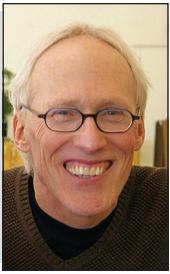


Celebrating the joys of 'oldness'

Senior Living



Scott McKay

Along my journey of growing older, I desperately tried to avoid my preconceived ideas of what old looked like, such as wearing hearing aids — which now I wouldn't live without — or using a pillbox, until there were too many days when I couldn't recall if I took my morning pills or not!

Since I've passed those two milestones, I've started thinking that instead of denying my age I should celebrate my "oldness" and the accompanying joys. (I'll leave the challenges for another day.)

But what is old? We've all heard it is 10 years older than you are now (which I'm continuing to find surprisingly accurate), but is there a better way to know? So, for those of you who are curious, I found this list of "scientifically validated"

- indicators of old age. See how you compare with my answers.
1. You fall asleep watching TV or reading the paper. No, but at 3 p.m., I do start nodding off.
 2. You become forgetful. Yes, but it's no different than the 20-something who can't remember what I just ordered on my Subway sandwich!
 3. You groan when getting up from a chair or out of bed. No, but for some reason my wife thinks I do.
 4. You say "Back in my day." No, I say, "Back in the good old days."
 5. You have an afternoon nap. Yes, but they are now "power naps."
 6. You don't know the names of current celebrities. I do — if they are over 65.
 7. You have a low tolerance for teenagers. No. I find teenagers great. It brings back fond memories of my youth without having to relive those days.
 8. You only listen to music from your youth. No. I listen to contemporary music that sounds like music from my youth.
 9. You choose places to eat

- because they play quiet music. Yes, because I want to hear who I am talking with — which is not easy wearing hearing aids.
 10. Choosing to meet friends for lunch or dinner rather than a night out for drinks. Yes. I need to be in bed by 9 p.m.
 11. You spend weekends or holidays in garden centers. No. I try to stay out of the garden — that's my wife's domain — thankfully.
 12. Gardening is a hobby. No. See above.
 13. You forget where your glasses are. Yes, but I always find them — on my head!
 14. You choose clothes for comfort rather than style. Yes, because who am I trying to impress?
 15. You get a haircut to "suit your age." No, because I'm still figuring out what my age is.
- So how did you do? Did you do better than my nine out of 15 "no" answers? If so let's go out and celebrate — but please, not too long!
-
- The members of the 1985 country music supergroup The Highwaymen were Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson. I received

correct answers from Steven Woolpert, Barbara Cadwell, Susan Ellis, John McEwen, Jess Birge, Gene Ucen, Lana Tepfer, Tina Castañares, Keith Clymer, Margo Dameier, Mike Yarnell, Rose Schulz, Jim and Jennifer Stager, Doug Nelson, and Joy Nicholson, this week's winner of a free quilt raffle ticket. And last week I missed Beverly Thomas and Doug Nelson.

Remember when doctors and even Santa Claus were used to sell cigarettes on television? That ended at 11:50 p.m. on Jan. 1, 1971, when the last cigarette advertisement ran on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. For this week's "Remember When" question, what was the brand of cigarette in that television ad that tried to cash in on the women's liberation movement with the tag line, "You've come a long way, baby." E-mail your answers to mcseniorcenter@gmail.com, call 541-296-4788 or send it with a short history of the Women's Tennis Association.

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Well, it has been another week trying to decide which way is up. Until we meet again, as they said in

the old west, "Poor is having to sell the horse to buy the saddle."

•••

"There are six myths about old age: 1. That it's a disease, a disaster. 2. That we are mindless. 3. That we are sexless. 4. That we are useless. 5. That we are powerless. 6. That we are all alike."

— Maggie Kuhn

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Nutritious home delivered meals and pick-ups are available for anyone over 60. For more information, you can call the meal site in your area.

Hood River Valley Adult Center at 541-386-2060;
The Dalles Meals-on-Wheels at 541-298-8333;
Sherman County Senior and Community Center at 541-565-3191;
Klickitat County Senior Services: Goldendale office at 509-773-3757 or the White Salmon office at 509-493-3068;
Skamania County Senior Services at 509-427-3990;
Seniors of Mosier Valley at 541-503-5660 or 541-980-1157.

The City Council: A fictional narrative of Rural Life in the American West Episode 160: Tootie's Quality Customer Service Training Program

By Jim Tindall

The Warhaven City Council Uptown seat opened when Pete Petrovich decided not to run for reelection. Tootie McDaniels ran successfully for the seat without espousing any formal platform or agenda. As a Republican with Libertarian leanings, she was a proponent of small government, yet Warhaven was a trim bureaucracy; there wasn't much blubber on which to take her fiscal scalpel. Once in office, she saw happenings with new eyes, which occurs to many elected officials — to any of us thrust into new responsibilities in any situation. And fact of leadership that has always been a gift to Warhaven; quickly our leaders learn the arts of compromise and discerning listening as two cornerstones to progress.

As a consumer, Tootie carried palpable indignation at what she perceived as slipping customer service. She could cite many examples of sales clerks who preferred checking their phones or just disappearing instead of assisting the customer. Her friends and neighbors knew never to get her started on the shortcomings of big box stores. She believed Warhaven City Schools did a good job educating students for their futures. But society and culture were changing and it couldn't all be blamed on the Internet.

As owner of the L & M Merc, she relied on sincere customer service to keep customers coming back. They could easily enough drive to Garfield and not spend their hard-earned dollars in town.

In her public explanation of the program's essence, Councilor McDaniels made the following statements:

"While I realize the Internet is a big part of everyone's lives, I believe a worker ought to secure his or her phone in a locker. Employers are not paying John or Jane to text and chat or watch a cute kitty video; they receive a wage — or salary — for work-related activities. This is certainly not simply a problem with hourly workers."

There was grumbling in the audience.

"If I am a customer and need assistance and the worker is engrossed texting, what message does that send ME? If I sense indignation from that worker for this interruption, that's a big turn off. Texting can wait for break time. From the bottom to the top of the chain of command, a worker needs to be focused on the needs and goals of the employer. If not, everybody's value diminishes."

More grumbling and recrossing of legs.

"Beside business etiquette another component of the training is local geography. Workers who

come in regular contact with the public need some understanding of the lay of our land, its major roads, its waterways, AND the recreational options around Warhaven. Have you ever walked into a gas station for directions and the person behind the counter says, 'Oh, I'm new here. Sorry.' Simply unacceptable."

She looks over at Mayor Holman who nods for her to continue.

"From day one a worker needs to accept that he or she is part of a team. If an item is out of stock, the problem shouldn't be blamed on 'they,' but rather, solve the problem with a special order or speak with the manager who can call the warehouse. You get my point. Blaming management without crafting a solution reflects poorly on everyone in that business."

Sheila smiled. "That's certainly true." And she should know, owning two successful businesses in town.

Tootie said, "Communication with the customer begins before the words. Have eye contact with the customer, and when appropriate, show your sense of humor. When every customer is treated as a respected neighbor, business gets done. There should never be the loitering of employee cabal confabs. That speaks to a problem in management."

Someone in the audience

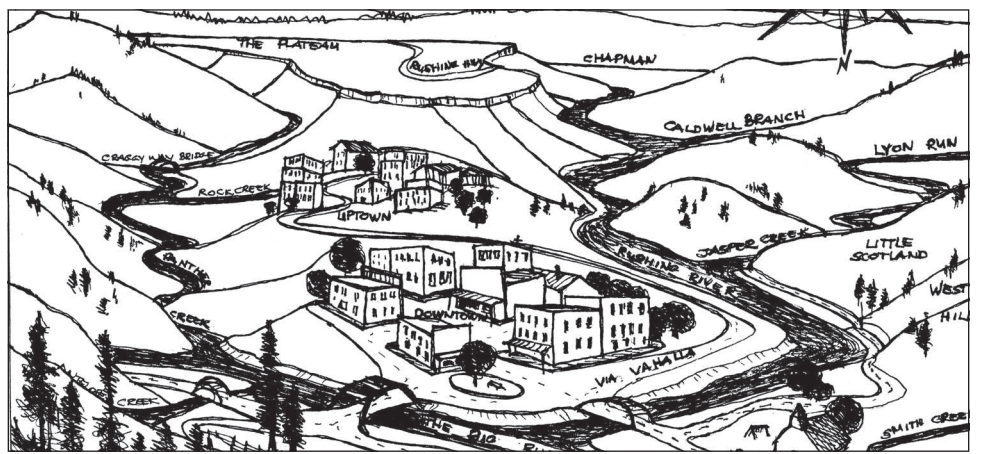


Illustration by Peggy Ohlson

coughed.

Orin asked, "Ms. McDaniels, for the audience, would you highlight the logistics of the trainings?"

"Certainly, your honor. The Quality Customer Service Training Program would consist of two 90-minute sessions for employees, one week apart. The rationale for this timing is that questions will arise, and those can be fully addressed in the second session. Additionally, the chamber will host a one-hour session to apprise employers of concerns for retaining quality workers. For example, what parameters will you establish for appearance and personal hygiene? Consider uniforms or a clothing allowance to guarantee the white shirt and black slacks or the manicure or good dye job. Perhaps dental insurance is a crucial part

of your benefits package? And what salary and benefits will retain conscientious employees? What is a living wage? Is health insurance indispensable?"

In bringing her concept before the Warhaven City Council, McDaniels gave public birth to her Quality Customer Service Training Program. Tootie actually wore three hats for the evening, for she was a businesswoman as well as the vice president of the Warhaven Chamber of Commerce. The council chamber was full. She had arm-twisted all chamber board members to show up to show support, both moral support for the idea, but also to offer fiscal support for the program's inception and ongoing delivery of training services.

Tootie was confident her colleagues on the council would support her efforts.

Mayor Orin Holman opened discussion among the city council prior to public comment, which, he knew, was going to be abundant.

George Ansbach praised the idea and immediately asked, "How can the city respond with in-kind support to keep the program's budget reasonable?"

Ike Moseseek proposed that a meeting room in the hospital would be one means of saving money.

Sheila Black Petrovich offered to explore grant ideas in order to fund for generous stipends for the attendees.

Public comment ended up resoundingly in favor; the council voted favorably, with Tootie respectfully abstaining, to proceed.

May sky features lunar eclipse

What's in the Sky



Jim White

Welcome to May! Probably the biggest event in the night sky this month will be a full lunar eclipse, occurring on the 26th. Lunar eclipses also, of course, happen when there is a full Moon, and this one will be another "supermoon," a bit larger and brighter than normal. The downside is the timing. The eclipse will begin at about 2 a.m., and will be total by about 3 a.m. The Moon will still be partly eclipsed at sunrise, about 5:20 a.m. You will need a good view of the

southwestern sky to catch a view. At 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. will be better, when the Moon is a bit higher in the sky. If you don't want to get up that early, you can enjoy the bright, full Moon on the evening of the 25th.

The planets Jupiter and Saturn are bright in the morning sky. On both May 4 and May 31, the crescent Moon will be located between the two planets, low in the southeastern sky.

Mars is hanging in there, still visible in the evening sky, low in the west. It will be moving through the constellation Gemini, and will be just to the left of the twin stars Castor and Pollux at the end of the month.

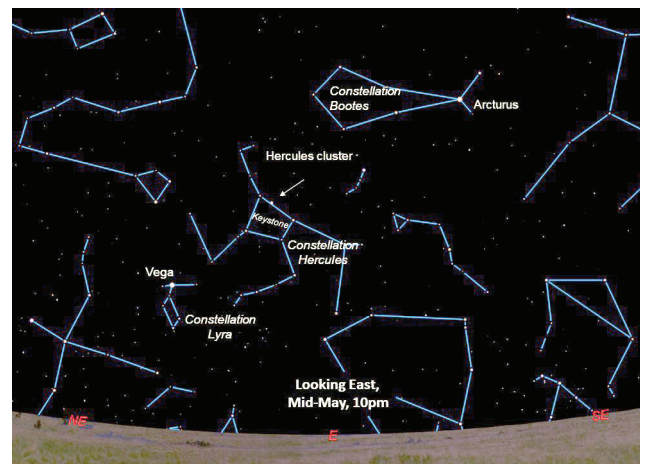
Venus will be prominent in May, low in the western sky at sunset. As the month

progresses, Venus will get a bit higher in the sky and easier to see. Venus is very bright, the brightest object in the sky other than the Sun and Moon. Mercury will be there too, and May will be a good time to locate our elusive innermost planet. Mercury will be above Venus, and will be brighter than most stars. Look just above Venus and a bit to the left. On May 28, Venus and Mercury will be very close, a really nice conjunction. Look for them about 9 p.m., right after sunset (they will set by 10 p.m.).

A bright star that is coming into view in the evening sky is Vega, the fifth brightest star in our sky, the king of the little constellation Lyra. Look for Vega in the northeast after sunset, just above

Cygnus, the swan. Vega was once our "north star," located close to where we see Polaris today. That was some 12,000-13,000 years ago, and it will again be over the north pole some 12,000 years in the future. Vega is one of our "neighbors" at a distance of about 27 light-years from the solar system. Vega is one of three stars that make up the "summer triangle" when they are high overhead during our summers.

Above Vega, as we look to the east in May, lies the relatively faint constellation Hercules. Look just above Vega, and to the right, and you'll find Hercules. The bright star Arcturus is located in the constellation Bootes, just above Hercules. Although Hercules does not contain any very bright stars,



it does have four moderately bright stars that form a squarish figure, the "keystone" of Hercules. Use the chart that accompanies this article to locate the keystone. The keystone contains an interesting object to locate, the Hercules globular cluster. Globular clusters are gravitationally-bound, dense groups of stars, in a spherical shape. They are dazzling through a telescope. The

Hercules cluster is the biggest and brightest of these star clusters in our sky. Even if you don't have a telescope, you can find it with a pair of binoculars. It will appear as a fuzzy "star." Look along the top side of the keystone, as we see it, and see if you can locate it!

Enjoy May's night skies!

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