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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**STRANGE BREW**

While reading Mary O'Brien's latest column, "Rapid Response" (10/1), I was reminded of a recent incident in my neighborhood. On a walk with my dogs near the Weyerhaeuser end of Little Fall Creek Road, we encountered a man talking in distressed tones to his cell phone. Logging pants and boots, suspenders, about 25 years old. His truck, likely a Weyerhaeuser Company vehicle, had broken down apparently somewhere on the company's haul road about a mile away. As he was explaining where, his cell phone died, and I could still hear his frustration and outrage a couple of hundred yards down the road.

While berating his phone for failing him, the caller stood in front of and was surrounded by a number of residences. It clearly never occurred to him to knock on the nearest door and ask to use the phone.

Well before human relations were packaged in portable cell phones, Blackberries, iPods and the like, those of us of a certain age expected to exercise the kindness of strangers face-to-face if we had trouble — and to return the favor. Or, if need be, depend on our survival skills and sense of adventure without props.

Though certainly we might have been turned away, more often we were welcomed into the nearest house and into the lives of its occupants. For instance, when a friend and I were traveling in New Zealand and ran out of gas in a rural area, a nearby neighbor loaned us a gas can and his car to go into town to fill it. For me, at least,

HULT  
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2009-2010

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