

A Surreal Regulation

By Pete Clark

Murphy's Law, which states, "Whatever can go wrong will go wrong," has been the bane of my life. A good example of this is my first inventory as a Division Manager at a big box department store. From the beginning of the final drive to be ready for the count until the inventory cards had all been collected, I was on my feet for forty-one hours. A card was laid for every item in my division and every card had to be picked up at the end of the count. A map showing all of the tables, shelves and walls was created to show the beginning card number and the final card number of each display, so there would be no confusion, but Murphy had his way.

When the counting was complete, my assistant and I began picking up the cards. We were making good progress when my assistant told me he was missing a card. He had the number before the missing card and the number after it. We searched the immediate area but could not find the card. We returned to picking up cards and would search for the missing card when we finished. We searched everywhere without finding the missing card. As the other divisions finished with their inventories, the managers and assistants came over to help search. All to no avail. We had to find the card because the dollar amount it represented might be large enough to affect the outcome of the inventory. We searched and searched until someone found the card lying on the big work table in the receiving room at the back of the store. The person who knew how it got there never spoke up.

Another illustration of Mr. Murphy's repeated intrusions into my life is the current situation. Our Over-the-Range Microwave died some time ago. We didn't replace it right away because it sits too high for Judie to easily reach it. But I now do the cooking. I decided to replace the big microwave because I want to use larger dishes than those that will fit into the small microwave on the counter. I went on line and found the microwave I wanted on the website of a big box store that handles building supplies and appliances. I made a note of my choice machine's model number and stock number.

At the store, I spoke with an employee who found the model I wanted. I placed an order for delivery, including installation and hauling out the old microwave. The delivery men arrived, brought in the new appliance and began uninstalling the old one, but they couldn't get it out. They showed me a jammed part in the microwave. They said I would have to get someone with the proper tools and skills to remove the microwave. Then they would come back, install the new one and haul away the old unit. Later I noticed the four screws holding the front end of the microwave in place. Perhaps that was why they couldn't remove it.

When I worked, I had to solve my problems as no one would do it for me.