**That Was The Week That Was (TW3)**

The title of this article is the name of a TV show from the early 1960’s that originated in Britain and migrated to the United States. The show was about the events of the previous week and showed the summary news of the week in a satirical, comical presentation. The events of my last week seemed to fall into the category of events that fit the description of items for that TV show.

The Shower: The shower valve in our bathroom had been sticky for 20 years. Chris was taking a shower one fine morning when she yelled for help. The shower valve did not turn off the water and was spewing water itself. The only solution was to turn off the water supply for the whole house, which was easy to do since I could just turn off the red handle coming into the house. I called a recommended plumbing company and they were able to show up within two hours. I asked them to bring a new valve. The person showed up, looked at the problem and said I needed a new shower valve. It could be installed that day, but he would have to remove some of the tile to install it at a cost of $2500. I refused this estimate and called my friend Bill, the plumber. We took apart the surface plate and found that the previous valve had two parts, one side had connections to the hot, cold, and shower outlet. Screwed into that side was the valve that mixed and adjusted the water temperature. We unscrewed that half, went to the plumbing supply place, and purchased the replacement part for $75. That part came with a new gasket and six new screws. It got installed in 10 minutes and it did not leak at all. The action was really smooth and it mixed the water without sticking like the old one did. We never could adjust the temperature well with the old one.

The Van: We have a 1989 Dodge Ram Wagon that was suitable for taking family vacations with 2 adults and 4 children. It later was also useful for Girl Scout outings and moving Andy and Emily to and from college. Later it was the vehicle of choice for camping trips and various outings. It should have been replaced long ago, but due to Federal Regulations on corporate gas mileage, a large gasoline powered vehicle was effectively outlawed. This year it was due for a smog check in the State of California. The first step was to get a oil change. I used the working air conditioning on the way there since it was a desirable hot day. After stopping at the oil change, the car would not start at all, not even a click. The car was jumped and behaved until the next evening when the engine again just stopped and the car needed another jump. Our usual auto mechanic said that the car had a carburetor leak and was idling too fast for a smog check and needed $900 worth of repair before he could even check out the rest. That made no sense, so I took the van to the parts place for a new battery. However, the van failed anyway the next morning. After another jump, I took it to another private repair place where they kept it for a day and found that the cable to the battery was defective. The repair cost was $100. The idle returned to its previous slow rate. I now tried to find a Red Star Smog Check location. The first six locations that I tried all had defective test equipment and could not do the test for a vehicle that old (or so they said). I finally found a gas station that would do the check, and the van passed. That means we can keep using it for the next two years.

Soccer World Cup: In the past for both the Men’s and Women’s soccer World Cup, I have run a pool where points are awarded for predicting the results of the tournament from the round qualifiers (1 point) through the knock-out rounds (2,3,4 points) to the final winner (5 points). I was planning not to do that this year, but as the World Cup approached, I received Email requests to continue the tradition. I had to adhere to my fan club request, so I prepared and sent out the usual scoring prediction sheets. Much to my surprise, this year had 18 entrants for the event (the most ever).

The Subaru: I am still driving my dad’s 1990 Subaru Legacy. While it was parked on the street, some people out on a walk were looking sadly at the car. When I approached them, they pointed out that all the tires were devoid of any tread on the outside of the tire. They said that if the car was on a wet road, I would have little traction on a curve. Wise guy me said, well, I will get new tires by the rainy season in three months. The next day I was on the freeway interchange making a gradual right turn at speed, when I felt the car slip out to the side on a dry road. UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED (the title of Ralph Nader’s book about the Corvair) immediately came to mind as a red flag. The next day, I drove slowly to the tire shop and got all 4 tires replaced. The analysis from the shop was that the tires had been under-inflated and that the suspension was still in good shape. I was relieved.

Avocado Picking: Last year, I sold most of my Hass avocado crop to the souvenir stand at the end of the railroad line. They took all of my avocados that I had with me. When I showed up this year with a larger crop, they only wanted a few boxes. They had raised prices for their customers, but had not increased the amount they gave me for avocados and purchased fewer because they sold less. I was really tired after picking lots of avocados, and I also selected the larger sizes for that stand. Afterwards, we went to a Mexican restaurant in Santa Paula. When we asked for guacamole, they had none. After some discussion, the cook bought a box of avocados. There were still so many avocados remaining on the trees so I decided to attempt to sell the rest of the avocados commercially since I did not have enough energy to spend a lot of time and effort picking.

The Cat and the Fish: When Emily left for Portland at the beginning of May, she took her cat, Juju, with her. It did not take long before the squirrel that used to walk along the top of the fence to the trees in the back to learn the direct route through the yard. The gophers decided to populate the front slope where the cat used to patrol. One of the agreements when the cat left was to give away the fish tank since it was a maintenance problem while we were on vacation. I had to get the fish guy to come over and clean the tank, and then Chris’ fishing buddy’s son wanted the tank and the fish. The living room now looks vacant without the cat and the fish present. Both the carpet there and the flooring in the kitchen are in need of replacement.

Income Tax: June 15 is when the payment for estimated taxes is due for the federal and state government. When I looked at the projected taxes for the 2018 year, I was astounded to find that my taxes had increased by 20%. I was surprised at the amount of the increase and the complexity of the new rules. I thought the new taxes were supposed to be simpler and smaller for the people. Apparently, I am not one of those people that would benefit from the new tax law. Most of the people that I discuss taxes with are becoming worse off financially with the new tax law.

The conclusion of the TW3 TV show was always the same: “It is over, let it go!” Good advice.