

**April, 2005**

### **Cherry Blossom Festival, DC**

Why do they have to hold the Cherry Blossom Festival in DC in the spring? It always rains!

### **Death in Passing**

What a week! Terri Schiavo, Johnny Cochran, Frank Perdue, Mitch Hedberg, and the Pope.

### **Air My Dirty Laundry**

I live in one of three apartments in an 80+ year old house. We have laundry facilities in the basement. Melissa, who lives in one of the the other apartments must not have enough dresser space because she keeps her clothes in the dryer.

### **TV, I Rarely Watch It, But I Have Seen It All**

How can it be that when I am so friggin' spent from working and living my miserable existence that, when I finally decide to watch bad TV rather than read the paper or do the crossword puzzle, I have already seen the show? I decided to watch "Two and 1/2 Men" which I had seen previews or snippets of and thought might be funny.

So I fire up the tube to watch two in a row reruns of "Two and 1/2 Men." Anyhow, I had seen one of the episodes before. I never meant to watch this show nor could I tell you when I did. I think this just another sign that sitcoms suck so badly that they have to rerun the decent ones so frequently you cannot avoid seeing them again even if you have only watched the show once. Or I am brain dead.

Bottom line, I watch so little new TV that it scares me that I can watch something that I think is new (relatively) and have seen it before.

### **Road Rage**

Traffic just gets worse and worse and the worst part is the unpredictability. Never knowing what the commute is going to be like is miserable. Today was big truck day. I managed to get by most of them before I got on to 15 on which I would not have been able to pass them. But I did get stuck behind one. We were actually going at a reasonable clip with almost no slow downs until after Lucketts at which time we began to proceed at the speed of "dump truck."

There's nothing quite like a lovely spring day on the road in your new car...stuck behind a stinking dump truck. You've got your windows down and sunroof open and after a couple mile of sucking dump truck exhaust fumes, which are surely the dirtiest of the all, you don't care how fast your going! You could be sitting by the side of the road and you wouldn't care. You've got the diesel exhaust fume's buzz from hell. Who needs beer?

### **If They Are That Good, Send Them After Spam and Viruses**

According to the Washington Post article, Web Censors In China Find Success, dated 4/14/2005, the Chinese have become quite adept at blocking what they probably consider to be subversive material from Chinese web surfers. I say that if they can do that so well, they should be able to help censor the spam and viruses out there...unless that is where most of it is coming from.

### **And the Lesson Is?**

According to the Washington Post article, Beijing Cites Progress on Protection Of Rights, dated 4/14/2005, the Chinese government is cracking down human right violations by "prosecuting more than 1,500 officials accused of abusing prisoners or holding them without legal grounds." The Chinese government report "depicted human rights violations by China's security organs as aberrations - criminal acts by wayward officials," which sounds quite like what the U.S. government says about the human rights violations depicted at Abu Graib and Guantanamo Bay. Supposedly human rights organizations say that violations are a reflection of Chinese government policy...the same thing that others have said of the U.S.

Who learned what from who I am not sure. What I am fairly sure of is that some senior policy makers need to stand up like a man or woman and take responsibility for the actions of those individuals for whom they are responsible. In my ten years in the U.S. Navy we were taught that with leadership came responsibility and accountability. What I am not seeing with senior leadership in nations all over the world is accountability. You have to own up to your mistakes and those of your subordinates. Until you do so, I will not respect you.

### **Commute My Sentence Please**

It is apparent to me that there are at least three personalities of commuters. You've got two types of tailgaters, passive and aggressive, and you've got the "hang back" types, of which I am one. I personally don't see any reason to tailgate someone on a two lane road like Route 15 during rush hour. There is no point in passing because the line of cars never really ends.

The aggressive tailgaters hate the "hang back" types. You can see it in their eyes and facial expressions as they do a slow burn right on your bumper. They weave back and forth to try and see around you...like something unusual is going on...not like it is the normal rush hour or anything. I had one woman a few weeks ago on a Friday who was absolutely frantic. It would have been funny if it wasn't so dangerous. This woman was in a Lincoln Navigator that loomed so large behind me it was blocking out the sun. I thought night had come early. The woman had the hard look of some technology company sales VP. Her skin was dark and leathery from what were probably too many days at the OBX. Finally, she passed me on the left in the left turn lane and blazed on by. As she got in front of me the strong smell of her perfume engulfed me like a Bhopal toxic bloom. She must have had a hot date.

This morning this guy in a Tiburon (not really a guy car in my estimation but....) was all over my back bumper on 15. It was annoying but I figured he'd just hang there until he could break loose at Leesburg. I'm just cruising along listening to the radio and the guy up and passes me. I just look at him in amazement. What was the point? Now he can tailgate the guy in front of me.... I was happy the tailgater was gone. The new guy behind me was a "hang back" kind of dude.

On the way home I remembered another personality that is probably just an aggressive tailgater at work on a multiple lane road like RT. 7. These are the folks that see an opportunity to gain a car length by switching lanes. They love me because I leave so much space between myself and the car in front. I of course then do a slow burn because I have to back off to maintain my space.

### **Empty Glass?**

This empty page has got to go. I will rant shortly.