

Celebrating 55 years of Murphy...

Listening to the radio on my way to work this week, I learned it was the 55th anniversary of the age-old 'Murphy's Law.'

The law (If anything can go wrong, it probably will) apparently originated at Edwards Air Force Base in 1948 at the North Base.

Named after U.S. Air Force engineer Capt. Edward Murphy, the so-called law was born after he commented on a not-so-competent technician who royally screwed up some aspect of the design while working on a project with him. Murphy was reported to have said, "If there is any way to do it wrong, that guy will damn well find it."

Shortly afterwards, an Air Force spokesman gave a press conference concerning the project, and during the question and answer period, reported that "The team's good safety record on the project was due to a firm belief in Murphy's Law and in the necessity to try and circumvent it."

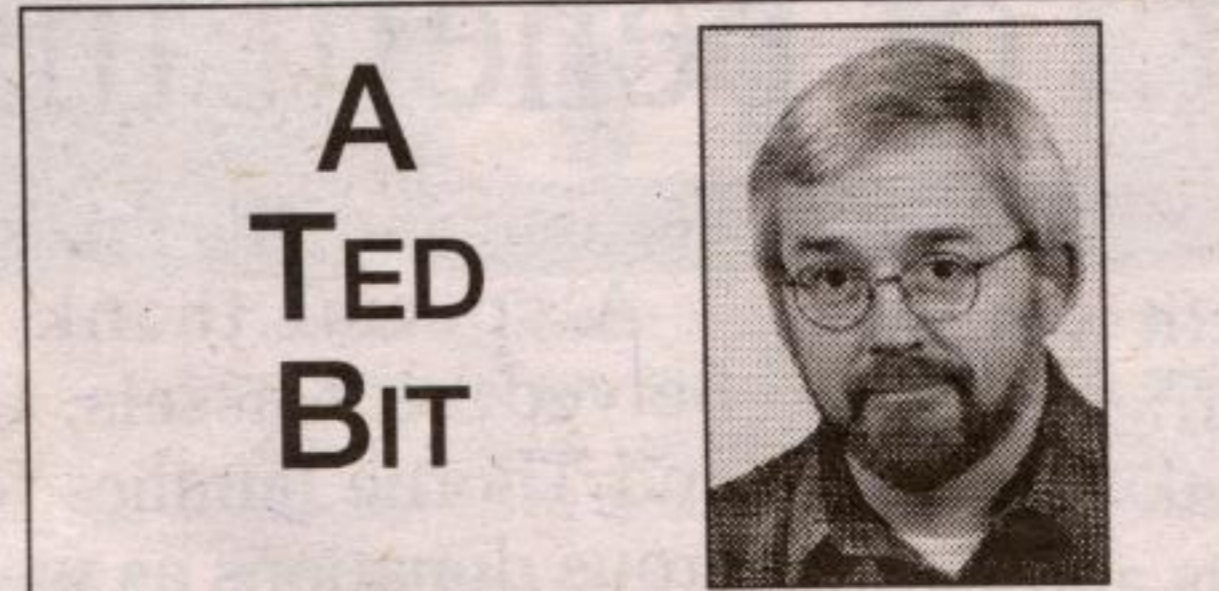
The old adage, "If you can't dazzle them with your brilliance, ya gotta baffle them with bull...", well you know..." was obviously also implemented that day. The rest is history.

Out of the famed Capt. Murphy's mouth came the basis for all the pessimists in the world to unite, drawn together by the bond that failing is not really their fault because some outside force, called Murphy's Law, interfered with the grand scheme of things.

Unlike the laws of physics, like those created by Newton or Pythagoras' Theorem, (all based on proven facts— geez, my old physics teacher Mr. Beer would be so proud of me right now) Murphy's Law is based on the unknowns— or the fear that they may exist.

The radio program featured people calling in with their own versions of Murphy's Law.

As they spouted off their personal idioms,



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I thought of a few of my own variations of the U.S. engineer's pessimism-based rule.

For example, in the newspaper office:

If a computer in the office can crash, it will happen just prior to deadline.

If a real estate agent sets up an appointment to have a house photographed, it will always occur when the sun is behind it.

Camera batteries never die when you're not using them, only when you need them for that Pulitzer Prize-winning shot.

If you can spell a kid's name two ways, the one you pick will be wrong.

If the printer is going to run out of paper, it will happen while printing your document.

Anything that can go wrong, will, one hour before the three-day weekend starts.

And in everyday living:

The unexplained noise you've heard under the hood of your car for two days will quit the moment you pull into the garage.

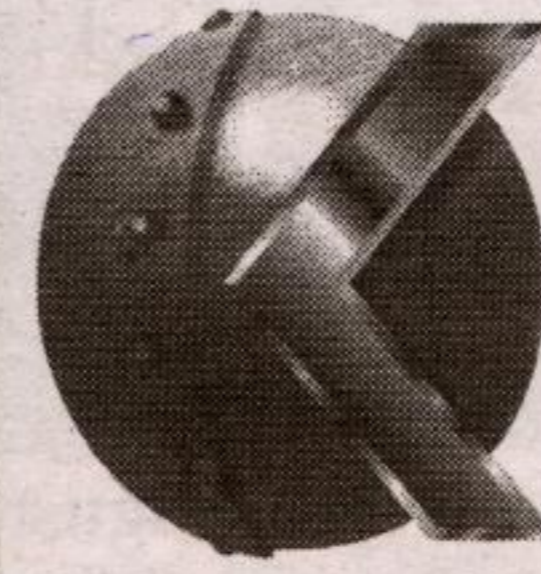
If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

A pat on the back is only a few inches from a kick in the pants.

The moment you get a pay raise at work, the car will need brakes, tires or exhaust work.

And best of all:

Some days you'll be the hammer, most days the nail— but the day you're the hammer, your thumb will likely get in the way.



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Chairman, Halton Region
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