



Kennedi Gibbs, C.E. Hanna Elementary

New law will regulate small-time car sellers

BY ERIC PETERSON
Star Staff Writer

A new law makes it illegal to sell multiple cars on the side of the road without a proper business license.

Rep. Randy Wood, R-Anniston, put forward legislation establishing a motor vehicle license. The bill passed on May 15 and was signed by Gov. Kay Ivey the next day.

"It makes it that if you're selling cars you must buy a license in Alabama," Wood said.

Dealers will need to have a license if they want to sell more than five cars in a year, according to Wood.

The purpose of the bill, Wood said, is to prevent "curbstoning" — an industry term for sales of cars by sellers who don't have a business license.

Wood said the practice is "not fair for the guy trying to make an honest living."

Randy Jones, the executive director of the Alabama Independent Automobile Dealers Association, agreed that something needed to be done about curbstoning.

"If an individual puts a car on sale without a license you don't know who he is, and you don't get info on them," Jones said. "Not every person does that, but a lot of people do."

Once or twice a month, Jones sees someone come onto a used car lot to have a vehicle inspected for insurance purposes. Once the vehicle is inspected it becomes clear it has sustained some severe damage in the past.

People who practice curbstoning will acquire damaged vehicles from natural disasters or wrecks, so cars that may have been flooded or been involved in substantial car accidents may be sold to unsuspecting consumers. This leads to consumers paying money for a car that may not actually be safe.

However, there are other reasons to sell cars outside of a dealership.

Ricky Hinds, owner of Quintard Jewelry and Pawn, has a title loan on a car and is advertising it for sale in the parking lot. Hinds said he received the title loan due to the previous owner's inability to pay back the money he pawned the car for.

"It was maybe sold three times without the title," he said.

Hinds said he sold three cars last year, and he didn't have a particular opinion about the bill.

"I'm kinda neutral, I suppose," said Hinds.

Hinds does not have a dealership license, but his license as a pawn shop owner lets him sell whatever he needs to in order to settle bad debts.

The vote in the state House of Representatives was almost unanimous, with only Rep. Wes Allen, R-Troy, voting against it. Attempts to reach Allen for comment were unsuccessful.

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COFFEE BREAK

Editor: Lisa Davis, ldavis@annistonstar.com

SPOTLIGHT ON: John Long, attorney and author

BY FAITH DORN
Special to The Star

John Long is an attorney and best-selling author on substance abuse. Arrested in 2000 for possession of crack cocaine, and threatened with losing his law license, Long went to treatment and joined a 12-step program. Now sober for 18 years and still practicing law, he has recently released his autobiography, *The Book of John* (Not The One In The Bible), and it is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Books-a-Million and more. To book Long to speak to your group, contact him on his website, thebookofjohn.net.

What interested you in working as an attorney?

That was the year they came out with the Mitsubishi 3000GT, and I wanted one of those. Plus, I thought I could save the world. Neither one of those worked out. [laughter] But I have helped lots of people by doing criminal defense, divorce, personal injury — a little bit of everything.

Tell us about the opioid crisis.

People do not understand addiction, and the opioid crisis has to do with addiction. People — not knowing they have a genetic or whatever predisposition to addiction — take that first drink or drug. You do not know you are an addict until you take that, and once you take it, it sets off a craving — an actual physical reaction in your body to where you want more. There is an article about it by the National Institute of Health.

How did you progress from drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana to using crack cocaine?

The crack cocaine started when my second wife passed away from asthma, and I did not want to deal with the pain. Her daughter that was living with us had a boyfriend who I bought pot from, and he also sold cocaine. One thing led to another. Two years after starting that, I lost everything.

What happened after your 35-day treatment?

After treatment, I moved into a single-wide trailer in the middle of a junkyard — with eight of us living there. I came home one night after a meeting, and my wife and I got into an argument, and she threw me out of the junkyard, and the only place I had left to go was my parents' house. I had a 25-inch Sanyo television, two garbage bags full of clothes and my two kids. I had a car I bought for \$250, a 1988 Ford Thunderbird; it did not have a grill or muffler, and I had to wipe the windows with my hands, but it got me to meetings.

Tell us about your experience in Sedona.

Last year, I went to Sedona, Arizona, with some friends I met on Facebook; it was for a psychic awareness seminar. We did this fire ceremony where we wrote a letter to God. In that letter I asked God to help me finish writing this book because I had put it down for four years, but I knew if I ever finished it, it would help a lot of people. So, we put our letters in the fire and sent it out into the universe. There were about 18 of us, and we all asked for different things; I asked to be shown a rainbow. The next day, a friend of mine who had moved to Sedona said he would take me to a meeting. Everybody gets there, and I am asked to read the literature for the meeting. He announces the meeting and says, "I want to welcome everyone to the Over the Rainbow group of Alcoholics Anonymous." I started bawling



Trent Penny/The Anniston Star

like a baby, and I could not even read; I am sure I gave those people a stereotype — guy from Alabama cannot even read! [laughter] They give out sobriety chips at the beginning of the meetings. One girl said, "Oh, I am so filled with gratitude that I made it a year without drinking. I was looking out my window on my way here, looking at Bell Rock, and 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow' started playing on the radio." I started crying again. We start sharing, and another guy said, "Oh, April, I am so proud of you. I remember when you were growing up, we used to call you by your nickname 'April Rainbow.'" I got back from the trip, and I was looking at my pictures, and there is a rainbow in one of them.

Do you have a suggestion for a "Spotlight" profile? Contact Faith Dorn at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.

JOHN LONG

Hometown: Birmingham

Occupation: Attorney and #1 best-selling author

Favorite author: James Redfield and Wayne Dyer

Favorite film: "Avatar"

Favorite music: Indie Rock

Words to live by: I try to maintain my integrity. I think that is really important for an individual. If you cannot be honest with other people and yourself, you get guilt, regret and remorse. Tell the truth. Be real. I do not sugarcoat anything.

Advice: Let go, let God. Be honest. Be who you are. Be authentic.