

# You can't make up this stuff

January 28, 2012

Well kiddings, it's time for another round of "You Can't Make Up This Stuff," the game based on my brother Big Rob's theory that reality is stranger than any fiction.

As always we begin in Rob's stomping grounds of Flint. As reported on Mlive.com, it seems that a county-owned building needed roof repairs and Genesee County received a U.S. Department of Energy grant to do the work. As has been the county's practice in the past, the sheriff provided some jail inmates to assist on the project. The idea was that the contractor would use free inmate labor and then make a donation to the county for the use of that labor.

Ah, but nothing is that easy or logical when the Feds are involved. A county attorney has advised the sheriff that the Davis-Bacon Act requires that the inmates be paid the prevailing wage because the work was federally funded. This means the inmates should have been paid \$26.21 per hour. The sheriff says he refuses to pay inmates, the contractor and subcontractor have been served with a violation notice of federal standards, and the whole issue has been sent to the Department of Energy for clarification.

Flint has been one of the hardest hit cities in the na-

tion when it comes to job losses. The irony in all of this is that if the inmates wind up getting paid, they may have some of the highest paying jobs in the county.

If this situation is enough to make you slap yourself in the head, I have good news for you if you wind up with a nose bleed. A new medical study conducted by several hospitals, including the Detroit Medical Centre, recommends a new treatment — nasal packing with strips of cured pork. A report says: "Cured salted pork packed within the nasal vaults successfully stopped nasal hemorrhage promptly." This just reaffirms the notion that bacon makes just about everything better.

This news might be enough to make you want to have a party. If you're looking for someplace to hold your shindig, the National Funeral Director's Association has a suggestion. Look into booking a room at a funeral home. The association says that in a 2010 survey, 8.3 percent of the respondents said they hosted non-funeral events at their fa-



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cilities (weddings, graduations, birthday parties).

If that idea isn't festive enough for you, perhaps an outdoor gathering might be in order. The problem, however, is that at this time of year in northern Michigan, your guests might not want to hold a frosty beverage in their hand for fear of frostbite. Have no fear, our Scandinavian cousins have a solution for this glitch well

in hand (pun intended). All you need to do is buy everyone Skuuzi at [www.skuuzi.com](http://www.skuuzi.com). A Skuuzi is a wool mitten with a can/bottle holder woven into the end. It sort of looks like a headcover for a golf driver. Your hand stays warm, like in a mitten, and your beverage stays cold. These are \$29 each, but a party pack of 12 is just \$220. And who knows more about partying than the Scandinavians?

Finally, more of a question than an observation. I've read all the articles about the proposed roundabout at the corner of Plett Road and 13th Street. I've also studied the drawings and aerial map. In all of these the attention,

discussion, and explanations have focused on vehicles and drivers. I may be missing something, but I have not seen the word "pedestrian" in anything I've read.

Now, as I view the overhead maps, I note there's a sidewalk coming in from the southwest corner of the intersection, which is the end of the Clam River Greenway. There's another sidewalk on the northeast corner that leads to the soccer fields and ball diamonds. As I recall, when these were put in, the intent was that children could walk or ride bikes from the city of Cadillac out to the recreation fields.

So, my question is this. With traffic never stopping as vehicles circle through the roundabout, how does a pedestrian (many of whom might be children) cross safely? I ask because I've tried to cross this corner and, even as currently configured, it's a challenge. Someone needs to explain how the roundabout will make the task any easier or safer. As near as I can tell, when it comes to pedestrians, this corner has the potential to become a game of Frogger (with me being one of the frogs).

**JIM NEFF** is a local columnist. Read Neff Zone columns online at [www.neffzone.com/cadillacnews](http://www.neffzone.com/cadillacnews).