

Time to extend a white flower to mom

Marvin Baker



Guest Columnist

In honor of Mother's Day, my snappy patter is taking a siesta. For starters, I'd like to apologize to my readers for the inconsistent publication of my column of late. That being said, I aim to be on track through the end of the school year.

As much as I hate to admit it, there is a degree of responsibility that comes with putting my attitude and opinions, as tongue in cheek as they may be, out in public.

Occasionally this responsibility can have an upside, namely when some experience I've had can serve as an example to others. Granted, it's usually an example of what *not* to do, but I'm trying the "glass half-full" thing these days, so seeking the positive - the value of a lesson learned - is important.

One of these lessons is finding that I'm not so different from others as I once thought. This has been discovered by simply talking to people; a skill I once sorely lacked.

I'm pretty confident what I share with you next will have

some relevance to someone out there. Consider it a public service announcement in honor of a holiday that I have neglected for many years.

I have been estranged from both of my parents since my fall from grace. For a time, I had resigned myself to living without family ties, possibly seeking or being sought out at some point in the distant future and dealing with the conflict then.

Why, after all, do I need to invite thirty plus years of hurt feelings, familial strife, disappointment and criticism back into my life? I still have friends. I have a beautiful daughter. I even get to vent publicly and enjoy a degree of satisfaction for having a readership to vent to.

I should be able to live through this and still say goodbye at the appropriate moment with a clean conscience. Pretty mercenary, don't you think? Not surprisingly, this plan hasn't held up well over the long haul.

In defense of some, I would interject that there are those among us who have good reasons for avoiding, or even fearing, their own parents. I've been locked up with some of the worst and they deserve to be where they are. Sadly, they are usually people who are unable or unwilling to see beyond their own needs, pain or fears and their children are the ones who've paid the price.

Like many of us, however, I do not have such an excuse. For the most part I simply have had no idea what to say or how to reach out, and knowing there's quite a bit of my parents in me, I imagine it is equally difficult for them.

Assuming, that is, either of us would be capable of setting aside pride to make the effort in the first place. This is where, I, personal-

ly, have the biggest problem fitting into the big boy pants.

Thankfully, one of the things I have learned in my numerous attempts to piss off everybody on the planet: no one is above acting like a child, not even a parent. This kind of levels the playing field so to speak. And, I also realize quite a few of us childish sorts are "tired of always having to be the one who makes the first move."

Well, I must admit, there is no one who can lay claim to *always* having to be the peacemaker. (By the way, when I catch myself using "always" or "never," that's a pretty good sign my argument has devolved into finger-pointing.) Suddenly, it becomes possible my folks may be thinking the same way. The scary part is, until I ask, I won't know. I hate this part. Stay tuned.

For those of you with a nagging suspicion that this might be relevant in your own lives, make yourself safe, gather some support and then deal - whatever that may require for you and your situation.

Until then, no amount of anger, food, sex, drink, drugs, money or relationships will fill the hole inside you. Trust me, I've tried to make all of them work and the only things I have to show for it are a skewed sense of humor and a really pissed off ex (I can't say I blame her).

See you next week, and call your mother.

Hyperstar and The Young Republicans are here to rock the house! Come by and get some good eats and prizes from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. in front of the courtyard.



Daisy Bain/The Clackamas Print

Tiffany Woods of Oregon City (left), talks with travel writer M.J. Cody, author of "Wingin' It," a travel column that appears in The Oregonian's Sunday Travel section every fourth Sunday of the month.

Authors travel to campus

Two established travel columnists visited Clackamas Wednesday, May 1 for Authors' Night, "Travel Writers of the Northwest."

M.J. Cody, co-editor of "Wild in the City, a Guide to the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Greenspaces," and author of The Oregonian column, "Wingin' It," joined Susan Hauser, a Portland native who has been writing for the Leisure & Arts page of "The Wall Street Journal."

Both writers read humorous excerpts from their columns and books. "I suggest taking a tall friend and letting them walk first," was a line from Cody's book, "Wild in the City" about how to deal with the enormous amounts of spiders in the Northwest.

Hauser offered her own side comments about Cody's freedom at The Oregonian in her column, "When you get the freedom to write whatever you want it's like running around naked!" Susan also stated that her column doesn't hide the redneck reputation the West Coast has in the East Coast.

"A lot of my writing reflects that we're a little different," said Hauser.



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