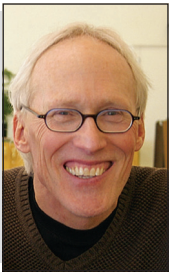


Time to brush up your 'small talk' skills

Senior Living

Scott McKay



about anything, thankful someone is listening besides your faithful canine companion!

But as with most skills, you don't really lose it. And whether you are an extrovert or an introvert, now that you are socializing — safely! — you might want to brush up on your conversational skills.

Janet Siroto in her April article for Next Avenue, a web-based news site for older adults, shares ways you can get back in the habit of small conversations with old and new friends.

1. Don't lose your confidence because small talk doesn't come as easy. It will take time and practice.

2. Avoid focusing on the dark cloud in the room. The pandemic has been difficult but try to focus on the future. It will make a more pleasant and less stressful conversation.

3. Avoid the "can you top this" competition, whether it is about the pandemic or how early your grandchild spoke his first word: "No!"

4. Anticipate the most common greeting, "How are you doing?" Instead of the typical response, you could answer, "It's been tough, but I've learned a few things." This opens up the conversation for the person to ask about what you've

learned.

And I'll add one more that's a personal weakness of mine. Don't do all the talking! Take a breath and let someone else add a few words.

If you keep practicing, you may reach the gold standard of small talk: Talking with someone who knows you, but you don't remember them and must chit-chat as if you do!

As we begin to exit these challenging times, small talk can be a valuable skill helping us reconnect and build the foundation for deeper relationships as we move back into the extrovert's world.

Try this on for size. I hope it brings a smile.

A property manager of a single-family residence was showing a unit to prospective tenants and asking the usual questions. "Professionally employed?" he asked. "We're a military family," the wife answered. "Children?" "Oh, yes, ages 9 and 12," she answered proudly. "Animals?" "Oh, no," she said earnestly. "They're very well behaved."

In the 1961, Walt Disney produced film *The Absent-Minded Professor* starring Fred MacMurray, Professor Ned Brainard discovered

a new substance he called Flubber (a blending of flying and rubber). I received correct answers from Susan Ellis, Gene Uzen, Barbara Cadwell, Tina Castañares, Rhonda Spies, Mike McFarlane, Jess Birge, Lana Tepfer, Russ Noe, Dave Lutgens, Rose Schulz, Doug Nelson, Jack Bissett, and Eileen Utroske, this week's winner of a quilt raffle ticket. And last week I missed Doug Nelson, Judy Hanson, Joan Chantler, Mike Yarnell, and Mary Zenorini.

While sitting on our front porch in The Dalles, my wife and I can watch the planes, trains and automobiles, and the occasional barge, traveling up and down the Gorge. Every time I see a plane, I yell out to my wife's consternation, "Ze plane! Ze plane!" For this week's "Remember When" question, what was the television series aired from 1977 to 1984 where Mr. Roarke's assistant Tattoo would yell those words after running up the tower and ringing the bell? E-mail your answers to mcseniorcenter@gmail.com, call 541-296-4788 or send it with a scale model of a Grumman Widgeon amphibious aircraft.

Well, it's been another week, listening for the train coming around the mountain when she comes.

Until we meet again, don't always believe everything you think.

•••

"If you have the choice between humble and cocky, go with cocky. There's always time to be humble later, once you've been proven horrendously, irrevocably wrong."
— *Kinky Friedman*

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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.

Meal sites

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.

MY DAUGHTER, AN INTROVERT, finds living in our extrovert world uncomfortable: Social gatherings, networking, meet and greets. But during these months of social limitations, she's told me, with a smirk on her face, "Now the extroverts have to live in my introvert world!"

For more than 15 months, we have been living as introverts. But now that we have been vaccinated, we can put aside the puzzles, books and DVDs of our favorite movies and go out, see friends we haven't seen for months, and ask, "Now, what is your name?"

Most of us long for moments of spontaneous conversation: The small talk between friends and new acquaintances. But as with any skill, we may have lost the ability to make small talk: Feeling awkward and out of practice. (Or you may be jabbering to anyone



Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association's trombone trio members Bob Smith, Ed Price and Hugh Amick perform live at Hawks Ridge for the first time since last fall. Contributed photo

CGOA musicians perform at Hawks Ridge

Friday, April 23 marked the first live music in more than a year performed at the Hawks Ridge Assisted Living Center in Hood River. It was also a milestone for the musicians, the Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association's (CGOA) trombone trio composed of Bob Smith, Ed Price and Hugh Amick, who haven't been together since they played outside of Providence Brookside man- or with their instruments late last fall.

These musicians love to entertain, and have given free performances to Gorge residents on many

pre-COVID occasions, such as a flashmob at Rosauers, downtown for First Friday and at events for the various other non-profits in town, including Columbia Center for the Arts, according to a press release.

Rosie Aripes, activities director at Hawks Ridge, said she was excited to bring live music to the residents after sequestering for the pandemic. Several residents gave their appreciation post-performance.

Hugh Amick, president of CGOA, said, "It was extremely fulfilling to play for a live audience after so many

months of confinement"

The performance schedule is continuing, with Erica Roulier and Jill Foley of CGOA scheduled to entertain Hawks Ridge residents with their string duets on May 14.

CGOA is in the midst of planning for a return to their regular season, and hopes to have the full orchestra together, which of course will include those intrepid trombone players, for a performance in the fall, said a press release.

Visit the website for details at gorgeorchestra.org.

'Powerful Tools for Caregivers' offered starting May 21

Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital's Volunteer in Action program is offering the Zoom series "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" Fridays, May 21 through June 25, from 10 a.m. to noon. This is an educational program designed to help caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a spouse, family member or friend, said a press release. Cost is \$30, with scholarships available.

The course is intended for family caregivers, long-distance caregivers and caregivers of adult children with disabilities. "Like many people, you may not realize you're a caregiver," said a press release. "You might think what you do as simply helping someone important to you."

Caregivers are those who help someone with medication, grocery shop for or with someone, take someone to doctor's visits and interpret medical instructions, check

on dietary needs, manage cleaning, laundry and other household services, care for someone who doesn't live near you, and/or provide care or support for someone in your home, in theirs, or in a facility, said the press release.

Participants will learn to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, better communicate feelings, increase their ability to make tough decisions and locate resources.

"Family caregiving can be stressful as you try to balance your priorities with the needs of your loved one," reads a press release. "Whether the person you care for lives with you, down the street or across the country, caregiving is a challenging and rewarding role that affects your health and well-being."

To register, contact Britta Willson at 541-387-6404 or brittany.willson@providence.org.

White Salmon Rotary, Mt Adams Chamber prepare for community cleanup event

■ Staff Report
Columbia Gorge News

The 25th Annual Community Cleanup for Bingen and White Salmon residents is back and will be held Friday, May 21, and Saturday, May 22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Bingen Recycling Center.

Reuse, repurpose and recycle items from your home and yard, and help keep waste from going into the landfill.

Brought to you by the Rotary Club of White Salmon-Bingen, Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce, and numerous community partners, a \$10 suggested donation supports future cleanups and other important Rotary projects.

Community Cleanup of Bingen and White Salmon is a major hands-on project of the local Rotary Club and focuses on keeping as much material out of the landfill as possible by providing residents a place to take yard debris, electronics, used items such as clothing, building materials, scrap metal, appliances, household goods, furniture, bicycles and more, said local Rotarian Lora Helmer.

"A big part of the focus is on waste reduction and alternatives to landfilling," Helmer said.

The Klickitat County Recycling Coordinator Michelle Mulrony will also be on hand to answer recycling questions, help with waste reduction solutions, and

will be selling home composting bins to help reduce food waste.

In 2019, 115 volunteers provided over 600 hours of their time to make the annual event run smoothly. New volunteers are always welcome and lunch is provided to all who participate. Please call 509-493-3630 to sign up for a 2-hour shift as a sorter, greeter, driver or loading assistant. Local groups are encouraged to volunteer together and wear your organization's t-shirt and be featured on the Community Cleanup Facebook page.

Tammara Tippel, Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce Executive Director and boardmember of the Community Cleanup planning committee, said one thing that keeps her dedicated to the event is taking the phone calls from elderly residents who require assistance to get their home items or yard debris picked up.

"They are so appreciative of knowing that someone cares enough to come and help them," Tippel said. "It is a big deal when you have had a broken appliance in your home that you could not dispose of alone. This is about the community coming together to assist one another in creating a more pleasant environment for us all. We are making a difference."

For details visit Facebook at [WACommunityCleanup](https://www.facebook.com/WACommunityCleanup) or call the Chamber at 509-493-3630.

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- Hula Saw
- Planerman
- Planer Infeed Helper
- Sorter Bin Chaser
- Stacker
- Strapper
- Forklift Driver
- Log Yard Operator/ Equipment Operator
- Millwright/Mechanic
- Chain Puller

Full job descriptions and required application can be obtained at the main office located at 4865 Hwy 35 Hood River, OR 97031.

Job postings can also be found on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)