
190 Duration

Handy Hephaestus

The rock, the vulture, and the chain, from *Prometheus*
All that the proud can feel of pain, by Lord Byron (1788-1824)

Fire flickers throughout Greek mythology. Zeus, chief of the ancient gods, hired Prometheus to make men. Feeling sorry for his creation, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to mortal man. His punishment, poetically paraphrased by Byron above: to be chained to a rock and have his liver eaten out every day by a vulture, growing a new one at night for prolonged pain.

Zeus wasn't yet done tormenting Prometheus for giving men fire. He ordered Hephaestus, the god of fire and blacksmithing, to punish man for all time by making him a wife. Out of his shop, made from clay, emerged the original woman, Pandora. Women get a lot of bad press early on in the written world. In Christian mythology, the first woman, a subversive conniver named Eve, for her transgressions the Lord said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing." Yikes, talk about generation-forward punishment.

Fire, violence, and gristly combinations were important cultural ingredients to the Aztecs as well. They believed that the world had already been destroyed four times, and the only thing preventing the fifth and final apocalypse was The Fire Ceremony. Performed every 52 years (one Aztec century, or sun), the ceremony offered up a human sacrifice. They cut out the person's heart and started a fire in their chest. If it worked, the sun would come up the next day and the world would continue. Whew, close call.

Hephaestus ran a flaming workshop with an anvil and 20 bellows. When his wife Aphrodite kept cheating on him with the war god Ares, he made an invisible, unbreakable net of silver and trapped the promiscuous couple. What then?

Dr. Phil might ask, "Why ever did you weave your wife a golden girdle bestowing to her irresistible charms to all men?"



Flame on, Johnny! Chemolene in a rosebud is the ideal heating/bending torch, cheaper and safer than acetylene ----- and total domination of secondary flame temperature.

Until next issue,

Tom Hull

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Success Story

John Hooper

Graduated: from SU in 1991

Married: with three kids

Owner: Good Vibrations

*"Disorder in the house
It's a fate worse than fame
Even the Lhasa Apso seems to be
ashamed" --- Warren Zevon*



No shame in those eyes!

So blasts the 4 strategically placed stereo speakers such that nobody in our 10,000 sq. foot shop gets cheated on volume. Thanks to John Hooper and his Roseburg business *Good Vibrations* for all the sound equipment in my trucks, shops and home for the last 15 years. Ha! Making all those speaker boxes in Mr. Kruzic's woodshop class in high school paid off!

Asked what success means, he wrote, "That is a way heavier question than you make it sound ... I think the world should judge success by a happy meter, not a financial meter." Of course, that begets an even harder problem of defining happiness. For John, it begins with "being content and happy with the career you choose." You know it when you see it, to quote the famous.

Not done with my interrogational catechism, when prodded for advice for young people he deferred to a preacher's analogy ... *Life is like a pickup truck, everything you do gets thrown in the bed, ex-wives, bad financial decisions, etc. The choices you make in life, you have to haul them around. They might not ride in the cab with you, but they are always there in the bed.*

In the end, John threw in the towel on defining success and opted for the thousand word image to the right ... their newest family addition.

About his own picture above, are you kidding? Give me the photo choice between "John at the office" and "John at the party?"



This is success!

Here's How: Tips from the Field

Playing With Fire - Safety in the Shop

Little four-year-old granddaughter Megan's eyes opened wide as I unloaded tools to build a pantry at her house. As the chop saw, pin gun, air compressor and bag full of cordless tools appeared, she demanded, "I want to help!"

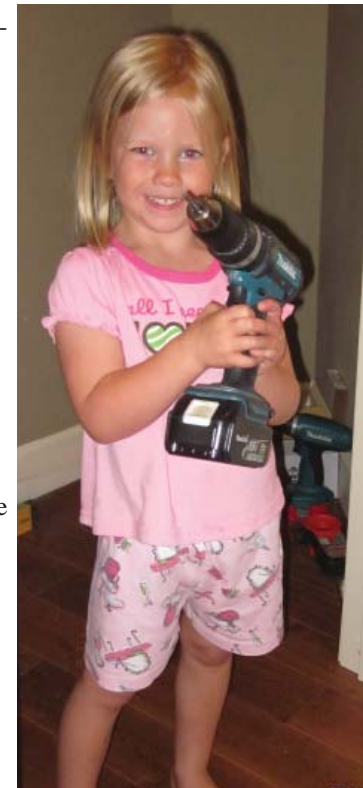
Tools and young learners, like high school kids, pose unique safety issues. First, tools, like wild beasts, if approached wrong, will bite. Sometimes lethally. Second, young people are astoundingly unaware of worldly dangers. Yesterday, I saw a group of kids walk behind a truck on a hill. There were two feet between the bumper of the truck and a concrete wall. The novice driver was preparing to let off the brake and engage the clutch, certain to roll back and pinch teenage bodies. The Sword of Damocles.

Shop teachers soon learn the subtleties of hand and body placement. A slight change in position can instantly turn a safe situation dangerous. How fast does an accident occur? So fast it's over before it begins. Pinch points are the hardest safety hazard to teach because it requires analyzing each situation encountered. Not something that can be tested on a multiple choice exam, pinch points are the most common cause in industry of losing body parts.

Megan was intrigued with the tool sounds, mimicking each tool throughout the day. Weeee weee for the the cordless, Ka-poo Ka-poo for the pin gun, often adding the exclamation, "I wike that sound." That's fine, but know where to place your off-hand fingers before the trigger is pulled.

Knowledgeably applied, ears are essential safety guards. From table saws to acetylene torches, there are sounds you don't want to hear, and you better act fast when they occur. Sound never lies.

So, did little Megan use that Makita 18-volt lithium wrist-twister in her hand? Sure, but my hand was right on hers and the clutch was set for screwing and not drilling. A safe day as long as somebody knows what evil lurks in the hearts of tools.



I wike that sound!