



# My kids know I don't have a clue, geographically speaking

Ned  
Hickson

During my mini book tour to Watsonville, Calif., a few weeks ago, it became apparent that even as a soon-to-be 50-year-old man, I still have the directional sense of a standard windsock.

If not for the GPS system in the rental car, I would probably be outside of Reno looking for an on-ramp to Sacramento right now.

It's a disorder many famous historical figures also suffered from, including Christopher Columbus, who discovered America completely by accident while looking for — if memory of

sixth-grade history serves me — a faster trade route to WalMart.

I'm the kind of person who must enter and leave somewhere the same exact way in order to keep from getting lost, even if it means walking backwards out of a public facility, such as the men's room at Safeco Field.

I've actually had nightmares about being a contestant on *The Amazing Race*. In it, I am partnered with my friend David, who spent six years in the Marines and therefore still refers to distances as "clicks" — a unit of measure based on kilometers and the use of a special clicking device.

Were I trying to find my way out of enemy territory,

this device would be about as useful to me as, say...

A Superball.

Because of this, my *Amazing Race* nightmare always starts and ends the same way, with everyone getting the first clue and then excitedly running off in the same direction. Except for me, who excitedly runs in the opposite direction — and off a cliff with my "clicker."

It's a short dream but always traumatic, especially when I wake up lodged between the bed and the wall "clicking" my TV remote.

Back when our oldest daughter entered middle school, I knew it was only a matter of time before my worst fears were realized and, as a parent, I would have to

help her with geography.

When she opened her geography book and started talking about longitude and latitude, the prime meridian and flat map distortion, I knew it was time for me to buckle down and, as her father, at least try to get out of it by faking a seizure.

Seeing her expression, I quickly realized I had already used this technique when asked about "where babies come from," "algebra," "geometry," and why her favorite shirt was now tied.

The truth was, I used to be good at helping her with geography, back when we could pour all the major continents and countries onto the floor and put them back

together, usually with some parts of Hawaii missing because, as I explained, they sank.

"C'mon, Dad. I need your help. I can't figure the answer to this," she said, pointing to the last question on her sheet:

Using this flat map, determine the distortion ratio between these two continents.

"OK, looks like the Soviet Union and Africa," I said helpfully.

"Soviet Union?" she asked. "Yeah," I said, tapping what I knew to be the world's largest landmass, not counting Shaquille O'Neal.

"That's Russia, Dad."

Things weren't off to a good start but I pressed on. According to the formula, all we had to do was determine

the coordinates of the farthest points on each continent, add them up, factor in the distortion ratio, then decide how much a "D" on this assignment was going to affect her overall grade.

As it turned out, we actually DID figure out the correct answer. Don't ask me how because I honestly don't remember.

Heck, I don't even remember how I got back from Watsonville...

*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*

## Watershed Council to discuss coho fishery suspension

During the Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) general meeting set for July 27 at 6:30 p.m., the topics will be "The Salmon River Experiments: Lessons for Intelligent Tinkering in Salmon Ecosystems" and "Aquatic Invasive Species and the Oregon Lake Watch Program."

SWC's meeting will be held at the Honeyman State Park Meeting Hall (big yurt), 5543 Canary Road.

Doors open at 6 p.m. and the meeting gets underway at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting agenda includes a presentation by Dan Bottom, who has lead research efforts in the Salmon and Columbia Rivers to understand what is behind the changes in salmon populations and the impacts of human efforts to reverse declines in

salmon populations.

Bottom will be sharing lessons learned, including the results of the most recent work to understand the impact of coho hatchery program suspension.

Rich Miller, from Portland State University's Center for Lakes and Reservoirs, will discuss aquatic invasive species in lakes. This includes harmful algae blooms and a new Lake Watch volunteer monitoring program.

Miller will also conduct a Lake Watch training in the afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m. at the meeting site.

Interested persons can sign up at [www.pdx.edu/oregon-lake-watch](http://www.pdx.edu/oregon-lake-watch).

As always, the SWC board of directors and executive director will give project updates and announcements of upcoming activities.

## Learn 'Bollywood Fusion' dance at Elks Lodge

A Bollywood Fusion Class is being held Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Florence Elks Lodge.

Bollywood Fusion is a playful dance form that has evolved from the Hindi Culture in India. As the film industry in Bombay has

grown, so has the dance style in their films. Bollywood Fusion takes on a mixture of belly dance, Indian folk, classical and modern jazz.

The music is very light-hearted and many of the moves are simple.

For a typical Bollywood

class, the women wear coin belts/hip scarves like in belly dance. Many students enjoy wearing ankle bells, too.

For more information or to

attend the class, contact Eileen Angilletta by email at [eangilletta@yahoo.com](mailto:eangilletta@yahoo.com) or visit her Facebook page The Dancing Divas.

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