

Nuggets of Fun and Nostalgia for Treasure Valley Golden-Agers

Lunch Shaming



They call it “lunch shaming.” I call it cruelty. For nearly four decades, I stood by and saw it play out in my classroom’s shadow. Then one ordinary Tuesday, I finally broke the rules.

For 38 years, I’ve been a history teacher. My days were spent inside gray cinder block walls, with shelves of fraying textbooks and the steady

drone of the dismissal bell at 2:15 every afternoon.

I taught U.S. history—wars, speeches, the Great Depression. I told my students about bread lines, dust bowls, and families that had to scrape together pennies just to put food on the table.

But the hardest lesson wasn’t in any chapter. It happened every day in the cafeteria.

It was a Tuesday when I noticed it with new eyes. One of my quieter sophomores, Jamie, a boy who sat at the back of third period, was in the lunch line. He was a good kid, always sketching little Union soldiers or Civil War cannons in the margins of his notes. That day, when he got to the cashier, she leaned over and said something. His shoulders sagged. She slid a tray toward him—but it wasn’t the hot meal everyone else had. It was the dreaded “alternative meal” - two slices of white bread with a slab of cold cheese, and a carton of milk.

(Continued on page 2)

The Weigh to Go!

Two candy shops sold their bulk candy at the exact same price. Yet children adored one shop and avoided the other. Why?

In the first shop, when a child asked for 30oz of candy, the seller would scoop out about 50oz, then slowly remove scoops until only 30 oz remained. The child’s eyes followed the pile as it shrank smaller and smaller.

In the second shop, the seller began with just 10oz—then kept adding more, and more, until the scale reached 30. The children’s faces lit up as their portion grew larger before their eyes.

Both shops gave exactly 30oz. But the feeling was completely different.

That’s the secret: in life, always aim to give the sense of adding, not taking away. That’s what people will cherish and remember.



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The Parts of Speech Poem

Every name is called a **noun**,
As field and fountain, street and town.

In place of noun the **pronoun** stands,
As he and she can clap their hands.

The **adjective** describes a thing,
As magic wand or bridal ring.

The **verb** means action, something done,
As read and write and jump and run.

How things are done the **adverbs** tell,
As quickly, slowly, badly, well.

The **preposition** shows relation,
As in the street or at the station.

Conjunctions join, in many ways,
Sentences, words, or phrase and phrase.

The **interjection** cries out, "Hark!"
I need an exclamation mark!"



You know how they throw
the ball into the crowd
after they win the game?

That's not allowed in bowling.
I know that now.

(Lunch Shaming—Continued from page 1)

The IOU meal. The shame sandwich.

Jamie walked past his group of friends and sat alone at a corner table. He didn't touch the food. He just stared down at the table, his face pale. It wasn't just a sandwich; it was a public announcement that his family was broke.

In that moment, something inside me cracked. I'd been teaching about history for decades, but right there I saw what humiliation looked like—served up between two slices of bread.

The next morning, I walked into the main office before classes began. Clara, the cafeteria manager, was counting receipts. She had worked there almost as long as I had.

"Dan," she said, barely looking up. "Don't tell me the copier's broken again."

"It's fine," I said, sliding a folded fifty across the counter. "This is for the kids. If someone can't pay, cover it from this. Don't let them walk away with that cold sandwich."

She stared at the bill, then at me. Her eyes softened, and with a small nod, she tucked the money into her apron without a word.

That became my routine. Every Friday, I dropped off a bill—fifty if I could, a hundred when there was a little wiggle room in my paycheck. I started calling it the "Hidden Meal Fund." Clara never mentioned it, but I noticed. Sometimes I'd catch her quietly serving a full tray to a kid I knew was struggling, and across the room, she'd give me a little nod. That nod meant the world. It was our silent pact.

For a year, I did this. No announcements, no pats on the back, just quiet defiance against a cruel system.

Then one afternoon, my brightest student, Emma, lingered after class.

(Lunch Shaming—Continued on page 7)

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Sharing is Caring

When I was around 10, I carried a secret shame. We were so poor that I often went to school with no food. At recess, while my classmates opened their lunches - apples, cookies, sandwiches.

I sat pretending I wasn't hungry. I buried my face in a book, hiding the sound of my empty stomach. Inside, it hurt more than I can explain.



Then, one day, a girl noticed. Quietly, without making a fuss, she offered me half her lunch. I was embarrassed, but I accepted. The next day, she did it again. And again. Sometimes it was a roll, sometimes an apple, sometimes a piece of cake her mother baked. To me, it was a miracle. For the first time in a long time, I felt seen.

Then one day, she was gone. Her family moved, and she never came back. Every day at recess, I'd glance at the door, hoping she would walk in and sit beside me with her smile and her sandwich. But she never did.

Still, I carried her kindness with me. It became part of who I was.

Years passed. I grew up. I thought of her often, but life went on.

Then, just yesterday, something happened that froze me in place. My young daughter came home from school and said: "Dad, can you pack me two snacks tomorrow?"

"Two?" I asked. "You never finish one."

She looked at me with the seriousness only a child can have: "It's for a boy in my class. He didn't eat today. I gave him half of mine."

I just stood there, goosebumps rising, time standing still. In her small act, I saw that girl from my childhood. The one who fed me when no one else noticed. Her kindness hadn't disappeared, it had traveled through me, and now, through my daughter.

I stepped onto the balcony and looked at the sky, my eyes full of tears. All at once I felt my hunger, my shame, my gratitude, and my joy.

That girl may never remember me. She may not even know the difference she made. But I will never forget her. Because she taught me that even the smallest act of kindness can change a life. And now, I know: as long as my daughter shares her bread with another child, kindness will live on.

Night, Night

Since I was a kid, I've always been terrified of someone hiding under my bed at night. The fear got so intense that I finally decided to see a psychiatrist.

"Doctor," I said during my first session, "I can't sleep because I'm convinced there's someone under my bed. I feel like I'm losing my mind."



The psychiatrist nodded thoughtfully and said, "This is a common fear. Let's work through it together. Come see me three times a week for a year, and I'll help you overcome it."

"How much will that cost?" I asked nervously.

"Eighty dollars per session," he replied.

I blinked at him. "That's... a lot. I'll have to think about it."

Six months later, the psychiatrist spotted me walking down the street and stopped me. "You never came back to work on your fear. What happened?"

"Well," I said with a grin, "eighty bucks a session, three times a week, for a whole year? That sounded like a small fortune. So instead, I went to a friend who cured me for just \$10! I saved so much money, I even bought myself a new SUV."

The psychiatrist raised an eyebrow. "A friend cured you? Really? And how did he manage that?"

"Simple," I said with a laugh. "He told me to saw the legs off my bed. Now, there's no way anyone's hiding under there."



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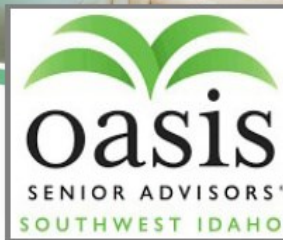
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Bending a Knee

Oscar, an 80-year-old gentleman, retired to Florida after his wife of 58 years had passed away. He was quite alone in the world and longed for companionship. One day, as he was walking through a public park, he spied what he considered to be a very pretty silver-haired lady sitting alone on a park bench. Getting his nerve up, he approached the lady and asked graciously, "Pardon me, ma'am, but may I sit here with you."

The silver-haired Maria looked up to see a distinguished looking white-haired gentleman and replied, "Why certainly," and scooted over gently to give him room to sit down.

For the next two hours the two sat and talked about everything. They discovered that they came from the same part of the country, liked the same big band music, voted for the same presidential candidates, had long happy marriages and lost their spouses in the last year, and in general agreed about almost everything.

Finally, the old gentleman cleared his throat and asked sheepishly, "Ma' am, may I ask you two questions?"

With great anticipation Maria replied, "Why certainly!"

The old gentleman removed a handkerchief from his coat pocket and spread it out on the ground before her. He very gingerly got down on one knee and looked her softly in the eyes.



"Maria, I know we've only known each other for a couple of hours, but we have so much in common. I feel I have known you all my life. Will you marry me and be my wife?"

Maria grabbed at Oscar's hands and said, "Why, yes, I will marry you! You have made me so very happy!"

She reached over and kissed him gently on the cheek. Then Maria said, "You said you had two questions to ask me. What is the second question?"

Oscar cleared his throat and said, "Will you help me get up?"

How to Upsell

A young man from Arkansas moved to Florida and went to a big "everything under one roof" department store looking for a job. The Manager says, "Do you have any sales experience?"

The kid says, "Yeah. I was a salesman back in Arkansas."

Well, the boss liked the kid and gave him the job. "You start tomorrow. I'll come down after we close and see how you did."

His first day on the job was rough but he got through it. After the store was locked up the boss came down. "How many customers bought something from you today?"

The kid says, "One".

The boss says, "Just one? Our sales people average 20 to 30 customers a day. How much was the sale for?"

The kid says, "\$101,237".

The boss says, "\$101,237? What in the world did you sell?"

The kid says, "First I sold him a small fish hook. Then I sold him a new fishing rod. Then I asked him where he was going fishing and he said down the coast, so I told him he was going to need a boat so we went down to the boat department and I sold him a twin engine Chris Craft.

Then he said he didn't think his Honda Civic would pull it, so I took him down to the automotive department and sold him that 4x4 Expedition."

The boss said, "A guy came in here to buy a fish hook and you sold him a BOAT and a TRUCK?"

The kid said, "No the guy came in here to buy Excedrin for his wife's headache, and I said, 'Dude, your weekend's shot - you should go fishing.' "



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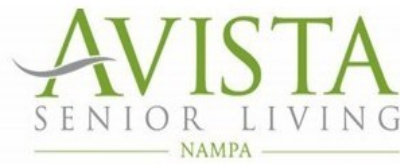
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Eating in the 50s

- ◆ Brown bread was something only poor people ate
- ◆ Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking
- ◆ Cubed sugar was a luxury
- ◆ Pizza had something to do with a leaning tower
- ◆ Oranges were reserved for Christmas stockings
- ◆ All chips were plain—with or without salt
- ◆ Condiments were salt, pepper and ketchup only
- ◆ Prunes were for medicinal purpose
- ◆ Yogurt was unheard of
- ◆ “Health food” was anything edible
- ◆ Liver and onions was a special meal
- ◆ People who didn’t peel their potatoes were just lazy
- ◆ Seaweed was definitely not a food
- ◆ Pineapple came in chunks in a can; we never saw a real one
- ◆ Water came out of a tap, not from a bottle you paid for
- ◆ Cinnamon and sugar on toast was a treat
- ◆ Milk came from bottles on the porch, not in plastic jugs
- ◆ Take out was for the trash, not for restaurant food
- ◆ The one thing we never had on our table was our elbows!



Only in America ...do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

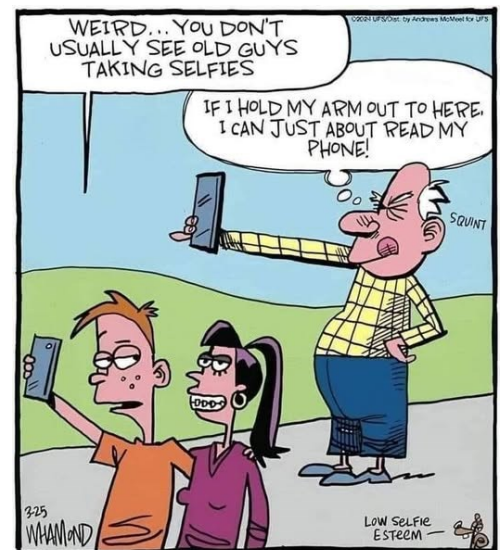
Only in Americado people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.

Only in Americado banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.

Only in Americado we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Only in Americado we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.

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After years of playing the guitar,
I thought I could learn to play the piano.
But it's not an easy instrument to pick up!

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Cruising Down the Highway

An older couple was cruising down the highway in Florida, enjoying their retirement freedom — windows down, classic country playing, and just a tiny bit too much speed.

The wife was behind the wheel, confident and chatty. The husband was riding shotgun, alternating between giving directions and dozing off.

Suddenly—red and blue lights flashed in the mirror.

“Uh-oh,” she muttered, easing the car to the shoulder.

The officer approached. “Ma’am, do you know how fast you were going?”

The wife leaned toward her husband, “What’d he say?”

“HE SAID YOU WERE SPEEDING!” the husband bellowed.

The officer smiled. “Can I see your license?”

She turned again. “What’d he say?”

“HE WANTS YOUR LICENSE!”

After looking at her ID, the officer chuckled. “Oh, you’re from Georgia! I went on a blind date there once—worst one of my life.”

The wife frowned, “What’d he say?”

And without missing a beat, her husband replied loudly: “HE SAYS HE THINKS HE WENT ON A DATE WITH YOU!”

The officer nearly fell over laughing, waved them off, and said, “Drive safe, folks—and maybe a little slower next time.”



Old-Time Technology Quiz

Give yourself 1 point for each thing you have NEVER done:

1. Used a rotary phone
2. Used a floppy computer disk
3. Used a typewriter
4. Taken photos with a film camera
5. Listened to music on an 8-track
6. Listened to music on a cassette tape
7. Listened to music on a vinyl record
8. Listened to music outside on a boombox
9. Watched a movie on a VHA tape
10. Accessed the internet via dial-up
11. Used a phone book
12. Sent a postcard
13. Used a paper map to get somewhere
14. Owned an encyclopedia
15. Owned a dictionary
16. Paid with a paper check
17. Put letters in a mailbox slot
18. Got a call on a party line
19. Called the operator to place a call
20. Sent or received a telegram

____ Your Score



It's really awkward when your pastor preaches about being friends with someone no one wants to be friends with, and suddenly the whole congregation wants to shake your hand after the service!

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Just Fix the Hole!

I had a tree I wanted removed because it was too close to the house. I called a tree guy and he came out and did a nice job cutting down the tree. He asked me what I thought and I said it was nice, but what about the stump?



He informed me that he was just a tree guy who cut down trees; if I wanted the stump

removed, I would need to call a stump guy.

I found a highly recommended "stump" guy and he came and got the stump out. He says there you go.

I asked him about the hole. He says, I'm a stump guy - I just remove stumps, I don't fill in the hole. Long story short, he told me I would need to call a landscaper.

I got a hold of a landscaper and I told him I'm leaving town on a trip and I don't care what he does, just fix the hole and make it look nice.

I got back today and found out he planted a stupid tree!

(Lunch Shaming—Continued from page 2)

"Mr. Whitmore?" she asked softly, twisting her backpack strap. "This isn't about the assignment."

"Go on," I said.

"I know it's you. The lunch money thing."

My stomach dropped. I imagined a meeting with the superintendent, a lecture about school policy, maybe even disciplinary action.

But Emma's face wasn't accusing. It was glowing. "My mom works in the office. She saw the entries in Clara's reports. The donations. She figured out who it was. And, well... we want to help."

The following Monday, my AP students set up a bake sale in the main hallway. Their sign said: "Bake Sale Against Hunger. No Student Left Behind at Lunch." By the end of the day, they dropped a shoebox on my desk stuffed with crumpled bills and coins. Four hundred and twelve dollars.

The administration knew. Everyone knew. And still, they turned their heads and let it happen.

Now, I'm preparing for retirement. The "Hidden Meal Fund" is no longer hidden—it's become The Fund, run completely by students. They organize fundraisers, bake sales, and car washes. They own it now.

For 38 years, I tried to convince kids that history was about battles and bold leaders. But that wasn't the real lesson. The truth is, history is shaped in quiet corners, in acts of compassion no textbook ever records. Sometimes it's written in a cafeteria, when a teenager is spared the humiliation of being branded poor over a sandwich.

That's the history I want to leave behind. That's the America I still believe in.

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Walmart has announced that they will be closed on Thanksgiving so that all the Self Checkout people can be home with their families.

Expert Help

An elderly woman hurried to the pharmacy to get medication, got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys inside.

She bowed her head and asked God to send her some Help.

Within five minutes a beat-up old motorcycle pulled up, driven by a bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull rag.

He got off his cycle and asked if she needed help?

She said: "Yes, my husband is sick and I have to get home, but I've locked my keys in the car. Please, can you help me unlock my car?"

He said, "Sure."

He walked over to the car and in less than a minute the car was open.



She hugged the man and through tears said, "Thank You, God, for sending me such a very nice man."

The Biker heard her little prayer and replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison yesterday. I was in prison for car theft."

The woman hugged the man again, sobbing. "Oh, thank you, God! You even sent me a professional!"

Milestones



Darlene Maiden
Oct 2, 1932—93 years
Melba Senior Center



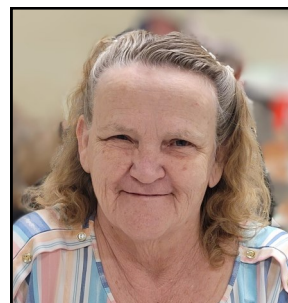
Jack Lawson
Nov 22, 1932—93 years
Caldwell Senior Center



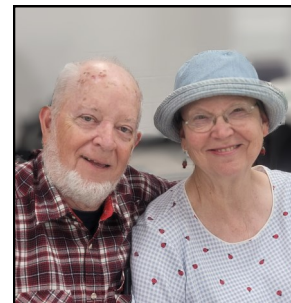
Merrill Marshall
Nov 23, 1933—92 years
Caldwell Senior Center



Bob Covert
Nov 23, 1934—91 years
Nampa Senior Center



Penny Wilson
Nov 8, 1955—70 years
Caldwell Senior Center



Dale & Lois Van Hooser
Nov 28, 1970—55 years
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