

# Cutler Bay NEWS

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## Remembering life before all this technology arrived

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Vice Mayor



Well, I woke up a few days back to my cell phone screaming about an incoming call. It was connected to my Sony speakers so it was extra loud.

Who was it? My loveable grandchildren were trying out their new iPhones with Facetime. It worked great and I expect many more calls like this in the future, but it got me to thinking... a dangerous thing, as you know.

These 7- and 10-year-old kids held in their hands more technology than was in the first space shuttle or ever in my head. Just think — one generation back my father was excited to see his first automobile, and described the thrill of having electricity in the house, borrowed from a neighbor with an extension cord. He had a radio with a large horn speaker, which he played on the front porch so that other neighbors could share. (More stories about my father on my website at <www.sochin.com>.)

I used to read Dick Tracy comics and marveled at the impossible wrist radio that he used. Who could ever hope to actually see such a thing? Even today, I am decades behind the latest stuff. My iPhone is ancient compared to the latest ones. I am still not sure what they offer that makes it worth the upgrade. My grandkids tried to explain, but old Papa just doesn't get it.

I am able to talk to Siri on the few occa-

sions that she understands me. Maybe it is my New England accent. I text and email and talk, and take and view movies. What else can I do? I am sure that right now a bunch of engineers are working on iPhone 6, 7, and 8. What in heck will they add and why? I know people will be lined up overnight to be the first to have one. I don't get that at all. What if I got mine a week later? What would I be missing?

History buffs like me tend to look at things through segments in time. Being from the Geriatric Era, I view our country as only being around 250 years old, yet the scientific advancements of the past 20 years or so boggle my mind. I asked my auto seat companion what she thought the next 10 years might bring. Her reply: "Quiet, I hope, when you stop blabbering about history!" Well all of us can't be great philosophers and prognosticators. I try really hard to ask myself just what is left to invent.

Remember Charles Duell, the head of the U.S. Patent office in 1899 said, "Everything that can be invented has been invented." Gee, I hope so because that might give me some time to get familiar with what already is around and then we all might be able to view beautiful sunsets in real life rather than a 3D YouTube presentation.

When I think back to growing up as a child in a family with no automobile and a huge Stewart Warner radio in the living room, I have nothing but happy memories. I remember tying a string between two tin cans and talking to a friend across the backyard. Talk about technology!

Getting around was actually fun. Those old clanking trolley cars with the pole reaching up to the electric wire and the kids (not me) who hung onto the back to hitch a free ride and save a nickel. Many times they would tug too hard and pull the pole down which would bring the he trolley to a stop.

And what about food and medicine? I grew up knowing that carrots were good for your eyes and bananas stopped diarrhea. What else was there to know? Gluten, carbohydrates and polyunsaturated fats hadn't been invented yet. Nor was childhood obesity an issue. We played outdoors most of the time and, if a kid was fat, we called him "fatso," and that was enough incentive for them to lose weight.

Most doctors had a stethoscope, a tongue depressor, a thermometer and a little hammer with which to whack your knee. Somehow they kept us alive without MRIs, EKGs and all that other expensive stuff. What tests are the medical engineers working on now? Better start saving up or getting on Obamacare.

So what do you see ahead in another 10 years or so? Please send email to me and let me know your ideas of what you would like to see, other than world peace, which seems dubious at the moment.

Send your thoughts to <ernie@community.com>.