

Commentary



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Our Views

Businesses in town are very giving

Sometimes large business can become a lightning rod for criticism. Wal-Mart is one of these businesses.

An internet search on the Arkansas based company highlights employee and labor issues, imports and globalization issues and the effects on a community's local economy when a Wal-Mart opens up. All of these issues have their critics and defenders and they can fill many columns all by themselves.

Instead, let us focus on how the Southington Wal-Mart is going out of its way to be a good neighbor.

As we highlighted last week, the Southington Wal-Mart has nurtured a history of giving in the community. Officials from the store have authorized donating thousands of dollars to many area charities and civic groups.

"The capability is there at every Wal-Mart," Wal-Mart Personnel Manager Beth Egliskis said in a recent interview with The Observer. "I've adopted this town as my own. I really love it here."

Egliskis' love of Southington has shown, as Wal-Mart has aided the Southington Relay for Life, the American Legion and Southington Community Services, just to name a few.

The "Live Well Krew," Wal-Mart's team for the recent Relay for Life event helped to raise over \$6,000. The fundraising for the relay



Ed Harris
Thoughts around town

goes on for months beforehand.

The American Legion recently received \$1,500 from the store to help purchase and send supplies for troops serving overseas.

The box-store giant routinely holds food drives where employees bring in food that is then donated to the Community Services Department.

Southington's Wal-Mart was recognized for its community service in 2008 when it received the YMCA's "Reaching Out" award.

"They have helped us many times over in the last several years," said Rachel Wache, president of the American Legion Auxiliary in a recent interview with The Observer. "Quite honestly, I'm not sure what we would do without Wal-Mart. They are phenomenal."

Other corporations in

Southington are also aiding those in need.

As was also noted last week, Price Chopper Supermarkets in Connecticut have banded together to support the families affected in the Hartford Distributors tragedy. Associates and customers have been participating in several fundraising efforts these past few weeks, from taking cash donations at the registers, selling hot dogs, chips and soda, to the associates donating for a dress-down weekend.

Spearheaded by the Southington store's Customer Service manager Kim Bryant, the stores have managed to raise \$4,397. With The Price Chopper/Golub Corporation matching all donations up to \$5,000, they are hoping for a donation of \$10,000.

The list goes on and on.

Stop & Shop is a longtime sponsor of the Italian American Festival. Rita's Ice has several fundraisers every year, including most recently for the Twin Angels Foundation.

Outback and TD Homers have stepped up to bat for Southington schools, raising or donating money for many different endeavors. Every few weeks during the school season The Observer is sent photos and releases by the schools in relation to the fundraisers.

While we are on the subject of

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Stay safe on the school bus

Southington students returned to school earlier this week. Monday, August 30 officially marked the end of summer, at least in the eyes of Southington students.

Over the last few weeks, The Observer has printed the public, private and parochial school bus routes. Besides the amount of pages they encompassed, we noticed that many of the bus routes have a high number of stops, which could leave students on the bus for an extended amount of time.

Because of this, we wanted to offer some bus safety tips to make the ride to and from school safe and enjoyable for everyone. Though much of the following may be common knowledge for older students, there are numerous kindergartners who will mark their first trip on a school bus next week.

The following is some tips from First Student, Inc., the nation's leader in student transportation.

Remain alert at all times. Do not listen to your MP3 players, text, talk on your cell phone or play handheld video games because you won't be aware of what's happening around you.

Also be careful when wearing your hood up, as it makes it difficult to see around you.

Be extra careful when crossing in front of the bus.

Don't wear clothes with toggles or dangling key chains. They can get caught in the bus doors or on the handrail.

Know your driver's name and your bus number to be sure you are boarding the right bus.

Be courteous and respectful to your driver. Safely getting children to and from school is a tremendous responsibility that drivers take very seriously.

Choose a bus "buddy" ahead of time so when you get on the bus you recognize a familiar face.

Have fun with your friends, but don't be loud or get out of your seat as it may distract the driver.

Be courteous to fellow riders. If a student repeatedly bothers you, tell your bus driver. They are there to help.

Understanding what to expect can help ensure a positive school bus experience.

Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D., child psychologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, believes that a bus ride can be a wonderful opportunity for children to socialize. He suggests that parents role play with their children to get them to practice meeting new kids and interacting with them on the school bus.

Besides being the safest mode of school transportation, riding on the bus can also be a treasured, memorable experience.

In a 2009 survey conducted for First Student, nearly half of adults surveyed readily recalled personal school bus memories and 39 percent still remember the name of their school bus driver.

Here's to a safe and happy school year.



Time just flies by at warp speed

Two days ago I said, "Wow, can you believe August is over?! What happened to the summer?!"

No more than two days before that, or so it seems, I said, "Wow, can you believe July is over?! What happened to the first half of summer?!"

And seemingly no more than two days before that, I said something to the effect, "Wow, where did June go?!"

I'm starting to notice a pattern.

The months are ticking by as frequently as Lindsay Lohan tosses back a shot of tequila. As often as Linda McMahon stuffs another pile of glossy campaign fliers in my mailbox. As often as Joe Biden utters something profoundly dumb. As often as Sarah Palin says, "You betcha!" As often as Mayor Jarjura pushes to the front of the line at a Chinese buffet restaurant. As often as a certain columnist strings together a series of "As often as" comments in a feeble attempt to be clever.

OK, OK, that's enough with the "As often as" stuff, don't you agree? You betcha.

They don't make months like they used to. I can remember a time when you could count on at least 30 full days in each and every month. Except February, of course, which comes at a fairly lousy time of year, so you don't really mind seeing March 1st roll around, with it's hope that spring will indeed arrive and the four-foot piles of snow on the sides



Bill Dunn
Laugh or Death

of your driveway finally will melt away before you catch yourself saying, "Wow, can you believe July is over?!"

But now, a month seems to be no longer than a week—and a short week at that. Talk about inflation!

Time is not just flying by these days. It is traveling at warp speed.

I think it's due to a little known addendum to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. As you all know, the main part of the Theory deals with Einstein's discovery that time and space are relative. He discovered this phenomenon when his in-laws came to visit, and suddenly the size of his house seemed to shrink and the passage of time seemed to stand still. At first, the brilliant physicist planned to call his finding the Theory of Relatives. But a colleague at Princeton suggested he instead use the word Relativity.

Anyway, a subsection of the main theory states that the perceived passage of time accelerates in direct proportion to one's quantity of ear hair. In other words, as you get older, time flies by faster.

My wife reminded me this is the same topic I wrote about almost two decades ago in one of the first humor columns I ever had published. (But it seems like only two days ago!!) That was when I first heard those cherished words of encouragement from my family members and friends: "Um, Bill, was that supposed to be funny?" Ah yes, I still hear that helpful comment quite often even to this day.

When I addressed this subject for the first time, I was in my mid-30s. And I actually thought time was flying by too fast back then? Sheesh. What a dope. If I had only known then what I know now. (For one thing, I would've bought Google stock instead of General Motors stock. Yet another brilliant financial decision on my part.)

In conclusion, I'm afraid it will seem like a mere two days from now when we all will be saying, "Wow, can you believe the Holiday Season is here again?!"

So let me be the first to say, "Merry Christmas." If it seems a bit premature, just wait a few moments.

Bill Dunn is a freelance writer who resides in Torrington. He can be reached via his Web site at: www.boomertrek.com.