

Columns

Day without internet launches stages of grief

The weeping and gnashing of teeth began almost immediately.

A Friday off, with Mrs. HLS at work, meaning the TV remote is mine, all mine! (queue Scooby Doo bad guy laughter)

What's this? "Unable to connect to internet?" No problem. I'll just reboot the old firestick and all my military documentaries; golf channels and fishing shows will be at my fingertips as Zeus the dog coerces me into a nap on the couch. Hmmm. Still not working. What's going on with this thing? I know, I'll unplug the server and modem for 90 seconds, as this has fixed my connection issues in the past. Still not working. Then, the dreaded text from the mis-sus. Cable is out all over town.

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



NOOOOOOOOO!

I call the service provider's 855 number, and I'm told by a recording that there are outages reported, but for more information, I can go to their website. Sure. I'll go to the internet that your recording JUST TOLD ME WASN'T WORKING and get the scoop. I'm not a smart man, but that doesn't really seem like a plan that's going to end positively.

And then, just like that, the five stages of grief set in.

Denial: This is just a quick outage. It'll come right back on, right? I'll be able to use my data on my phone to connect to the interwebs and I'll at least be able to listen to programs, right? Wrong. At this point, the dog is being very persistent that I take a nap with him, so I settled for listening to some stuff I had downloaded from

Spotify while I made the great personal sacrifice for my pet and snoozed for a bit. It will all be alright when I wake up, "A slumber did my spirit seal" and all that stuff, right? Sorry Wordsworth, but not this time. Still no internet.

Anger: Oh, come on. I pay too much for this service not to work. I DESERVE to watch my fishing shows and golf channels and war docs. This is BS and I'm going to let someone know about it. Still no living humans answer the customer service line. I can pay my bill or, get this, enhance my service options, right there on the phone, but I can't vent to some poor CSR living in who knows where. While I'm suffering from the yoke of oppression that is my lack of internet is

not the best time to try to up-sell me.

Bargaining: OK, I'll calm down if you just come back on. I'll even forgo my shows and try to be productive if you'll just come back. I don't think I can function without you.

Depression: Wow. What a horrific thing. No internet means no shows. No research for future stories either, but mostly no fishing shows. The U.S. Open and college world series are about to begin, and I have no ready access. I am totally bummed.

Acceptance: OK, there's nothing I or anyone else, save those heroes in MC shirts who are diligently working to fix the issues, can do about it, except go to the library. They've got "the other" internet. I did

get Wi-Fi on my phone at Mon-ical's when I was having lunch and I see that the book of faces is all atwitter (did you see what I did there?) with people asking about the new service provider in town. They're mad as H E double hockey sticks and they're not going to take it anymore. In other words, they're my tribe at the moment. I go back home and work in the garden and clean up the garage. Productivity is NOT what I had in mind for a Friday afternoon off work.

Finally, at 9:07 p.m., I hear a triumphant squeal from Mrs. HLS. The internet is back on, so Blue Bloods, it is. No fishing. No golf, no college baseball, but peace and tranquility has once again descended on Hookerville.

Reusing old brick a passion for past 45 years

I have been scavenging used bricks for 45 years; the bug bit me as one of the streets close to our house was being dug up for new sewer installation. We were in the process of building our first tea house and I was trying to convince Hubby to let me buy 100 bricks for the floor. My girlfriend, Gale, lived right behind us and we were joint gardening at the back of both properties. Her husband was building a gazebo and we were building an English square tea house and traditional British tea houses usually had brick floors.

As Hubby was driving home from work he noticed that the city workers had dug up a large section of old street brick, which was under the asphalt, and he stopped to ask if they were reusing the bricks and was told that we could have all we wanted as long as we took them that night. The bricks were to be hauled to the dump the next day.

Almost the minute he told me that we could have the bricks I was out the door and heading through the back yard to the street, pulling my little red wagon behind me. I made numerous trips back and forth while Hubby ate his dinner, but he finally took pity on his exhausted wife and drove the car around the block and helped haul bricks by filling the trunk of the car with them. This scenario of brick scavenging continued with every house we

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



lived in and I also moved 200 of my favorite street bricks with each move.

As my housing has come full circle (we rented this house as students 50 years ago and I bought it three years ago and moved back to my favorite street in town) some of those bricks are returning to my possession. The kids who bought our first house from us used many of the remaining bricks but they also bought the rental house across the street and moved many of those street bricks to the backyard of that house.

They had planned to build a brick pavilion but never got around to the task. Over the years they too were bitten by the brick bug and many times we were all meeting at the same place to scavenge bricks. Recently they decided to sell the rental house and, like all brick lovers, they decided to move all the bricks back across the street. I have been blessed with their friendship all these years and have been given permission to pick bricks from their stacks to complete one of

my new brick floor projects.

The neighbors, many of whom still live in the neighborhood or have returned as I did, are having a giggle watching me walk back and forth with my 7th red wagon as I enjoy picking bricks. I will have to admit that it is a bit more difficult hauling bricks at my age as opposed to when I first hauled them 45 years ago. I used to be able to carry six at a time but two is my limit now. The red wagon used to be stacked five or six layers high but two layers is the limit now especially when pulling the wagon through the grass and up a hill to the street. I might be slower but I will get the job done.

While resting in between brick runs I discovered how to make corn soup. Mom loves just about anything made with corn but can no longer eat it and has mentioned how she misses corn on the cob, a corn soufflé she used to make and cream corn pancakes which my Granny used to make.

I remember Granny's creamed corn pancakes and

they were delicious but I have never found a recipe in any of my aunt's recipe boxes and Mom said she really did not know how to make them but she just threw ingredients together and hoped for the best.

I decided to use Mom's method to make corn soup. I mixed all the ingredients together and cooked it until the vegetables were tender and then I used an immersion blender to break up the vegetables. After the soup thickened and was well blended, I ran it through a strainer to remove all the kernel and outer covering called the Pericarp.

The Pericarp is the part of corn that is so hard for humans to digest but when you use a blender and strainer, when the soup is hot, you can extract all the flavor and liquid.

I then added more butter and milk and simmered the liquid until well blended. It turned out great so it looks like I can add corn soup to Mom's menu. I am also going to try to make the corn soufflé using the cooked liquid as a replacement for the 14 ounces of creamed corn in her recipe.

Making corn pancakes from the liquid might be a bit tricky; I have not figured out the sub-

stitution equivalents yet. Wish me luck.

Creamed Corn Pancakes

- 1 (17 oz.) can cream style corn
- 1 c. milk
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 egg white, stiffly beaten
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 c. flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder

In a bowl, mix corn, milk, egg yolk, sugar and salt. Stir in flour and baking powder. Fold in egg whites. Spoon batter 1/4 cup at a time onto slightly oiled preheated griddle. Brown evenly on each side. Serve hot with syrup. <https://www.cooks.com/>

Summer solstice signals season's start

Tonight the Moon makes a nice triangle with the planets Venus and Mars in the western evening sky and then the Moon is above Mars by about four degrees tomorrow night.

Today is also the date of the summer solstice. The Sun will be directly over the Tropic of Cancer on our Earth at 9:58 a.m. this morning, signaling the official start of summer. Notice the length of your shadow at noon today. The length of your noon shadow won't change much this week as the name "solstice" means "Sun still." Even ancient sky-watchers noted that, when the Sun was at its highest in the sky, its altitude didn't seem to change for a week or so. Check

In the night sky

By David Leake



it out for yourself!

Weather permitting, there will be another open house Saturday at the CU Astronomical Society Observatory, southwest of Champaign and northwest of Tolono, from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. See cuas.org for directions and call 217-351-2567 to see if we have to can-

cel due to clouds. We haven't had much luck weather-wise so far this year so keep your fingers crossed!

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How to forgive — look to the Bible for help

I thought I had done it already. I felt I had made peace with my past and forgiven everyone who ever did me wrong. But when a certain person's name came up, or the image of their face or offense came to my mind, I could still feel a burning anger and hurt inside me. The pain was still there, and I still held it against them.

Poor, innocent me. I had done nothing to these people who chose to do terrible and awful things to me. Hurting me in mind, body, and soul for their own selfish pleasure. From the time I was a child through my adult years, I could count so many times that I had been wronged unfairly. But, as my mom always told me, life isn't fair, get over it. It's not that easy to just get over it.

I knew better than to hold a grudge. I was always taught and believed, really, that I had to forgive; I had to let go or the pain of life would eat me alive.

I believed it, and I believed I had done my best to forgive people of their trespasses, as God had forgiven me. Yet, when I would hear a name or a date or remember a place in time when something had occurred, a hot anger was still there deep inside me. I would ask God to forgive me, and try again, but it was a revolving cycle. I couldn't shake it.

I bet we are all like that. I think it's human nature. Truth be told, forgiving is a very hard thing to do, and sometimes it seems impossible. But, I also believe that unforgiveness will keep you out of Heaven. So it is necessary that we forgive, as Jesus did. But how?

To invoke our brains to let go of something our hearts want to hold onto is taking on a war of wills. Humans cannot do it alone. It took me years to figure this out; forgiveness only comes through God's help. We cannot do it by ourselves.

Did you know those little prayers that you say to God, even in passing, are taken seriously by God? He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows before you do what you need help with. He is just waiting for the request. God is a gentleman, a Father watching from a distance as His child makes decisions, wanting to help but waiting to be asked.

That's what happened to me. I was pondering a situation that happened when I was a kid, a great injustice done to me at the hands of a bully in school, and I felt that burning fire of anger still bubbling deep inside the pit of my stomach. I hated it. I hated my bully. It's been over 45 years since that particular event happened, and I was still angry and hurt about it! I still saw the girl's face that hurt me, and I still remembered her name, and disliked her. I had to get rid of this memory, and this feeling. It wasn't good, or healthy, or

Holding It All Together

By Amy McCollom



prosperous. And it was a sin to not forgive, and to feel this way about a person when we are to love one another. I felt guilty.

I said a little prayer under my breath, "Lord, help me to forgive. Teach me what to do so I can forgive this person, and anyone else in my life that has wronged me."

Days later after reading in Psalms 37, God spoke to me. That's my special time with Him, right after I have read His word. He gently told me this: "When people do mean things to you, it isn't THEM

who is doing it, it is a spirit doing it through them. Just as the Holy Spirit moves through people to do good things, Evil spirits move through people to do bad things. It's not the people, it's the spirit, Lest any man boast."

He went on to explain that unforgiveness was also a spirit and that as soon as I let go of the blame, the spirit would flee and the unforgiveness would be gone. I understood all of this completely.

I'm thankful for God's Spirit living inside me! Yes, I can do all things through Christ, all

things like forgive people, have mercy on others, tackle problems in my life, survive loss, have a peace that surpasses all understanding; but only through Christ's Spirit, who lives in me, strengthens me, instructs me, and helps me daily. That day I learned how to forgive others.

If you are struggling to forgive someone, I hope that you try the method that worked for me. Read the Word, perhaps Psalm 37. Then pray and wait for God to speak to your mind. Realize that people are led by the spirits that reside inside them. The Bible says pray for those that despitely use you, and this is why. It's not the person, it's the spirit inside of them that we are fighting against. Once we get a hold of that concept, forgiveness of the person will happen. It feels so good not to be bubbling with the fire of anger and hurt. It changed my whole mindset. The truth does set you free.