



The Chatterbox

Older? Brain drain is frustrating but not fatal!

BY BETTY KAISER
For the Sentinel

My husband's stepmother, Mae Kaiser, was in her early 90s when she began initiating me into the perils of getting older. This successful business-woman outlived two husbands and married for the third time in her 80s. Until the day she died, she loved ballroom dancing, socializing and keeping up with the youngsters in the family. She was a marvel of nature and a joy to know.

She was particularly known for her prodigious memory. Also her handwritten notes. Each one was a labor of love because she suffered from severe macular degeneration in an era before the age of modern treatments. She used a large magnification lamp to help her see the thick black words she wrote on lined paper. Sometimes the words ran off the page and were unintelligible, but we cherished them all. At the end of her life she was nearly blind but still writing.

It was from Mae that I started hearing such sayings, as "These are not the golden years I was expecting. They're bronze!" Or, "You know you're getting old when everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work." And finally, with a tired sigh she would sadly whisper "My get up and go has gone and went."

I was a young whippersnapper in my 40s when Mae came into the family. And frankly, I never gave it a thought that I, too, would one day suffer from the consequences of being "older." Youth never does. As the saying goes, I didn't drink, smoke, chew or go with boys that do! I thought my boundless energy would last forever because I was the queen of aerobic exercise into my late 50s.

Guess what? I got old anyway. I had gray hair in my 40s. In my 50s I started wearing makeup and eyeglasses. In my 60s I developed laugh lines and wrinkles. And the day I turned 70, my brain's retrieval system slowed down. In the words of a former 90-year old neighbor, "I had turned another corner." That is seldom good.

"Brain drain," a.k.a. a 'broken memory retrieval system,' is serious business. That's what happens when the answer to a question is on the tip of my tongue but I just can't quite spit it out. I've come to believe that smart phones were invented especially for seniors like me. I still know my Social Security number and everyone

in the family's birthdays, but don't ask me what their addresses are!

This retrieval problem has now expanded to email quizzes that readers love to send me. Last year my retrieval level reached a new low when a relative sent me the following quiz on Mental Health Day. She said, "This is a quiz for old people who know everything!" She was either being sarcastic or she doesn't know me very well, because I failed it miserably.

So, I'm sharing this quiz with you. There are only nine questions. They are straight questions with no trick answers. But here's a warning: if you find yourself searching your brain for an answer that is right on the tip of your tongue and it won't come out...you may have brain drain just like the rest of us. Good luck, and no peeking at the answers first!

A Brain Drain Quiz

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters 'dw' and they are all common words. Name two of them.
7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name at least half of them?
8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.

9. Name six or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S.'

Answers To Quiz:

1. The one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends: Boxing.
2. North American landmark constantly moving backward: Niagara Falls. The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.
3. Only two vegetables that can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons: Asparagus and rhubarb.
4. The fruit with its seeds on the outside: Strawberry.
5. How did the pear get inside the brandy bottle? It grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.
6. Three English words beginning with dw: Dwarf, dwell and dwindle...
7. Fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar: Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, brackets, parenthesis, braces and ellipses.
8. The only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh: Lettuce.
9. Six or more things you can wear on your feet beginning with 'S': Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.

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



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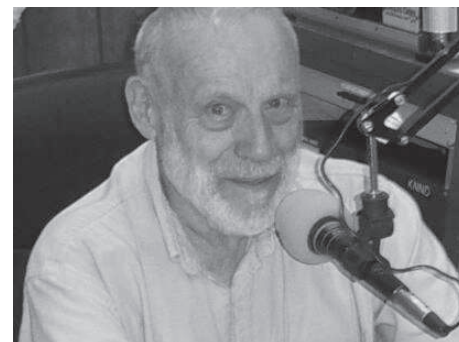
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Meet the DJ/Program Host



JOHN KLOBAS

John is a retired professor who taught classes in Sociology and Neuro-Linguistic Programming at Lane Community College. He loves playing international and Old World music. He played for years with The Polka Pipers and as a talented musician he is often invited to perform the music he loves at special events. John also hosts a similar show on KLFO in Florence, Oregon.



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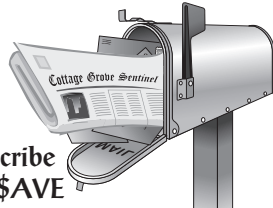
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