

San Angelo parking meters run for different lengths of time. Down by the post office, it's one deal; over in the courthouse area, it's another one. I have to ask every time I park, since I don't keep a map or chart on the Wool Capital's machine.

I do know that cruising around looking for a parking space costs what it used to take to finance a polar expedition. Gasoline grinders make tellers look like cheap skills. Idling jets on modern carburetors burn more than the designers of the Sherman tank though was needed for their first unit.

Thus, trips to downtown areas had better be planned in advance. Yesterday, I had an afternoon appointment with a lawyer. Fixers, as you know, work by the hour. Tradition and ethics of the profession are that the attorney holds the clock and the client takes a tight grip on the arm of his chair.

It's all a secret method of billing. I operate under the assumption the track record anywhere on this earth can be beat if the man or the horse running owns the stopwatch. I'd be reluctant to say that a lawyer has an advantage, but I will chump off and say that more folks have been hurt playing blindfold bluff wearing the handkerchief than going around with both eyes open.

Anyhow, I was in a terrible hurry to be at the lawyer's office on time, but luck failed. I had to stop to ask a couple of fellows loafing in front of the building how to satisfy the parking meter.

Haste, or the sight of such, meant nothing to these hombres. The other wanted to know where I'd bought my cap. The other wanted to know how much my cousin Goat Whiskers the Younger was asking for a second-hand German car that he'd hospitalized three years ago.

The cap, I explained, was inherited from my Uncle Goat Whiskers. Caps not being subject to titles or patents, I couldn't give the sovereignty except that they'd better believe that Uncle Goat Whiskers never owned anything that had a lien or a title defect.

As to the secondhand German car, I suggested they contact Young Whiskers. Young Whiskers, being well into adulthood, considered competent by the community and courts, and versed in the same tongue as themselves, was capable of trading his own secondhand cars by either telephone or post.

I got five nickels from a lady in a jewelry store, She didn't care where my cap came from or whether my cousin sold cars. On the way back, however, one of the sidewalk crew followed me to the meter to ask how much old so-and-so wanted for his ranch out close to Mertzon.

Upstairs, a high priced arranger was waiting. I'd already dropped the last nickel in the slot. Child Who Sits in the Sun was loose on the town with a free-spending friend of hers, forming a team that would bring down the examiners on the Chase Manhattan National Bank.

"He wants \$8800 an acre for his ranch plus a thousand a foot for the highway frontage, in cash. I'll sell you Whiskers' secondhand car for three million with a guaranteed title. Mister, I'll give you this cap if you'll just let me go."

Subscribers criticize the daily newspapers for failing to cover the scene. Sidewalk press conferences milk the news before professional reporters can leave their desks. Backyard gossips and coffee sessions offer too much competition.

It must have cost \$30 to park. I'm going to find a lawyer who works at night, in the suburbs.