to Boker, they might just fix my broken ceramic blade. So off went the letter and the wounded knife to the powers-that-be at Boker. Within a few weeks they sent me my knife back with a brandnew blade, free-of-charge, now I had two fine knives! Life was indeed good. How could things possibly get any better? After finding out how much money I had tied up in knives, my wife decided to buy some new furniture. As we were hauling our old recliner rocker to the dumpster, there, under the frame, sat my original \$75 Spyderco! The circle was complete; the prodigal son had returned. Today this fine blade rests in my pocket. The Boker brothers are in their cases, ready to be called upon if needed. I have bought new pants with tighter pockets as well. The \$471 I've invested in all this cutlery should easily last me a lifetime.

I was at a gun show the other day where I noticed that fountain pens are coming back. I have a ball point pen in my pocket that seems to write forever and only cost me a dollar, but for \$200 and change, I could have a fine writing instrument. I almost bought one but then remembered the wife was talking about remodeling the kitchen. Maybe she should make the first move this time!

Shorts:

Goodbye to Nike: We heartily agree that Nike's new choice of a spokesman has the right to protest. However, we find it impossible to go along with an ad campaign that features a multi-multi million-aire proclaiming to 'have given up everything,' and kneeling in protest when our National Anthem is played. Perhaps he simply doesn't understand that the reason the rest of us stand for this Anthem is to honor not only those who defend our country but those who gave their lives to allow this rich "sports hero" the very freedom to do such a terribly disrespectful thing. We hope this guy's sport and his new sponsor understand our decision to abandon both this sport and this sponsor as well. Our protest is very simple: After canceling our season tickets, we donated all of our Nike gear to the Salvation Army. One of our other friends simply threw anything they had with this brand in the trash. In our lifetime we have 'needed' doctors, firemen, policemen, our military, lawyers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, computer technicians, farmers, ranchers, realtors, oil producers, grocers, pharmacists, pilots, equipment dealers, car dealers and yes, even insurance professionals. But never, not once, have we ever "needed" a professional sports or entertainment celebrity.



Kavanaugh Hearing Thoughts: All I can say about the recent hearings on Judge Kavanaugh is, if based on the criteria that while in the process of adolescent fumbling, while you were attempting to get closer to the opposite sex, you may have acted, talked, or touched someone inappropriately, you are now a "sexual predator;" virtually every man I know has that label. Furthermore, if every female who has ever been the object of this adolescent fumbling is now to be labeled "a survivor," virtually all women I know are "survivors" as well. Is there no limit to the endless bullshit we are forced to watch generated by a political body of self righteous hypocrites, and pushed out to we supposedly ignorant masses by the out of control hysteria machine we call the "media?"

Books for Sale: I still have a few copies of Minot Down Under, the picture book I did on the 2011 Minot flood. If anyone wants a copy I can get one out to you. They are \$40 including postage. Also, Main Street Books in Minot has copies for sale if you just want to stop and pick one up.



Thanks for reading The Crapper Chronicles, and remember, we have our families, our friends, our health, and time... the rest is just smoke and mirrors!

Chuck

THE CRAPPER
MUSE

Golfer's Poem

(Sung to the tune of Mr. Sandman)

Mr. Sandman; Give me a brake.
I'm in the sand trap,
And I need a rake.

Thought I was landin' short, but
I went over.
Now I'm in the trap,
My game is over.

Mr. Sandman, lemme go please.
This sands too hard,
And puttin's a breeze.

I need out of here to keep on
playin',
That's why to you I'm now
Really prayin'.

Mr Sandman, thanks so much;
You let me escape.
But I'm in the rough,

I shoulda took my time, but I
still rushed it.
Now trees are in my way,
I've really muffed it.

Mr Sandman; I'm quitin' the
game
Since I've tried playin' golf,
My lifes not the same.

So thank you, thank you on my
knees,
Mr Sandman,
For shittin' on me.

05/15/98 (apparently after a particularly trying round of golf)