

THE FOURRR-WAY TEST
By
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PODUNK PINES WEEKLY NEWS

I sat down this morning here in Quaking Aspens in my comfy little pine-paneled office with a nice cup of tea to write this column, and I have had nothing but trouble trying to get it written. First, the carriage on my Underwood did not want to return. Then the letter "r" on the keyboard began to stick and repeat when it was capitalized. My ribbon is also becoming dim and when I went to find carbon paper, there was none. I always like to have a carbon copy of all my columns in my files for later reference.



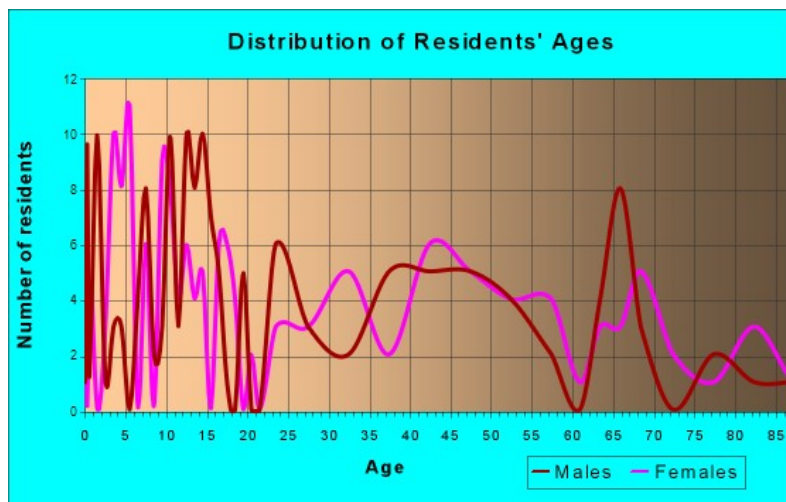
There was nothing to do but to get in my Edsel and drive across the river to the Turning Leaf Book Store & Office Supply in Podunk Pines to replenish my supplies. I was most upset when the owner, Page Turner, said she would no longer be stocking typewriter ribbons and carbon paper. I suppose all you eClub people never have such problems with your fancy computers, but I do think it is unfair that I am unable to get the office necessities that I need in order to do my work. It seems to me that if they can send a man to the moon, they can stock the items necessary for a journalist such as myself to type my column. I hate to think I might have to take my original to the library each week and have Miss RRReade mimeograph it. I reckon the next thing that will disappear will be the mimeograph machine.

Then driving home, I noticed a new noise in my Edsel, and I suppose I will have to take it into town and have Mr. Goodscrewdriver take a look at it. The whole morning just made me feel cranky.



Then I went out to my mailbox and you will never guess what was there. I just have to tell all you worldwide computer users that you have nothing on me! Today my head is so swelled I could barely get through the door to my little office. The reason for this elation is that I got a note from the eClub computer expert containing comments on my column about the club's official admission to RRRotary. I could hardly believe my eyes. Some of the people who wrote nice notes to me were David from Malaysia, Mary from Arkansas, Keith from Salinas, Stephen from Hawaii, RRRobert from Tulsa and Maureen from Las Vegas.

You can't imagine what other places I heard from: Vimal from India. INDIA! Mercy sakes, I nearly had to lie down with a cold cloth on my head when I read that one. There was a nice message from David in Canada, Joanie in Ohio, Bill in Alabama, Brooks in Spokane and Randy in Texas.



There was also one from Anthony who is a member of the Pittsburg, Kansas club. I'll bet he doesn't know that there is a Past District Governor in your very own eClub who is married to a graduate of Pitt State University. Ms. Taylor of the eClub is married to PDG RRRon RRRoderique of District 5490 who is a Pitt State Gorilla. I have even heard that she is an honorary Gorilla.

As I went on I got so excited I had to stop and take my blood pressure. There were nice notes from Charles in Australia, Oscar in Monterrey, Mexico, and RRRobert in Brazil. I saw where RRRobert

used to be a member of the Colorado Springs North club. I'll bet he doesn't know that Ms. Taylor grew up and went to school in Colorado Springs! I read a nice comment by Judith from Wasilla, Alaska, Noel in the Philippines, and Elif in PARRIS, FRANCE! Imagine! The most romantic city in the world. There was even one from Kurt who tried to tell me he was from Lake Wobegon, but I know better. I think he is really from Glenwood, Minnesota.

Elizabeth in Nairobi, Africa, wants me to come visit her country and see the wild animals. Elephants, tigers, giraffes, zebras! Just think of it! I can hardly take it all in. I have never been farther away from Quaking Aspens than the time I drove to Denver with Miss Ima Gossip to fly to that Arizona city for the RRRotary district conference. To think that I can sit here in my little village of Quaking Aspens and get messages in my mailbox from these RRRotarians around the world is almost more than I can absorb. This eClub is very powerful, I believe.

I am so honored and happy to hear from all these wonderful people, and I do hope they will visit your club again in the future. My dark mood of earlier this morning had disappeared.

I suppose I will have to be very careful what I say if people from all over the world are going to read my column. I haven't even told Miss Ima Gossip yet about all my nice notes. She will tell everyone in town. I will have to have my medicinal spirits on hand when I relay THIS news to her. I confess I had to take a couple of sips from my flask myself when I finished reading the kind comments.

Enough about my international fame. Now back to business.

Today I will be writing a column on the RRRotary Four-Way Test. Many of you older members may simply quit reading here and talk among yourselves because I am sure you can already recite it from memory. I assume all you RRRotarians do use the four questions in your daily life, but one RRRotarian once told me that his club was so small that they only had a Three-Way-Test. Yet there may be some newer members who have never had it fully explained to them. This Four-Way Test is a set of questions we should ask ourselves about the things we think, say or do, as we deal with others.

This simple test goes way back to 1932 when RRRotarian Herbert Taylor was asked to take charge of a company that owed creditors over \$400,000 but only had assets of \$6,100. Now, that was a lot of money then; it was in the Depression. The company was Club Aluminum, which was a very good product. Mr. Taylor wanted something in his organization that his competitors did not have in equal amount. He wanted a code of ethics that would help everyone in the company ask themselves questions about whether their proposed plans, policies, statements or actions were right or wrong. He came up with the Four-Way Test and kept a copy of it under the glass on his desk. He checked everything that passed over his desk against those questions. From a bankrupt condition in 1932, in 20 years the company had paid its debts in full, had paid its stockholders over one million dollars in dividends and had a value of over two million dollars. All these rewards came from a cash investment of only \$6,100 and hard-working people practicing the Four-Way Test code of ethics. The Four-Way Test was adopted by RRRotary in 1943. It has been translated into more than 100 languages. Herb Taylor became president of RRRotary International in 1954-55.

Wouldn't it make you happy to know that every single company you deal with had a copy of the Four-Way-Test under the glass on the president's desk? I can surely think of many times it would have helped me in my dealings.

Now here are those four tests. Think of how you might apply them not only to your business but in your home, social and community life. I'll bet you will feel better and everyone around you will be happier.

First: IS IT THE TRRRUTH? Now, that one seems simple enough, don't you think? Well, sometimes it is a hard one to follow. When Miss Ima Gossip, our town clerk and my best friend, asks me, "Does this dress make me look fat?" I admit I am often in a quandary about how to answer her. I finally – truthfully – tell her no, it doesn't. I can say that because I think that she looks fat no matter what she is wearing. However, it would not pay to be so honest as to add that opinion, would it? That would simply be hurtful. If you are an antiques dealer, don't tell your customer that the blue and white Chinese vase in your shop is from the Ming period when you know very well it came from a cheap import store in the city. Another example would be for Mr. Goodscrewdriver to tell me the truth about the noise in my Edsel and not inflate the repair estimate when he looks at it.

Second: IT IS FAIRRR TO ALL CONCERRRNED? I'll tell you how I learned about this one. I have a younger brother. When we were little, sometimes he and I would scrap over the last piece of cake or pie. My mother settled this problem by having one of us divide the goodie in two and then letting the other one choose first. You have never seen such careful, honest cake and pie cutters as we were. It was also fair to my mother who then did not have to get involved in any dispute. A good example of not being fair to all concerned would have been if my brother ate all the cake and told my mother the dog did it. That would not be fair to me or to the dog. So, all of you RRRotarians should remember this story when you have to decide whether something you are going to say or do will assure that everyone involved is treated fairly. All businesses should abide by this adage, and they would have very happy customers. I hope that Page Turner at the Book Store & Office Supply reads this column when it comes out and decides to reconsider stocking ribbons and carbon paper.

Third: WILL IT BUILD GOOD WILL AND BETTERRR FRRRIENDSHIPS? Sometimes when we are in a bad mood like I am today with this "r" trouble, it is tempting to snap at others. Many friendships have been lost by a careless, unkind or hostile word said in haste. We all need all the friends we have these days, and it is wise to treat them well. Also, I think it is a good idea to be nice to those who don't like us. (It drives them crazy when you are.) If everyone in the world were to abide by this one rule, we would not only have more friends. We would have world peace. All the money now spent on bombs and war, planes and guns would be unnecessary, and those funds could instead build schools and hospitals and homes for the homeless. Just think about that.

Fourth: WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERRRNED? I think Page Turner at the Book Store & Office Supply needs to think about this one. It is not beneficial to me not to be able to purchase typewriter ribbons and carbon paper. It is not beneficial to her because she will not get the money I would spend for them. I think I will frame my copy of the Four-Way Test that was given to me by a RRRotarian at that district conference and tell Page she should hang it up in her shop. I'll bet every single one of you can think of at least one experience you have had where abiding by the Four-Way Test could have solved a problem.

Now I must put my Underwood in my Edsel and take it across the river into town to get the "r" repaired. It's just always something, isn't it? I hope the repairman can fix it soon and perhaps he will know who in town might still carry typewriter ribbons and carbon paper.

Some of the people in Quaking Aspens and Podunk Pines that I would like to have display the Four-Way-Test in their place of business are:

- Cash Teller at the First National Bank. I think it would be beneficial and fair for all the bank's customers to know that their money is safe, especially since the former manager, Rob deVault, left under a cloud of suspicion and money was missing.
- Phillip Fuller at the Quaking Aspens service station. Sometimes I suspect his gas pumps aren't working properly and short me when I fill my Edsel. I'd be more comfortable if he had the Four-Way-Test displayed.
- Willa Tell at the donut shop. She should stop telling Miss Ima Gossip that her donuts are low calorie and healthful, and maybe when Miss Ima asks me if her dress makes her look fat, I can say "no" without reservation because she won't be.
- Shirley Passiton at the drug store. I think if she had to look at the Four-Way-Test sign every day, she might be less likely to spread gossip. That would be beneficial to those who are targets of her tittle-tattle rumors, especially Bonnie Ann Shapely, last year's Miss Backwater County, because Shirley is jealous of her.
- Clevis Butcher at the Quaking Aspens grocery store. I am none too sure of the scale in his meat department. It would be beneficial for all his customers if he were to display the Test.
- Judge Will Playfair at the courthouse. It would be comforting to be certain that the judge will always take into account his duty to be fair to everyone who comes before him in court. He especially likes fining tourists for speeding when Sheriff Arrestem gives them a ticket while I have a suspicion he sometimes lets his cronies off the hook when they do the same.
- Cyrus Ulysses Last at the funeral home. I do think C. U. Last is an honest man, but a few folks in town have hinted that he removes the pillow from under the heads of some of his "customers" after the funeral and reuses it. I don't suppose his "client" cares, but it really isn't fair to the relatives, is it?
- Rose Wood (granddaughter of old Mrs. Holly Wood who passed away last year). She runs the Happy Days Movie House her grandmother left her. I have heard from both Shirley Passiton and Willa Tell that sometimes Rose shows RRR-rated movies late at night when the town council voted several years ago that only G-rated movies would be shown. If that is so, then she is not keeping true to the spirit of the Four-Way-Test, I'd vow.
- Mr. Mark Downs, manager of the Podunk Pines Wal-Mart. Because Mr. Downs runs such a large enterprise, I think more than most his customers need to know that he is being fair to all of them when they shop there.

Lastly, I believe that all used car dealers and politicians should have to hang a copy of the Four-Way Test in their offices and abide by them. I personally believe that many of them have trouble with all four questions.

You can see that even in a quiet, peaceful, little town high in the Rockies where nothing much seems to happen, we can still apply the Four-Way-Test every day. It's a lot like the Golden Rule, isn't it? Don't tell fibs, be fair in all your dealings, be nice to your friends (and those who aren't) and treat everyone as you want to be treated.

Oh, mercy sakes. I have run on and on and I must hurry over to the high school now as I have the honor of judging the cookie-baking contest at the Home Economics class. I do this every year, and it certainly gives me an opportunity to personally apply the RRRotary Four-Way Test. I will announce the winner in next week's column. I might even include the winner's recipe.
