

PARENTS TALK BACK
Parents often clueless about kids’ internet use

It’s a well-known parental habit to underestimate the trouble your own child gets into.

For some, it’s always “other people’s kids” who smoke, drink, do drugs or have sex. Turns out, little Johnny and Jane may not be the responsible digital citizens many parents believe them to be, either.

The Center for Cyber Safety and Education, based in Clearwater, Florida, commissioned a study last year that looked at how children in grades four through eight use the internet — and how their parents perceive them to be using it.

Patrick Craven, director of the center, said the organization hired Shugoll Research to survey 192 students and their parents in four cities: Los Angeles, St. Louis, Baltimore and Bethesda, Maryland. While the sample size is too small to generalize to a national population, the results reveal a sizable disconnect in parents’ perception and children’s actual use of the internet.

Even in this relatively young subset, nearly half said they had used the internet at 11 p.m. or later on school nights, in ways other than doing homework. A third of the kids surveyed, and nearly half of the middle schoolers, said they had been on at midnight or later. Only 11 percent of parents perceived that their children were online that late at night.

That’s just one parental blind spot the survey discovered.

About 3 in 10 students admitted they use the internet in ways their parents would not approve of. For the middle schoolers, this rose to 4 out of 10. What were the forbidden online activities they reported doing? Lying about their age to get onto adult websites, listening to or downloading music with adult content, watching movies or programs meant for adults, searching the internet for adult topics and using a webcam to Facetime with a stranger.

Four out of 10 children in the study said they had connected with a stranger online, and more than half of those kids told the stranger they were older than their real age.

When parents were asked if they thought their children were downloading and listening to music with adult content, 63 percent said yes. Actually, only 31 percent of students said they did this. The same was true for movies with adult content: Twice as many parents thought their children were watching them, compared to what children reported doing.

But when parents were asked if they thought their child had chatted with and tried to meet someone they’d met online, only 2 percent thought so. Fifteen percent of kids admitted they had.

“Parents are kind of missing the point,” Craven said. This study wasn’t even done with high schoolers, he said: We’re talking about elementary and middle school-aged kids.

“The results prompted us to create all new materials for parents on our website,” he said. The organization’s site, safeandsecureonline.org, features a section for parents and guardians, which includes several suggestions:

- Create a charging station: a spot where everyone’s devices get plugged in at night. “You have to get (devices) out of the room,” Craven said. Ninety percent of children said they had a device to access the internet in their room at night. Nearly 4 in 10 students said they had been really tired at school because of late-night internet use; a few arrived tardy or missed school due to it.
- Consider apps or parental controls offered on family plans by wireless providers that allow parents to turn off the Wi-Fi connection in the house at certain times.
- Make discussions about internet use an ongoing conversation, not a one-time thing. Nearly all children in the survey acknowledged that their parents or school had taught them about internet safety. But many parents have weak follow-through on rules and oversight.
- Join the social media sites your children and their friends use. In this age group, the most popular ones were reportedly Instagram, Snapchat and Vine, with moderate numbers of kids also using Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and Ask.fm. You don’t have to be an active social media user, but being familiar with how the sites work and periodically checking in is a good idea. “If they know you are on, it will make an impact,” Craven said.
- Play your child’s video games with him or her occasionally. Gaming these days has a social media aspect, and involves conversations with other people — often strangers. While you may be good about picking games rated for your child’s age, the in-game conversations with other players may not be age-appropriate.

There’s a thin line between regularly talking about online use and lecturing or nagging. Tweens and teens are masters at tuning out the latter.

If this survey is any indication, these conversations require far better follow-through by parents.

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Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

How gardeners can help protect butterfly populations

By DEAN FOSDICK
Associated Press

Bees aren’t the only pollinators suffering from a massive North American die-off. Butterflies and moths, those flying flowers of the insect world, are disappearing too.

“But the situation isn’t hopeless,” says Scott Hoffman Black, executive director of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, in Portland, Oregon. “Anybody — gardeners or butterfly lovers — can make an oasis in their landscape for these important animals. It doesn’t matter if you have a tiny lot or a farmyard. A little effort can help a lot.”

Besides their beauty, butterflies and moths play a significant role in the pollination of flowering plants, 80 percent of which rely on animals — mostly insects — to move their pollen from plant to plant, the Xerces Society says. Butterflies and moths also serve as an important food source for other animals.

Yet in the United States alone, at least five butterfly species have gone extinct since 1950; an additional 25 are listed as endangered nationwide, and four are listed as threatened, according to Xerces in its new guide, “Gardening for Butterflies” (Timber Press, 2016).

Federal protection is being sought for the monarch butterfly population, which has plunged 90 percent in North America in less than 20 years. “During the same period, it is estimated that these once-common, iconic orange and black butterflies may have lost more than 165 million acres of habitat — an area about the size of Texas — including nearly a third of their summer breeding grounds,” the Center for Biological Diversity says.

Just as significant has been the near elimination in farm fields of milkweed, the exclusive food of monarch caterpillars.

Donald Lewis, a professor and extension entomologist with Iowa State University,



Dean Fosdick via AP

This 2004 photo shows an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly perched on some Creeping phlox, a ground cover. Gardens emphasizing nectar plants that bloom year-around are a good first step toward reversing the dramatic decline in butterfly populations.

cites a 2012 study that documented an 81 percent decline in milkweeds in agricultural fields from 1999 to 2010.

“The cure for butterfly and pollinator preservation, conservation and improvement is to create biodiversity, which, of course, is at odds with most farming, urban sprawl and commercial development,” Lewis said. “But it is our goal.”

Nurture, enrich and diversify your home habitat, entomologists say.

Planting pollinator gardens that emphasize nectar plants that bloom year-round for bees, wasps and other wildlife is a good first step. Butterfly gardens take that a stage further by adding host plants suitable for hungry caterpillars.

“Since butterfly larvae are picky eaters, it

takes a variety of food plants,” Lewis said.

Butterfly gardens should be located where they’ll get at least six hours of sun per day. They should contain at least four annual, biennial or perennial nectar plant species, and at least 10 milkweed plants of two or more types.

Ironically, beware the invasive butterfly bush, which has been listed as a noxious weed in several states. And think twice about the mass release of butterflies.

“Xerces is taking a stand that we should not be moving or releasing butterflies for such things as weddings, out of a concern for possible diseases,” Black said. “We have a sense that the same issues that are happening with bees are happening with butterflies.”

OUT OF THE VAULT

Historic mining town incinerated for third time

With the cry of “Fire!” at 7:30 p.m. on April 19, 1937, the historic business district of Canyon City in Grant County burned for the third time since its founding in 1861.

Buster Cresop, who lived in the old Elkhorn Hotel, looked out his window and saw smoke billowing up from the attic of the old wooden frame building and sounded the alarm. Some 25 guests were evacuated from the hotel, which was soon reduced to ruins. The flames, pushed by a stiff south breeze, rushed northward and soon most of the wood-framed buildings in downtown Canyon City were ablaze. The fire burned through the night, and when the smoke cleared, 15 businesses and an apartment building had been destroyed. Cause of the fire was reported a carelessly discarded cigarette in the Elkhorn Hotel. Damages were estimated at around \$150,000.

The town of 350 was left with its homes, a service station, a Pastime house (bar and card room), the post office, a relief station, the theater and a barber shop. Neighboring John Day sent emergency food supplies to hungry Canyon City residents, and other area cities, including Pendleton, sent relief supplies or cash donations to help the town get back on its feet.

One boy almost lost his life when he attempted to plunge into a burning building



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

in search of his mother. A guard restrained him, and he was later reunited with his equally distraught parent. Two John Day volunteer firefighters were temporarily overcome by smoke, but recovered. And a woman fainted after being evacuated from her home. Otherwise, the townspeople emerged from the fire unscathed.

The tinderbox-dry buildings threw flames so high that they could be seen 25 miles away in Seneca, and within a few hours more than a thousand people had gathered around the fire zone; the city promptly put the gawkers to work in a bucket brigade. In all, more than 500 volunteers pitched in to fight the blaze. In addition to the Canyon City firemen, John Day, Prairie City, Mt. Vernon and U.S. Forest Service crews laid extra hoses to keep the flames from historic buildings like the former home of poet Joaquin Miller and the Episcopal Church, which had survived two earlier fires as well.

Last to leave the downtown inferno was Mrs. Hilda Valade, a telephone operator who stood by the switchboard to call for help through the Mt. Vernon exchange, 10

miles away. She escaped through a rear exit only after the telephone offices had started to collapse.

At the *Blue Mountain Eagle* offices in John Day, editor Clint Haight busily put out a special edition of the paper, but his Canyon City building burned as well, destroying all the newspaper’s files and archives. The *Eagle* (then the *Grant County News*) had been the only downtown survivor of the 1898 Canyon City fire that started, mysteriously, in the room of a traveling performer about an hour after he sang “There’ll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” in the town’s New York Theatre. He was arrested and put on trial, but acquitted for lack of evidence. An 1898 *East Oregonian* story reported an oil lamp exploded in the room of a “morphine fiend.”

Canyon City first burned to the ground in August of 1870, when the town was a much larger, bustling gold mining town. Because the town was built in a narrow valley, and the main street was originally so narrow, no insurance companies would insure the businesses, and in the first and second fires the town was a total loss.

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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

Rock ramps at park help turtles exit water

BEDFORD, Texas (AP) — Some turtles having a tough time crawling out of an updated North Texas pond can now use special exit ramps.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported Thursday that the small lake at Boys Ranch Park in Bedford was lined with concrete and has steeper embankments. The reptiles were having a tough time getting in and out of the water.

City workers have installed three exit ramps made of rocks to make navigation easier for the turtles and other animals, including ducks.

City spokeswoman Natalie Foster says the plan originally called for one ramp for turtles, then workers realized that wasn’t enough.

The small turtle ramps measure about 5 feet long and 2 feet wide.

University mistakenly sends 5,000 students acceptance emails

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — More than 5,000 prospective students have mistakenly been notified by email that they’ve been accepted into an upstate New York university.

University at Buffalo spokesman John Della-



Max Faulkner/Star-Telegram via AP

In this photo taken April 14 turtles climb out of the water at the refurbished Boys Ranch Lake in Bedford, Texas.

Contrada says the mistaken email was sent Wednesday to students whose applications hadn’t been fully reviewed. He says the university sent a second email about three to four hours later notifying the students of the gaffe and apologizing for it.

The university posted a statement on its website saying the “miscommunication occurred when an incorrect email list was generated from an applicant database.”

The statement says it’s important to note the students who received the mistaken email are still being considered for acceptance by the university.

The University at Buffalo has about 30,000 students.

Stinking drunk? Police say ‘inebriated’ man used fart spray

ATHENS, Ga. (AP) — Police in Georgia have arrested a man for allegedly causing a stink at a bar.

The Athens Banner-Herald reports that a woman told officers Blake Leland Zengo, 20, of Bogart, sprayed her in the face with a product designed to smell like flatulence.

An Athens-Clarke County police report says several people left the bar Saturday, citing a foul smell inside, and then told police that Zengo was the culprit.

The police report described Zengo as “very inebriated”

and said a bottle of spray designed to cause an offensive odor was found in his pants pocket. Zengo denied spraying anything.

He was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, public intoxication and underage consumption of alcohol. He was released from jail on \$1,500 bond.

It’s unclear whether Zengo has an attorney.

Madrid mayor: Dog poop culprits may have to clean streets

MADRID (AP) — Dog owners in Madrid beware: Pick up after your pooch or face working as a street cleaner.

Madrid Mayor Manuela Carmena is warning dog owners they’ll face stiff fines or possibly weekend work as street cleaners if they are caught in an upcoming dog poop crackdown. Carmena says Monday that police will initially focus on two city districts where many dog owners are not cleaning up after their pets.

Dog owners could be fined up to \$1,700 if caught. Carmena also says she’ll propose to city councilors that offenders perform street cleaning assignments on Saturdays or Sundays as a possible substitute for the fines.