

A poem for a friend in need

Of all the things Oregon Poet Laureate Kim Stafford told us when he read at the First Draft Writers' Series last month, these words touched me the most: "Someone in your life needs a poem, right now."

I thought of the people in my life. Could I write such a poem?

Stafford's friend Sharon had needed a poem, he said, when the circumstances of her life presented her with overwhelming challenges. How did he know? She told him so. He found her message one morning at work, but she had written it at 3 a.m. "In the wee hours of the morning it struck me that I am in need of a poem — a prescription that would hearten my soul and give me strength to face these days ..."

She was simply asking him for a favorite poem, something Stafford might recommend that "through humor or empathy or drawing on Spirit, brings a little Light and Hope."

You might have a favorite poem, too, words you lean on in times of loss or fear. After the deaths of September 11, 2001, many Americans turned to poetry, an almost instinctive search for ways to understand our feelings. Auden's "September 1, 1939" was a favorite. When my

mother was suffering after surgery, she and I recited Yeats' "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" together — a comfort to us both.

How many of us have Kentucky poet-farmer Wendell Berry's "The Peace of Wild Things" taped to the wall above our desks or pinned to a bulletin board in our houses? "When despair for the world grows in me ... I go and lie down where the wood drake / rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds." There's more — I hope you will find that poem, if you don't know it yet, and I hope it helps you, too.

But sometimes people need words that can come only from us. From you and me. Stafford, knowing this, gathered poems for Sharon from his own writing. "Turns out," he writes in the small collection he would title "Circumference: Poems of Consolation and Blessing," he had "many little spells to sustain my own buoyancy in the face of hard news and daily assaults to heart and mind." One such spell he calls "Improvisational Salvation." Remembering what Miles Davis had said about playing the wrong note — when you play the wrong note, it's the next note that makes it right — Stafford says, "So / stay awake / & play."

Another of my favorites from this collection is "Allegiance" ("I pledge alle-

giance to the doomed life, / clumsy person, old salmon struggling up / a shallow stream"), which ends with another Stafford story. "Once I had a sweetgrass bag, and I gave it away / to a stranger. 'You have a sorrow,' she said. / 'Don't be afraid to see how deep it goes.'"

Stafford has written more than a dozen books, including a prize-winning essay collection and powerful memoir. But the book that quickly disappeared from the sale table after his reading was "Circumference."

"Don't worry," he said. "I'll send more." Roberta Lavadour has several copies waiting at Pendleton Center for the Arts, a gift for those who knew this was the book they needed.

It's not easy, writing a poem for the person in your life who needs to hear these particular words. Stafford was asked to write a poem for the surgical waiting room in Doernbecher Children's Hospital — for parents who would be waiting in that nearly unbearable situation. What could he say? Not that all would be well, because it might not be. Somehow, though, he made a gift for those people. And sometimes, he told us, he goes up to the eighth floor to read that poem himself.

We all know the winter holidays can be a challenge for those dealing with pain or loss. It may be that in this season Stafford's assertion is more relevant than ever. Whether or not we consider ourselves poets, I suspect he's right: Someone in our lives needs a poem. Or just a word, a word

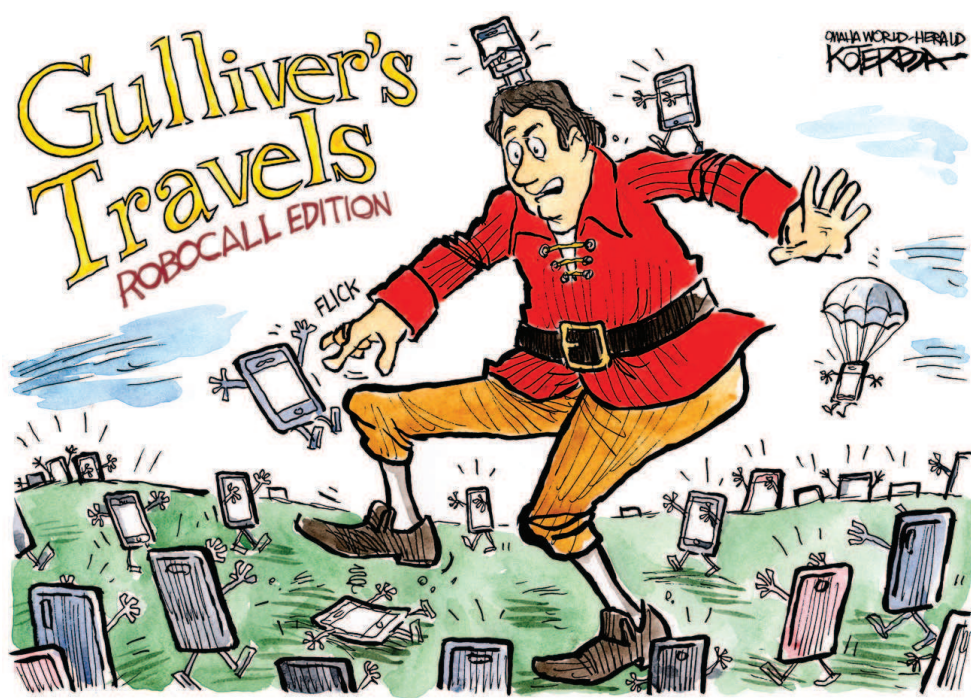


BETTE HUSTED
FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

from us.

And after all, that's what poems are made of.

Bette Husted is a writer and a student of T'ai Chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.



Terminate robocalls

By The (Huntington, W.V.) Herald-Dispatch

How many of us have missed an important phone call because we didn't recognize the number? Nowadays if you don't recognize the number, you don't answer the phone. Why? Because of all those annoying robocalls.

Some robocalls mask themselves by using a local number when the call really is made from far, far away. You can't even trust the caller ID on your phone anymore.

According to a recent article in the *Washington Post*, reports of unwanted phone calls are rising. Nearly half of all cellphone calls next year will be spam, according to projections by First Orion, a caller ID firm.

An article in *USA Today* quoted statistics from YouMail, a company that provides a service to block robocalls. The article said U.S. consumers and businesses received about 30.5 billion robocalls in 2017. That broke the record of 29.3 billion calls set the previous year. YouMail estimates the 2018 total will jump to roughly 48 billion.

U.S. phones received some 6.1 million robocalls per hour in September 2018 alone, YouMail said.

Help may be on the way.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey said last week he had joined a bipartisan group of 40 attorneys general to stop or reduce annoying and harmful robocalls.

The coalition is reviewing the technology major telecom companies are pursuing to combat illegal robocalls, which can make it appear that the incoming call is coming from a legitimate source, such as a well-known financial institution, business and/or government entity.

"Our office receives numerous calls from West Virginia consumers annoyed by the prevalence and frequency of robocalls," Morrisey said in a news release. "By joining forces, I believe our coalition can work with the telecom companies and produce

real results to quell these intrusions and stop scammers from taking advantage of West Virginians."

Attorneys general from Ohio and Kentucky are also part of the coalition.

Morrisey said the multi-state group he has joined has had in-depth meetings with several major telecom companies. The attorneys general share information about the technological capabilities already in existence or in development to fight these calls.

The coalition is working to develop a detailed understanding of what is technologically feasible to minimize unwanted robocalls and illegal telemarketing, engaging the major telecom companies to encourage them to expedite the best possible solutions for consumers, and considering further recommendations the states should make to the Federal Communications Commission, Morrisey said.

The coalition's efforts will enhance West Virginia's ability to enforce anti-spoofing legislation passed earlier this year, which prohibits any seller or telemarketer from misrepresenting its caller identification data in order to deceive the call's recipient, Morrisey said.

Meanwhile, the FCC is considering action to create a national database of phone numbers that have been terminated and reassigned. The database would help prevent accidental robocalls to numbers that are no longer assigned to consumers who signed up to receive those calls.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, who offered the FCC proposal on robocalls, has offered another proposal that he says will help prevent spam text messages. But spam messaging via texting is not nearly as troublesome as robocalls. Pai's announcement says as much. It says the spam rate for texts is estimated at 2.8 percent, while the spam rate for email is estimated at more than 50 percent.

The sheer volume of robocalls renders cellphone service almost useless at times. It's good to see efforts are underway to limit the damage robocallers are doing to our ability to enjoy our phone service.

First step in forest revision was positive

By Glen Casamassa
National Forest Service

Dear objectors, interested persons, and Blue Mountains community members:

I recently had the privilege of meeting many of you during the first round of objection-resolution meetings for the Blue Mountains Revised Forest Plans. I want to sincerely thank everyone who participated. Over 300 objectors, interested persons, and public observers attended meetings in John Day, Pendleton, Wallowa, Baker City and La Grande. I am grateful for the time and effort invested by each of you. I hope you will agree that this first round of resolution meetings was a positive step.

The meetings were led by objection reviewing officers based in Washington, D.C., with support and coordination from the Pacific Northwest Regional Office as well as the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests. The goal for these initial meetings was to bring clarity and mutual understanding to the Blue Mountain Forest Plan objection issues. The dialogue helped Forest Service leadership and staff to better understand your values, concerns and views.

Spending time in Eastern Oregon improved much more than our understanding of the issues identified in the objections, though. Through our initial discussions we also gained a deeper appreciation of local residents' special relationships with the land. We had it affirmed that, for many of those who live in and around the Blue Mountains, these national forests are not just places to visit and recreate — the forests are a vital part of your community life, identity, heritage and livelihoods. The Forest Service is striving to honor these special relationships in the Blue Mountain Forest Plan's resolution process. In doing so, we will better respect the views of many different community members — including our Tribal neighbors, the states of Oregon and Washington, county and other local government representatives, user groups, environ-

mental groups, industry, and business — all of whom seek assurances that the Forest Service will protect their priority resources.

During the initial meetings the Forest Service heard a lot about a wide range of topics, including access; aquatic and riparian conservation; elk security and big-horn sheep; fire and fuels; fish, wildlife and plants; livestock grazing; local government cooperation and coordination; public participation; social and economic issues; timber and vegetation; and wilderness, back-country, and other special areas. Digging into these topics in person gave the Forest

Service the opportunity to explore issues that were not as prominent in the written objection letters. From the dialogue, some issues appear to be close to resolution while others will require further discussion, so there will be more steps to take in this process. The Forest Service knows that many topics are interrelated, and we will work to pull together the related topics for discussion in future meetings, so all of us can better see the connections and consider the trade-offs of potential resolutions.

The Forest Service also understands that not all objectors and interested persons were able to attend the first round of meetings or have their voices represented by others. So, as we navigate these next steps, the Forest Service will work ensure we are as inclusive as possible in future objections-resolutions meetings.

Over the coming weeks the reviewing officers will be studying the notes and reflecting on what we heard in the first round of resolution meetings and we will be helping the Washington office in scheduling the next round of objections-resolutions meetings. We will be in touch again to announce the next steps. Thank you for your contributions, and I look forward to making more progress together in the near future.

Glenn Casamassa is the Pacific Northwest regional forester overseeing the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests.



The LONG ARM of the LAW.