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# How To Ruin A Town Without Trying

A message in an area newspaper column seems worth repeating here. It was stolen from a fellow who stole it from Jim Moore of the Carbon County News in Red Lodge, Montana. With thanks to the author, it goes as follows:

## How To Ruin A Town Without Trying

- Here's how to ruin any town, especially your town:
- Never attend any meeting. Just sit around and criticize the way "they" are doing things.
  - Vote against any kind of tax levy, whether the purpose is good or not. "They" just want your money.
  - Make fun of the fire and police departments. They are just out for glory and pay.
  - Don't ever go to the school concert, ball game, benefit program or exhibit. Just sit in front of that "idiot box."
  - Knock the city council. This is a must. Every one of the councilmen is just on the council to get a little kickback.
  - Stay out of church. You might go Easter and Christmas just to prove to yourself that the clergyman doesn't know what he's talking about and that everyone there is a hypocrite.
  - Buy everything you can out of a discount catalog. These firms are the first to come through with the donations and service to the community.
  - Don't support your hometown newspaper. The out-of-town papers and TV are a lot better and contribute much more to the town than the local bugle.
  - Spread any story or rumor that is defamatory or uncomplimentary about the town. Never say anything nice about anybody. All kids are delinquents. All businessmen are crooks.
  - Above all, always be cynical about anything that is supposed to be good for the community. Your motto should be, "If it's good, it can't happen here."

## Brief Notes From Subscribers

To the editor:  
 We have been going to Ocean Isle Beach since 1957 and it is the greatest. We bring our children and grandchildren there and we have a great time.  
 The people of Ocean Isle are so friendly. The people at Cooke Realty and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Robinson are the greatest. We include them as family.  
 I have been taking the Beacon and would like to continue it so we can keep up with things down there.  
 Helen Hege  
 Lexington

...  
 I am 68 years old but I am still working. When I am unable to work I will claim your senior citizen subscription rate.  
 It is very kind of you to offer this price to senior citizens. I feel too young to accept it at this time.  
 N. C. Bellamy  
 Supply

...  
 Look forward to the paper each week.  
 Would be great if the Calendar of Events were for a two-week period—at least the weekend events. Some of them sound like lots of fun. By the time the paper gets here, the events are all over.  
 Alice and Wally Church  
 Manasquan, New Jersey

## DEEP QUESTIONS

### What Is The Good Life?

BY MAURICE F. STANLEY, Ph.D.

If you had to list three things that are essential to the good life, or real happiness, what would you say? I do not mean just for you in particular, but for everybody. Health? Money? Friends? Love? Beauty? Popularity? Beach house? Fame? Family?

Plato and Aristotle (whom I think highly of) believed that virtue was essential to the well-lived life.

Plato believed the soul of man to be like a chariot, with a charioteer and two horses. The charioteer represents reason, the virtue of which is wisdom. Without the charioteer the chariot of the soul would run into the ditch. One horse represents the "spirited" part of the soul, the virtue of which is courage. Without courage the soul would get nowhere in life. And the other horse represents the appetites of a person—hunger, thirst, lust. If this horse does not have the virtue of temperance the chariot will wreck by being pulled out of the road by this wild beast.

So, for Plato, the soul is happy in which reason rules the spirit and the appetites, and Plato believes that wisdom is possible only through knowledge of goodness or virtue.

Aristotle admits that people differ in their needs, and that for the destitute or the otherwise unlucky it may well be impossible for them to be happy. But happiness is achieved, if at all, through the famous "Golden Mean", a mean or middle path between extremes. To be happy a person must make virtue a habit, he says.

For example, Aristotle believes the virtue of courage to be a mean between the extremes of cowardice (a vice which is the deficiency of fearlessness) and foolhardiness (having too much fearlessness).

This seems right to me. For what if a person is healthy but ignorant? Can he be happy? Or what if he is rich but treacherous? Or popular or even famous but miserable—a drug addict, say? Or beloved of someone but unable to love in return?

Aristotle makes a lot of sense to me. How about you? If you have a question or (short) argument you wish to have discussed here, write to me in care of this newspaper.



Stanley

Dr. Stanley lives in Sunset Beach and teaches at Brunswick Technical College.

# Make Me An Offer, Any Offer

You can tell I don't have children. It's been years since I've browsed in the cold cereal section at the grocery store. Normally I just reach for the same old familiar box without ever slowing down the grocery buggy.

By accident the other night, as I was reaching for the same old brand, a boxfront offer on a neighboring brand shouted, "Free inside!" I couldn't resist—looking, that is.

Soon I was indulging in a pastime not enjoyed since childhood—checking out every offer on every box for "the best deal". Both the kiddie and adult cereal businesses must be getting darn competitive, because I could count on one hand the brands that didn't make some kind of offer. They cost about as much as the ones that did.

We're not just talking about discount coupons to apply to your next purchase of Brand X. We're talking major league stuff, so start saving your POPs (proofs of purchase).

The sweeter the cereal, it seemed, the more elaborate the offer. Or was it the other way around?

I took a scientific approach, of course, as only befits an editor, quickly noting these offers can be divided into categories: free inside, free with POPs or the coupon on the box, special offers, rebates with POPs, mail-in certificates, etc.

The free insides top the list—no



Susan Usher

delayed gratification! But the goal-setter part of me prefers the ones where you save and save and save toward something special like athletic tube socks.

Anyway, have you looked at cereal boxes lately? Does your child choose his breakfast menu by the prize inside or by the taste and/or nutritional value of the cereal itself?

Many of the items have built-in enticements to command or encourage repeat business—box-stuffers that are part of a series, for instance, or a likeable item that takes more than one proof of purchase to order. A Mom would have to be ingenious to counter some of these moves.

Stickers are a big item for box-stuffing. You can take your choice of road sign stickers, body stickers, regular 3-D holographic stickers or holographic stickers that could make you the winner of an entertainment center, headphone radio, or a two-foot tall robot that can be programmed to walk, talk, play games and music, a musical dispenser with 16

stickers, Men and Little-Miss stickers, Cabbage Patch stickers, crook and cop stickers, a make-your-own-stickers kit.

"Action" type figures also are popular stuffers—a diving figure, a converting robot toy, an "action" figure (collect all six!).

Not all action figures are stuffed inside. One brand makes you save four boxtops to send in for a five-inch (too large to stuff) robot type figure.

Figures and stickers aren't all you'll find inside the boxes. You can also claim your own "magic motion" ring. Or if you don't mind the kids having candy for breakfast (isn't that starting a little early?) you can dip into the gummy worms (fruit-flavored "worms" packed two to a box) or candy chews.

Looking for a way to entertain the kids? One box comes with a make-your-own iron-on design for T-shirt, etc. It even comes with paint, which must be allowed to dry before Mom grabs the iron. Another box includes a free detective kit that can be used to "find the culprit" and share a \$1 million reward.

Some offers let you play while you pay. With Tic-Tac-Toy, for instance, you get \$1.50 for each four purchases across or down the board (but not on the diagonal), up to \$12. With another board game, you can claim up to \$150 in rebates of \$2 to \$25 and the chance to earn a bonus \$3 rebate.

My favorites, though, are the ones that require three or four POPs, such as boxtops, Universal Product Codes (UPCs for short) and cash register tapes.

With the right POPs, for example, I could claim a free 14-piece starter building set (plus get a rebate if I buy one of the larger sets); a free Mary Lou Retton poster, a free pocket trivia game great for long road trips with the family, a free plastic jump rope, a free kite, a free windsock, free athletic tube socks, or a free mini-vehicle like my nephew collects.

With a combination of POPs and cash, you can order a range of personalized items such as T-shirts and double-sided photo puzzles (one side features you, the other a cereal box-top), discounted cookbooks and do-it-yourself handyman books, entertainment coupon books, and stuffed animals.

Adults or others interested in free food can mail in a certificate for a coupon for two ounces of free decaffeinated coffee, or claim coupons good for a free can of orange juice, free ice cream treats, free fruit, free party mix fixings, or a free can of diet soft drink. Or they can buy the cold cereal that includes the one-serving sample of instant oatmeal.

One coupon can be redeemed at a local hardware store for a garden trowel worth \$1.19.

One offer topped them all, screaming at the gambler I really am.

An almost-irresistible urge to pull the corner tab on every box nearly did me in the other night. I came that close to owning a whole lot of cereal.

If I had pulled the tab and the box played "Take Me Out To The Ballgame," I would have been the instant winner of a big-screen VCR unit. The question may haunt me for years to come: Would I, would I have won?

I need a VCR unit like I need another pet, but to be an instant winner ...?

## The Sea At Last

On a visit to Acadia National Park several years ago, I was intrigued with a plaque at one of the overlooks inviting the visitor to do more than



Bill Faver

just look out over the sea along the Maine coast. It read:

The sea at last! You may have traveled three thousand miles to get here, or perhaps you only stepped across the road. Whatever the journey, to those who love the sea it is always thrilling to stand at its edge.

You are on a rocky point overlooking the waters of another world. The dust, the crowds, the city streets lie behind; a cool, vast reservoir of life stretches ahead—filled in different regions with billions of animals and plants.

Take a path to the shore. Smell and feel the salt air. Explore the remarkable tide zone; the clasp between ocean and land. And perhaps ask yourself, "Where does man fit, what is his role?"

This same invitation applies to all of us who come to the edge where land and sea meet. We come for varied reasons: to lie in the sun, to play in the surf, to fish, to sail or go boating, to photograph, to rest or rock on the porch.

Whatever our reasons for being here, we can learn to appreciate the coastal environment if we will try to understand the complex interactions taking place. There is no better way to do this than by taking the time to investigate the shore, looking for its inhabitants and observing their surroundings, trying to find out why they live where they do, what they eat, and what eats them. And, when our investigations bring us to man's relationship to the sea and its creatures, we can develop the kind of concern that should carry over into our lifestyles and our daily activities.

The sea at last! Perhaps you, like many, take from it what you want and never think much about it. Or, perhaps you, like many others, have come for many miles or stepped across the road to acknowledge its rich heritage, to respect its fragile ecosystems and to look to its promising future.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES BOOK KEEPING

## My Friends Have The Write Stuff

My boyfriend, Mark, a university student, is putting the finishing touches on his first novel, a story of life and magic set in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains.

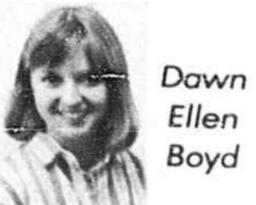
Ian, another close friend, is a fantasy writer, and his publication credits already include "Fantasy Book," "Ares," and "Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine." Last year we were proud when one of his stories was anthologized in a hard-bound collection.

In the bottom of a desk drawer, I have my own cache, a collection of poems I have penned over the last three years, when I began writing seriously. I only show them to Mark for criticism, make changes, then slip them back into their manila folder. My nerves haven't been steeled enough yet to submit them to magazines.

Since I began writing for the newspaper, my personal writing has fallen by the wayside, so I'm just going to have to try harder to make time for it. Sometimes I have so many ideas I feel my head will explode if I don't put them on paper!

When I work on a poem, I write it out in longhand, scratching out words and adding new ones as I go. Sometimes, wonderful times, the poem flows from head to hand to paper, just right as it is.

My friends have entirely different writing styles. Mark feeds sheet after sheet into the typewriter, typing



Dawn Ellen Boyd

madly and turning out pages of near-perfect prose. (He's the kind of person the little signs that say "Genius at Work" were invented for.) When he isn't satisfied with what he's writing, balled up sheets of paper fly everywhere, and soon the floor around his desk looks like someone has had a snowball fight.

Before Ian begins writing, he sits and stares at the typewriter like he is trying to hypnotize it into doing his bidding. Two things can happen. He sometimes will begin typing furiously; other times he hits his head on the desk chanting "writer's block, writer's block."

I met both of them while I worked as the editor of my school's fine arts magazine. Mark had a story accepted the first year; Ian contributed a play the second. Their writing was serious yet enjoyable. It was obvious both were very talented.

Now, they talk "shop" often. I discuss writers and writing with them (we were fortunate to attend a university with one of the best writing programs in the country),

but sometimes I find myself being quiet when they discuss their own work. It's my own fault for being so private about it, but sometimes I'd feel like they didn't remember that I wrote too. I was just "Dawn the magazine editor" rather than another writer.

Or, that's the impression I was under.

The last time I visited Mark, he showed me a bound copy of his novel he was using to make corrections. I opened the book, and in the front was a poem I had written.

"I thought it opened the book really well," he said.

My first thought was he'd done it out of love and nothing more, but I realized he wouldn't let anything go in that might spoil his book.

This vote of confidence has made me realize it's time to come "out of the desk drawer" and begin sharing my work. I'm giving my nerves until the first of the year, then I'll begin the many-times painful process of submitting to reputable literary magazines.

When the rejections come, as I know they will, at least I'll have my friends there for support.

And when the first acceptance comes (as I pray it will) they'll be there too—celebrating with me at our favorite Mexican bar.

Mark says that's a good place to celebrate. They make a mean ginger ale.