Col. Fuller can tell lots of little-known city trivia

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This was the first one where motorists could pull under cover in bad weather and have their car serviced.

Col. Fuller also might have had the first drive-in. It began after the automobile became rather common, but it was motivated by the bathing suit.

"Prior to 1916, bathing was done in bath houses in covered areas on piers in the bay. Women's bathing suits covered all but the head and lower arms. A skirt came to the knees and little loose pants with elastic protruded below them. A few inches of stockinged calf was seen above high-topped canvas shoes.

World War I brought a revolution in scandalous one-piece bathing suits. The piers were gone and people dressed at home and drove to the beaches.

"Until that time, were young people with a parent who went along fully dressed. At the drugstore or confectionery, a nonmother would go in and carry out soda fountain drinks or confections to those seated sedately in the car.

"By 1920 people were coming in, placing orders and asking it be brought to the car. That was the transition stage. By 1921, people were regularly pulling up to the curb, sounding a horn and waiting for one of us to hie out for their order.

"Curb service was established through it was somewhat perilous," he said.

Trays were handed into cars to be held on the lap, where drinks were frequently spilled.

"There was nearly a decade of this inside-the-car tray juggling before some clever fellow made a fortune out of the door-hanging type of tray. And curb service left the competition of the open lot service with pretty girl carhop.s."

That was the beginning of "service with a smile" which seems to have died with curbtop service.

The colonel's privately printed book, "When the Century and I Were Young", gives a real feel for life in Corpus Christi from 1914 to 1924.

The book is not available commercially. I read one of my Corpus Christi history books for one. So I will pass on more of its contents.
Whatever the year or the place, boys will be boys

When I finished Col. Theodore Fuller's
title, "When the Century and I Were Young," I almost had a feeling that I had spent part of my boyhood in Corpus Christi.

It was before my time, but the things boys in Corpus Christi did in 1914 were the things I did in North Texas when I was a Fuller's age where a creek substituted for the bay.

Girls were watched closely and not al- lowed in the sun during the heat of the day unless they were fully protected from its rays.

But boys had guns, slingshots and knives and built and sailed boats. They were allowed to face the dangers of water, weather, homes and whatever they could get into without damaging property or disturbing others.

Fuller learned to shoot a shotgun at age eight and had his own gun by age 10.

"Young boys were given more freedom

from parents and perhaps more responsi-

bility. They were subjected to things now
done quite dangerous to children of a like age. Why? I'm not sure," Fuller

wrote.

In 1914, most farmers near town were prospering, conservative, blue-law type Protestants, while the townspeople were more Catholic in taste as well as reli-

igon.

"Even in 1914 Corpus Christi was a resort town and a sporting town. Beach
cottages, hotels, bath houses, pleasure

piers and pleasure boats were for families;

a salubrious sulphur spring was for the

ailing and aging; saloons, pool halls and

brooms were for sporting males.

"Water fowl fed and nested within

walking distance of downtown where a

boy could hunt within a mile of the court-

house in almost any direction....

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Bill Wilkens

"...I grew from a five-year-old to a lazy, gawky, boat-crazed youth. I learned firsthand the habits of birds and the names of all the fish and secondhand the
tales of the madams of the four larger

brothels.

"Corpus Christi was a wonderful place

for boisterous boys, adventurous adoles-
cents and men in the making.

There were not many dogs in town be-

cause of the fear of hydrophobia. There

were few automobiles. Wagons with

lengthwise seats picked up passengers at the train station. They were called station

wagons.

Boys made their own toys, including

motorboats and tractors powered by rub-

ber bands, sailboats and tops. Marbles

games were played for keeps as were tops

with sharpened spikes. Broken glass was

used to bring other kids' kites down in kite
dogfights. Boys made scooters and

wagons from old roller skates.

"People had little interest in wildlife

except for game... Our knowledge of na-

ture was limited... I remember no quail

on North Beach and there was never a

starling or robin in Corpus Christi during

my stay here, but I hear they are common

winter visitors now.

Grocers delivered, coffee came from a

grinding shop, a green grocer with fresh

fruits and vegetables covered the town by

wagon and meat came from the market at

City Hall where dog bones and liver were

free.

Boys could earn money - four cents a

pound - from lead balls they gathered on

North Beach where Zachary Taylor's ar-

my had a rifle range.

During World War I, students at David

Hirsch School had trouble concentrating

on their studies when soldiers opened up

with machine guns outside. They fired at

targets on sand spits across a lagoon which is now the Port of Corpus Christi.

A boy's life included doggie bugs, turn-

table bugs, ground squirrels, concentrated toads, ducks and shrimp and homemade boats

which sank in the bay.

The colonel (who lives at 12 Ridgeway, Sylvas, N.C. 28779) has never had a bug for the bay. I'm going to catch him again when he comes back for another look at it.
Male custom of honoring women gets no respect

The article by author Betty Lehan Harragan decried "obscure codes" of male-female etiquette as "a disaster for women seeking equitable positions with men. The old 'ladies first' routine is a comedy of errors in practice.

In business situations, superficially courteous demeanor is part of the unwritten code of conduct for all employees. Unfortunately, the workplace is composed of people from both schools of behavior -- the practitioners and recipients of old-fashioned gallantry and the descendants of the age of rudeness. Caught in the middle are ambitious women who want to treat and be treated as equals.

Business manners are strictly impersonal. They are based on protocol, the same as government or diplomatic relations. Here, the rule of rank is paramount. Rank in the hierarchy determines who goes first in a receiving line and who is seated next to whom.

"Common sense dictates that whoever is closest to a door opens it and passes through..."

"Under normal business conditions, it is unnecessary for males or females to rise from their seats when another person enters a conference room, your office or a restaurant. The only exception is when the entrant is considerably higher in rank than the seated persons or group," Ms. Harragan says.

"Ah ha! I finally got the message. Derriere bussing in the corporate world knows no sex. It's just rank."

I heard of one corporate-type female executive who has a lot to learn about Texas and Texans.

An employee, a Texan of the old school, referred to some of the younger employees as "little ladies.

His "boss lady" (I do hope she has that term, too) screamed at him in front of other workers, accusing him of demeaning the women in her office with such language.

The oldtimer was terribly embarrassed, for he meant no disrespect at all. Maybe somebody will be real polite to her some-time and pull her chair back for her and yank it away when she squats. She's due for a fall.
Seawall may be standing on last leg

They tried to build a scenic overlook at Shoreline and Peoples, but they didn’t have a leg to stand on. The pilings had washed out and it’s going to take a lot more dollars to replace them so the beautification project can proceed.

But will the final cost be much higher than the additional $90,000 estimated to replace missing pilings under the section?

Is this an indication that the late James S. Naismith, an engineer on the job when the seawall was constructed in 1939-41, was right when he said there were serious voids along the entire length of the wall and it was in danger of collapsing.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but I remember my talk with Naismith shortly before he died. I went to interview him about his famous father, the inventor of basketball.

But he was more concerned about the life of the seawall and the tremendous cost to Corpus Christi if it had to be replaced. It was built for only $2.5 million. Replacing it could be 50 times that amount.

The problem, he said, was not from wave action from the bay, but from ground water flow from the inland side which washed out the fill and exposed and deteriorated pilings.

Cracks, he said, some of which run across the concrete steps, the sidewalk and the pavement on East Shoreline, indicate hollow areas.

I have used this Naismith quote before, and I’ll use it again:

"We figured the life of the bayfront improvements at 50 years when we built it. We figured major maintenance would be necessary after 40 years. Those 40 years are up."

He made that statement five years ago.

The latest problem with pilings occurred at an area where water flows under the base of the T-Head, apparently eroding the bottom under the sheet pilings, causing them to move. Sheet piling is the outer wall under water with a concrete cap on it.

This was the area on which Goldston Corp was to construct a 40-by-20-foot overlook with a drinking fountain, seating, trees and an information kiosk.

Divers discovered that water depth there was 21 feet instead of the five feet along most of the wall. The damaged pilings were discovered when a 40-foot section of the seawall was removed.

If another $90,000 is required to complete the beautified bayfront area where seating, lights, cobblestone paving and stylized traffic signals have already been installed at the street level, the total cost of the project will be somewhere around $232,000.

The project has been funded to this point with a grant from the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife and a matching grant from the city’s share of federal Community Development Block Grants.

Naismith’s son, James P. Naismith, also an engineer, is deeply concerned about the condition of the seawall, too. He is hesitant to speak without full engineering data. He says he understands that tests have been conducted by the city on the foundations, but he has no information on them.

However, I gathered he had some reservations about the testing the city has done. “There are two other ramps and water flows under both of them,” he said, indicating there could possibly be erosion at those points.

“If the wall had been thoroughly tested along its entire length, something like this doesn’t just jump up and bite you,” he said.

I hope the weakness in the wall is an isolated instance. If it isn’t, there are going to be some mighty angry hotel owners who built here for the bayfront view.
Cartoonist turns fun maps into profitable venture

Jim Prewitt is turning his doodlings into an entrepreneurial venture that seems to be turning him into a corporation. A graphic designer and illustrator, the 6-foot-4 Texan was doing well enough in Hawaii where he worked for a couple of design firms before opening his own studio.

Business was good and he liked Hawaii well enough, the Island of Oahu began to fence him in. After a while he felt he had to get back to Texas. The A&I graduate was laying around home in San Marcos, wondering what to do when his mother suggested he try his hand at maps similar to one a friend had done of Honolulu.

"It was a slick four-color map showing the major buildings, public service locations, restaurants and tourist facilities." He did a map of Wimberley, selling spots to merchants, the cost varying according to the information and size of the picture.

Each picture is cartoonlike, yet clearly recognizable. He might distort the landscape to suit his purposes.

"You can bend the horizon and close in some of the vacant spaces. But I take pictures of every business so I don’t miss details," he said.

What you actually have is a visual Yellow Pages map with bits of comedy scattered all about it.

He has done maps of San Marcos, New Braunfels, Victoria, Sixth Street in Austin and is now doing Kingsville and Corpus Christi.

The Victoria map throws in a little trivia and some history trivia: "Popeye was born in Victoria in 1919, the creation of famous cartoonist, E.C. Segar," and "Bianchi Pharmacy, oldest drugstore corner in Texas."

His map key has explanations for little figures hiding about the map, such as "ex-cats" in the streets, a "frat" who looks like a rat, UFOs, dillos, beer cans, punks, ducks and snakes.

"I work late at night and I get a little dingy and all sorts of strange things occur to me," Prewitt said.

The Sixth Street map in Austin is highly condensed, not allowing for so much whimsy. Still he manages to get in birds, clouds and a hypodermic needle labeled, "trouble."

He always manages to work in a picture or two of his dog Bob. "I had my dog Bob before David Letterman got his dog Bob," he said.

His dog Bob is a well-mannered mutt who resembles the ol’ Yeller dog in the Disney movie.

A sea serpent might crop up in the water and all sorts of strange things pop up on the streets and highways.

The maps are proving popular to tourists and locals alike.

He has a crew out selling the ads at $100, $200 and $300 each. Some maps framed for study by customers. Or the advertiser can sell the maps and recoup his investment.

He spends 300 hours on each map. Corpus Christi stretches from Padre Island to past Calallen. How do you get that on one map where you can recognize everything?

"I’m covering the central part, but I can make certain areas dense, curve the horizon and bring in the outlying areas. The main thing is to help people find things. And if they can recognize landmarks immediately, it’s a big help."

Merchants at Wimberley were skeptical at first, but that map is in its third printing.

Prewitt studied art at Texas A&I where his father, a retired military man, was manager of the Student Union Building.

Prewitt is working on the cities he is familiar with first, getting established with small to mid-sized cities. Then he’ll think about the big cities. That’s when the 26-year-old artist can start being a corporation.
Mifflin Kenedy collection offers wide range of art

MON JAN 21 1995 C

Bill Walraven

It's like a mini-tour of an art gallery. It's a portion of the art collection accumulated by Mifflin Kenedy in 1885. The items were in the Kenedy mansion on Upper Broadway and until recently in the La Parra Ranch House near Sarita. There are some real pieces of original art, two of which are priced at $50,000 each, and there are some very good copies of works of earlier artists. Some pieces will go for as little as $800.

Appraiser Anita Eisenhauer and James J. Elliott, who will conduct the tag sale, think the New York dealer saw old Mifflin coming. Some of the paintings are, frankly, dogs. Some are in need of repair from rough handling. "We have had appraisers and conservators give estimates, so the prices take into account the damage and the cost of restoring them," Ms. Eisenhauer said.

"This is not an auction. It is a sale. There will be a preview showing and sale of the paintings from the Sarita Kenedy East Estate Jan. 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The sale will be

Porcelain plates in Kenedy collection, 20 inches in diameter, are in particularly good condition

Monday, Jan. 28 at E.O. Antiques, 1811 Ayers." She showed me a confessional screen of finely carved mahogany inlaid with bone. "A maid hid behind it during dinner and when Mrs. East needed something, she signaled." More impressive is an antique rosewood Chinese jde cabinet covered by extremely delicate carving. "This is the finest furniture in the collection," Elliott said.

This included some pieces by Millard of New Orleans, leading furniture manufacturers in the South in the last century. They couldn't be used in the average house for they stand more than nine feet tall.

Two very old leather chairs with brass studs stand out as thrones. One is from France and the other Spain.

A mantle clock also would be in place in a royal suite. Two muses hold up gold-plated leaves and flowers. It must weigh 200 pounds. One of two original big paintings is a landscape by Giovanni Cavalli (1818-1900). It is in its frame, and the other is a portrait of Paul Vernone or Bunina Salinbrini. The tag sent by a New York company which refined the painting was mixed up.

Among statues is a Marly Horse by Guillaume Coustou (1677-1746). Unsigned, apparently it is a copy. The bronze stands 30 inches high.

An original sculpture by P.J. Mene, a noted French animal sculptor of the last century, is 10 inches tall. But it is the paintings which catch the eye. A 45-by-35-inch painting shows "Freedom Fighter," in red guerrilla garb similar to that of Garibaldi's troops. It was painted by E. A. Baneel in 1838.

Another is a portrait of Abdul Kader, a famous Arab sheik. In all there are 46 paintings. Almost as impressive are some of the finely carved picture frames, some valued as much as $5,000.

Two matching porcelain plates bearing portraits of women are in particularly good condition. They are 20 inches in diameter, larger than most porcelain paintings, Elliott said.

For some reason porcelain painters were held in low esteem by other artists of the day, he said. There aren't many residences that will hold Kenedy's art treasure, but items are expected to sell briskly because of their South Texas historical connection.
1939: The year Halley's Comet didn't appear

O
kay, Bill Barnard, you've fi-
nally gone too far.

You created a stir in 1939
with the fake alligator
who was supposedly devouring
dogs and cats and meter readers.

You convinced the world there was
an interminable doghouse builder who had an
uncanny knack for foretelling natural
disasters.

And you convinced Corpus Christi citi-
zeny the government was installing
coastal defense artillery on the bayfront
when the area was being filled in with
dredge material. Many citizens ruined
clothing and lost shoes in the clay muck
and two city fathers had to be removed
from the morass by the Fire Department.

All these are forgotten. But after 46
years, one of your pranks has hit home.

Here is a letter, dated Jan. 8, from
Douglas Stein of Des Moines, Iowa:

"Dear Corpus Christi Newspaper:

I heard a news story on yesterday's
early morning news that reminded me
of your city. I was there for a short time
in the late thirties and stayed at a hotel on
the main street near the water (the Nueces Hotel).

I was told that the elderly man that sat
in the lobby and kept missing the spitoon
owned the hotel. (W.W. Jones).

"The story in the news was about Hal-
ley's Comet. A column in the local paper
named the time it would be visible.

"So my wife and I stood across
the street by a seafood cafe and watched. We
saw a glimpse of it out towards the
little hospital south of town.

"We went back to this cafe and talked
about it while we ate.

"Does anyone at your paper remember
this?

"My children and grandchildren say I
must have dreamed this. I know what I
saw. I was there.

"They say if I keep making up things,
they're going to put me in a nursing
home.

"Just thought someone besides me
would remember.

"I always hoped to come back to your
city, but never got a chance."

I have made an effort to find Mr. Stein.
There are two "D. Steins" in Des Moines,
but neither is a Douglas Stein. Unfortu-
nately, he did not include his address.

I had, I would have told him that
what he saw was one of Bill Barnard's
most famous hoaxes.

Bill, who was a reporter and daily col-
umnist for the Caller, very carefully set up
his readers with a pseudo-scientific col-
umn about how scientists had discovered
an error in their calculations and Halley's
Comet had actually passed over Corpus
Christi in 1985 as they earlier thought.

Rather, it would appear that very week in
1939.

The next column advised residents to
look to the south at 8 p.m. that night and
they'd see it.

Barnard had friends scattered at inter-
vals from the bay inland. Among them
were Tom Wallfeld, Dr. Sid Conolly
and Herbert Schultz.

They synchronized their watches and
with perfect timing, set off sky rockets
from east to west.

Police and the newspaper office re-
cieved dozens of calls from exalted citi-
zeans who reported seeing Halley's Comet.

Barnard got another column from the
eye-witness accounts.

So, Mr. Stein, you did see what you
and everybody else took to be a comet.

You were not dreaming. It really did
happen.

I hope you get this word to your family.

Bill Barnard went on to become a war
correspondent, Bureau Chief and retired
last month as the chief executive officer
of the Associated Press west of the Missis-
sippi.

I haven't seen Bill lately. You don't
suppose he stopped off in Des Moines
and dished off a quick letter. Naw, Bill, at
his advanced age, wouldn't pull a joke
like that. Would he?
Press Club show had shaky debut 30 years ago

It seems almost impossible, but the Corpus Christi Press Club's Gridiron Show is 30 years old with the presentation scheduled Saturday. The club and the show were largely the idea of a dynamo of a reporter named Jim Greenwood. Jim was a wheeler-dealer, just the type of a guy to get something started.

He weighed about 260, but he was pretty light on his feet.

To be fair to his idea to publish a Gridiron Extra, an April Fool-type spoof. The newspaper (Volume No. 29 was printed Monday) serves to stir up interest in the show, which in turn raises funds for Press Club scholarships and other charitable projects.

That first show was purely amateurish. There was no professional direction and nobody knew anything about scriptwriting.

A show was put together, and the actors of the radio and old comic strips were at learning their lines.

Oiline-rancher Dudley Dougherty of Beeville generously underwrote the liquor bill.

We had a lot to learn about catering, too.

This could have spelled disaster except for the fact that the audience was busily mixing itself drinks all during the show. This made for a terribly receptive audience.

For years, our regular customers told us that first show was the best and that we could never top it. They were wrong. Nobody, truly knows just exactly what was said that night. There was one exception. There had been a spectacular jailbreak the previous year and there was a skit in which Big Jim was trying to squeeze through a small jail window the escapees had reputedly made their break through, and he got stuck.

That was a big scene. But it wasn't as big as the one in which he played the Nurse Prowler. The nude dude entered dozens of houses in the Del Mar Addition, grabbed women's purses and fled.

Jim wore long Johns and a green fig leaf. Ruth Del Mar Sullivan sang the song while Jim tucked-toed, hiding behind foot-tall bushes. Kleig lights turned his fig leaf black and the audience thought he was naked.

It was the all-time laughmeter hit. There have been others, like Jim Springer singing Rubber Ducky or Spencer Bones Pearson as a rooster.

We have become so used to a gridiron show that we have become polished with the help of theater people. Early skits were overly long and laid massive eggs when they didn't go over, sometimes because the story was so inside only the folks who knew that they were behind it.

We tried to use real props, like a 1,000-pound switchboard, a real covered wagon and an auto that emptied its gas tank into the orchestra pit during rehearsal as we tried to get it on stage. Memorial Coliseum had to be evacuated.

Jim Greenwood has been dead for many years now, but I think of him every year the Gridiron Show is being readied.

But this year I'll think about another big old boy, Jim Springer, who died last week.

He was our master of ceremonies at a number of shows and was so animated he transmitted his enthusiasm to the entire cast.

I'm glad to have both of those Big Jims as friends. Neither was the type you forget.
Putting purchase together usually tears him apart

The bookcase looked beautiful there on the showroom floor. The price was good, too. It was nicely finished. I wouldn’t have to sand it, stain it, varnish it and wax it. It was already a piece of furniture. And it was on sale for half price.

My wife had been looking at bookcases for a month. Some of them had glass fronts. Some had drawers. Others had doors. Our model had a drop leaf desk, handy for writing notes when my regular desk is unreachable because of the storage volume on top of it.

“Go for it,” I told her, reaching for the checkbook. “I’ll send it down to package pickup,” the salesman said. I was wondering how I might get a six-foot bookcase in the car when I saw it was “partially assembled.”

Recently I got a filing case she ordered by mail. It was partially assembled, too. I didn’t have to put the little wheels together. But nothing else was screwed together.

It was simple enough. There were the sides, a bottom, a shelf, a lid, a drawer and a bag full of nuts and bolts. I was nearly through when I noticed that the bottom wouldn’t quite fit. The reason was, I discovered, was I had attached the shelf as the bottom and the bottom wouldn’t fit as a shelf.

I took everything apart and started over, carefully reading the instructions. I followed them religiously, but somehow the lid wouldn’t fit. That was because the back was on backwards. Finally I got it together after I took things apart again to remove the shelf so the lock would fit.

The Navy used to make us take our weapons apart and put them together until we could have done it in the dark, which was the general idea. I could do the same thing with that stupid filing cabinet.

We picked up the bookcase at the back of the store. Luckily the clerk carried it to the sidewalk. Otherwise I don’t think I would have made it. I walked it to the curb and leaned it in the back of the station wagon and with a lot of huffing and puffing got the carton loaded.

I dragged the thing into the living room to assemble so nobody would trip over it.

This was a simple project. All the shelves but the desk level one were the same. There was absolutely nothing to go wrong. The two sides were A and B.

Piece of cake.

The little bolts were long and the job took nearly three hours, getting the whole thing square and tightened down so I could concentrate on the drop leaf desk top. The hinge fit snugly in the little holes on each side.

Good heavens. What are those little holes doing on the side of the wall? I laughed and laughed, to keep from screaming, and took a walk.

Six shelves times three bolts on each side—that’s 18 on one side and 18 on the other.

It took nearly two hours to dismantle the whole partially assembled pre-fabricated DIY assembly. Assembly was quicker because the holes in the material were now loose and easy to find. Two hours more and I had myself a bookcase. Surprisingly it looked just like the one at the store which was already assembled.

I seldom make much sense out of instructions with the partially assembled pre-fabricated DIY assembly. Instructions are written by Korean or Japanese craftsmen because their basic English is written with an unusual backspin to it.

One of the gifts around our Christmas tree was a mechanical dog which gyrates along, motivated by a pair of batteries. Among the instructions from the Japanese manufacturer was a notation, “This is not a real dog.”

I have assembled a washboard, a dolly and a shop stool, all without benefit of instructions. It doesn’t even worry me any more to have a bracket and six screws left over.
Merits of having a home computer are debatable

It's a smart aleck. It asks who I want to call. I write Caller. It gives up the number and automatically dials it.

Of course I don't have complete confidence that one day my computer might not get into a fight with the other. So, for insurance, I have the words run over to my typewriter. It's great to watch that machine rattle along all by itself like a runaway locomotive. It's like my column is being produced by a robot and all I have to do is lay back and wait for pay day.

If I find that most columnists around the country are doing this now. I am told it works fine until you go to the office and the security guard won't let you in and nobody in the newspaper recognizes you.

I haven't had this problem yet because I drive to the office downtown after my computer transmission to check my mail. Actually, I want to make sure that what I drove to town to have coffee with the guys.

My machine hasn't failed me yet, but I always have the feeling it's just about to.

"Must be nice loitering around the house - no bills, no telephones, no hassles," my contemporaries say.

It is pretty good. But I do take calls at home. I have a comfortable chair but I walk around and around to keep from sitting in it.

My wife likes the arrangement because I wash the dishes, do the laundry and I have even dug up stumps and moved huge concrete patio slabs - all to keep from sitting in this comfortable chair.

The dogs like the arrangement, too. They are extremely well fed and they get their ears scratched a lot.

The neighbors like it because I am a one-man Neighborhood Watch, looking out every time the dogs join the neighborhood barking chorus.

This also allows me to greet the mailman personally. The wave of barking tells right where he is.

Sometimes, events conspire to send me back to the office. Yesterday, for example, I decided to escape by moving a load of dirt from the front yard. That's when I discovered my new wheelbarrow had a flat tire and I was just as bad as a backwash in a Weed Eater.

And I never turn on the television lest I never write another word.

I've started forcing myself to sit here even when nothing is going on.

The one major flaw in the plan is that the refrigerator is 19 pages away. A few months ago, I lost about 20 pounds. Now I have gained more back.

So, when people ask me if I'm not putting on a little weight, I reply, "It's the computer's fault."