

# THE DISTRICT LINE • By Bill Gold

## In Dummkopf, This Makes Sense

ONCE UPON a time, there was a land called Dummkopf. The people who inhabited this land were a happy-go-lucky lot.

All day and all night they dashed about in their automobiles with their families, having lots of fun and killing each other in smashups at the rate of more than 100 a day.



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After a while, Dummkopf's Council of Elders called a meeting to discuss the situation. The chairman said: "We keep finding dead people in smashed up cars, or scattered about in the roadway nearby. There may be a connection between the smashups and the deaths. I suggest that we investigate."

A commission was chosen to look into the matter, and in due course it brought back a report which really shocked the Council of Elders.

The commission found not only a connection between smashups and deaths but an additional connection between smashups and speed. The Council forthwith proclaimed new rules ordering all vehicles to maintain safe speeds.

But the Council failed to take into account the indomitable Dummkopf spirit. It forgot that when a resident of Dummkopf is told that something is bad for him, he is apt to reply: "I'd rather fight than change."

So the merry people of Dummkopf kept right on

speeding and killing each other.

An emergency meeting of the Council of Elders was called, and it decided that more policemen would have to be hired.

However, this produced very little improvement. When a Dummkopf motorist sees a policeman, he slows down; but he speeds up again as soon as the policeman is out of sight.

Next the Council tried a massive educational campaign. Traffic deaths immediately dropped to only 99 a day.

But by the end of a week the toll was back over the 100 mark, and the Elders knew that they had failed again.

In desperation, they ordered that all Dummkopf autos be timed by hidden radar equipment so that no driver would ever know which streets were being watched on any given day. Drivers would thus be encouraged to slow down and live, whether they wanted to live or not.

Needless to say, many drivers objected. The words "E Pluribus Unum" in their Constitution clearly gave them the right to ignore any law that didn't suit their convenience, especially laws designed to apply to other people but not to a true Dummkopf. The use of radar became a great public controversy.

As fate would have it, there were some enterprising radio stations in the land of Dummkopf. By law, they operated "in the public convenience."

So, to suit the convenience of Dummkopf drivers, these radio stations would find out on which streets

the radar crews were working and then would broadcast this information to their listeners.

A Dummkopf driver who tuned in these broadcasts would know on precisely which streets he would have to drive safely, and thus he would be relieved of unnecessary safe driving on all other streets.

There lived in Dummkopf a police inspector who had the bad luck to be charged with the responsibility for keeping motorists alive.

The police inspector filed a complaint against the radio stations, and asked that they be stopped from broadcasting warnings about the whereabouts of radar crews.

But the manager of one radio station couldn't see anything wrong with these broadcasts. He said that they were designed "to promote traffic safety."

The logic of this reply so overwhelmed the citizens of Dummkopf that they lifted the broadcaster to their shoulders and cheered him to an echo.

Then they went home and wrote indignant letters to the editor of their newspaper. In these letters they denounced the unsportsmanlike conduct of policemen who try to catch honest citizens who are doing nothing more than cheating a little when they think nobody is looking.

The Council of Elders, ever responsive to the wishes of the multitude, took quick action. It ordered the radar machine installed in a permanent location, well hidden behind a big neon sign which said: "You are now approaching a secret radar installation."

The police inspector was turned over to the Undummkopf Activities Committee, which banished him from the country, and every citizen of Dummkopf lived happily ever afterward until it was his turn to die in an auto crash.