



Ned Hickson

If customer service can't help, try the suicide hotline

Sometime between Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, my computer slipped from its normal "sleep mode" and into a deep coma. This became apparent after hitting the space bar and getting no reaction whatsoever, not counting a low-pitched whirring sound that — if I didn't know better — I could swear was snoring.

Realizing there might be a serious problem, I gathered all of my computer troubleshooting experience and, over the course of the next 10 minutes, applied that experience by hitting the space bar no less than 400 times. When that didn't work, I unplugged the computer and plugged it back in. Tried a different outlet. Switched keyboards. Wiggled my mouse. Considered finding a different

occupation, preferably one involving explosives.

I eventually realized the only thing left to do was call the Help Line listed in the service manual and hope someone there could either (a) talk me through this or (b) talk me down should our conversation move to the rooftop.

As expected, I was greeted by an automated voice telling me, in that creepy robot word-splice tone, that my call was important to "them" and to please hold until the next representative became available.

Thank.

You for.

Your patience.

Next came the music, a collection of Michael Bolton, Celine Dion, and Whitney Houston standards re-mixed — I'm guessing — by either John Tesh or Yanni to keep people on-hold from growing impatient. This is little like trying to talk a suicidal jumper off the ledge by giv-

ing them a pogo stick.

Making matters worse, I was reminded every 30 seconds — by that same creepy robot voice — that my call was "very important to 'them'" and to remain holding for the next available representative, keeping in mind that my weak, carbon-based body was slowly deteriorating with each passing minute.

Again thank.

You for.

Your patience.

When my service representative broke the line 20 minutes later asking for my computer's serial number, I was unprepared. Not just because it was the first unsynthesized human voice I'd heard in nearly an hour, but also because I didn't have the serial number ready. That's when I was told by "Chaz" I could easily find the number by going to my computer and — very carefully — turning it upside down. Upon hearing these helpful instructions I

cocked my head to one side and, while pinning the phone against my shoulder, fought off an aneurism. I was then instructed to call back when I had the serial number readily available, to which I replied to "Chaz" that I was "readily available" to catch a flight to Atlanta and strangle him with a USB cord unless he waited for me to flip my computer over and read him the number.

After entering the serial number into his data bank, he informed me all the hardware was still under warranty.

However, I needed to pay \$45 in order for the service call to continue. I thanked him for his time and, before hanging up, told him how much I was looking forward to having a glass of sweet tea when I got to Atlanta.

My other option was to take my computer to an approved repair service located 60 miles away. The up side is that I could deal with real

humans. The down side is that driving there would cost about as much as following up on my threat and actually flying to Atlanta.

After careful consideration I decided to stay here.

That's because, the way my luck was going, "Chaz" was probably a 260-lb martial arts champion whose passion for the sport began when his wife left him for a loud-mouthed humor columnist.

Even if I got my computer fixed, what good would it do if I had to type everything with my tongue?

So, as of today, my computer is still in the shop. According to the repair guy they're just waiting for a new "logic board" to arrive which,

well...

Makes sense, I guess?

In the meantime, I'll continue working on a back-up computer that is too old to handle things like getting on the Internet, updating my blog, or performing any function in under 10 minutes. I hope to have my computer back in a few days. Until then:

Thank.

You for.

Your patience.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

FRAA to host tea tasting



COURTESY PHOTO

Lady Bettina and Lady Mary will host the FRAA's tea time Jan. 30.

The Florence Regional Arts Alliance invites all tea lovers to join "Lady Bettina" of Florence and "Lady Mary" of "Who knows where" for a tea tasting and talk on the history of tea.

This will be held Friday, Jan. 30, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the FRAA Art Center, 4969 Highway 101, at Munsel Lake Plaza No. 4.

The art classroom will be transformed into a tea parlor,

and hats are welcome but aren't required.

As the ladies say, "Slightly irreverent and a bit cheeky, we will teach you about tea as you sample the four major types of tea and one tisane (herbal tea). We may throw in a scone or two, and who knows what other surprises."

Preregistration is required by Wednesday, Jan. 28, by calling 503-910-3625.

Community Chorus sign up

For anyone who likes to sing, this is your chance to belt out your favorite Hollywood tunes. The Community Chorus of Florence plans to present a concert on May 3, at the Florence Events Center at 2

p.m. Registration for this season begins Monday, Jan. 26, at 7 p.m., at Cross Road Church on 10th and Maple streets.

For more information, contact Laura Merz at 541-902-8567.

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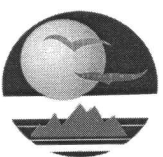
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Andy loves to nap on his people furniture, run through out the house chasing / wrestling with his siblings, and is a very curious, affectionate fellow. It would be best if he was adopted with a sibling since they are a tightly knit group spending time constantly with one another. If adopted with a sibling, the adoption fee is \$85 for two. Kittens are better with a buddy as they can entertain each other, keep each other from getting lonely, and best of all, they learn social behavior like not scratching / biting people by play-wrestling with each other!



If you would like to meet Andy or any of his friends, please visit us at:

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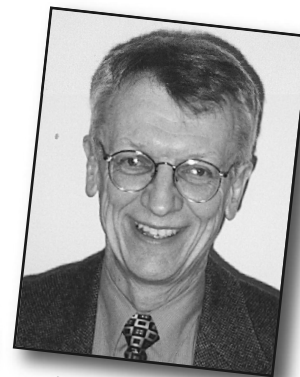


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