



THE CURMUDGEON'S CORNER

Dear Journal,

I recently had to buy a new phone after dropping mine in the water bucket. I went to the cell phone store in our little town and told them I wanted to replace my old phone with the upgrade they had sent a brochure on. The salesman then proceeded to try and sell me any number of phones that could take pictures, send e-mails, access the internet, with touch screens, bells and whistles and one could even microwave a pizza! What he didn't realize was that he was dealing with a total nimrod when it comes to all those things. I just wanted a phone that I could make calls to other human beings on, period. To say that I am technologically challenged is the understatement of the century, the last century. I grew up with phones still attached to the wall, often with "party" lines that meant you could listen in on your neighbors if you were very quiet and your mom didn't catch you. The only person who had a telephone with pictures was Dick Tracy and he was in the comics! Advancements in technology have left me sputtering and coughing in the dust.

It's not just cell phones. There's computers, GPSes, cars with satellite hookups, heck, even the breeding business is affected. For eons if we wanted to breed Bessie to Blackie you sent her to Blackie's owner's farm and left her there for a few days or weeks and then picked her up hoping she was in foal and that the baby would have four legs and a tail come spring. This worked for horse breeders since Noah picked out two equines to put on the ark. After the invention of the truck and trailer you had the option of sending Bessie even farther away than down the road. You could send her to the next county or even the next state. What a concept! Now you had choices and selective breeding began in earnest. Like that handsome bay stud in New Hampshire? How about that fancy chestnut in Maine? Let's drive her over there and see what happens. All went well until those know-it-all scientists got involved. They had the idea that you could put the stallion's semen in a bucket and ship it anywhere and you could breed your mare at home. No more trailering hundreds of miles, no more board bills for broodmares, no more good old fashioned live breeding. This all sounded good until you, the breeder, realized that you had to know what you doing for this to succeed. Many people tore their hair and ran screaming into the woods! Technology had reared it's ugly head in the horse business. I, for one, thought early on that this was all way too much trouble. I'd have to learn how to breed horses all over again. Back when I was a kid the man I worked for had a stallion he would

breed on the end of a long rope. He's tie up the mare, run back and open the stallion's door, grab the rope and hope everyone lived. Then he'd wait twenty minutes and do it all over again. It's a wonder I wasn't scarred for life.

But you know what? We all adapted. We learned the new methods. We got our mares in foal. Life goes on. Now we have bloodtyping, DNA, even cloning, and who knows what will come in the future. They are talking about being able to clone mastodons from hair samples found frozen in the ice for millions of years. Species long extinct may yet again live among us. Jurassic Park may be a new theme park and, hey, if we gathered together enough mane hair maybe we could even get Justin back!

This old dog probably is past learning any new tricks. I had enough trouble trying to explain what was in the blue bucket to the UPS man the first time! You're shipping WHAT!?

The Curmudgeon

P.S. Does anyone know how to turn this dang cell phone on?