

# The op-ed page

## Ways to help firefighters

The Chronicle-Telegram:

This morning, I was stopped from my household chores by the drone of sirens and heavy equipment, headed toward Westway Gardens. I am always awestruck at the speed used to get here and the ability of these fine dedicated men.

Too little is said about them, for they are off those trucks before they are stopped. They are ready with fire hydrant hookups within seconds. Masked marvels ready for any possibility to protect life, property and possessions.

Winter is coming on and perhaps residents need some fire reminders.

1. Keep those hydrants clear of snow, so that fast hookups can be made.

2. Obtain the free red circles that mark the room of a child, handicapped person or senior citizen, that might have

problems. These can be had through the fire stations

3. Do not hamper the fire department, with too-close sidewalk gawking. Keep children at home or at safe distances from all equipment and hose lines.

4. Remove backyard pets to safer zones as soon as possible so that they are not nipping a fireman, in confused protection attempts.

5. Instruct all family members on fire safety in the home.

These are five simple suggestions, but a great help in case of fire

To the firefighters of Elyria God bless you one and all

Mrs. Dottie Rider  
Elyria

## Standardize our age laws

The Chronicle-Telegram:

Legislation needs to be introduced to standardize legal age. Today at the age of 18, a person is legally an adult. He may get married and have a family, join the armed forces, and vote. He may even be tried as an adult in court.

But this individual is denied the right to drink.

If 18 is too young to be responsible about drinking then maybe it's too young to be married and live on your own, serve your country, or even vote.

If you are old enough to make a decision controlling others' lives, such as voting, you should be able to decide on your own life, such as drinking.

If you were under 18 and got in a car accident which killed someone and you'd been drinking, you would be tried as a juvenile. The reasoning for this is you

were under the legal drinking age so you were not mature enough to be responsible for your actions.

If this same accident occurred to an 18-year-old, he would be tried as an adult. This is not right. Legally he is as irresponsible for his actions as the adolescent, and should be reprimanded in the same manner

The inconsistency of these laws is confusing and doesn't even stop 15 and 16-year-olds from drinking; how will it stop 18-year-olds? Legislatures should combine their ideas and have a standard age in which all these responsibilities and privileges are gained.

Either the drinking age should be lowered to 18, or everything else moved up to 19

Brenda Allsop  
Grafton

## 'Let's take care of our own'

The Chronicle-Telegram:

Sectionalism: Undue concern for a particular section of the country. Isolationism: A national policy advocating freedom from foreign political and economic alliances.

Combine these two concepts and what you produce is this "Let's take care of our own" attitude held by some Americans today.

Many are against the United States supplying aid to underdeveloped nations when that money could be going into Americans' pockets. I am bored with this over-ambitious view. The facts are that we have programs to help our needy and our standard of living is continually increasing.

The Third World nations are at both

geographical and technical disadvantages. Therefore, they have no means to efficiently support over two-thirds of the world's population, especially when producing only one-fifth of the world's food supply.

Isn't it bad enough we pay thousands of American farmers to not produce food? Yes, we have our own problems; yes, we have our own responsibilities, but no, we aren't the only ones on this planet.

My opinion is not altruistic. It is on the basis of logic and reason that I see it a necessity to view our existence as one people and work for the quality and right of everyone's human dignity.

Terence C Poje  
Elyria

## 'Family friend' killed by car

The Chronicle-Telegram:

This letter is addressed to the driver of a red Ford Fairmont:

On Sunday morning, Oct. 28, you were heading south on S. Abbe Road and in front of our house, between University and Chestnut Ridge, you killed our friend, our companion, our little black cocker spaniel.

My children watched their pet die. This is not another "my pet got hit by a car" letter. The dog was not a stray, just roaming around. He accidentally got out from his fenced-in backyard.

He, like almost everyone's pet, was part of the family. Did you have to speed up when you saw him running in the road? I know that you know what you did. You had to hear it, or possibly even feel it, because we heard it inside the house

You didn't even slow down, much less stop. Do you know how guilty you made the child feel that left the gate open? The kids were trying to catch him, to bring him home. Didn't you see or hear the children trying to get their dog?

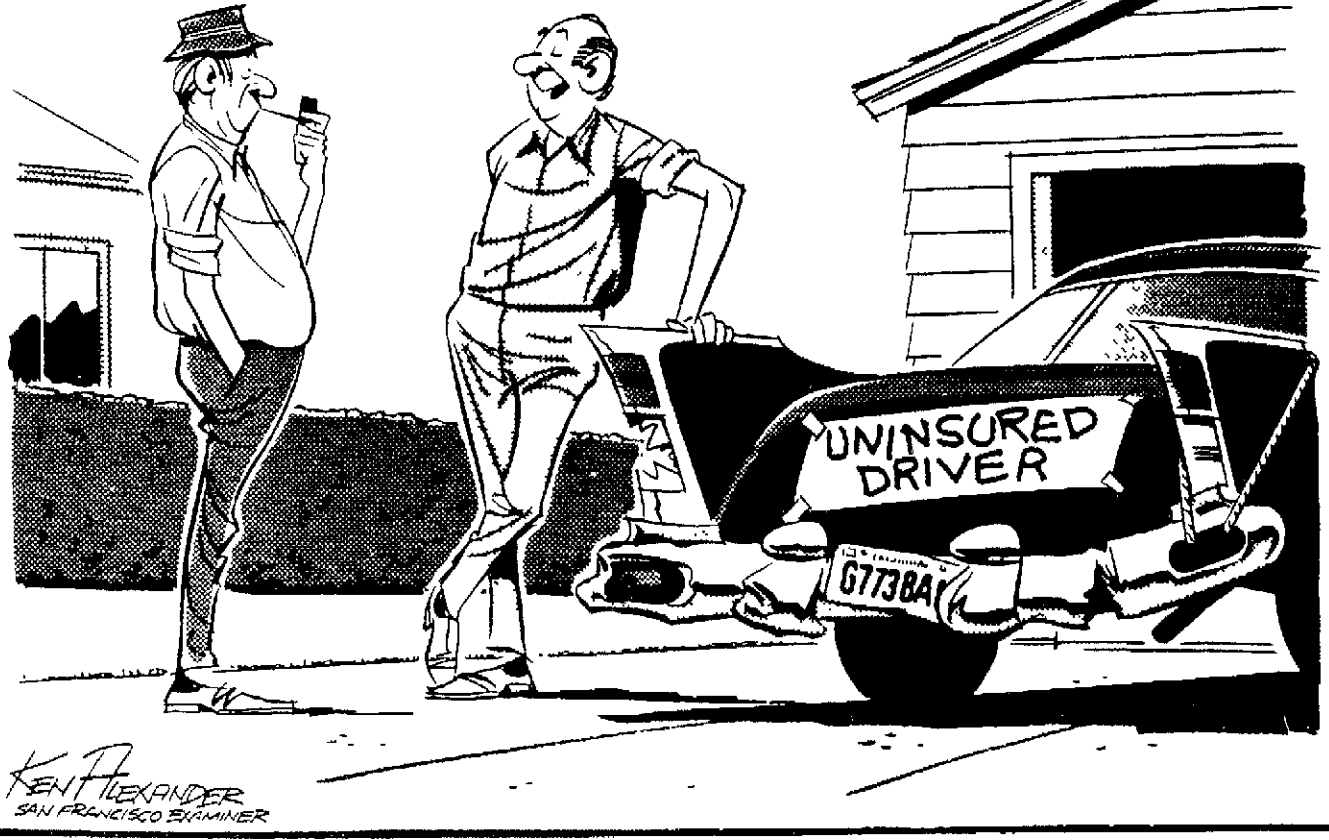
I always wondered how we would handle his death, we loved him so much.

Cindy Vidler  
Elyria

## Rules for letters

Letters on topical subjects are welcomed, but they must include a signature. Too many letters are rejected because, although they contain the writer's name and address as required, they are not signed.

We do not publish addresses and will withhold names only under special circumstances. Letters may be edited, those considered libelous, in poor taste or otherwise objectionable will not be published.



"IT'S NOT TRUE BUT IT MAKES DRIVING A BREEZE... NOBODY'LL GET WITHIN A BLOCK OF ME"

## Ignorance inhibits overseas trade

By Vincent J. Schodolski  
Chicago Tribune

Europe and the ability of the United States to compete effectively in a business world which grows more interrelated every day.

"We are appallingly parochial in our approach to education," said Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation and a former U.S. commissioner of education. "The decline here is a symbol of a myopia and a complacency that I find disturbing. In an interdependent world this ignorance can't be ignored."

DESPITE THE NATIONAL debate on educational reform, Boyer and other senior education officials around the country say this aspect of the problem is being ignored

The roots of the problem are tangled around the post-World War II experience of the United States, a period when the country's economic, political and military dominance of the world was unchallenged.

Add to this the sheer size of the country and its linguistic homogeneity, and you have an atmosphere that many observers believe bred an arrogance toward other nations and eliminated any immediate need for Americans to learn foreign languages or make an effort to understand foreign cultures.

AFTER EUROPE'S RECOVERY from the war was complete and its industries and those of Japan and developing countries in Asia began to be competitive, U.S. education went through a period of radical change, the experts say

During the 1960s, greater academic freedoms in U.S. schools and universities led to reduced requirements in many fields including history and language study.

"There is a deeply ingrained hostility toward teaching something that a student has no immediate need for," said Diane Ravitch, a professor of history at Columbia University Teachers College.

"The United States is the only developed nation in the world where you can graduate from college without studying a foreign language," said Hayden "Even in Egypt and Botswana students have to know more"

WHILE FAILURE TO learn foreign languages is part of the problem, it's the combination of factors and Americans' frequently glaring lack of sensitivity toward the subtleties of older and more

often complex cultures that has led government officials and businessmen to conclude the situation has reached the point where it is contributing to the erosion of U.S. power and prestige.

It is on the field of international business and trade that the concern is most clearly focused.

"We have enormous difficulty in finding U.S. citizens who have a sufficient understanding of the international scene to run our international business," said Leonard A. Lauder, president and chief executive officer of Estee Lauder Inc.

"Many Americans tend to look at the world with the view that what is good for Iowa is good for the Middle East"

THE LACK OF true understanding on the part of U.S. businessmen of the countries, not only leads to lost business, experts say, but great confusion and embarrassment.

The National Council of Foreign Language and International Studies uses the example of a U.S. baby food manufacturer that marketed its products in a developing country in the same way they did in advanced nations, with a picture of a healthy baby on the jars

What the company failed to understand was that in less developed lands, illiterate people often depend upon the pictures on the packaging to tell them what they are buying. In this case, the company later discovered, many people assumed they were being sold ground-up babies.

Thomas Hague, assistant to the chairman of Borg-Warner Corp., said that in years of experience working in Asia, he had seen "repeated generations of young Americans coming out, even with MBAs (masters' degrees in business administration)... unprepared"

He lays great blame at the door of U.S. high schools and colleges, which he says have done a woefully poor job preparing students to understand, or want to understand, foreign cultures. Meanwhile, he said, Japan and other Asian nations have spent great time and money in learning about the United States, its laws and its customs. This has contributed to their success in penetrating U.S. markets, he said

"I wonder if anyone really feels the shame of that happening in a country as powerful and as huge as this one," he said.

## Once it was lawn, now it's Stewart Field

One of the things I looked forward to when we moved into our new house was having a backyard with grass growing in it

When our old house was built, the builders sodded the front, the sides and the first half-inch of the back. The rest they left looking like the Okefenokee annex. It was half an acre of mud, weeds and crawdads. We moved in midway through September. By November we were getting complaints from neighbors about the water moccasins

In the spring I planted grass seed, which I watered and covered with straw and watched over with eager anticipation. In early May the first wispy blades of grass poked their heads through the straw. In the middle of May there was enough grass to see without kneeling down

At the end of May someone noticed that the backyard was shaped just like a softball field

Home plate went near the garden, first base was the \$119.95 plum tree, second was in the middle of the yard, third was by the patio. In no time at all, every kid this side of Pete Rose was choosing up sides in my backyard, popping foul balls into the garden, pulling hard line drives against the house and slamming home runs into the private hedge

BY THE END of the summer, my tomatoes all had "Spalding" imprinted on them, the aluminum siding on our

D.L. Stewart



house had more dents than a '56 Chevy and there wasn't a blade of grass left between home plate and centerfield.

Eight years we lived in that house. Eight years of hook slides into second. Eight years of waiting for the sound of shattered kitchen windows. Eight years of planting grass in the spring and breathing diamond dust in the summer.

So when we pick our new house, the first thing I check out is the backyard. It is perfect, long and narrow with thick grass already growing on it. Best of all, there are trees. Dozens of them, tall and strong and growing randomly all over the yard. The only way to get from one base to another in that yard would be to swing on vines.

We buy the house and I spend the summer sitting on the back patio, watching the grass grow. Thick. Green. Uncleated. Somewhere, I knew, there was a backyard that was being converted into Wrigley Field, but that was someone's else's problem.

ON A PLEASANT Saturday afternoon in September, my backyard bliss is interrupted by the 9-year-old.

"Hey, Dad," he says, "how about throwing around a football?"

"Gosh, son," I say, "I'd really love to. But, as you can see, with all these nasty trees there's not much room back here for throwing a football. I'm awfully sorry."

"Well, then, let's play in the front yard"

"We can't do that. There are too many windows that might get broken."

"Not if we use a Nerf football."

"Well, OK, I guess that wouldn't hurt anything," I agree.

After all, how much damage can one 9-year-old do to a healthy lawn?

The two of us walk to the front yard. I pick up the Nerf football. The 9-year-old runs out for a pass. I drop back into an imaginary pocket, plant my feet, cock my arm and throw the ball. It is a perfect spiral.

Before it comes down, 17 of his friends have flocked to our front yard in football jerseys and are calling for a fair catch.

Before I can explain to them about how I was sort of hoping to have a green frontyard like all the other neighbors, it is third and 15 and my team is two touchdowns behind.

So now I have a yard with a forest in back, no grass in front and a bunch of kids in my garage building goal posts.

