

Tidbits From Earth

Advice From Joe on the Fine Art of Car Repair

by Joe Albrecht
Collegian Staff Writer

I'm not very good with cars, mechanically speaking. As a matter of fact I'm not very adept with anything made from connecting metal parts outside of nail clippers. I was told this when I took one of those standardized tests which contend to shed light from Heaven into a person's life so he knows which career is best for him.

Everytime I endured one of these tests I scored in the 97th percentile on three of the categories and in the 2nd percentile on the other seven. "Says here, Joe," my career counselor would remark, "that you'd show much promise as a light bulb installer, answering phones on the Crest Hotline, or washing farm animals on the Australian outback. But for God's sake don't ever come

within a 10-mile radius of my car."

These tests may serve a valuable purpose, other than showing that you, the test taker, have the intelligence of a Bic disposable lighter, but they didn't tell me anything about my lack of skills with automobiles that I didn't already know.

My stupidity with cars has been emphasized every holiday my family has gotten together for a picnic and my three brothers and I stand around talking in the afternoon sun.

DAVE: So Mark, how's the car running?

MARK: Great. I just rebuilt the carburetor, transmission, and for that matter, the whole engine.

FRED: You too? I did the same last Tuesday. I took the afternoon off from work.

DAVE: I had to do that last year. Now I'm building my own car from spare lawnmower parts

randomly laying in the garage.

ME: I washed my car last week.

It's taken a while, but I've finally resigned to the fact that I'll never be proficient at working on cars. But what I lack in

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hands-on ability I adequately make up for in the theory and logistics of how cars work, having studied in depth the various car commercials aired during David Letterman.

My extensive theoretical knowledge can be seen in my responses to letters I have received

at home or else made up.

Q. Joe, you're a heads-up kind of guy--in these times of economic hardship, am I better off buying a new or used car?

A. Yes, unless, of course, you'd rather buy me one.

Q. I hear an awful lot of talk about fuel injection. Could you explain that?

A. This is a very simple procedure in which you pull into an EPA-approved filling station (fn.1) and "inject" the "fuel" nozzle of the gas pump into your gas tank. After you have filled up, you may claim to be "fuel injected" and are eligible for a small tax refund. Void where prohibited. Canadian orders please add two dollars for shipping and handling.

Q. I know you're a busy guy, and this is sort of, er, well, it's sort of, er, nevermind.

A. No, go ahead.

Q. Well, we were thinking of

honeymooning in the Bahamas in late March and we want to know what sort of temperatures to expect.

A. And you don't have your reservations in already? You may as well forget it.

From the above sample, it is quite obvious that I can answer pretty much any question about cars or can at least spell "fuel injection". So if you have any questions, send them to: Joe's car care corner--1141 e. 38th st. apt. 22 - Erie, PA 16504. Your questions will be given my complete and undivided attention unless something good comes on TV.

FN.1 -- An EPA-approved filling station requires all employees wear those silly, matching jumpsuits displaying as much grease as in the hair of any member of the musical group Sha Na Na.

A Bachelor's Guide to Cooking: Dinner for None

by Mark Owens
Collegian Staff Writer

After getting home late from school and attempting to make myself dinner, I have concluded that men are missing the Betty Crocker gland that 99.98% of the female population has.

Manufacturers of food products realize this, and to encourage men to cook for themselves most instructions are written in cartoon form for Males With the Comprehension of Brain-Dead Newts.

Unfortunately this limits guys to culinary treats like Rice-A-Roni, Cup O' Soup and Chocolate Bananas-on-a-Stick.

But, out of brotherhood for fellow bachelors, I have translated a recipe in my mom's cookbook that any newt, I mean guy, can make. Here is the recipe for Mrs. Beastie's Basic Cake:

4 eggs, 2 cups sugar, 2 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1/8 teaspoon salt, 1 cup milk, 1/2 stick of butter, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 12/27 teaspoon of paprika extract, 2 bat wings, 1 eye of Wog.

First a note on measurements. A cup is the same thing as a glass (or in a pinch a coffee mug). I realize that some of you may not have access to tea or tablespoons, so the plastic silverware in the Wintergreen Cafe' will do. As for the

fractional measurements, do what I do - wing it.

Now I'll go through this step-by-step so you don't get lost:

"Beat the eggs until lemon colored, then add sugar and continue beating until fluffy." First, remove the shells. My mom recommends it. Fluffy means "The consistency of Tiffany's brain cell."

"Sift flour with the baking powder and salt." Put the salt & baking powder into a bowl. Take a spaghetti strainer and dump the flour in it so the flour goes into the bowl. This process should dirty, say, five dishes.

"Add to the egg-sugar mixture and beat until smooth." Dump everything into another bowl.

"Heat milk and butter to almost a boil, stirring until smooth." Put the milk and butter in a pan, turn the stove on 'high', go watch Oprah Winfrey and contemplate where 16 percent of the matter in the universe went.

"Beat the milk and butter into the batter." Dump everything into a food processor and let it mix for half an hour while watching "The New Ghostbusters."

"Pour the batter into a greased 13X9X2 inch pan and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes." On a greased table, with greased hands, place the greased pan and pour the batter in. Then put the

pan into a greased oven.

For fun, let a greased pig watch. Bake until "The New Adventures of Banana Man" is over with.

With lots of luck you'll get the cake pictured in the book. Most likely you'll end up with an object similar to the Little Rascals cake.

You know, the one that went "WOW," blew bubbles, and had toys in it. Of course, you won't have toys, unless you dump some Cracker Jacks into the mix.

If this doesn't work, don't worry - buy a microwave! This is the greatest thing since Johnny Carson! Or is it Pat Sajak? Maybe it's Arsenio Hall. I can't tell the difference.

Anyhow, cooking by microwave is so easy. All you do is throw the box in, set the time and PRESTO! Dinner is served.

To make things even easier, use my method: set the time for 20 minutes and put the dinner in. Your meal is finished when you hear a muted WHUMPH! from the microwave.

Well, that's it for this week. Join me next time when we'll talk about that Cajun treat "Blackened TV Dinner." It's really easy to make: set the oven for 500 degrees and bake. Dinner is ready when the fire department runs into your house with hoses.

Dueling Pianos

by Jennifer Rose
Collegian Staff Writer

The Penn State Cultural Series will sponsor Dueling Pianos on Sunday, February 12 at 3 pm in Reed 117.

The program will feature Behrend music instructor Dave Stuntz and English instructor Marjorie Podolsky in a two-piano and four-hand piano recital entitled "Music of American Popular Culture."

The recital will include pieces by Stephen Foster, Gershwin, Cole Porter, ragtime, and pieces from popular movies.

The two players have synchronized their pieces to combine and contrast, creating striking effects of sound.

The Series schedules events throughout the semesters from several major categories including theater, classical music, jazz music, dance and mime, traditional and folk music, and other types of cultural entertainment.

The programs are put together by all twenty-two campuses throughout the Penn State system. Campuses vote on which acts they feel are the best and though this an interstate

recruitment is set up. Not all programs are performed at all the campuses, but through this system the best acts get a good reputation and often get booked at a great deal of the campuses.

Stuntz and Podolsky however, aren't traveling--they will perform only at Behrend.

The acts are often approached and asked to be a part of the series, but they also can use their own initiative to become a part of the series. According to Dave Shields, Assistant Dean of Student Services, "It's good to promote outstanding faculty and students of our own campus, and students are encouraged to show their cultural skills."

On February 20 is Lynn McCormick will examine of the struggles of blacks in America. On March 16, harpist Harvi Griffin will perform works from Bach to rock, and on March 31 "Deuce" will perform funk, jazz, Latin, and rock music.

Next year's Cultural Series is already being put together. John Downey, head of the Cultural Affairs Committee, is looking for student input on different acts for 89-90. The committee will meet March 6 through April 10 to select the programs.

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