

PARENTS TALK BACK

Is crowd-funding the new hustle?

Lucy, a sweet-looking toddler with wispy blond hair, needs \$450 for head shots because a talent agency is “very interested.” Her mother wants you to chip in to “start her on her road to success.”

A Washington University student would like some help buying a piano because she can’t use the practice rooms on campus. They aren’t always open, you see.

There’s a local high school student with a 3.67 GPA who wants to take a 10-day trip to Costa Rica during spring break. Her mother would like you pitch in, because her daughter “could really use a trip like this for stress relief.”

Or you could throw in a few dollars for a high school rugby team in San Francisco that needs money for a trip to Australia and New Zealand.

These are all public pleas for donations from the crowdfunding site GoFundMe.com, which has collectively raised a billion dollars for a multitude of causes in the past year alone.

Giving has always been a social act, one that binds people together and encourages reciprocity. Now, it’s also a social media act.

In one way, it’s been a blessing to be able to help people with unexpected funeral or medical expenses, or those dealing with some other crisis or disaster. It’s rewarding for the giver to help a friend or stranger during a difficult time.

It’s not so rewarding to see people begging for money for boob jobs, lavish birthday parties or vacations.

One mom, and certainly not the only one, posted that she wants to throw her 1-year-old a \$1,000 birthday bash; won’t you pitch in? (For the record, she surpassed her goal and raised \$1,095.)

The number of birthday-related campaigns within the “Celebrations and Special Events” category on GoFundMe has “skyrocketed,” according to a site spokesman. There was a 330 percent increase in donation volume for birthday campaigns between 2013 and 2014.

Sites such as GoFundMe have a financial stake in promoting and normalizing this uncouth behavior: They take a 5 percent cut of whatever is raised. There’s also a 3 percent fee for their payment processors. Your charity or good will is their for-profit business enterprise. Also, it’s “giver beware” in each of these transactions, because there’s no oversight to see if the donations go toward their stated purpose.

Offline, if someone asks for money (for anything), and someone else wants to give, it’s a private interaction between those two parties.

But when that transaction happens in a public space, it reminds the rest of us that we have to teach our children a value we may have taken for granted: It’s not acceptable to ask friends or strangers to pay for your luxuries or to fund your wish list. The sheer volume of such shameless requests — for things from dream weddings and cosmetic surgery to children’s hobbies or sports equipment — makes me wonder why anyone thinks it’s OK.

Has crowdfunding replaced the hustle? Or has it become the new hustle?

The apparent logic is: If someone wants to give, why shouldn’t I ask? There’s a simple answer: It’s greedy and lacking in self-pride. Would you stand on a street corner, holding a sign, asking for spare change for your daughter’s cheerleading uniform or your son’s football camp? Because it looks just as ridiculous to pass the tin cup on the information superhighway.

You’re not asking people to fund a shortfall in your budget. You’re asking them to fund a shortfall in your priorities.

No one should feel guilty for declining to donate to another able-bodied person’s wish list. The world is full of causes and people with needs more compelling than a birthday trip to Mexico.

In fact, those who succumb to social pressure when they are tagged on Facebook with such ridiculous fundraising requests are enabling a culture of entitlement.

Here’s a radical idea: Go fund yourself.

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AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back



Photo by Jason DeCrow/Invision for Purina Beggin/AP Images
Portia, a Yorkshire Terrier-mix and her owner walk the runway in matching Marge Simpson costumes.



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer
A pug in a tarantula costume participates in the annual Tompkins Square Halloween Dog Parade in New York, Oct. 24.

New York park goes to the dogs for 25th Halloween dog parade

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A park went to the dogs in a grand way on Saturday, hosting what was billed as the nation’s largest Halloween dog parade, with hundreds of canines submitting to their owners’ fanciful desires to see them in costumes as superheroes, dinosaurs and the pope.

Thousands of spectators lapped it up, mingling with nearly 300 four-legged contestants around a stage in Manhattan’s Tompkins Square Park. Every imaginable breed was paraded one by one to preen before judges in the hopes of a Best in Show award at the 25th annual outing, which raises money for the park’s dog run.

Manhattan resident Robert Krzywicki watched dozens of spectators sneak snapshots of his dachshund, Daisy Mae, dressed in a dinosaur suit.

“For the day, she’s like a movie star,” he said.

The prize was won by some Dallas contestants who tapped into the Halloween spirit with a Day of the Dead-themed presentation that included two Chihuahuas and a Yorkshire terrier. Last year, a doggy version of Rose and Jack from the movie “Titanic”



Photo by Jason DeCrow/Invision for Purina Beggin/AP Images
Ruby, an Australian Shepherd-mix proudly struts her alter ego as Donald Trump at the Tompkins Square Halloween Dog Parade.

captured the title.

This year, there were all types of dinosaurs, perhaps capitalizing on the excitement generated by the recent release of the “Jurassic World” film, and dogs posing as an alligator, a dragon, a fisherman and characters from “The Wizard of Oz” and “The Flintstones.” One dog, accompanied by a woman wearing a nun’s habit, was dressed as Pope Francis.

Some dogs’ costumes were outdone only by those of their owners.

Bronx resident Andrea Pagan

was decked out as Wonder Woman, just like her Boston terrier guide dog, Imani, who is a bit of a hero in real life, protecting Pagan from potential accidents resulting from disabilities.

Spectator Danielle Williams, who’s from Port Chester, walked excitedly by dozens of colorfully costumed dogs and said she wanted to pet them all.

“I want to scoop them and love them,” she said.

Not only were the more than 275 participating dogs not barking up the wrong tree in the



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer
Paralyzed rescue dogs Maury, right, and Little Miss Lexi in Google Maps car costumes .



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer
Dachshunds Eli, left, and Emily in Minion costumes.

park surrounded by dog lovers, they mostly weren’t barking at all, no surprise to Krzywicki, who watched Daisy Mae shy away from the affection of strangers. He suggested stage fright had set in.

“She’s pretending she doesn’t know me,” Krzywicki said. “She’s saying, ‘Help! Somebody adopt me! Look what he made me do!’”

OUT OF THE VAULT

Lawmen arrest robbery suspects from wrong crime

A saloon holdup in 1902 led to the arrest of two suspects — from a different robbery.

A pair of masked men entered the Kentucky Saloon in Freewater the evening of August 14, 1902, startling the bartender and his five patrons lined up at the bar. The men were relieved of about \$10 in cash and the thieves also rifled the cash drawer, making off with about \$150 in total.

Two days later, Umatilla County Sheriff Til Taylor received a phone call saying one of his deputies, Pat Ritchie, had been shot in the leg while attempting to arrest the saloon robbers at a house just outside Athena. After receiving a tip, Ritchie had placed two deputies covering the exits of the house while he began sneaking up on the front of the building. Suddenly, the front door flew open and bullets started flying. Ritchie, whose gun jammed, was hit in the fleshy part of one thigh and fell. The shooters, thinking the deputy was dead, stole his



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

horse and rode away. The other deputies fled the scene without stopping to help Ritchie.

A posse was soon on the trail of the escaped suspects, aided by a pack of bloodhounds from Walla.

The posse stopped near Touchet Station after two days of searching and were preparing for dinner when a man raced to their camp saying a Swedish man had been attacked and beaten almost to death by a pair of thugs. Sheriff Taylor’s posse caught up with the bandits a mile and a half away, where a running shootout took place. The suspects managed to escape into the brush and disappear.

On August 19 Sheriff Taylor finally ran one of the suspects to ground, arresting George McDonald as he worked with a threshing crew on the farm of John King near Athena. It was

then that the posse discovered they had been trailing the wrong pair of robbers since the altercation near Touchet Station. McDonald confessed to the robbery of the Swedish man and he and his accomplice, who was arrested at a neighboring farm, were turned over to the Walla Walla County sheriff.

And the Kentucky Saloon robbers? Al Cofer, a notorious local outlaw, was fingered as one of the culprits, but he and his partner had disappeared while the posse chased after the Touchet robbery suspects.

Cofer’s criminal career was a long and varied one, having a criminal history in Washington and California as well as serving time in the Oregon penitentiary. The Pendleton native was linked to a gang of stock rustlers in the Butter Creek area and was a champion jailbreaker, escaping from the Heppner jail three times in a five-week period before almost losing his life when he fell down an abandoned well in the dark. A sheepherder out looking for strays rescued

Cofer after three days without food and water, and Cofer was arrested again a few days later. To prevent him from escaping again, Cofer was tried and sentenced to the penitentiary immediately. He was released after serving that prison term shortly before the robbery at Freewater.

The mystery of Cofer’s whereabouts was solved almost a year later. Sheriff Taylor read about a train robbery in New Mexico and wrote to the sheriff in Santa Fe, including a photo of Cofer. He was told Cofer had been arrested for the train robbery, and that he and a Mexican prisoner killed a jailer in a subsequent escape attempt. Cofer was sentenced to life in prison for the killing, but was never brought before a judge for the Freewater robbery.

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Renee Struthers is the Community Records Editor for the East Oregonian. See the complete collection of Out of the Vault columns at eovault.blogspot.com

ODDS & ENDS

Owner finds car on roof of home

WOODHULL TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — When Joyce Kingsley heard “kaboom” while at her Michigan home, she immediately thought about extreme weather.

The 83-year-old needed to look up: A Ford Mustang was parked on the roof of her home after the driver had a medical problem Monday and lost control on Interstate 69 in Shiawassee County.

Kingsley’s home about 20 miles northeast of Lansing is built next to a hill, and the roof is nearly level with the ground, *The Argus-Press of Owosso* reported.

“I was just watching TV inside. I had it up pretty loud — but this was much louder,” Kingsley said.

State police said the Mustang went through several bushes, trees and a fence before stopping on the roof. The driver was treated for low blood sugar but

wasn’t hurt.

“The driver is extremely lucky,” Trooper Ben Rowell said.

Kingsley plans to put a tarp over the damaged roof until it can be fixed.

“It could’ve been a lot worse,” she said. “I’m glad everyone is all right.”

Officer dressed as homeless man catches drivers using phones

BETHESDA, Md. (AP) — A Maryland police officer went undercover dressed as a homeless man to catch people who were using their phones while driving.

Cpl. Patrick Robinson went undercover Tuesday morning equipped with a police radio and a body camera. He held a sign that read, “I am not homeless. I am a Montgomery County police officer looking for cell phone texting violations.”

Montgomery County police Sgt. Phillip Chapin and about

eight other officers issued a total of 56 tickets county-wide that day, including 31 tickets and 9 warnings to people caught using their phones without hands-free devices.

Chapin says authorities are seeing more distracted-driver-related deaths as a result of people using their phones while behind the wheel.

Stray cat in airport irks authorities

CAIRO (AP) — A stray cat is darting around Cairo’s international airport, flustering authorities trying to catch it days ahead of a major international inspection.

Security men were called in Wednesday to try to capture the rebellious feline, which had been fed by some passengers and staff in recent days but has now been declared persona non grata by authorities ahead of next week’s International Civil Aviation Organization visit. As of the

evening, the Egyptian Mau cat is still at large.

Hotel to serve road kill-inspired menu

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — A fish and wild game supper is featuring some Vermont road kill on the menu.

New York’s WPTZ-TV reports Hotel Vermont will offer three animals injured or killed on the road as it hosts the Wild About Vermont event on Nov. 7. The event will feature a game supper with donations from hunters and fishermen in the state.

Residents say it’s a quirky and interesting idea.

The supper will cost \$75 and will be prepared by chef Doug Paine. Also on the menu will be deer, bear, moose and muskrat.

Paine says it will be delicious and well worth trying. He says he’s sure many residents haven’t tried bear but would probably like it if they did.