

EAST VALLEY OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2003

© THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

COMMUNITY COLUMNIST

Here's who has been naughty

I hate to do this, but I'm afraid I have to put on my crabby hat.

Apparently, some of you here in the East Valley have not been following the rules. (I'm sure the West Valleyites are just as bad, but for the moment anyway, they're out of my jurisdiction.) Worse yet, you don't even recognize your offenses.

Not to worry. Your significant others may recognize you from this list and will be happy to put you out of your misery.

1. Passengers: If you're a guest in someone's car, you may not fiddle with the driver's radio, airflow or other knobs and gadgets unless you are specifically invited to. This actually happened to me on a hiking expedition to the Rim a few weeks ago. Your job is to navigate, with helpful comments such as "turn left at the Jack In The Box." Pointing is not an acceptable substitute for a good verbal direction.

2. Drivers: Don't slow down on the 101 whenever you see something happening along the berm. Think about it: That's exactly how a traffic jam gets started, for crying out loud.

3. Kids: Turn down your dang subwoofer stereos in public (which, you'll note, is practically everywhere). We don't want to hear your gormless music (which is, by definition, anything I don't like).

4. Laundry room users: If there are six washing ma-



JIM VEIHDEFFER

Special for The Republic

chines, you may not commandeer five of them. And if you have that much laundry to do, try wearing your underwear a few more times.

5. Telephoners: When you call someone, it's your job to identify yourself right away and not just start blathering on about your dumb laundry problems or how someone snipped the wires to the subwoofers in your hopped-up Jeep Wrangler.

6. Local merchants: Do not stick your fliers on our windshields. Also, we don't need any more door-hangers advertising your "Low, Low, Low Mortgage Rates!" Bad, bad, bad! That's not advertising. It's littering. How'd you like it if I rented an unmarked airplane and dropped thousands of leaflets in your neighborhood?

7. Moviegoers: Coming in late and plunking your large-haired self into the seat directly in my field of view is not acceptable.

8. Movie theater owners: While I'm on the subject, can you get your popcorn operatives to stop smashing the goods in the misguided attempt to make the bag look fuller? Nothing is more annoying (except Ms. Big Hair

up there) than to get into the middle of the superjumbo bag and find that it's all crumbs.

I won't mention names, but a certain Scottsdale theater that features all the best foreign films is particularly guilty. They also have a little memo taped to the counter saying: "Ask each customer: 'Would you like a Super-Duper Jumbo size for just 50 cents more?'"

9. E-mailers: Nobody enjoys scrolling through pages and pages of forwarded "headers" just to discover a moronic chain letter (even if you have said "This is not a chain letter") or inspirational story where you couldn't even get the correct author right. And no ... *The Twelve Days of Christmas* was not created as a coded reference to important articles of Christian faith.

I'll be coming around in my SUV (sleigh utility vehicle) in a couple of weeks to see who's been naughty and who's been nice. So if you see someone wearing a strange hat and checking a list, be sure to leave some wine and cheese out. And then run for your life: You don't know how long I've been wearing my holiday skivvies.

Jim Veihdeffer is a freelance public relations writer living in Tempe. Author of the Amazon.com e-book, *Stories I Never Told My Family*, he can be reached at Veeds.J@aol.com. The views expressed are those of the author.