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School board meetings have been taking up a lot of my time. Special sessions have fallen two or three times a month. Our school houses have become too small to meet the enrollment. In order to keep from double decking the kids, we have been forced to start a building program.

To finance the program, a bond issue was passed. As one of the senior men on the board, opponents of the bonds selected me to absorb their dissatisfaction.

Telephone time was logged into the 50 minute range. One old gal called about my wife's dog breaking her screen door. She did so well on the dog complaint that she threw in an extra 20 minutes of criticism on her school taxes.

She'd have made an excellent prospect for a scuba diver. Throughout the full course of the conversation, she never once had to pause for air.

Most of the time during the heated monologues, I draw pictures on a scratch pad or make up epitaphs. I like to think of things like, "Thanks to Ma Bell, old sister so-and-so could spread plenty of hell. Now that she's gone we can take a new lease and for the first time, rest in peace."

Though the saying would be too long for a stone cutter, I draw squares around it and put hearts and angles on the boundaries. Time passes faster when you have a pencil and pad. My ear lining gets tired, but I survive unscathed.

School board members also have experienced enriching personal encounters with the citizens. An hombre down at the post office became so generous with his disapproval of our actions that he attached an expletive to the phrase "a bunch of lying ..." so deftly that I wondered why the school hadn't selected such a tasteful wordsmith to deliver the commencement address.

Public servants can't afford to talk back to a voter. The scowl I gave him was due to the cross lighting from the post office windows.

Andrew Jackson got named "Old Hickory" for using a walking stick on hombres much more discreet, but in this age of peace, Mr. Jackson wouldn't make .09 on the Gallup rating.

Sharp retorts always come late. On the way to the ranch, I reflected on the gentleman's charge. How I would have liked to have said, "Kind sir, why don't you just stuff it up your farm to market."

Such phraseology is a bad sign in boardmen. Old board hands grow strange. The last one to resign suggested that the gymnasium be converted to a kindergarten room. I've sat close to some of them in whom, at a late meeting, you could hear birds singing in their heads and noises like a musical saw playing in their stairways.

I don't think the fellow at the post office really meant what he said. At that time, one member of the board was so big that he was cramped to pass through a normal size door frame. I know I was dissatisfied with the new stop signs around Mertzson until I heard the mayor was an ex-boxing champion. After I was better informed of the mayor's past, I fully endorsed all of his programs. I imagine if the post office critic had assessed who was on the board, he would have been delighted to assist Reader's Digest to do an article praising the board's integrity.

Conditions will change when the new building is completed. Soreheads will heal. Folks will be proud of their contribution to education. I'll miss doing the art work, but will be glad to get some sleep.