



**Ned Hickson**

# If your name is Larry, we've got a bad connection

There are three things I know about "Larry."

He is a contractor; he lives somewhere in Multnomah County; and he has the same cell phone number that I do.

The calls started about a month ago, presumably about the time "Larry" got his contractor's license and began making bids. Since then, he has been a busy man, picking up jobs and making sure that his clients know they can call him any time. Day or night. For any reason at all.

Which they do — to my cell phone.

The Hansons, for example, call whenever they change their mind about what color tile to use around the bidet in their new bathroom. For the Gilmores, deciding between cedar shakes or aluminum siding requires at least one consultation a day. And the Reynolds are still contemplating the ripple effect of kitchen cabinets without knobs.

Mrs. Reynolds thinks knobs would make their kitchen look more inviting; Mr. Reynolds believes not having knobs would stymie their 2-year-old and keep him out of the cabinets for at least another year.

Over the course of the last month, I've gone from polite-

ly explaining that there is no "Larry" at this number, to a more direct approach, which is that "Larry" died — killed in a freak shop-vac accident that was a gruesome, yet impressive, testimonial to the workmanship of Black & Decker products.

I was certain that this tragic revelation would solve my problems. That was until the calls started up again, no doubt after "Larry's" apparent resurrection from a 3-gallon-capacity shop-vac canister.

This left me only one choice.

When the Hansons called this afternoon asking for advice from "Larry" about their decision to use apricot-colored tile around the bidet

in their new bathroom, I told them, as their contractor, they could save themselves a tidy sum of money by simply purchasing a better brand of toilet paper.

Click — dial tone. One down.

For the Gilmores, who were still agonizing over the decision between cedar shakes or aluminum siding, I suggested ditching the house for a double-wide trailer covered in simulated wood paneling and accented with a fence made out of used shipping pallets.

Click — dial tone. Two down.

The next time the phone rang, I snatched it up on the first ring.

"Larry speaking."

It was the Reynolds, looking for help on reaching a final decision about those kitchen cabinet knobs.

"It seems to me that the perfect combination would be something inviting and deceptively hard to open," I said, and heard the Reynolds agree. "Might I suggest installing some beautiful ceramic knobs on your cabinets, then nailing the doors completely shut?"

Mrs. Reynolds hesitated before asking, "And where are we supposed to store our dishes?"

"Hey, I'm offering a solution! If you want to bicker over functionality, find another contractor!" I snapped.

There was an awkward silence before Mr. Reynolds grabbed the phone. "What kind of nails would you suggest?"

Click — dial tone. Though I hung up on them I do plan on calling them back at some point.

In the meantime, if "Larry" happens to be reading this, please call me so we can straighten this whole mess out.

You know the number.

*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*

## 'Now you has jazz' in Florence

### 'Miles To Go Quartet' Review

By **BURNEY GARELICK**

If the great Louis Armstrong were alive and in Florence in 2015, he would say it again: Now you has jazz!

Because, within the glow of City Lights Cinemas, a live band often performs the best jazz this side of heaven.

Named for another jazz trumpeter, Miles To Go Quartet has been dazzling crowds on stage in the Chaplin theater this year.

With the music of Duke Ellington, Monk, Sonny Rollins, Oscar Pettiford, Paul Desmond, Rodgers and Hart, Harry Warren and others, the quartet swings with the warmest melodies and the coolest improvisations.

Miles To Go jazz beaux are: Nate Kaplan, drums; Ron Green, trumpet and flugelhorn; Michael Anderson, acoustic string bass and occasional velvet vocals; and Gus Russell, keyboard wizard.

If the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, the quartet needs a yet-to-be spoken superlative because its parts claim all the glowing adjectives.

Miles To Go captures a melody, often familiar, then spins it to the four corners, and brings it back on time and in splendor.

Now you has jazz! On Sept. 17, the quartet shared the stage with three girl singers — three women well known in the Florence arts community.

In the second set between instrumentals, Florence's nightingales each performed a ballad d'amour. Judy Adams crooned "The Nearness of You"; Denise Dee delivered a torchy, sassy "Save Your Love For Me"; and Nancy Pearson defined "But Beautiful."

Indeed.

Beautiful music played and sung by beautiful performers in beautiful acoustics. It doesn't get any better.

At the end of the two hours, an enthusiastic audience clapped for more.

The quartet encoored with a slam bam "Caravan," giving Kaplan an opportunity to turn loose on the traps.

Miles To Go plans to return to City Lights in November. Watch the cinema schedule, and drive your own caravan over the dunes to see and hear Miles To Go Quartet.

If the A Train came West, its destination depot would be Florence — where you has jazz ...



## How bulk cooking can make meals easier

Healthy family meals can get lost in the shuffle of busy schedules. Convenience may win out when parents are short on time, and it's hard not to be enticed by the ease of fast food or the lure of frozen foods. While these options are certainly fine on occasion, there is a more nutritious solution for time-crunched families.

Planning is a big part of enjoying a homecooked meal, and cooking in bulk can help families enjoy more homecooked meals. By thinking ahead about meals, you can more easily enjoy homecooked dinners than if you were to wait until the last minute to think about what's for dinner.

If bulk cooking is a foreign concept, the following are some resources to help you along.

- Get started by browsing cookbooks, online recipes or speaking with friends and family members about their favorite meals, especially those that may be popular with younger eaters. Concentrate on a specific meal each day. Dinner is the meal many families hope to share, as breakfast and lunch are often eaten outside of the home. Make a list of the ingredients that go into your family's favorite meals, selecting recipes that use many of the same ingredients.

- Wait until you have a free schedule and ample time to go to the store to shop for all of your supplies. Have a list on hand and check off each item as you find it. Cooking in bulk also means you can buy in bulk. Very often bulk-size foods are discounted, saving you both time and money. Shop for the staples that are needed for most meals, including fresh herbs, cheese, spices, oil, and whatever flavorings your family finds most appealing. Large bags of rice and potatoes also are handy to have available.

- Take advantage of warehouse club membership fees or manufacturer or store coupon deals on multiple buy specials. Buying jumbo-sized packages of food makes more sense when you intend to cook in bulk.

- Clean out the refrigerator and freezer, as you will need plenty of room to store your ingredients, and later, your prepared

meals. Figure out when you will be doing the cooking so you know what will need to be refrigerated or frozen once you return from the supermarket.

- Establish a dedicated cooking day. Many bulk cooks cook on the weekend. You may be able to have a spouse or friend take the children for the day so there will be no interruptions.

- Gather all items that need to be chopped or sliced and set them aside. Leave ample time to chop or slice, which can take a lot of time. Use all of your available cooking resources, such as the grill, stovetop, oven, and slow cooker, at once. Then just drop the ingredients in as necessary.

- Have plenty of freezer-safe storage containers on hand. Divvy up the meals into containers and label clearly. Now each day of the week you have a fast meal that can be heated up in no time. Fresh bread and a salad may be the only other components you need.

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