

Increasingly frequent reports point to the fact that - like so many things - using your brain keeps it growing, replacing worn-out cells, and functioning better.

Or, as some wise sage has proclaimed, when you stop learning, you're dead.

New and interesting "stuff" through most of our lives on a regular basis in this Information Age. Some of it is useful and uplifting to the ongoing learning process. On the other hand, some of it's frustrating and irritating.

For instance, thanks to a chance encounter with an old friend at a local post office, I recently learned that sending square greeting cards will cost you more postage.

Say what, you say? Sending square-shaped holiday greeting cards became less of a square deal for some folks who discovered recently that they owed 11 cents on every square-shaped greeting card. Some of the cards went back to the sender marked "insufficient postage." In other cases, recipients received "postage due" greetings. This, despite the fact that their over-

all square inches were less or equal to that of a normal, business-sized envelope, according to one of our local postal employees. And they were considerably under the size of the large, manila mailing envelopes which we regularly send out from here with a single first-class stamp.

A trio of us discussing this in the post office's lobby came to a prompt and unanimous assessment of this policy. Stupid. Makes one consider a postal "tax" revolt, like throwing tea in Boston Harbor.

Or, just e-mail your greetings next year.

On the other hand, something else I learned recently makes perfectly reasonable common sense.

I learned - firsthand - that one cannot open the doors in the back seat of a police car. And I learned this during my first - and hopefully, only! - ride in one.

We had taken the pickup to the hunting camp and were enroute west on Interstate 80 when The Farmer spotted what looked like smoke rolling out of the exhaust. Within minutes, the heat gauge had zoomed to

the danger level and steam poured out from under the hood when he lifted it. While he was attempting to tape a tiny, hard-to-reach hose so we could limp to the next exit, a state trooper making a timely patrol of that stretch of highway stopped to see if we needed help.

What we really needed was water to replace what had pressure-blasted the dripping wet engine. Thus, with a couple of small plastic buckets in tow (which had held birdseed for the feeders just hours before), I was hauled a couple of miles to the Bellefonte exit of I-80 perched on the backseat of a state police car. When I tried to hop out, it was then I realized there are no door handles on the inside of the back of a police car.

Makes sense to me, considering that many folks who ride there would rather be anywhere else.

The service state owner cheerfully pointed me toward a water faucet and within minutes we were back at the truck, full buckets in hand. Those couple gallons of water allowed us to drive to the exit, where the same station - incredibly - just happened to have the exact small hose on hand which we needed. In about an hour, the new hose was in place, water level filled to normal and antifreeze replenished.

We returned to the highway with renewed appreciation for the Pennsylvania State Police and extreme gratitude that there are still "service" stations out there, not just places to fuel up.

And, finally, thanks to a couple of our very knowledgeable and helpful readers, we now

have the answer for our grandson as to how the Pennsylvania Turnpike came to be called that. Seems that when early, improved, toll roads were built by private enterprise outfits, they fitted the entrances with a pipe, which was also called a "pike." The "pike" was kept across the road until the toll was paid, then it was turned aside, allowing entrance to the roadway. Thus, to enter those early, improved toll roads, one had to pay to turn the pike.

File that one away for the next time your kids or grandkids

switch from demanding "Are we soon there?" to quizzing you on why the highway you're traveling is called the "Turnpike."

As we continue to be enlightened on a daily basis on such varied and informative data, it makes one feel like they should really do something bigger and better with all this knowledge. Like maybe apply to be a contestant on that popular "want to be a millionaire" television quiz show.

Do they have category questions on farming?

Dairy Recipes Wanted For New Brochure

PHILADELPHIA (Philadelphia Co.) - The American Dairy Association/Dairy Council Middle Atlantic is looking for dairy farm families to submit recipes for a new brochure. The brochure will be used by dairy promoters at local dairy promotions as a sampling of local dairy favorites.

The recipes can be in any category and should include at least two dairy ingredients. Entries will be judged on the following attributes - easy to make, broad appeal, easy-to-access ingredients, and nutritionally sound.

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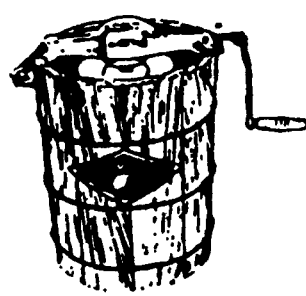
Kristen Campbell
American Dairy Association
325 Chestnut Street, Suite 600
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