

NOTHING TURNS HEADS LIKE NEW NOTCH-BACK PICKUP TRUCKS 11/09/99

The reaction to dropping a tree on my new truck was all I expected. It has elicited a wide range of comments, few of which proffered little solace. As one would expect, most of them were undisguised expressions of pure joy that confirmed a statement I made in my account of the incident. If you can dish it out you better be able to take it.

The dust had no more than settled when daughter Lisa was on the phone settling old scores. A quick call to Roger Perkins was answered with, "I would have given a thousand dollars to have been there." He followed up with a quick call to me for a "full report".

I gave him the bad news sparing myself none of the responsibility. My plea to please keep the whole affair low key was answered with outright derision. He had a long list of names on the kitchen table and was calling all of them with the news.

Needless to say, his reaction was typical especially from those I have jabbed a little in the past. My first stop at Walt's Diner was hard, but not half as tough as it would have been if Wait had been there. His countenance almost made the whole episode worthwhile when he finally caught up with me. He could not wait for me to get in the Diner, charging across the road with dire predictions of how long it would be before I ever lived it down. All facts that I was already painfully aware of.

Initially I thought of how fortunate I was to be able to drive it until **it** can be repaired. My optimism had been tempered somewhat by the attention it garners in my travels. "You sure have guts to drive that around uptown," is one often-heard remark.

I have had many suggestions with one of the best coming from Claude Lecours. He suggested I keep it locked up where no one could see it and charge everyone for a look. Run it out, let them look and put it away for the next customer, I can see now why he has been such a successful businessman.

Ivan Kaye told me Bill Payne could not believe I featured the mishap in my column, with a picture to boot. He allowed as how he might be capable of such a debacle but not stupid enough to put it in the paper.

I drove it to Cooperstown via Utica yesterday and was the center of attention whenever I parked. I was honest enough to tell them a damn fool dropped a tree on it.

The misadventure was not a total loss. I have subsequently learned my blunder is not unique or isolated in our locality. In fact, quite a few of my friends and acquaintances have been involved in similar incidents. I of course am reluctant to report any of them here. Unless you would care to come forward and share some of the shame and humiliation with me, that is. Confess, it will be good for your soul. If my experience is any indicator, It will provide a great deal of hilarity for your friends and acquaintances.

For those who are afraid I may run out of damn fool high-jinx, relax. My latest was making two trips up in the woods combing the leaves and debris for a lost hunting knife, including one trip with a borrowed metal detector.

I found it afterward on the floor of one of the closets in the house, thanks to the Ginkgo Biloba my wife insists I take. It promotes healthy brain function.

I dread tomorrow when the whole episode takes on a new dimension. We have a timber sale showing with a group of loggers.