

AUTOMOTIVE TOOLS

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate expensive car parts not far from the object we are trying to hit.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door, works particularly well on boxes containing convertible tops or covers.

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL: Normally used for spinning steel Pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age, but it also works great for drilling roll bar mounting holes in the floor of a sports car just above the brake line that goes to the rear axle.

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

WISE-GRIPS: Used to round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for lighting those stale garage cigarettes you keep hidden in the back of the Whitworth socket drawer (What wife would think to look in there?) because you can never remember to buy lighter fluid for the Zippo lighter you got from the PX at Fort Campbell.

ZIPPO LIGHTER: See oxyacetylene torch.

WHITWORTH SOCKETS: Once used for working on older British cars and motorcycles, they are now used mainly for hiding six-month old Marlboros from the sort of person who would throw them away for no good reason.

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, splattering it against the Rolling Stones poster over the bench grinder.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans rust off old bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and hard-earned guitar calluses in about the time it takes you to say, "Django Reinhardt".

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK: Used for lowering a Mustang to the ground after you have installed a set of Ford Motorsports lowered road springs, trapping the jack handle firmly under the front air dam.

EIGHT-FOOT LONG DOUGLAS FIR 2X4: Used for levering a car upward off a hydraulic jack.

TWEEZERS: tool for removing wood splinters.

PHONE: Tool for calling your neighbor Chris to see if he has another hydraulic floor jack.

SNAP-ON GASKET SCRAPER: theoretically useful as a sandwich tool for spreading mayonnaise, used mainly for getting dog-doo off your boot.

E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR: A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is ten times harder than any known drill bit.

TIMING LIGHT: A stroboscopic instrument for illuminating grease buildup on crankshaft pulleys.

TWO-TON HYDRAULIC ENGINE HOIST: A handy tool for testing the tensile strength of ground straps and hydraulic clutch lines you may have forgotten to disconnect.

CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 16-INCH SCREWDRIVER: A large motor mount prying tool that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end without the handle.

BATTERY ELECTROLYTE TESTER: A handy tool for transferring sulfuric acid from a car battery to the inside of your toolbox after determining that your battery is dead as a doornail, just as you thought.

AVIATION METAL SNIPS: See hacksaw.

TROUBLE LIGHT: The mechanic's own tanning booth. Sometimes called a drop light, it is a good source of vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin", which is not otherwise found under cars at night. Health benefits aside, its main purpose is to consume 40-watt light bulbs at about the same rate that 105-mm howitzer shells might be used during, say, the first few hours of the Battle of the Bulge. More often dark than light, its name is somewhat misleading.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the lids of old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splash oil on your shirt, can also be used, as the name implies, to round off Phillips screw heads.

AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty suspension bolts last tightened 40 years ago by someone in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, and rounds them off.

CAR RENTAL

On duty as a customer-service rep for a car-rental company, I took a call from a driver who needed a tow. He was stranded on a busy highway, but he didn't know the make of the car he was driving. I asked again for a more detailed description beyond "a blue four- door."

After a pause, the driver replied, "It's the one on fire."

CARRIER LANDINGS

Flying into a Middle East airport, my co-pilot and I reviewed our flight plan for the trip back to the USS Enterprise. We were to pick up a Navy captain, and experience had taught me that even seasoned vets turn white-knuckled during carrier landings.

Once the captain was strapped in, I turned around to welcome him aboard. "Sir," I asked, "will this be your first carrier landing?"

Looking at me with disdain, he opened his inflatable vest to display gold wings above five rows of ribbons. "Son," he said, "I have over 500 carrier landings in jet fighters."

"That's good to hear," my co-pilot said, winking at me, "because this will be our first."

THE C.E.O.

A fellow had just been hired as the new CEO of a large high tech corporation. The CEO who was stepping down met with him privately and presented him with three numbered envelopes. "Open these if you run up against a problem you don't think you can solve," he said.

Well, things went along pretty smoothly, but six months later, sales took a downturn and he was really catching a lot of heat. About at his wits's end, he remembered the envelopes. He went to his drawer and took out the first envelope. The message read, "Blame your predecessor."

The new CEO called a press conference and tactfully laid the blame at the feet of the previous CEO. Satisfied with his comments, the press -- and Wall Street -- responded positively, sales began to pick up and the problem was soon behind him.

About a year later, the company was again experiencing a slight dip in sales, combined with serious product problems. Having learned from his previous experience, the CEO quickly opened the second envelope. The message read, "Reorganize." This he did, and the company quickly rebounded.

After several consecutive profitable quarters, the company once again fell on difficult times. The CEO went to his office, closed the door and opened the third envelope.

The message said, "Prepare three envelopes..."

CHARITABLE LAWYER

Mr. Wilson was the chairman of the United Way, which had never received a donation from the most successful lawyer in town. He called on the attorney in an attempt to make him mend his ways. "Our research shows that you made a profit of over \$600,000 last year, and yet you have not given a dime to the community charities! What do you have to say for yourself?"

The lawyer replied, "Do you know that my mother is dying of a long illness, and has medical bills that are several times her annual income? Do you know about my brother, the disabled veteran, who is blind and in a wheelchair? Do you know about my sister, whose husband died in a traffic accident, leaving her with three children?"

The charity solicitor admitted that he had no knowledge of any of this. "Well, since I don't give any money to them, why should I give any to you?"

NEVER BRING IN PLANTS WHEN IT GETS COLD

Garden Grass Snakes (also known as Garter Snakes...Thamnophis sirtalis) can be Dangerous. Yes, grass snakes, not rattlesnakes.

Here's why...

A couple in Sweetwater, Texas, had a lot of potted plants. During a recent cold spell, the wife was bringing a lot of them indoors to protect them from a possible freeze. It turned out that a little green garden grass snake was hidden in one of the plants and when it had warmed up, it slithered out and the wife saw it go under the sofa. She let out a very loud scream.

The husband (who was taking a shower) ran out into the living room naked to see what the problem was. She told him there was a snake under the sofa. He got down on the floor on his hands and knees to look for it.

About that time the family dog came and cold-nosed him on the behind. He thought the snake had bitten him, so he screamed and fell over on the floor.

His wife thought he had a heart attack, so she covered him up, told him to lie still and called an ambulance.

The attendants rushed in, wouldn't listen to his protests and loaded him on the stretcher and started carrying him out.

About that time the snake came out from under the sofa and the Emergency Medical Technician saw it and dropped his end of the stretcher.

That's when the man broke his leg and why he is still in the hospital.

The wife still had the problem of the snake in the house, so she called on a neighbor man. He volunteered to capture the snake. He armed himself with a rolled-up newspaper and began poking under the couch. Soon he decided it was gone and told the woman, who sat down on the sofa in relief. But while relaxing, her hand dangled in between the cushions, where she felt the snake wriggling around. She screamed and fainted, the snake rushed back under the sofa.

The neighbor man, seeing her lying there passed out, tried to use CPR to revive her. The neighbor's wife, who had just returned from shopping at the grocery store, saw her husband's mouth on the woman's mouth and slammed her husband in the back of the head with a bag of canned goods, knocking him out and cutting his scalp to a point where it needed stitches.

The noise woke the woman from her dead faint and she saw her neighbor lying on the floor with his wife bending over him, so she assumed that he had been bitten by the snake. She went to the kitchen and got a small bottle of whiskey, and began pouring it down the man's throat.

By now the police had arrived.

They saw the unconscious man, smelled the whiskey, and assumed that a drunken fight had occurred. They were about to arrest them all, when the women tried to explain how it all happened over a little green snake. The police called an ambulance, which took away the neighbor and his sobbing wife.

The little snake again crawled out from under the sofa. One of the policemen drew his gun and fired at it. He missed the snake and hit the leg of the end table. The table fell over and the lamp on it shattered and as the bulb broke it started a fire in the drapes. The other policeman

tried to beat out the flames, and fell through the window into the yard on top of the family dog who, startled, jumped out and raced into the street, where an oncoming car swerved to avoid it and smashed into the parked police car.

Meanwhile, the burning drapes were seen by the neighbors who called the fire department. The firemen had started raising the fire truck ladder when they were halfway down the street. The rising ladder tore out the overhead wires and put out the electricity and disconnected the telephones in a ten-square city block area (but they did get the house fire out).

Time passed. Both men were discharged from the hospital, the house was repaired, and the dog came home. The police acquired a new car, and all was right with their world. A while later they were watching TV and the weatherman announced a cold snap for that night. The husband asked his wife if she thought they should bring in their plants for the night.

That's when she shot him.

MATH HOMEWORK

Parents are expected to participate in their children's education, and my friends were no exception. They gladly help their fifth-grade son, Andrew, whenever he's stumped. One day after school, Andrew ran into the house waving a paper in the air. "Hey, Mom, great news! There were only three mistakes on my math homework," he announced. "You made one, Dad made one and I made one!"

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" Don't answer.

Never tell your Mom her diet's not working.

Stay away from prunes.

Never let your three-year-old brother in the same room as your school assignment.

If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse.

Felt-tip markers are not good to use as lipstick.

Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat.

When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your Mom when she's on the phone.

THE DEFENDANT

The judge read the charges, then asked, "Are you the defendant in this case?"

"No sir, your honor, sir," replied Bob, "I've got a lawyer to do the defendin'. I'm the guy who done it."

GREAT THRUTHS THAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED:

- 1 – No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- 2 – When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3 – If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4 – Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5 – You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6 – Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 7 – Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
- 8 – You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 9 – Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
- 10 – The best place to be when you're sad is Grandpa's lap.

GREAT TRUTHS THAT ADULTS HAVE LEARNED:

- 1 – Raising teenagers is like nailing jelly to a tree.
- 2 – Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3 – Families are like fudge, mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4 – Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5 – Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
- 6 – Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fiber, not the toy.

GREAT THRUHHS ABOUT GROWING OLD:

- 1 – Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2 – Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.
- 3 – When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 4 – You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 5 – It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 6 – Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 7 – Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

SUCCESS:

- At age 4 success isnot piddling in your pants.
At age 12 success is...having friends.
At age 17 success is...having a drivers license.
At age 35 success is...having money.
At age 50 success is...having money.
At age 70 success is... having a drivers license.
At age 75 success is...having friends.
At age 80 success is...not piddling in your pants.

AGE

Age is a quality of mind.
If you have left your dreams behind,
If hope is cold,
If you no longer look ahead,
If your ambitions fires are dead ---
Then you are old.

I KNOW SOMETHING

I figured that at age seven it was inevitable for my son to begin having doubts about Santa Claus. Sure enough, one day he said, "Mom, I know something about Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy."

Taking a deep breath, I asked him, "What is that?"

He replied, "They're all nocturnal."

ICE CAPADES

A mother's four-year-old daughter was attending her first performance of the Ice Capades. She was so mesmerized that she wouldn't budge from her seat even during intermission, watching the activity while the ice was cleaned.

At the end of the show, she exclaimed, "I know what I want to be when I grow up!"

The mother envisioned her on the ice in another 15 years, starring in the Ice Capades.

She was brought back to earth when the daughter continued, "I want to be a zamboni driver!"

LIVING WILL INFORMATION

While I was watching the football games last weekend, my wife and I got into a conversation about life and death, and the need for living wills.

During the course of the conversation I told her that I never wanted to exist in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and taking fluids from a bottle.

She got up, unplugged the TV and threw out all my beer.

Sometimes it's tough being married to a smart aleck.

THE TICKET

Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting. Well, for example, the other day I went downtown and went into a store. I was only in there for about 5 minutes and when I came out there was a cop writing out a parking ticket. I went up to him and said, "Come on, man. How about giving a retired person a break?" He ignored me and continued writing the ticket.

I called him a "Nazi." He glared at me and started writing another ticket for "having worn tires". So I called him a "member of the doughnut eating Gestapo." He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket. This went on for about 20 minutes. The more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

Personally, I didn't care. I came downtown on the bus and the car that he was putting the tickets on had a bumper sticker that said Hillary in '08."

I try to have a little fun each day now that I'm retired.

CAT-SITTING

One night while I was cat-sitting my daughter's indoor feline, it escaped outside. When it failed to return the following morning, I found the beast clinging to a branch about 30 feet up in a spindly tree. Unable to lure it down, I called the fire department.

"We don't do that anymore," the woman dispatcher said. When I persisted, she was polite but firm. "The cat will come down when it gets hungry enough."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"Have you ever seen a cat skeleton in a tree?" she said.

Two hours later the cat was back, looking for breakfast.

MOVING DAY

When we agreed to help our sergeant move to a new apartment, we didn't know the elevator wasn't working. So after hours of carrying heavy boxes and furniture up 11 floors, we were wiped out. And when the sergeant asked us to search for his favorite pot, no one moved.

"I'll give a bottle of Scotch to whoever finds it," he shouted.

Within minutes, a private found the pot.

"Good," said the sarge. "Now look for the Scotch."

BOYS AND GIRLS ARE BORN EQUAL BUT NOT THE SAME

"Equal" is not always synonymous with "the same." Men and women are created equal. But, boys and girls are not born the same.

1. You throw a little girl a ball, and it will hit her in the nose. You throw a little boy a ball, and he will try to catch it. Then it will hit him in the nose.
2. You dress your little girl in her Easter Sunday best, and she'll look just as pretty when you finally make it to church an hour later. You dress a boy in his Easter Sunday best, and he'll somehow find every mud puddle from your home to the church, even if you're driving there.
3. Boys' rooms are usually messy. Girls' rooms are usually messy, except it's a good smelling mess.
4. A baby girl will pick up a stick and look in wonderment at what nature has made. A baby boy will pick up a stick and turn it into a gun.
5. When girls play with Barbie and Ken dolls, they like to dress them up and play house with them. When boys play with Barbie and Ken dolls, they like to tear off their appendages.
6. Boys couldn't care less if their hair is unruly. If their bangs got cut a quarter-inch too short, girls would rather lock themselves in their room for two weeks than be seen in public.

7. Baby girls find mommy's makeup and almost instinctively start painting their face. Baby boys find mommy's makeup and almost instinctively start painting the walls.
8. If a girl accidentally burps, she will be embarrassed. If a boy accidentally burps, he will follow it with a dozen fake belches.
9. Boys grow their fingernails long because they're too lazy to cut them. Girls grow their fingernails long - not because they look nice - but because they can dig them into a boy's arm.
10. Girls are attracted to boys, even at an early age. At an early age, boys are attracted to dirt.
11. By the age of 6, boys will stop giving their dad kisses. By the age of 6, girls will stop giving their dad kisses unless he bribes them with candy.
12. Most baby girls talk before boys do. Before boys talk, they learn how to make machine-gun noises.
13. Girls will cry if someone dies in a movie. Boys will cry if you turn off the VCR after they've watched "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" three times in a row.
14. Girls turn into women. Boys turn into bigger boys.