



Country philosopher

It's none of my business, but. . .

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

We can never say, outright, that advice is useless. Where would we be, and how hard our path through life, if our parents hadn't advised us? Those dear old folks took their years of trial and error and turned it into wisdom that they generously shared with their children. They advised us against the folly of playing with matches. They told us of the tragedy that could ensue if we ran into the street. Their advice was solid and we deeply appreciated their concern.

But not all advice is good. There are millions of people who have failed miserably in the everyday pursuit of living... and yet these same people will tell you.. emphatically ..how to run your life. Their advice comes free and constantly.

If I am told that a bridge is out on a certain road and that it would be wise for me take a detour...then I heed that advice. If I am told that a certain store will bring me great savings, then I listen.

But the thing that drags me down, that lowers my cholesterol level, are these people who lavish advice when they don't know what they're talking about. They simply have the compulsion to advise and nothing is going to stop them.

I went to the store yesterday with my daughter. I stood at a counter in one of our better shops and picked up a pair of

blue socks.

"That's sort of stupid," said Jessica.

"What's stupid?"

"Blue socks are stupid. Ye Gads, father, don't you realize your eyes are blue?"

I felt a twinge of dissatisfaction with myself. How could I possibly have considered blue socks when my eyes were blue? And then I felt a twinge of what-in-the-hell-is-going-on-here...because blue socks would go magnificently with my blue suit and wouldn't go all that bad with my blue eyes.

"I think I'll take the blue socks anyway."

"That," hissed Jessica, "is your business."

There is not one move you can make in this life without someone telling you that their way is better. I went into the Pharmacy the other day and I was just reaching for a tube of Crest when a perfectly strange voice said, "Does Crest contain nitroglycerin?"

I turned around (in great apprehension) and replied, "No, all it has is stannous fluoride."

The person who had spoken, an old man, got up in my ear, and whispered, "You're wasting your money. BRIGHT-SMILE contains nitroglycerin and small explosions blow the tartar from your teeth."

In cowardly compliance I put the Crest back on the shelf and bought a large tube of BRIGHT-SMILE. When I got outside, and out of sight of the old man, I threw the tube of BRIGHT-SMILE up against the nearest wall. There was a terrific explosion and I don't know about BRIGHT-SMILE removing tartar but it sure as hell demolished the Bell Motor Company.

I was having trouble with my boss and a co-worker said, "You don't have to take that stuff. Just go in there and tell that old fool to keep his mouth shut." I took the advice. I really told my boss off. The old man stood there with a look of shock on his face. Then he had a look of anger on his face. Then he had a look of hatred on his face. Then he fired me.

The advice I really hate is that which overcomes you when you are thinking of getting a different car. You have picked out a brand new red Pontiac.

"Damn it, Amos, don't get a red Pontiac. Especially a brand new red Pontiac. They have a tendency to lose all four wheels when passing through small towns. And believe me...red can get awfully dirty."

So you change your mind. You will get a used Ford Pinto.

"Look, Amos, it's none of my business but getting a used car is just plain stupid. Why would you want to

inherit other people's troubles? It's a known fact that used Ford Pintos lose their fenders when it rains."

"Maybe you're right."

"Of course I'm right. What color were you going to get?"

"Blue."

"Lordy, Amos, don't you know that blue picks up dirt awfully easy?"

So you decide to get a used car that is almost brand new. You decide on an automatic shift.

"Come on, Amos, are you nuts? Automatic transmissions are costly, always break down, and sometimes they drive the connecting rod directly into your heart."

Well, in that case, a standard shift.

"What? A standard shift? Are you nuts? A standard shift is much too costly. You will be replacing the clutch every ten miles."

And so, my friends, this is the way it goes. Over and over again. Advice from every single person you come in contact with. I, myself, would never give advice on what kind of car to buy. The act, itself, is too personal. You, and you alone, know what is best suited for you. It would be utterly asinine for me to foster my opinions to others.

The only advice I would feel free to give is not to, on the spur of the moment, go out and buy a new Cadillac.

Especially a green one.