

## Code of the North

Oct. 2004

Woe is me. Double woe is me. This is the worst thing that could ever happen to a man of the north. No, my hunting dog didn't die. Worse than that. No my wife didn't leave me, worse than that. Let me start at the beginning.

I walked into the 210 Tavern the other day, ready for a beer with my colorful up north friends that frequent the old 210. Digger Dan was there as was Quick Vic and Sweet Amy was in her usual place behind the bar. Digger asked an innocent enough question and I of course answered it in an innocent enough manner. Now my life is hell.

The question that Digger asked was, "Hey, Wade where ya been. We haven't seen you in awhile." Without thinking, my innocent answer was, "I've been working." Three simple words (alright four if you count the contraction I've as two words) and my life was completely changed. With those three words, Quick and Digger moved away as if I hadn't showered in weeks and Sweet Amy dropped her tray of bar glasses. As the resounding crash faded, I realized what I had done. I had broken the "Code of the North." Without thinking I had spewed out the words that no man living in Goneaway has ever said, "I've been working." Now for those of you that don't know what the "Code of the North" is, it is very simple: "The wife works and the men hunt & fish." It is why men call the North Country "God's Country" and the women call it "Purgatory". I guess it all depends upon how you look at "Up North". However, the code is the "Code". It is here and it is religiously followed.

Sure, Digger works, but he never admits it and since he is single, he doesn't have a wife to support him, so he sorta has to work. But, he never mentions work. I not only have a wife to support me (and she was a darn good wife at that), but I actually do have a part time job and I actually admitted it in public! Therefore, I have broken the "Code of the North." It really isn't my fault that I have a part time job, but nobody wants to hear that story, but I shall tell it anyway before I pack my belongings and seek exile in Fudgie Land.

It started innocently enough with me trying to Find Work For My Wife, which is what an up north guy is supposed to do. I was unsuccessful. Then Babe decided that she should go into business for herself, so she registered with the state and the IRS. But, (now this should have been a really, really big red flag), she also put me on the business license. Since I didn't succeed at finding her work, I thought that maybe I should help her start up her office and seek clients. Which I did. The first clue that something may be amiss was that I found myself working alone on these projects. However, the business did start successfully, but as time went on, Babe was always conveniently gone more and more often. When clients called, Babe was downstate, doing volunteer work, shopping, etc., etc., etc. So I had to answer the phone and service the clients. Pretty soon, Babe's business became my business. I can't quit, because I am registered with the IRS as a business with all the tax benefits and I must remain a business for the next few years! This is why I am about to be banned from the north. I am a man and I have a job. But hopefully you can also see why I don't think that all the problems I have supposedly caused are my fault. I didn't want to work; I was actually trying to help my wife find gainful employment!

You're probably thinking that "Hey, Wade, you're exaggerating." No I am not. You see, the Code of the North is there for a reason. Now pay close attention and you will see what I mean.

Now, the word is out in the women's social circle (aka the Underground Sisterhood of Stranded Northern Women) of what Babe did to me. Other women are devising ways to reverse the roles of their marriages. The whole Code is coming unravelled. Think of the affects around the North Country. The 210 Tavern may have to close during the day because men are working, not drinking. Men working means men are not hunting or fishing, which will screw up game management for decades. After all, men who work are too tired to drink and hunt or fish after work. Now, as I and undoubtedly in the short term future other men work, Babe and their wives will be free to shop, go to the casinos, participate in idle gossip, etc. The whole socio-economic platform and ecosystem of the north country has begun to change, all because of an unthinking comment. I have started the northern man down a slippery slope and I deserved to be banished south with my fudge sucking relatives. I will take my Babe & Bagle and Babe will be freed from her purgatory. I will go, because I can not face what I have done and even though it wasn't my fault, after all, I did break the Code of the North.