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Gas Prices
by
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We folks in West Virginia and these United States have got to be the easiest and most pliable bunch of critters there ever was... if someone told you ten years ago that in just a few years down the road you would be celebrating because you only had to pay \$2.25 for a gallon of gas would you have believed them? Really now... have they done a job on us or what? When I rode by my local Circle K and saw that gas prices were down to \$2.23 per gallon I jumped for joy. Judy wanted to know why I was so happy and I told her the gas prices were so low that I felt like going out and buying another car just so I could fill up the tank with all this cheap gasoline. She looked at me like I was crazy or something. Well, more than likely, I am.

Some friends flew in from Ohio for a few weeks visit and they were asking me what was new since they left in the early Summer and I proudly told them what the new gas prices were... they gave out a little snicker and said the per gallon price in Ohio was \$1.96 when they left that morning. Burst my bubble for a short while but then I was glad, figuring that only meant that maybe it was still going down and would be below the \$2.00 mark in our area soon.

Can you imagine though, we've become so used to paying out the nose that we'd actually accept a \$2 price as something attractive. It just 'shows to go you' that everything is relative and we all have the capacity and ability to rationalize anything and adapt ourselves to whatever comfort level is coming down the pike at any given time. I know the majority of you who read this column remember the good ole' days when we could fill the entire tank for around \$3.50... and that was high test. Any takers on betting that gas prices will never fall below a dollar ever again, much less get back to below fifty cents a gallon.

What I would like to see, which we used to see a lot of back in the 50s was a good old gas price war between competing gas stations. The other day I approached one of the local purveyors of petrol and suggested that he should instigate a gas war with his competitors. I told him it wouldn't take more than a difference of a nickel a gallon to get it started. He thought about it for a few seconds and told me he thought that was a great idea. I drove off thinking I had struck a blow for the common man's pocket book and when I drove by this same gas station the next day, sure enough... he had raised his prices by a nickel a gallon. It's a different world today, I guess.

That's another thing which bamboozles my mind... I search around trying to find the cheapest gas but some people obviously could care less what they're paying for this liquid gold. I'll see two gas stations side by side... the price for regular at one guy's pump is \$2.25 a gallon and the

guy next to him is \$2.35 a gallon and he's got more customers pulling in than the first guy.

Somebody clue me in here... please.

One disappointing thing I read yesterday... knew it was coming but hoped against hope it wouldn't... a letter to the editor in a newspaper other than this one was lamenting on the reduction in gasoline saying it was only contrived by President George W. Bush so that the people would vote for Republicans in the November election. Can you believe some people actually think that the President has access to a switch that allows him to turn the gas prices up and down at will? Why must people be so gullible (Judy says I shouldn't use the word stupid anymore) and not understand it's all about supply and demand... Always has been and always will be... thank goodness.

One of my daddy's favorite sayings to me as he and I were walking through these beautiful WV hills I love so well was... "Get your hands out of your pockets, Tom." Now that has absolutely nothing to do with gas prices or spending money but I thought it was a nice thing for my dad to say. He also told me, as I was growing up, "Watch them nickels Tom." I always assumed he meant if you spend a nickel wisely now you'll end up with more of them to spend later.

Speaking of spending nickels... (slick segue, eh?)... Have you ever watched a woman spend money when she's shopping? Talk about convoluted thinking... I want to share some insights on the basic philosophy of women and their shopping habits compared to a man's. It is said a man will pay \$20 for a \$10 item he needs... whereas, a woman will spend \$10 for a \$20 item she doesn't need, and then brag about how much she saved.

We men believe fervently ladies that if Momma's happy the entire household is happy so by all means we want to keep you happy. In keeping with that thinking I'll share another truth with you that you can apply to future, or present, relationships with the opposite sex. I guess you guys can learn something from this as well... Remember ladies... to be happy with a man, you must understand him a lot and love him a little. Men... to be happy with a woman, you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all.

And we'll close with this thought for you men... remember... A woman has the last word in any argument. Anything you might say after that is the beginning of a new argument.

Have a great week.

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