

As - Alpio Barbara, Redwood General Tire Service and Larry Rhodes, Five Points Tire Imports - remember Tom Hanlon:

(If you are politically correct or prudish do not read this article, because it is written in the way two of Tom's best friends told their stories).

Alpio: This is what Tom looks like:

- little man
- always wearing pants and suspenders
- he was proud that he always kept the same size pants, but forgot that at the beginning his pants reached the middle of his stomach and as he grew older the pants would go under his belly and the suspenders got longer and longer.
- his pants were always too short and when he came into the store he had both hands in his pockets and lifted the pants further up.
- his cap was always askew – it looked as if he put on the cap with his left hand, but it was not so. For some reason it was never straight- it always tilted to the left.
- he would come into the store looking worried as if he was carrying the whole burden of the world on his shoulders – sigh deeply – and say: “What’s new?”

Alpio got to know Tom in 1969, when Alpio was barely 18 years old and Larry knew him at least 10 years earlier, when both Larry and Tom worked for Davis and Myers on Bush/Franklin in San Francisco. As Larry said: “The fifties/early sixties were wild days. Tom – being “Irish” went to the Irish bar – adjacent to Davis and Myers – and so did the whole crew. But the following morning he would be back at work – and work hard.

Tom was mainly in the retread and battery business. He had a short stint in the insurance business, but over the weekends he would pick up casings and retreads – sell them – and after some time he started his first store in San Bruno.

He was passionate about used tires and continued to pick them up – “process” them and sell them (we will later return to the word –process).

He would come into the store – say his: “what’s new?” and go to select his used tires. When they all were “processed” he would come back to Larry – if he visited Five Points Tire or Alpio – if he visited Redwood General. He would be warm and sweaty – rub his hands all over his face – get a cup of coffee – and now he was ready to talk. He always had ready a piece of paper with quantities and sizes of the tires he had picked up so that they knew which tires were going to be “processed.” When they had finished talking – and Tom basically talked about tires and politics, he would go and talk to all of the tire people in the store. He knew them all – he knew about their families – their problems – their goals and was always there to help them solve their problems. That was what he also did to Alpio when Alpio was a kid of 18 years or to Denny Reiser (who now works