

Cheesy lawsuit milks Kraft company dry

It doesn't look like Kraft is going to be able to squirm its way out from under the "Ready to Roll" contest snafu.

For those of you who haven't heard, the company could owe more than 10,000 people Dodge custom vans valued at \$17,000 each.

Now, why in the world would a company as big and successful as Kraft USA get themselves into such a big mess?

The answer is simple — to sell processed cheese slices.

You see, Kraft thought that they could make people purchase more processed cheese slices with the incentive that they might be able to drive around in a new Dodge van for free. Kraft thought that the average consumer, after eating all those processed cheese slices purchased in hopes of winning a new van, would really begin to like processed cheese slices, thus sales would remain high after the opportunity to win a new van had passed.

Does Kraft really think the American people are that gullible? Yes.

But that's not the point.

The point is that instead of printing up 8,600 winning tickets for the prizes — 8,000 packages of cheese, 500 skateboards, 100 bicycles and one 1990 Dodge Caravan LE van — as they had planned, about 21,000 winning tickets were printed and distributed in the Chicago and Houston metropolitan areas.

Kraft noticed there was a problem when a number of people began turning in tickets for what was supposed to have been a single prize — the van.

Of course, Kraft discontinued the contest and pulled all the cheese off the



Ellen Hobbs
Editor

shelves. However, before all the cheese was pulled from the market, the media found out and publicized Kraft's unfortunate mistake. Many purchasers of the product were prompted to run to their local grocers to buy as many as they could of the remaining packages of processed cheese slices containing "Ready to Roll" contest tickets.

Some of those people got tickets to win the van, too.

Kraft made an attempt to make it up to all those people who got their hopes up. They quadrupled the original number of prizes for those who had winning tickets for the bikes, skateboards and cheese, and players who had matched tickets for the van and submitted them by June 16 received \$250 and were entered in a drawing for four Dodge Caravan LEs.

That's really a pretty good deal. Let's face it: most of those people who bought the processed cheese slices bought them because they wanted processed cheese slices, not because they thought they were going to win a van. When you start with nothing and end up with \$250, it is still pretty exciting, even if you thought you were going to get a van. It could have been worse. You could still have nothing except a package of Kraft Singles.

But a few sore losers still want vans by God, and they're no longer "Ready to Roll," they're Ready to Sue.

A judge told them Tuesday that they had a right to file a class action suit against Kraft to get those vans, whether or not Kraft had made an innocent mistake.

The hearing determined that the winners could be certified as a class, which allows all 20,000 winners, and anyone else who comes forth with a winning gamepiece on before Oct. 31, to seek relief from Kraft USA.

That means that Kraft could end up paying more than 1.7 billion dollars in damages to would-be winners, when all they really wanted to do was sell a few cheese slices.

Why are they being punished so severely for this innocent mishap? Maybe, according to the plaintiffs' attorney Burton Weinstein, it is because Kraft USA is "taking advantage of that great American obsession with gambling to sell cheese."

Of course they are. That's what advertising is all about — taking advantage of the public's obsessions to sell products.

There was no real malice intended by Kraft USA. All they were doing was trying to cash in on an idea that has been popular with advertisers for years — using a contest or give-a-way to sell a product — and it backfired.

I think we should give the poor Kraft company a break. They lost control. It was an accident. Accidents happen.

Ellen Hobbs is a junior journalism major and editor of The Battalion.

Free advice to unsafe drivers

OK, for all you really unsafe drivers out there who actually can read, this column is for you.

Yes, after nearly getting killed today for the 57th time this month by someone whose vehicle, if he has to have one, should have an advanced homing device or at least a self-destruct mechanism that activates once he gets out of heavy traffic, I have decided to offer you more than just various digital contortions that always seem to be the thing to do at this time.

And it's FREE!

Welcome to Carol's School of Driving.

Yes, at Carol's School of Driving, we will review various fundamental rules of the highway (in the continental United States, at least) so that you can brush up on them to improve your driving record — and your chances of having another birthday.

This is free of charge unless, of course, you want to send in a donation for that last blast of adrenalin you caused me today when I was just about to turn left, which shrewd drivers can deduce by a left turn signal (red light on rear left side of car going blinky-blinky-blinky) and you decided to pass ON THE LEFT SIDE right before I turned.

But let's forget that for the moment and start with the very poignant topic of blinkers, and the very poignant direction of left:

1. You turn on your left blinker (red light on left rear side of car going blinky-blinky-blinky) when:

- (a.) You are turning right.
- (b.) You are turning left.
- (c.) Right after breakfast.
- (d.) That's a BLINKER? Ha! And all this time I thought that was just a cute little ornamental knob!

ANSWER: The correct answer here is (b.) You turn on your left blinker when you are turning left. One easy way to remember this, if you are married and are turning left, is to always turn the blinker in the direction of the hand on which you wear your wedding ring. Another clue might be to turn the blinker in the direction you are turning.

2. You are at a red traffic light in town, which most alert drivers can deduce by the color of red. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, the light CHANGES TO GREEN! What do you do?

- (a.) Go.
- (b.) Sit there and discuss the situation in China or the sale on at Weiner's until the light turns yellow, then spurt through.
- (c.) Pick your nose and turn up the radio.
- (d.) Start your car, since you turned it off at the red light, and get another beer.

Carol Rust

The Beaumont Enterprise

ANSWER: The correct answer here is (a.) Go when the traffic light is green. One easy way to remember the rule, if you are familiar with the English language, is to remember that "go" and "on" start with the same letter. That's the letter.

3. You are driving up a hill and cannot see past this incredibly slow station wagon going 60 mph with five in the back. You need to get someone (like your home 1.2 miles away) and this cretin is just crawling along there was a speed limit or something. What do you do?

- (a.) Pass the mother, and the rest of the family, on the left side.
- (b.) Toodle along behind him his total nerd.
- (c.) Pass the car on the right side, tending for a moment the road to shoulder.
- (d.) Get another beer.

ANSWER: The correct answer here is (b.) If you are driving around behind a slow station wagon, chances are your totally cool friends will not see since they are going at totally different speeds in an effort to break the speed barrier, and you can save not only your reputation but the lives of the station wagon inhabitants by inching along at a totally uncool pace.

4. BONUS QUESTION (worth points): There is a silly little yellow diamond-shaped sign that has been up some years ago in the shape of an inverted (upside-down) triangle. The word on it is from a Baptist hymn that starts with a "Y." (HINT: "Y... No Temptation.") The mystery word rhymes with "field." It, (the sign of the hymn) often appears near freeway entrances to the interstate. Do you know what the word is, and what you should do when you see it?

- (a.) Don't sin.
- (b.) Say, "Look at that dumb upside-down triangular shaped sign!"
- (c.) Remark how that dumb sign evolved into smaller but equally dumb yellow diamond-shaped signs that are reproducing like crazy on the windshields of cars.
- (d.) The word is "yield," which means slow down and look for traffic before getting on entrance ramp.

ANSWER: The correct answer here is (d.) Slow down and look for traffic thus ensuring you will live through your next driving maneuver.

As will the rest of us, too.

Carol Rust writes for The Beaumont Enterprise.

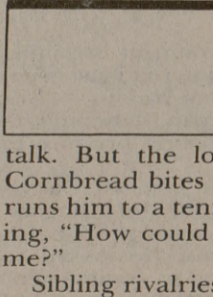
Sibling rivalry applies to dogs, too

A number of readers have inquired recently about my new dog, Cornbread.

Cornbread is a 6-month-old male black Lab, and I have paired him with the grizzled veteran Catfish, also a male of the same breed.

People want to know, "How does Catfish like having another dog another around the house?"

I'm not certain since Catfish can't



Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

talk. But the look on his face when Cornbread bites him on the ear or outruns him to a tennis ball seems to be saying, "How could you have done this to me?"

Sibling rivalries. I've heard about that

sort of thing before, and why shouldn't it apply to dogs?

Cornbread has turned out to be a toe-licker. I've heard about that before, too. Erotic novels are full of that sort of thing, and, again, why shouldn't it also apply to dogs?

A toe-licker isn't the worst kind of dog you can get. The worst kind of dog is an egg-sucker.

I had an egg-sucker once. His name was Leonard. He hung out around the chicken coop, and when the hens had finished their business, he would root his way under the fence and suck a few eggs.

"You have to get rid of Leonard," my grandfather said. "He's an egg-sucker."

I might have had to give Leonard his walking papers had it not been for an incident that occurred soon after my grandfather's ominous statement.

Leonard was on his way to the hen area one morning and got into a rift with a rooster, Garland.

Garland gave Leonard such a whip-

ping the dog never went near the chicken coop again. And whenever he smelled eggs cooking, he would run under the bed and whimper.

In an effort to find out if Cornbread was an egg-sucker, I opened the refrigerator door and pointed out the eggs to him to see what he would do. (They don't allow chickens in my neighborhood.)

Cornbread showed no interest in the eggs whatsoever. He grabbed a pound of ground chuck instead. What relief I felt.

I first learned Cornbread was a toe-licker early one morning. I had thrown off my cover and my feet and toes were exposed.

I was in the midst of a dream in which I was attempting to walk through a field covered with green jello. I awakened, however, to find Cornbread licking my toes.

I asked the vet if the fact Cornbread licked toes meant the dog was suffering from any sort of physical or mental disorder.

"Not that I know of," said the vet, "but if he stops licking your toes and starts biting and chewing them, you've got a real problem."

Biting and chewing, indeed. Like Catfish before him, Cornbread had done some serious damage.

He ate my glasses recently. He chewed up one of my golf shoes. Even the spikes had teeth marks.

He has gnawed the legs on several chairs, he attacked a pillow and won, he destroyed a wool blanket a friend brought me from New Zealand, and one morning I took him out and he started chewing on one of the tires on my car.

Other than all that, he's a wonderful dog. He's happy. He's friendly. He's smart. And he's mine.

Catfish, I am certain, eventually will learn to accept him as a part of the family, and sleeping in a pair of socks has been nearly as bad an experience as thought it might be.

Copyright 1989, Cowles Syndicate

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference
The Battalion Editorial Board

Ellen Hobbs,
Editor

Juliette Rizzo,
Opinion Page Editor

Fiona Soltes,
City Editor

Drew Leder, Chuck Squatriglia,
News Editors

Steven Merritt,
Sports Editor

Kathy Haveman,
Art Director

Hal Hammons,
Makeup Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.