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The Party Animal News

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Entomophobia & more

Goodbyes can be hard sometimes. This November my wife had to give up the car that her mother had handed down after she passed. It's been 10 years and we've put 110,000 miles on it, but after repeated mechanical issues the writing was on the wall. The car, a 2004 Camry, had always been durable. It's taken us on numerous cross country family trips to Florida, as a matter of fact our trips to west Texas almost equaled that in miles. And when we would take cross ocean trips for pest control meetings or pleasure like to Hawaii or Scotland, we could always count on it to start up after leaving it in airport long term parking regardless of the amount of ice covering it or the number of 110 degree plus days it had to endure.

Replacing our hardy old Toyota was an emotional process that was compounded by the fact that my wife dislikes the car buying process intensely, which I could explain as a phobia. Phobias cover a broad spectrum. Once a customer with a particular rat phobia explained her fears stemmed from when she as a child witnessed a rat aggressively jump on her father. Other people describe growing up in low income environments and developing a specific fear of seeing even a single roach. Even my brother developed a bit of arachnophobia after seeing a huge tarantula trudging through the garden of our childhood home. While I'm thankfully not scared of any type of pest, any college medical entomology class can remind you how important it is to address any pest control problems rather than avoiding or ignoring them. Simply ignoring the problem out of the fear of having to deal with it can put you in even more serious danger health wise.

So explaining my wife's disconcertion with buying a car is fairly simple. Her parents, who have both since passed, were children of the Great Depression and as a result her family was frugal, and only bought cars sparingly. So for them buying a car was quite an occasion. A little girl in a smelly car dealership all day with only Dodge Darts to look at, it might have been traumatic even for me.

I, on the other hand, always had a great time buying trucks with my father. At one point in the 60s he had his own fleet of 8 or more trucks zipping through the metroplex dealing with as many pest problems as possible. Every time we went to the Friendly Chevrolet on Beckley Ave in Oak Cliff I was having the time of my life. While my Dad sparred with the salesman, I was checking out the 60s beauties like the Camaro or the Corvette. The only unhappy person in that scenario was the salesperson wiping off my fingerprints from all the cars I was "driving".

Pest of the Quarter:

Honey Bee



We will be trying to save another honeybee colony in December and it will be interesting to see how they behave.

Honeybees can make it through the winter but they do need care. A. I. Root wrote about bee colonies in the late 19th century and for someone with no formal education he had a scientific mind on the care of bee colonies.

Control: More customers are requesting bee removal control versus chemical eradication.

Not all aversions are easily explained, however. Occasionally our company encounters people with definable psychological issues. Once a lady called our company claiming she was being infested by insects that simply weren't there. Unfortunately, she had a mental disorder known as "delusional parasitosis", that is the false belief her house was being infested with pests. While the causes of delusional parasitosis aren't well understood, my interviews with the afflicted indicate a past experience contributing to the problem. Aside from confirming that there is no real world infestation, there simply isn't much a pest control operator can do in this scenario.

Ann found a car at the state fair she liked, so I simply went to the car dealership alone. The salesman agreed to drive the car with me to my home so my wife could test drive it. The final paperwork included the manager telling us, "welcome to the cult." My phobia is being controlled by something like a cult. But, it's her car not mine, so for now I'm safe.

Happy Holidays,

David

"Rats" by Morgan Spurlock (the Supersize Me guy)

Not for the squeamish. In this documentary Morgan Spurlock, explores the varying degrees of disgust and acceptance of rats in different countries around the world. As it turns out there are many countries "fine" with living around rats (no big surprise to people who watched "The Amazing Race"). While we consider rats dangerous vectors of disease, in Vietnam some people consider rat a good meal. In India on the other hand there are temples swarming with rats where they are worshiped. Biased as I am though, I doubt I'll be adopting any of those customs soon. During the whole movie I was thinking more about how we could treat the rat infestations on screen.

We VALUE our customers!

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David, Emile and his sons
with his PiChiOmega honorary

“Old soldiers never die, they just fade away”... MacArthur

Some readers have been confused in the past about Emile Pappas. They thought he was a relative. He is one of my best friends in the industry.

Emile was recently given an honorary membership to the professional pest control fraternity Pi Chi Omega. The fraternity was established in 1950 at Purdue University to increase the educational level of people in pest control. I have been a member since 1982, when I graduated from Purdue. Emile Pappas educated many in the pest control industry over the years with detailed slide presentations and workshop books. He might not have been a college professor, but he was a true educator, and I am proud to see his accomplishments acknowledged in this way.

As a friend, he has shared with me some great stories of his war experiences. With my visit with him Saturday, I know those stories may never be told again. They have faded away. With the help of my family we are digitizing Emile’s vast collection of videos and slides so his educational pest control contributions will not be lost.



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