

Grant helped festival offer free concerts

The Sisters Folk Festival wrapped up its series of free summer concerts on Thursday, August 16, with a performance by international music superstars Altan on the Fir Street Park stage in Sisters. The shows were made possible by a cultural development grant from Oregon Cultural Trust.

The series was also sponsored in part by First Interstate Bank, Deschutes County Board of Commissioners Discretionary Fund and the City of Sisters.

The shows drew big crowds of music-lovers from across Central Oregon.

"It is extremely gratifying to have the ability to fund more of the amazing cultural projects happening across our great state," said Chuck Sams III, chair of the Cultural Trust board. "We are incredibly grateful to our donors and excited by the increased access this funding will provide to ensure active and culturally vibrant communities."

"We really feel that, with this year's series, we are offering three distinct cultural traditions: bluegrass, Cajun and Celtic, which exemplify a broad swath of the music that Americana represents," said SFF Development Director Steven Remington. "The support of the Oregon Cultural Trust validates the work SFF does year-round to promote Americana music."

For more information on Sisters folk Festival, visit www.sistersfolkfestival.org.

Techniques for happier screen time

By T. Lee Brown
Correspondent

Are you mired in Facebook depression, falling down rabbit holes of political news, losing sleep to Netflix and YouTube? Are Snapstreaks and Epic Tavern more important than exercising or keeping your grades up? Yeah, you've got a problem. Even if it connects you with friends faraway, even if following the play-by-play of Russian investigations makes you feel like a good citizen — excess device engagement drains your energy, time, and perspective. It's hard to connect with real people or make positive political change without those precious resources.

The folks who design social media technologies and program addictive news call it "hijacking your brain." Here are a few techniques for reclaiming it.

Reduce Visibility

Out of sight, out of mind. When you're on a diet, do you leave a candy dish on the counter? No, you're too smart for that. Find a dark cubbyhole where you can plug in your phone, and leave it there except when you really need it.

Out in public or at home with family, pretend your phone habit is like a drug problem. Gotta do it? Don't flaunt it. If enough people take this approach, our kids (and their grownups) will no longer think that glueing yourself to a screen and ignoring the world around you is normal and acceptable.

Take the "Wait Until 8th" Pledge

Worried that your kid will be the only one without an iPhone? Worry no more. Parents across America are signing the pledge to keep their kids off smartphones until eighth grade or later. (Flip phones and other basic phones for emergencies are

still OK.) Register at www.waituntil8th.org and fill in your school's info, or type in "Homeschool" for school name and Sisters 97759 for the city/ZIP. Encourage friends to sign up, too.

Schedule a "Digital Sabbath"

No, that doesn't mean streaming Ozzy every Sunday. In many religious traditions, people take a weekly Sabbath Day for rest and reflection. For the non-religious, that might look more like walking along Whychus Creek with a friend. Sit down with your family and agree to try one day a week offline, for a month. Plan ahead to avoid logistical hassles. If a full day is too difficult, start smaller. Write a promise to each other, sign it, and hang it on your fridge. For example: "Sundays from noon onward, we'll stay off our devices."

Turn Off Notifications

To foil the corporations who are making money off your state of distraction, go into your device's settings. Find notifications and turn them off. Now when you look at your device's face, it won't show you a million things you ought to be concerned about right now. Want to know whether track practice is running late? Click on your text

message app and see if the coach texted. Try not to read all those other, irrelevant texts alongside it.

Try a Bummer Break

Pick the media that's bummering you out most. Resolve to stay off it for a big chunk of time — a month, if you can; if not, try 10 days. It takes more than a couple days to come out of the haze. Don't replace your Bummer with a different game or app. Instead, find a real-life activity you can do when you're bored or stressed (drinking doesn't count). Ask friends and family to be supportive for this short period of time.

Learn from Cheating

Suppose you try to disengage — and find yourself slipping. First, know that you're not alone. Habits are tough to break, and these technologies are intentionally engineered to cause addictive behaviors. Keep a little notebook on-hand to jot down notes about when you "cheat" and why. (Your notebook is also a handy replacement for grocery lists, etc., instead of having them on your distracting phone.) Note, especially, your mood. Were you hungry, bored, stressed, tired, or sad? Which app or notification hooked you in? Read through later on; patterns will emerge.

Find out what triggers your worst screen-zombie habits.

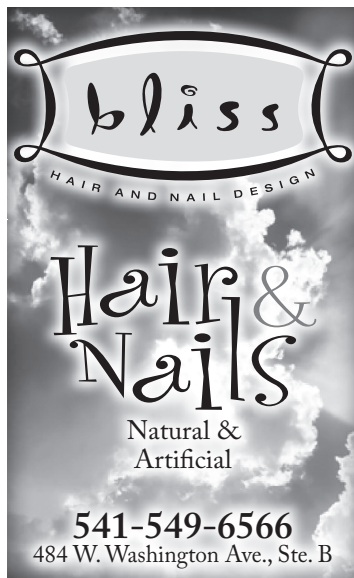
Get Some Help

In the Wild West we like to think we're independent cusses. But there's no shame in helping a neighbor round up stray cattle. No shame in barn-raising and potlucks.

No shame in talking to your doctor, pastor, or a counselor, either. Most bad habits play on our traumas and insecurities, relationship troubles and the stress of everyday life (not to mention deep existential angst). No need to navigate all that alone.

Here in Sisters, professional therapy is available from Audry Van Houweling, M.N., of She Soars Psychiatry, who takes an integrative approach; Dr. George Mecouch, D.O., with a Jungian-focused practice; and Brianna Morzov, LCSW, of Sacred Space Counseling, who offers EMDR therapy. Reach out if you need to.

There's more to come in The Nugget's ongoing series about digital media, nature, and our health. Email your tips and tricks for moderating screen time. If you give our tips a try, we're interested in hearing how it goes. We can keep your real name out of the paper. Email freelance writer T. Lee Brown, tiffany@plazm.com.



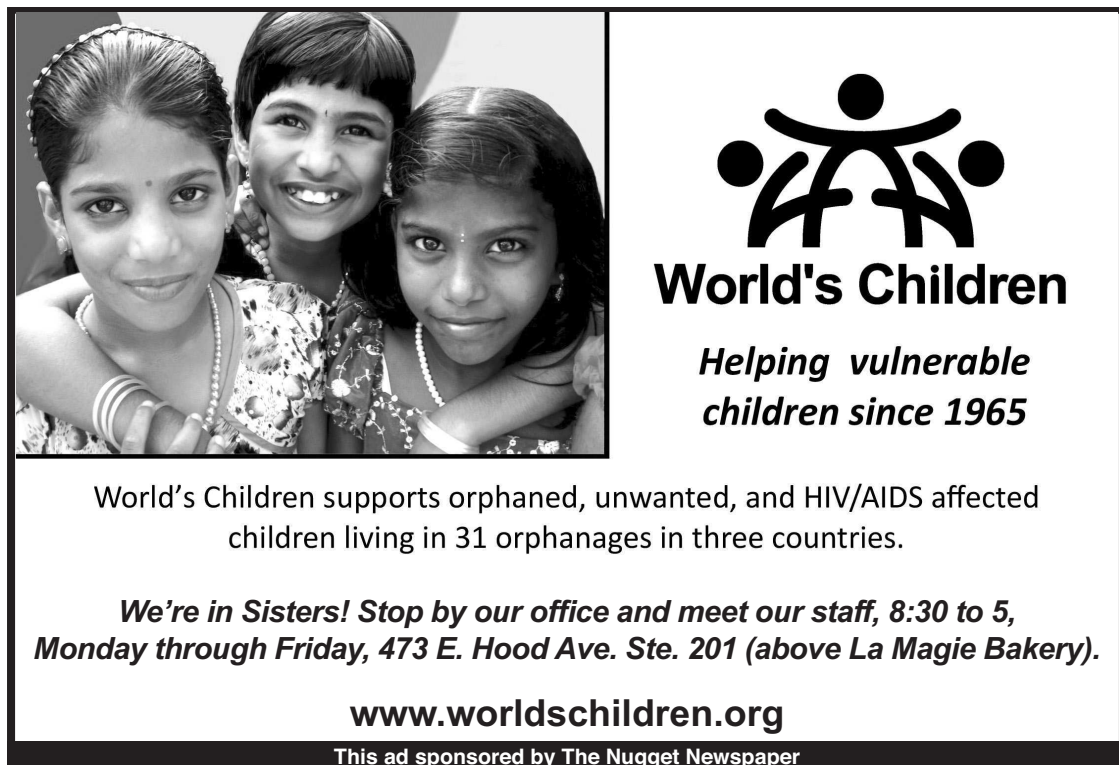
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