The Whirlpool

"Dive into the pool of perspectives."

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A publication of the • Mayor's Youth Advisory Board • City of Beaverton

Being Homeless

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In Portland, it is illegal to be homeless.

More precisely, it is illegal to sleep anywhere outside, according to the anti-camping ordinance. What are the options for one that doesn't have a home?

On December 16, 2000 eight men and women challenged the anti-camping ordinance and set up a temporary campsite under the Freemont Bridge. They called it the "Field of Dreams." This bout of civil disobedience was not met well, but when the media started to get involved, they gathered community support and entered in negotiations with the city. They were told that if they could have a tent set up at a specified spot by 8 o'clock that night, they would be allowed to set up camp. Thus began Dignity Village.

Since then, Dignity Village has come a long way. After their sixth move, they are located at the Sunderland Composting Yard. They are a registered non-profit corporation and have a strong village council as well as 24/7 security. Although there are still a few tents and "train-wreck" houses, Dignity Village is looking more and more like an organized community. After being criticized by the media for looking like a "third-world country," they built all their houses within building codes. "I love my third-world country, it's so much better than a bridge or a bush," responds Chrysler Chelle.

Chelle, security coordinator, co-building coordinator, head of the pet committee, and community "tool girl," explained how houses are built. According to their mission statement, everything must be "green, sustainable, and earth-friendly." Cob houses are the answer. A deck is first built 18" off the ground, a frame put on top of that, and then a roof. A straw and clay mixture then fills the frame. After that dries, a clay

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Editorials

From the editor's Desk...

All right, so the way I see it we have two choices in life. The first one is to complain about what we don't like and remain anonymous victims to the policies we're too lazy to help shape. The other is the one I have chosen, the harder, yet more rewarding one. Our second option in life is to step up to the plate and take action in the world; complain to someone that matters about what we don't like and help them try to change it.

Too many of us here in Beaverton take our community for granted; we don't recognize the beauty, efficiency, and diversity of our home, let alone the opportunities we have to make it an even better place to live. I believe that the reason for our ignorance stems not from an apathy on the part of youth in Beaverton, but from a lack of awareness; kids don't know what they have, they don't know how to change what they don't like, or contribute to what they do like.

That, my friends, is the purpose of *The Whirlpool*. Hopefully you will allow us to become a part of your lives, even if that means just sitting on your kitchen table- after a while we'd become so enticing you'd have to pick us up. We hope to put forth ideas and issues that are important to the local and international communities and to provide you with a forum to raise your concerns or anything else you might have to say. On top of that, we want to be a source of entertainment; if you're ever bored we want this to be something you can pick up to find something to do.

This month you'll find a range of in depth investigations of events and laws that affect you directly, along with a few happenings that are plaguing the world we live in. The new school speed limit law is a hot topic in this issue, along with the events taking place in Sudan. On top of the serious issues addressed in *The Whirlpool*, you'll also find a number of activities to do and places to go on a rainy day, because that's important too! If you think there's something we should be putting out there that we're neglecting, by all means, please let us know.

With that said, I hope you enjoy our first issue, we have a variety of articles for you to read and ponder, it's like a buffet for thought, if you will. Have a wonderful month, go and meet new people, make a difference in someone's life, get your ideas out there. We'll see you in the next issue... until then, enjoy!

Soliciting letters to the editor:

Get your voice heard! Send your comments, questions, and concerns to katlyn_whirlpool@yahoo.com and have them published in *The Whirlpool* for the whole world to see. This publication is all about you (yeah, you!) so send your rantings and ravings, your thoughts and concerns, even your questions and desires to us, we'd be glad to throw them out there for everyone to read.

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Mission Statement:

The mission of The Whirlpool *is to provide a source of information for Beaverton's youth in conjunction with a forum for teens to express issues and concerns important and applicable in the local and international community.*

It Seems Not That Long Ago...

We all have our chances at leadership. Leadership has many forms and it can be formal or informal. Whether it is choosing teammates for a "pick-up" game at the gym or running for school or political office – sometime we have all had chances to lead others. When was the last time you chose to step-up and exercise leadership? Get ready for a lifetime of leadership challenges and decisions!

It seems not that long ago that I graduated from Sunset High School (class of 1967 – you figure the math). I was a student leader in both sports and elective office each year of high school. Surprisingly, I had no idea that I would be utilizing the same leadership qualities today that I learned back in the 1960's. The fish bowl is simply bigger and the ultimate stakes are truly larger, yet I've found multiple times over the years how similar the challenges and rewards are to those distant days in high school.

All of this is to say how important it is to making the most of your day even at your youthful age. Your people skills, power of persuasion, keeping commitments and style of operation will follow you wherever you go and no matter how long you live. This isn't to say that you can't improve or learn from your mistakes. Smart folks do. Admittedly, I still make mistakes or don't see issues as clearly as I often should. Being that I'm an elected official, there are plenty of folks who will share their opinions and tell you what they think! I'm glad they do and value the feedback.

Leadership is a life long process. It doesn't stop when your term of office ends, the season is over or you have quit your job. You'll just see it in another form. Make the most of it and enjoy leadership for the challenges and rewards it brings to your life. I sure do!

• Rob Drake,
Mayor of Beaverton

Perspectives

New School Zone Speed Laws in Full Effect

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While cruising around town this summer, Beaverton's teenage drivers were likely warned by their concerned parents or indignant friends of a new speed law in the works. Oregon's new school zone speed laws are in full effect this fall. Though details of the law's stipulations may remain somewhat elusive, we all know that it requires us to slow down in a school zone.

The new laws were implemented with the passing of Senate Bill 179. Effective July 1, 2004, sweeping changes have been made concerning school zone speed limits. All signs have all been updated with warnings such as "Speed 20 MPH AT ALL TIMES." School speed limits have been reduced to 20 miles per hour in school zones, but the enforcement policies of this law vary depending on the area.

• In neighborhoods where the regular speed limit is 30 MPH or less, drivers are expected to travel 20 MPH at all times, irregardless of whether school is in session or not. Under this condition, speed limits have been curbed to 20 MPH every moment of the day.

• In streets where the usual speed limit is 35 MPH or more, drivers must limit their speed to 20 miles per hour when school is in session. Often there will be a smaller sign placed under the school speed zone sign that presents drivers with the hours of the day that the 20 MPH speed limits are in effect.

• A third condition concerns speed limits around school crosswalks. The 20 MPH speed limit will be enforced around school crosswalks only on school days.

The implementation and enforcement of the new school speed limit laws are not solely a Beaverton policy; they have been mandated by state legislature.

Fines range from $94 to $672, so teens wary of holding on to their hard-earned paychecks should pay attention to these laws that aim to ensure a safer community.

"Blank Page"

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The name of our publication, *The Whirlpool*, illustrates our desire for a blend of youth expression, and the open forum that our publication entails is not, by any means, limited to written words of opinion or fact. Our forum is free to any form of expression, and art of any shape and form is encouraged (so long as it remains appropriate). Convey your thoughts, your passions, and your views through *your* eyes – whether it be through poetry, drawing, or sketching. This section of the publication is meant to be filled by you.

The "Blank Page" is now open to all submissions of art and poetry.

-All submissions can be sent by e-mail to: tiffany_whirlpool@yahoo.com

-Keep in mind that *The Whirlpool* is published in black and white ink.

-Please try to keep content appropriate.

-For questions or comments, e-mail: tiffany_whirlpool @yahoo.com

What are we slowing down for?

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Have you ever been late for an appointment, or for school, and suddenly the car in front of you slows down to the speed of a snail? You tap your steering wheel, muttering about slow drivers and how much of an inconvenience they are, until you realize that you have entered a school zone. You hang your head in dismay as you quickly press the brake and resign to the next couple feet of painful deceleration.

Now imagine driving to a function on a Saturday night at eight o'clock and having the car in front of you slow down, just the same way. This time you really get irritated, there's no possible excuse for this deceleration, you think as you sigh in frustration. Wrong again, we now have to drive twenty miles an hour in school zones regardless of if there are kids around or not. This is exactly the situation that caused me to question the new school zone law. As I crawled along a stretch of road in front of an elementary school around eight o'clock last Saturday night, I began to wonder why I had to drive so slowly.

It wasn't as if any basketballs were going to come rolling out in front of my car suddenly. There weren't going to be any kids getting on and off school buses or walking home. It was likely that the school children in question had already gone to bed by this time of the evening. So why was I going twenty miles an hour when I had somewhere to be?

Well, I was just following the law, but the reasons behind that law are questionable at best. It used to be that you had to slow to 20 miles per hour only when school was in session, or when mounted lights were flashing. Not anymore. The new school zone law requires drivers to slow to 20 miles per hour regardless of time or day of the week, if the school you are passing is located on a road with a regular speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less. Schools located on busier, or faster roads are largely following the same laws as before. So why the change?

I understand that stretches of road around schools can be dangerous places for kids to walk if people don't slow down and remain alert. However, I seriously doubt there will be any kids with their lives in danger, around a school, on a Saturday night. I will continue to follow the new law, because it's not worth paying a traffic ticket to fight it. I mean, in the end it is only ten miles an hour and it'll only cost you about one extra minute to slow down. But it is enough of an annoyance that it has caused me to question the motives behind it, and that, I will continue to do.

Feature

The Sudan Crisis

Halah Ilias • halah_whirlpool@yahoo.com

Sudan is a country situated in Africa where genocide is taking place. According to the Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, genocide is "the systematic killing or extermination of a whole people or nation." A famous example of genocide is Hitler against the Jews of Nazi, Germany. Currently, genocide is occurring among the Sudanese, particularly in the city of Darfur, by their own government and Janjawid militias.

In February 2003, two armed opposition groups rose up against the Sudanese government because they wanted governmental protection for the people and region. The first group was the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the second was the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

The government counterattacked by allowing the Janjawid (Arab militias) and their own militiamen to attack and harm Sudan's societal welfare. The Janjawid and Sudanese militia began raping, killing and abducting people. They also began destroying property, water sources, and livestock. According to BBC news, "thousands of people are being forced out of their homes and are fleeing into Chad or are taking refuge within Darfur." Many also are arrested if they are suspected of contacting any of the opposition groups. According to Amnesty International, "Many of those being detained have said they were tortured in custody."

In particular, the children of Darfur are forced to witness murder, rape and other cruelties, which may cause emotional trauma. Schooling is also scarce in Sudan and only lasts for approximately three hours.

In August, Olusegun Obasanjo, the Nigerian President and chairman of the African Union, suggested, during peace talks that African soldiers could help to disarm the government-backed militias. Sudan's agricultural minister and the Union's top negotiator, Mazjoub al-Khalifa, rejected the idea.

On October 2, 2004, Mazjoub al-Khalifa agreed for 3,500 African Union troops to help build the confidence among the people. The African Union troops will essentially police the Sudanese in order to claim peace.

On October 15th, the United Nations reported that 70,000 civilians have died in refugee camps and that 10,000 more will die every month if the United Nations is unable to receive the $150 million it needs. The death toll only includes those that are in refugee camps, not those that have died outside of the refugee camps. Many that were not killed by the Janjawid and Sudanese government have died of starvation and disease.

USA TODAY on December 19, 2004, reported that Sudan pledged to halt military operations, but African Union officials stated that everything is still the same. The Janjawid and the Sudanese government are still continuously attacking their people despite their pledge on December 18, 2004.

Many human rights groups, such as Amnesty International and Refugee International, have helped by donating money and promoting awareness about the crisis in Darfur. Many other unmentioned groups and associations have worked hard to raise money to help Sudan and want help even after the genocide is over. Amnesty International has stated that much more needs to be done even after the war stops, "Impunity for grave human rights violations, the lack of freedom of expression or association, harsh conditions of detention, unfair trials and an unreformed judiciary as well as human rights violations against women, the use of militias to kill and displace civilians, and arms proliferation – all are issues that need to be urgently addressed throughout Sudan." For more information, visit amnesty.org.

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and sand mixture is spread on the inside and outside twice. Finally, clay and sand is mixed with a rust oxide with a choice of color, and spread onto the outside of the house. The result is beautiful, warm, sturdy houses. The problem: they take up to 6 months to complete, since a month of drying is necessary between each layer.

Dignity Village currently owns all of the houses they've built, however they do not own the land they are building on. They hope to achieve "perma-site," when they will have a permanent place to camp. Already they are making plans for it. Every house they have built is raised on a deck and with a minimal size so it will be easily transported when they achieve this location. Currently, Dignity Village is collaborating with University of Oregon architectural students to plan out housing and community layout designs.

According to Chelle they are "not a co-op, but we live in a co-operative society." Every resident must agree to contribute a minimum of ten hours a week to the maintenance and well-being of the community. While on the streets, Chelle says, it "rapidly becomes all about me out of self-protection." One always wonders, "What do I have to do to survive today?" At Dignity Village, however, the question is, "What can I do to help the community survive?" Residents testify to how Dignity Village has given them back their social skills, responsibility, pride of place, and personal dignity. "Some problem put us out there," she says, regarding living on the streets. Dignity Village helps because it's a "hand up, not a handout."

"This place has to survive, for people like me," Chelle says, "There's another Chrysler Chelle sitting out there under a bridge right now."

Homelessness in Beaverton

Beaverton has a significant amount of homeless people, mostly concentrated in the Nike woods and under freeway over-passes. Beaverton has anti-vagrancy laws, which disallows people from sleeping outside on property not their own. However, the city has a policy of trying to hook up all homeless people with any social services needed. The Community Action Agency of Washington County is involved in finding shelter, health care, addiction services, possible employment and other services for those in need. Nike is supportive of this positive community action.

Feature

Interview With a Hippie

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The 60's and 70's were a time of change, when people questioned traditional values and actively tried to change societal attitudes. Larry Kocher, who is disabled, describes his own journey through the 70's, how he resisted the stereotypes and fought the status quo.

What was the state of disabled access in Oregon in the 60's?

In many rural high schools in the 60's, disabled people simply did not go to high school because there was no access. In Portland, there was a school for disabled teens next to Madison High School, with a chain link fence segregating the disabled and the "normal" people.

When it was time for me to go to college. Oregon State University and the University of Oregon were 90% inaccessible, and most disabled people went to Portland State University, which had elevators.

When did you become aware of the need to combat injustice and really decide to do something about?

I became increasingly aware of the fluidity of values, how easily people could unlearn their stereotypes.

In 1971, I was living in the Medallion apartments, a building with disabled access. Because these were few and far between in Portland, many disabled people lived there. Most basically could not go out due to the lack of transportation for disabled people. In those days, the only options were cabs or wheelchair coach companies. Unfortunately, wheelchair coach companies charged $25 to come to your door, $1 per mile, and $25 for the return trip. There was also a non-profit organization, the Special Mobility Services, but they did not transport for recreational purposes. Disabled people were basically trapped, and had a hard time running errands or visiting friends and family.

I was one of the few who could drive. It took me six months to get my driver's license because they believed I was unfit. I had to go through various doctor's examinations and paperwork. But finally, I got my driver's license, and my disabled friends asked me for rides to visit their friends and family.

One day, I was smoking some pot, and I had a pipe dream [*defined by http://wordnet.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/webwn* as "a fantastic but vain hope (from fantasies induced by the opium pipe"]. Something had to be done.

So I started organizing. The hardest part of organizing was transportation, since political action is all about getting people excited. Therefore, I had to be selective with people, and we met at PSU, since it had disabled access. I became president of CRIP (the College Resource Information Program), and focused political action on the issue of transportation.

What was this political action?

I wrote a letter to the editor at *The Oregonian*, and was amazed at the number of responses, letters from people who also felt trapped, letters of encouragement.

I was asked to speak to the committee of the City Club of Portland, and I told them about my visions, dreams, and hopes. Of course, I was very naïve, just some guy who thought change needed to happen, and when the City Club asked me how to pay for making transportation more accessible, I just said something along the lines of, "We'll pay for it how we pay for everything else."

Mass media in those days was extremely open, without searches or bulletproof glass. You just walked in and said, "I'd like to talk to somebody about a story."

The people at *The Oregonian* and the major TV networks were very interested. Larry Wisbeck, the KGW assignment editor, listened to me for two hours. This would probably not happen today.

My plan was to walk to Salem and demand action from the people in power there.

How was the walk to Salem?

There were about nine of us, four of us disabled. And we walked for four days along the side of the freeway, from Portland to Salem.

It was arduous, painful, but one of the best things I have done in my life because it was so empowering.

How did people react?

We had daily newspaper coverage and television updates that can probably be found in archives.

People were supportive, and we had the cooperation of the police.

The truck drivers really showed they cared. On the second day of the walk, we took down the tents we had pitched, and it was raining like hell. Cars would splash us as we passed. The truck drivers would radio other truck drivers behind them so they could move into the far lane and not splash us.

How did you feel when you finally reached Salem?

Like when Hillary [*Sir Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tensing Norgay were the first humans to reach Mount Everest on May 29, 1953. Source: http://www.who2.com/edmundhillary.html*] reached the top of Everest. It was a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

I had made an appointment to see Dick Davis, the head of the Oregon Department of Human Resources. I hadn't told him we would be walking, but you can just imagine it from his point of view. Media coverage, determined people stampeding towards you—the nine of us might as well have been 400 people. The beauty and power of it was that the government had to listen.

Obviously Dick Davis was mad, since it had become such a big deal. The meeting itself was relatively short. We only asked for one thing: for him to assign a planner to the CRAG (the Columbia River Association of Governments) transportation committee. We wanted representation for the handicapped.

The planner was promised, but in the very first meeting, the planner didn't show. Oregon was going to turn its head and ignore us again. So I got on the media, raised a ruckus, and lambasted the state of Oregon for their lack of concern.

After that, a talented, skilled planner went to every meeting.

What changes were made?

A subcommittee for special transportation was established; I was on it.

We developed a 5-year plan in 1977 that can probably be found in the archives of the Metro or Tri-met:

1. We wanted commitment to a program of improvement
2. Tri-met commitment (this led to disabled access on Tri-met)

"Interview" continued on page 6

Feature

Minimum Wage: A growing concern

Priya Bhardwaj • priya_whirlpool@yahoo.com

Imagine working long arduous days on a full-time work schedule to support a family of three…yet your annual earnings are well below the poverty line. This situation is all too common in the United States as a result of the federal minimum wage of just $5.15 an hour. Working full-time, about 2,080 hours a year, would yield earnings of only $10,712 annually. The poverty line for a family of three is $14,824. However it also must be taken into consideration that for a single parent family often times the parent is not able to work full time, with children to take care of. This reduces their income dramatically and puts them in a dismal financial situation.

Oregon is one of thirteen states that have a minimum wage higher than the federal amount. By January 1, 2005, the minimum wage will reach $7.25, one of the highest rates in the nation. By law, Oregon's rate changes annually in relation to consumer index changes, unlike the federal rate which does not. It is the sole decisions up to Congress to decide when to increase or decrease minimum wage, even as inflation changes. Currently, federal minimum wage has not been increased for seven years, the longest stretch of no increase since 1938, when minimum wage laws were first established and set at $0.25.

Minimum wage was created to help low-income workers receive livable wages; however the livability of the current rate is questionable. The simple solution would be to increase minimum wage, right? However there are far too many facets of the issue to easily increase the rate without serious repercussions. One of the main arguments against raising this baseline value is that with an increase in minimum wage, unemployment rates will also increase. This is a logical argument as having to pay workers more would raise costs to business firms, causing them to look for alternatives. Alternatives include reducing workforce or outsourcing jobs, among other solutions. This view can be substantiated when noting Alaska, Oregon, and Washington. These three states have the highest minimum wage in the nation, yet are also among the top five states with the highest unemployment rates.

Opponents of increasing minimum wage argue that this conclusion is far too simplistic, noting that there are numerous other factors to consider. These factors include growth of labor force, meaning that employment can stay the same. However if the number of potential workers increases, unemployment rate will go up. An example to support the view of those for a higher minimum wage, that questions the relationship between unemployment rates and minimum wage, is Oregon. Even though Oregon's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the country, its high minimum wage may not have contributed to this. Oregon's joblessness increased significantly by 2001, however before then, since 1999 minimum wage hadn't increased. Thus high unemployment came *before* a notable increase in minimum wage.

Considering the stances of those for or against minimum wage, the fact remains that too many Americans are suffering from lack of livable income. About 7.4 million workers are paid minimum wage, making up 5.9% of the U.S. workforce. Those living below or near the poverty line have a daily struggle to pay bills, put food on table, afford proper healthcare, and send their children to school. Every day students are dropping out of school to help support their family by taking up a minimum wage job themselves. Low minimum wage is a major, yet multi-faceted problem that needs serious consideration and attention. It is not an issue that can easily be solved, however awareness of this problem should be promoted so steps can be taken in the right direction to make life easier for hardworking, low-income workers.

Sources:
http://www.epinet.org
http://www.boli.state.or.us
http://www.dol.gov

"Interview with a Hippie" - Continued from page 5

3. Define the relationship between cab and wheelchair coach companies, and a process for determining eligibility

What do you see as the future of disability rights?

I am very pessimistic about the future.

From 1977 to now, I witnessed greater access and acceptance.

However, I believe the openness of the 60's and 70's is disintegrating with the increase in greed. Disability is tied to health funding, and people are developing the attitude that disability is a self-inflicted. Certain disabilities are, to a certain extent. For example, people with heart disease can park in disabled parking spots, and heart disease is preventable through exercise and a balanced diet. However, then there are the blind people and the people without use of limbs, and obviously this is not self-inflicted.

Society is increasingly finding it convenient to blame disabled people, and the belief in what John Kenneth Galbraith, JFK's economist, called "the convenient social virtue". In effect, this means that many people believe healthcare and money should not be provided to people with disabilities because that just "encourages the self-inflicting", and that the best way to help us would be by not helping us.

I had an English teacher in high school who referred to change as a pendulum that swings back and forth. I come from a time where children like me would have been aborted had the parents known we would be born disabled. I come from a time when my parents were told I would be institutionalized, and it was allowable for experimental surgery to be practiced on the disabled.

Then there was change. It became acceptable to be disabled. Disabled people were considered employable, educate-able, productive members instead of a drain on society.

Unfortunately, I now see the pendulum swinging back towards stereotypes and that ignorance due to greed.

Though the idealism of the hippie era has dissolved into cynicism, there are still many battles to be fought. Human progress requires someone to recognize the problems and do something about them. A lesson to be learned from the hippies is that the smallest action can make a big difference.

Entertainment

101 Things to do in Beaverton: #68 Laserport

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The "101 Things to do in Beaverton" booklet includes various locations and activities for the average person looking to avoid boredom. This month's highlight? Laserport! Ever wanted to strap on a vest and lasergun, be thrown into a dark room, frantically dodge streams of lasers, while firing your lasergun at opponents to rack up points? If you thought the old location was great fun, just wait. The new location off of Allen Blvd. is bigger and better, making it more fun than before. The lasertag room is roomier than the old location, and features more strategic areas to conquer one's opponents. The arcade room has more games that include car racing, air hockey, sports, and fighting games. Perhaps the biggest asset that the new location provides is the new and improved party room. While at the old location the party room blended with the game room, now it is a completely separated area.

There is tons of room to accommodate many parties and large groups at once. Regular price is $7 for the first game and $5 for each additional game. For those planning on going with a group of friends, group discounts are available. For an activity that includes strategy, physical activity, teamwork, and fun, come check out Laserport's new location. Laserport is now located on 6540 SW Fallbrook Pl. in Beaverton. Hours of operation are Mon.-Thurs. 12p.m.-9p.m., Fri. 12p.m.-Midnight, Sat. 10a.m.-Midnight, and Sunday 11a.m.-9p.m. For more information call Laserport at (503) 526-9501.

Ways to get rid of telemarketers

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It seems the phone always rings at the most inopportune times: while you're doing homework, eating dinner, or wondering how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Popâä, getting rid of those pesky telemarketers requires creativity. To save ink and sanity, irrelevant parts of telemarketing spiels are represented in this article with the following designation: [BLAH BLAH yada yada yada].

1. Task-specific

Landscaping:

Telemarketer: Can I interest you in a special landscaping offer? [BLAH BLAH yada yada yada]

Person being harassed: How much extra do I have to pay you to bury a dead body under a nice giraffe-shaped bush?

The analysis: While this may scare the telemarketer away, it may also prompt unwanted legal action.

2. Cracked-windshield specialists:

Telemarketer: Hello, I work for [BLAH BLAH yada yada yada], and we specialize in cracked windshields.

Person being pestered: That sounds fun! I work for the Mafia and we specialize in cracked skulls.

3. A taste of their own medicine

Annoying-ness is the defining quality of the telemarketer. However, with a little practice, anyone can learn to be annoying.

Here are some ideas, but original methods work best:

-Insist that you are the adult of the household, but act like a five-year-old. Like telemarketers stick to their message, stick to your message of needing to go pee pee.

-Adopt the persona of a movie character (characters from Spanish soap operas or cartoons are particularly fun to do).

-Reply to the telemarketer's questions by singing operatically. Don't be shy on the high notes.

Example: "NoOOOOOO thank YOOOOOOOOOUUUUUU [*window breaks*], I am fifTEEEEEEN and don't really nEEEEEEED [*More windows break*] to start worrying about my 401 (k) plan [*Neighbors call police because they mistake your "singing" for shrieks of terror/pain*]

-Correct the telemarketer's grammar and diction

Example: "That would be 'retiring', with the infinitive form being acted upon by the subject. Don't forget your indefinite object."

Warnings:

Do not read while operating heavy machinery

Do not attempt methods described above without a sense of humor

Disclaimer: Neither the author nor MYAB accepts responsibility for the results of using the methods described in this article.

Get the Scoop: Book Review

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You've always heard that America's primary goal is to promote equality. You might even catch yourself saying, "That's not fair!" However, after reading Anthem, by Ayn Rand, you'll realize that maybe life should not always be just. Anthem is about a man who lives in the future, deprived of individuality, due to the ideology of equality that society imposes. Rand uses her knowledge of philosophy and life to create a world in which there is no such thing as individuality. She even goes to the extent of not using any words in the singular form to reiterate the fact that the world has forgotten the form of being different. This book definitely makes the reader reevaluate how far one should go for equality. On a scale from one to ten, this book would rank an eight. It takes a little adjustment to understand the style of writing but in the end it is worth it. On the other hand, if this does not stimulate your senses, perhaps money will do the trick. There is currently an essay contest going on, for Anthem and other Rand books, where one can win up to $5,000! For more information visit: http://www.aynrand.org/

How To...

Make you own, custom belt!

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Have you ever been shopping for hours for the perfect belt to match your outfit? You tried every store at the mall but nothing seemed to be exactly what you were looking for. No problem. Make your own belt! What better way to ensure your belt, a key accessory and complement to any outfit, is exactly how you envisioned it?

You may be thinking, "Well, I'm no fashion designer, and I have no idea how to even begin to make a belt!" Don't give up so quickly, it's a lot easier than you probably think. Visit your local Michael's or any major arts and crafts store to pick up the following materials and get started!

Time: After you've picked up the materials, allot about 25 minutes to create it

Materials:

1. Your choice of ribbon
2. 2 Metal "D"-rings for the clasp (if you don't know what these are, ask someone at the store to help you out!)
3. Thread to match the ribbon
4. Sewing machine, or just a needle if you like to sew by hand
5. Measurement
6. Scissors

Steps:

1. Measure around your waist to find the length of ribbon you must use. Add about a 8-inches more and cut the ribbon.
2. Take the 2 D-rings and wrap the end of the ribbon through it leaving about an inch of overlapping space that is to be sewn to secure the rings to the end of the belt.
3. Using your sewing machine (or by hand), make two straight lines along the overlapping space.
4. Now turn to the opposite end of the belt and fold half an inch of ribbon so that the end does not become frayed
5. Sew two straight lines along the folded overlapping portion just as you did on the other end.
6. That's it, your new, unique belt is done!

How to: Amuse Yourself on a Rainy Day

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So it's raining outside, it's so gloomy you wish you anywhere but here, preferably somewhere with slightly more tropical weather. Well, since you can't exactly catch a flight to Hawaii with the five dollars you have in your wallet, you're just going to have to find an alternative. It may not seem like an easy task, but I'm here to tell you there are plenty of things you can do to amuse yourself when the weather is less than desirable.

Although you can't catch a flight to Hawaii, you can catch a bus to almost anywhere in the greater Portland metro area for about one millionth the price of an airline ticket. The world is your oyster All of Portland, and the surrounding area, lies at your feet, stretched out in front of you just waiting to be discovered. Here's what I suggest; get a group of friends together, remember chances are they're all just as bored as you are. Once you've assembled a group, throw some ideas around until you can agree on a delectable destination.

What kinds of places am I suggesting you go? Well, thank you ever so much for asking, I'd be pleased to tell you. There is no shortage of interesting locations in the Portland area. Here a just a few of my ideas:

Take the bus downtown to Pioneer Place and people watch. On a yucky day you're bound to find a wide variety of interesting people hanging out in the mall.

If you have some money that's burning a hole in your pocket and you actually would prefer to go to the mall to shop, then hit Washington Square. Not only do they have an impressive selection of stores, but they have trees inside the mall. It's great, you can escape the cloudy, rainy weather and go shopping, all while walking among green trees.

If you're not really a "mall person," which many people aren't, it's always fun to go bowling. It's simultaneously a physical activity, and one that occurs indoors, just the perfect solution to rainy day boredom. Regular bowling is exciting, but if you're looking for a super exciting thing to do, then go cosmic bowling at Valley or Sunset Lanes. You can bowl to the tune of your favorite song; with that kind of backdrop, who knows maybe you'll score a perfect 300.

Maybe you like the rain and the mud puddles it leaves behind. If so, go to the park in a rain coat -so you don't catch a cold- and some old rubber boots. Just get soaked; play tag, jump in puddles, swing on the swings. You only live once right? Of course any park will do, but Washington Park is the biggest and wettest park of all. You can check out the reservoir while you're there and be overcome by the different shades of green that sweep over the entire premise.

If all else fails, stay home; rainy days are an excuse to become a hermit. Normally, we wouldn't want to spend quality time with ourselves, but when the weather is bad it becomes a pretty appealing pastime.

Make a fire (in the fireplace, of course) and read that book you've been meaning to get around to, or rent the movie you've been itching to see. After an afternoon of relaxation you'll be ready to face the prospect of a wet and gloomy week to come.