

Our Listserv– A Group with Many Talents

By: Brad Cunningham, City Attorney, Lexington, South Carolina

As summer rolls around and we ship my daughter off to her annual job as a summer camp counselor, my thoughts drift back to my first job and the jobs I performed during summers between colleges. I hope she has as much fun as I did!

My very first job was washing golf clubs and parking carts at a private country club. I would report to work around 2:00pm, after having ridden my bicycle on the two mile trek from home. These were the good ole days growing up in a small mountain town in North Carolina, when folks would think nothing of a 14-year old leaving on his bike after breakfast and not coming home until dark. If I was needed, the folks knew where to find me. There was no cell phone, and no electronic leash.

I worked the golf course job for a few years, and also picked up odd jobs valet parking at various parties, either at the country club or one of the swanky homes of the club members. In one instance, at the home of a wealthy "summer resident," I was working a party and an "emergency" arose. "We are out of tonic water," shrieked the party host. She begged me to run to the store for a few bottles, handed me a $10 tip and sent me out the door. Eager to make her $10 worth it, I dashed out the door only to realize my car was blocked in and couldn't be moved. For a split second, I thought "Gee, I can't go. Guess I'll have to give the $10 tip back...." Quickly, however I recovered, realizing I had the keys to about 100 various automobiles. After careful deliberation, I decided on a Mercedes as my transportation of choice. With *Carry on My Wayward Son* (by Kansas) blaring on the radio, I took off like the two guys in Ferris Bueller's Ferrari.... Fortunately, I returned without incident or without anyone finding out. Yes, I was a little loco in those days. The lawyer in me now shutters at the behavior of my youthful days.

On another summer job, perhaps my most "gross" job, I had to clean out the waste disposal bins at a manufacturing facility. The company made cellophane, and the by-product was a gooey jello-like substance the smell of which would offend even our wastewater treatment plant operator. I had to scrub this "stuff" off the inside of the garbage cans daily, and dump it into a cesspool of sorts, where it was treated and neutralized. It was this job which made me determined to graduate from college...

After my own reminiscing, I put out a survey on the listserve regarding first jobs, odd jobs, gross jobs and the like. Some of the responses I received include:

My first job was order packer in a parts warehouse. Started at age 16 and continued every summer and holiday through college. Odd Job? One summer I drove a yellow cab on evenings and weekends when not at the warehouse job. I have stories...

My first paid job was working for a local salvage yard removing auto parts from cars. I never really did odd jobs but worked on a grounds crew at a school during my summers mostly driving tractors with large mowers. The manager loved to hire farm kids because he said city kids just tore up large equipment. I suppose some would consider delivering calves and removing afterbirth as gross. I just considered it part of running a cow-calf operation which I did with my father before I went to law school...

My first job was in a gas station. It was owned by a woman who only hired girls. I was 16 and got robbed a few months after I started – by a woman. I never had a job I considered gross, although I worked at both a day care for young children and a convalescent home at one time. So, I did have some moments where the job duties were less than pleasant...

My first paying job (other than babysitting) was at yogurt shop in a mall. Samples were free for workers, and I took them up on that quite liberally. The best flavor was a swirl of the Strawberry and Cheesecake flavors – I remember that taste vividly! Surprising job? I was a telemarketer selling magazine subscriptions. I quit on Day 2 after they pressured me to close a sale with an elderly gentlemen who clearly didn't understand what was going on. I've felt bad for that man for 25 years. My most gross job? Well, the telemarketer one was pretty slimy. Otherwise, nothing on the job that's come anywhere near as close to the gross kind of things I've had to do in my job as a mother...

I was an elevator operator for a manual freight elevator in a downtown department store. The elevator operator had to manually line up the floor of the elevator with the floor of the building in order to allow heavy hampers to be rolled on and off. The elevator was controlled with a handle that could be pushed up and down to control the speed of travel up and down. The inside of the elevator shaft had been decorated sometime in the sixties by an "artist" that seemed to be channeling Peter Max. I could see all this because the elevator was just a mesh cage with no door on the front of it, so the shaft itself was literally speeding by your face as you went up and down. Odd Job? It had to be selling vacuum cleaners door to door. This particular vacuum used a spinning water bath to filter the air and dirt being picked up so that it also doubled as a humidifier and an air filter. I never really had a gross job, but the hardest job I ever had was working with a concrete crew building a local high school. I remember we were expected to drive a wooden stake into black clay that

had been baking in the sun for 60 days straight with no rain and a high every day of 102 degrees. Picture hammering a toothpick into the side of your coffee cup and you'll have a pretty good idea of the process...

My first job was sweeping floors at the Army-Navy Surplus Store for 20 cents an hour... Child labor... My Dad had the auto repair shop next door...

First "paying" job was at a camp where I sold ice cream, snacks, and handicraft materials as well as soft drinks (premix fountain dispenser if you know what that is). My first job as an adult was cashier in a department store which lead to selling men's clothing. The oddest job I ever had was during college I installed draperies as an independent contractor on behalf of a couple of local stores. The most gross job was one summer during college when I worked as a laborer in a lube oil and grease plant. We scrubbed asphalt/tar spills under furnaces using push brooms, TSP, and hot water generated by connecting a steam hose and water hose

First job was babysitting. Most unusual job was three to four years of commercial salmon fishing in Alaska. The most gross job was also commercial salmon fishing...

I delivered the local newspaper as my first job. The oddest job was when I cut the round corners of the materials used in 3 ring binders. Most gross job – varnish cook...

I delivered the local newspaper. As an unusual job, I also prepared fencing, posts and hardware by chemically treating all the items to make them weather resistant (dipping the items in soar, lye, nitric acid and the chemical treatment)...

Sweeping and cleaning up at a local pharmacy was my first job. As an unusual job, I was a Fuller Brush Man – lasted about 2 weeks. Can't say I have had a "gross" job, but there is this one opposing counsel . . . feel like I need to shower after . . .

When I was 10 years old and for every summer until I was 17, my mom told all of her friends that I would cut their grass for $5.00 – no matter how big their yard was. Believe me, we lived in a rural community and people had very large yards. I also worked at a race horse stable and drove a tractor. Cleaning out the stalls at the horse race stable was the most gross job I ever had...

I wrote a column for the local newspaper called "Jr. High Chatter." I was paid 10 cents per column inch. I was 13. It probably wouldn't surprise anyone that I worked in my dad's law office, but it might surprise people that I took live dictation using shorthand, or that I once retyped an entire 4 page document in Italian...

There you have it folks...A testament to the versatility of this talented group. And, in many cases (like mine), an incentive to finish school! Looks like we have all come out on top!

Technology seems to be advancing on an almost daily basis, and one advancement is creating an interesting dilemma for local governments. By now I am sure everyone has heard of "driverless cars." My first reaction to this idea is to ask why? If you don't need to go somewhere, why does the car need to do so? I am sure there are answers somewhere, but I am curious about several issues involved in this phenomenon. Chiefly, what if something goes wrong?

Case in point – consider this CNN story about an event in California:

"A police officer pulled over one of Google's self-driving cars Thursday in Mountain View, California. The car wasn't speeding. On the contrary, it was driving too slowly ~ 24 miles per hour in a 35 mph zone, according to the Mountain View Police Department ~ with traffic apparently backing up behind it.

"As the officer approached the slow moving car he realized it was a Google Autonomous Vehicle," a police department post said. Which is to say that no one was driving the thing. There was, however, a passenger. After a brief discussion, "the officer determined the car had broken no law. No harm, no foul and no ticket. For its part, the Google Self-Driving Car Project seemed proud of the whole affair."

I repeat my question – why? What is the purpose? And what if something goes wrong such as the case of the driverless car in Arizona that hit and killed a woman? Who is held accountable? Who do we ticket and summon to municipal court? Stay tuned...

The prosecution rests, your honor... ML



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