

No one should feel sorry for embezzlers

No one like to admit they've been conned by an embezzler. Banks and brokerages, especially, will go to almost any length to sweep this crime under the rug.

It looks bad when people find out that one of the loan officers has been tapping the till. It's worse when a stockbroker has been accessing the customers' accounts.

It happens all the time, but few embezzlers are actually prosecuted, and that's a shame. If more of them went to jail, it might cut down on this peculiar white collar crime.

The board of the Kansas Press Association had mixed emotions last year when the accountants told them their executive director had been "loaning" himself money from association accounts.

There may have been some sympathy at first, but by the time the final total had rolled in at \$117,000 in alleged misappropriations, there was not a tear to be shed for the group's ex-leader.

The board voted to turn the case over to the police and district attorney, and more power to them. It was embarrassing to be sure to have to admit it had happened on their watch, but the members had the courage to act.

Let me say up front, I have no sympathy for embezzlers. My father's law partner cleaned out the firm's accounts, leaving Dad with a stack of bills and an empty checkbook.

The fellow went to court and promised to make restitution, giving up his license to practice law. He never did repay Mom everything he owed, though. Last time I hear, he was a city official in an unnamed Midwestern town.

Dad had a stroke a couple of years later, and Mom always blamed the financial mess for putting him in an early grave at 55. My dislike for embezzlers runs deep.

You'd think more people would be angry when they find out, but oddly enough, the first impulse often is to feel sorry for the thief.

That's because embezzlers are likable people. We wouldn't trust them with the checkbook or the bank bag unless we thought they were nice guys.

That's what makes embezzlement such a rotten, despicable crime.

A stickup man walks in, points a gun at you, tells you to fork over the money or he'll kill you. That's relatively straightforward.

An embezzler smiles, shakes your hand, asks about the wife and kids. And steals everything he can get his hands on.

Some are cynical thieves. Others are weak to temptation, pressed by financial needs, expensive habits and weak morals, perhaps. None has much integrity or moral fiber.

Nice guys indeed. One I know of, when confronted, reportedly looked at the assembled accusers said, "Why are you doing this to me?"

And there were some among the victims who felt sorry for him.

Not me. I felt sorry for the people who had donated the money he stole, to the board members who had trusted him, to the customers who's accounts he may have pilfered. But not for him.

As a Christian, I wouldn't presume to judge any human soul. We're all sinners, and I'd pray for our redemption, all of us. But whether you see it as weakness or deceit, or both, you can't condone stealing, lying and weaseling.

It's a rotten crime, one that deserves to wind up in court, on the front page, in a prison cell, because the more embezzlers we let go, the more weak souls will try it.

— Steve Haynes



New "do" has everyone baffled

People are still getting used to my new "do". A friend from church told me that last Sunday her little girl leaned over and whispered to her, "Who's that lady sitting with Jim?"

She could have said, "That's no lady, that's his wife," but she didn't.

I'm discovering the advantages of really short hair. Keep in mind it is too short to curl so there is absolutely no fuss or muss. It is, literally, wash 'n wear hair. I can be ready to roll in a matter of minutes.

The down-side is that you can't change it. It is the way it is and that's just the way it is. Long hair did have the advantage of versatility; up, down, barretted, rubber-banded, curled, straight or pony-tailed. Still, after only two weeks since the cut, I can tell it has grown. Soon, I'll have to make the decision whether to keep it this short or let it grow.

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We could not have squeezed one more thing into our schedules this weekend if our lives had depended on it.

Saturday was full of shopping in preparation for our Mexico trip next weekend then to the movies to help Jennifer with the ticket booth and concession stand. We were late getting home but there was still laundry to be done. Jim needed a pair of

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



slacks for church. He was being ordained the next day as an evangelist and would be delivering the message. And since he would be preaching at the 8 a.m. service, too, I had to prepare my dish the night before for the Fellowship Dinner following second service. At midnight I'm slicing up 10 pounds of potatoes and starting a load of wash.

A few minutes later, sniff, sniff, sniff, I smelled something burning yet I didn't have anything cooking on the stove. It was that distinctive electrical smell and the washing machine was making a strange noise.

Something was terribly wrong. I shut down the washer and unplugged it, but that still left me with a tub full of wringing wet clothes. There was nothing to do but sort his trousers out, hand wash them and toss them in the dryer.

Sunday started very early with assembling the scalloped potato casserole and getting ready for church. Then it was time to load the car (don't forget the casserole which will have to finish cooking at church). When I opened the door, I was greeted with a sea of white. It had snowed during the night which meant a slower drive. It's not good for the preacher to be late to church and we barely made it.

Services went off without a hitch, Fellowship Dinner was wonderful and then it was time to get to the prison for afternoon chapel services.

After Jim preaching three sermons and me listening to three sermons we were exhausted when we got home. We had exactly two and a half hours before we needed to leave the house for a dinner party in a neighboring town so we decided to take a quick nap.

Nobody had to tell me twice. I was asleep in an instant. Two and a half hours later we awoke with a start. Oh, no! We still had a salad to toss and clothes to change. Five minutes later we were in the car and on the road again.

It was a lovely dinner party with lively conversation and great food. A great way to end the day. But, somebody stop me if I try to overbook myself like that again!

Who knew there were so many things in the kitchen?

We are getting new flooring in the kitchen-family room so while things were all moved out it seemed like a good idea to clean the cupboards, broom closet, etc.

I'm only about half done and I'm not sure I have the courage to finish. I just look at some of this stuff and think "WHY?"

For instance, why do I have a rusty tin jello mold? I have an aversion to jello. Never would I decide, "Hey let's have

jello and let's fix it in a fancy mold." I think it is rusty because I used it to make ice rings for the punch bowl. Last time I tried this the ice didn't look any more appealing than jello. It was sort of rusty. Yet for some odd reason I put the thing back in the cupboard.

I found Tupperware. I found a sippy seal for a bell tumbler. I'm saving that because—well I'm not sure, maybe I will

Back Home Nancy Hagman



have grandchildren.

I found broken Tupperware. They will replace that stuff, you know. 'Course I never get around to getting that done. I put it in the recycling. I found a lid that fits absolutely nothing else. I found stuff that looked cool at the time but which I have never used. Not once, not in 25 years. WHY?

I found sports drink bottles: Jump Rope for Heart, Rock Springs Ranch, and the University Methodist Church in Wichita. I tried to get rid of them. Patricia, enchanting spirit, said, "I want that one."

She put it back in the cupboard! Sometimes it's hard to make much progress.

I found a pint of Four Roses whiskey. I inherited it from my dad. I know there was some story behind this, but I can't remember what it is. We don't drink much whiskey, apparently neither did my dad. Maybe he kept it in case he got a bad cough, I hear it is good for medicinal purposes. The label says it is a blended whiskey and "the straight whiskeys in this product are four years or more old." I'd guess so, I know they are older than I am.

I found a microwave hot dog cooker. I always thought this was a good idea, it has

space for up to 4 hot dogs and a top to keep them from making a mess on the inside of the oven. I wonder why we never use it. I suppose the family thinks it helps me feel needed if I have things to do, like cleaning the microwave. I put this handy little item in the microwave, surely if we have to look at it before we cook a hot dog we might use it. There is always hope!

Under the kitchen sink, well that was actually very clean. I discovered the dish soap I had just purchased was nearly empty. Someone left the snap top open and it fell out of the little rack it sits in on

the door. There was soap all over the place. Even though it was soap, it was not easy to clean up. I'd soak it up in the sponge, then rinse and rinse and rinse. I finally decided to use the soapy sponge to clean something else. Heloise has nothing on me! When I got done the sponge looked better than when I bought it. Amazing.

I did get some stuff sorted out for a garage sale and I came up with a marketing plan. Everyone who buys something gets a sip of Four Roses. I hope we don't get any bad coughs before the weather warms up!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

To the Editor:

Norton County, in good faith, has gone the extra mile and then some to satisfy Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and do the best it can for safe and economical disposal of this county's trash.

Beginning with the contamination of the old landfill by a state agency's trash and subsequent closure by KDHE, followed by the decision to do the most environmentally correct disposal method, i.e., incineration oven, though much more costly than surrounding counties disposal costs, Norton County has strived to satisfy KDHE's every whim. Instead of being a good partner and working with Norton County for a fair, environmentally safe but common sense solution for

the disposal of our trash, KDHE keeps raising the bar, and the dollars to the citizens of this county. It is absolutely ridiculous what it sounds like it may cost this county for trash disposal, compared to our neighboring counties. Every Norton County city, business and citizen needs to join ranks and support the Norton County Commissioners in their effort to find a common sense, safe and economically fair solution to the disposal of our trash. Every Norton County city, business and citizen needs to contact our state legislators, Stan Clark and John Faber to help bring some fairness and common sense to the bureaucrats at KDHE. Time is short.

Sincerely,
Jerry Hawks
Councilman Ward II, Norton

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Office hours:
8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
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