



BY BETTY KAISER
For the Sentinel

The Chatterbox

Winter doldrums lead to the Internet

I am a true Capricorn. I get up most mornings with a mental list of what I am going to do, where I am going to go or whom I am going to see. I make lists and check off the finished projects at day's end. I like to be busy and productive. So what changed me this year?

This winter I have been more interested in being a slug than a worker bee. None of the items on my many lists have been crossed off. Interior woodwork has not been painted. Photo albums have not been dated and organized. I did get one desk drawer cleaned out but have not tackled even one closet. I have not even been tempted to go outside and weed around the tulips that are popping up.

As a rule, I am never bored, but you might say that currently, I have been lazy to the point of boredom. I've even been considering the pros and cons of joining social media to jolt me out of my lair. Maybe I need some of that "face time" everyone talks about. It seems that I'm that only one that hasn't joined "an electronic form of communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content."

Frankly, this kind of communication (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) just isn't appealing to me. I obviously stand alone in my thinking, as all of my kids, grandkids and friends are currently profiled on Facebook. If they're not texting one another, they're posting friends, or sending messages, status updates, videos and photos via social media. In turn they receive notifications when others update their profiles. Why?

My friends tell me they do this to keep up with their grandkids' activities. My grandsons' parents tell me the same thing. The grandsons aren't talking. In fact, I don't believe that I have ever seen my grandsons actually have a voice-activated telephone conversation with their friends. Why should they? They can knock out a 25-word text faster than I can find my cell

phone in my purse!

Knowledgeable sources say that Facebook is the world's most popular social media site. If I read my facts correctly, every month the site has over 900 million visitors. That is mind-boggling when you consider that the population of the United States is only about 320 million people (give or take a few thousand).

Still, this whole business of baring one's soul on social media doesn't interest me. But Facebook is tempting. Everywhere I go, people are saying, "Did you see it on Facebook?" Magazine/newspaper/radio/TV ads request that you "Like us on Facebook." It's like a mysterious club, and I'm not a part of it.

Now I may not be a joiner, but I don't like to be left out either. So I investigated the pros and cons of social networking. The pros are many and compelling: the ability to meet new people, re-acquaint with old friends and distant family members; bragging rights when something good happens and bringing awareness to social causes.

The cons are worrisome. The biggest is probably the privacy issue. Ironically, this newspaper columnist can't quite see herself sharing activities to friends and family that could be broadcast around the world. On the other hand, my life is pretty boring. Who would care if I shared what I had for breakfast or that a gorgeous gray squirrel is eating out of our bird feeder?

Some cite that Facebook is addicting and therefore time-consuming. Others object to the advertising, and everyone distains those users who are hateful and spiteful. Peeking at one page, I was appalled at the angry dialogue over a difference of opinion. It's not my style.

Ultimately, I once again said "No" to Facebook and started looking around for a less public way to spend my time. A segment on "Good Morning, America," caught my eye. Perhaps you have seen their on-going episodes of "Free Money," i.e. "Unclaimed money that may be waiting for you and me to find. Now that's interesting!

Depending on the source, it is estimated that over 90 percent of Americans have some sort of unclaimed funds or assets available. Every state in the Union, the District of Columbia, Canada (and more) have unclaimed funds and assets that have they are holding because the owner has forgotten them or the recipient is deceased.

Typically these funds were originally held in bank accounts, insurance companies, tax refunds, safety deposit boxes, etc. After an extended period of time, if the funds aren't claimed, they are turned over to a government agency until the recipient can be located. Filing a claim is a free public service. The trick is finding the money.

In Oregon the Department of State Lands handles unclaimed money and property. According to the unclaimed-money.org website, every year in Nov. as much as \$40 million in property belonging to individuals are added to the Oregon Unclaimed Money base.

To find out if you have any money waiting you can start here at www.unclaimedmoney.com. If you're a long Oregon resident try:

<http://www.oregon.gov/dsl/up/Pages/index.aspx> and follow the prompts.

Every state is different in where unclaimed money is handled. So if you previously lived in California, unclaimed property is the responsibility of the State Controller's Office: http://www.sco.ca.gov/upd_msg.html.

Now, a warning: Be sure that you don't fall for a fee scam. Look for the name of the state government in the link and the search will be free of charge. And be sure to look in all states of former residence.

At the end of this day I didn't make any new friends nor did I find any free money for the Kaiser family. I did, however, stay warm, learned something new, watched the weeds grow and finished this column. Mission accomplished. Now back to normal.

Betty Kaiser's Chatterbox is about people, places, family, and other matters of the heart. Contact her at 942-1317 or via e-mail — bchatty@bettykaiser.com

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

LWV to meet in CG

The League of Women Voters will be having a unit meeting at Cottage Grove's Lane Community College branch on Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 2:30 p.m. The discussion topic will be mental health issues. Anyone interested in this topic is welcome to attend.

Shrove pancake supper

Shrove Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras — they're all names for the same day — it's the day before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church will again join forces with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church to provide "your last meal of fat" before Lent on Tuesday, Feb. 9 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the OLPH Catholic Church Parish Center, 1025 N. 19th St. for \$5 per person or \$20 per immediate family. The menu includes sausage links, pancakes with syrup (sugar free available), jam, jelly or peanut butter, applesauce, coffee and orange juice.

Proceeds benefit Cottage Grove Community Sharing.

College Springboard at LCC

A new College Springboard program will be offered at the LCC Cottage Grove Center.

College Springboard is designed to start students on the right path to earn their college degree or certificate. Students taking the program will complete an Effective Learning course, take a tour of Lane Community College's main campus, attend career workshops and complete an academic plan. Successful completion of these elements will fulfill requirements of the Southeast Lane Scholarship specifically for residents of Creswell, Cottage Grove, Culp Creek, Dorena, Drain, Lorane, Lowell and Pleasant Hill areas.

An information session is planned at the Cottage Grove Center on Monday, Feb. 8 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Those interested in more information about the program can contact the LCC Cottage Grove Center at cg@lanec.edu or (541) 463-4202.

Income inequality discussion

Is inequality an incentive for hard work and invention? At what point, if ever, is the gap too large?

This is the focus of "How Much Inequality Is Acceptable?" a free conversation with Julia Hammond on Friday, Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. at Hard Knocks Brewing. This program is co-hosted by Hard Knocks and Opal Center for Arts and Education and sponsored by Oregon Humanities.

Julia Hammond is a writer and educator. She is the owner of FolkLala and the developer of the FolkLala blog. The company creates products and projects that explore culture through the arts.

Through the Conversation Project, Oregon Humanities offers free programs that engage community members in thoughtful, challenging conversations about ideas critical to our daily lives and our state's future. For more information about this free community discussion, please contact Leah Murray at 541-946-7252 or OCAE@opalcentercg.org.

Dubious Rubes at Saginaw Vineyard

Saginaw Vineyard will present the music of the Dubious Rubes from 6-9 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5. The show is for those 21 and over, and there is no cover.

George Fox Fall Dean's List

More than 850 traditional undergraduate students earned Dean's List recognition at George Fox University in the fall of 2015. The list included Sabra Chambers, a freshman from Cottage Grove majoring in elementary education and Mason Mueller of Cottage Grove, a sophomore majoring in management.

Students must earn a 3.5 grade point average or above on 12 or more hours of graded work to earn a spot on the Dean's List.

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Coffee Trivia

Coffee Fun Facts:

- Coffee was originally eaten. African tribes mixed the coffee berries with fat and ate them.
- Coffee is only grown near the equator — from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn, within a 1,000-mile limit. (Hawaii is the only place in the US that grows coffee.)
- Coffee is the third most popular beverage in the world (second only to water and tea). More than 400 billion cups are consumed each year.
- Coffee is the second largest traded commodity (oil is first).
- Coffee has 1,200 different chemical components — more than half make up its flavor.
- Mocha is the name of the sea port that was a route to Mecca, which is where coffee was traded.
- The first coffeehouses were opened in Damascus, Syria and Istanbul in the 1530s. Turkey finally opened one in 1554.
- George C. Washington, an English chemist, invented the first instant coffee called "Red-E-Coffee" in 1906. It took another three years to land on store shelves.
- One cup of coffee has 80 to 140 mg of caffeine.
- Decaf coffee still contains a small amount of caffeine. It would take 5 to 7 cups of decaf coffee to get the same amount of caffeine in 1 cup of regular coffee.
- A cup of regular coffee has more caffeine than a cup of espresso or cappuccino.
- Coffee also contains anti-oxidants. The anti-oxidants give coffee its bitter taste.
- Coffee has zero calories!
- 91% of coffee is consumed at breakfast. (And sometimes is breakfast!)
- 79% of coffee is consumed at home. Work is the second most common place for coffee consumption.
- A coffee drinker averages 2-3 cups of coffee a day.

Coffee Legend

One story about the history of coffee, as found on the Internet, claims the following as the origin of coffee. Kaldi, the goatherd, around 600 to 800 A.D., was tending his animals on a mountainside in Eastern Africa, when he noticed that they were acting strangely. He realized that they had been eating the cherry-red berries of a nearby shrub. They remained awake, jumping and leaping around the whole night, even the older goats.

Curious, the goatherd picked some and tasted them himself. He found that they invigorated him and made him more awake. A monk named Chadely, or Scyadly, from a nearby monastery passed by. Kaldi told him about the goats and he demanded to be shown the plant. The monk crushed a few of the berries into a powder and poured boiling water over them to make a drink. This was the first cup of coffee. (It was not until much later that coffee beans were roasted.)

Impressed with the results of the drink in making him wider awake and yet not affecting his capabilities, the monk took the new discovery back to his monastery. Coffee soon spread from monastery to monastery and, therefore, became in much demand with devout Moslems, believing it to be a divine gift brought by an angel.

— By Mary Bellis, About.com



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