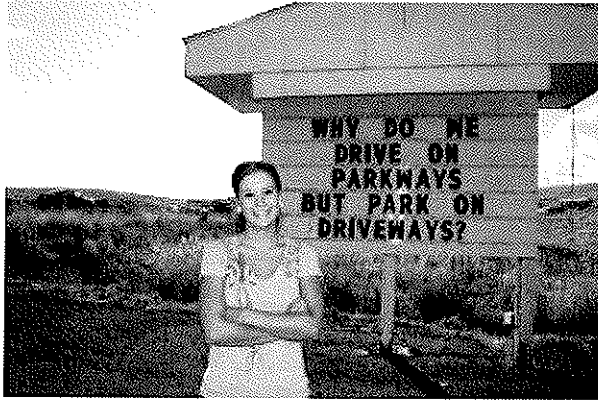


# Sign gives passing motorists something to think about

Moscow-Pullman road fixture has lots of fans



Tribune/David Johnson

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By David Johnson of the Tribune The Lewiston Tribune

MOSCOW - "Why do we drive on parkways and park on driveways?"

Hundreds of motorists commuting last week between here and Pullman on Washington State Route 270 no doubt contemplated the answer to the above question.

The question was posted on a small billboard adjacent to Crescent Electric Supply Company.

Or, what about the curious query two weeks ago?

"If olive oil comes from olives, where does baby oil come from?"

LaNelle Simmons, a 20-year-old University of Idaho student majoring in graphic design and advertising, is responsible for posting the humorous inquiries.

"It's just daily jokes, that's all it is."

Simmons works part time in Crescent's clerical department. The business, located on the north side of the highway, used to house Champion Electric. Sam Young, of Moscow,

owned Champion. He still owns the building, but now works for Crescent. He confirmed the business sign out front indeed has a history as a source of provocative sayings.

"In the previous business, I had a couple of employees and they had a blast doing it," Young said. But with the change of businesses, he said, the postings went on a two-year hiatus.

"Now we basically resurrected it and LaNelle is making the best of it."

Simmons said she gets the humorous questions off the Internet and from other sources. So far, she confirmed, none are her originals. But that doesn't seem to concern passing motorists, many of whom call to respond or simply encourage continued posting.

"A lot of people just like them. Some will try to answer them," Simmons said. "And some just ask me what I do with my daily life?"

The baby oil question seemed to be a particular hit, Simmons said.

And what about this ichthyological notion that appeared about three weeks ago: "Do fish get thirsty?"

Young said the sign used to sometimes push the political envelope, but won't anymore. Light-hearted humor, Simmons said, is what she's looking to share with the public. Editing problems also cropped up before, Young recalled.

"If we had a misspelling, we got a call, or many calls right away," he said. "People would say, 'Could you please run this through spell-check?' So we had fun with that."

Perhaps that's why Simmons recently posted the following: "If a word in the dictionary was misspelled, how would we know?"

Wind has damaged the west side of the small billboard. But Young said it will eventually be repaired and perhaps used to tout community events. He said there is no advertising motive behind the postings, since Crescent Electric is a wholesale company that caters to off-site contractors instead of onsite retail buyers.

"We're just doing this as a fun service to the community."

Simmons said she'll strive to change the sign every Monday, if for no other reason than to help everyone kick-start the work week.

"Why are they called apartments, when they're all stuck together?" the sign read several weeks ago.

"If a fly didn't have wings," another posting postulated, "would it be called a walk?"

Simmons said she doesn't fret about finding material for the billboard and actually enjoys pondering along with motorists next Monday's possibilities. "I don't know what next week's will be," she said. "It's a mystery."

As for this week's muse, consider the following: "Why are there flotation devices under plane seats instead of parachutes?"

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