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Information is contained herein

Curtis Seltzer

BLUE GRASS, Va.—I receive a fair amount of email complaint each week that I have written yet another column that provides no useful information.

This is a fair criticism. My daughter realized this about my advice when she was five.

In an effort to rehabilitate myself, I offer herein three sure-fire business plans and one biscuit recipe. You don't see George Will offering practical wisdom of this kind, do you?

1. Start a Law School.

A law school need not be accredited. In fact, the one I started this week -- The Seltzer School of Legal Legerdemain -- is defiantly against validation of any kind. (If this takes off, I will set up a sister school for accounting—The Madoff Institute for Creative Ledgerdemain.)

As Dean, I've recruited faculty who are not lawyers, practicing, disbarred or otherwise. In fact, none even attended law school or are present on campus, which exists in one or more clouds.

We discriminate against no live applicants and act affirmatively on anyone who does apply.

Our philosophy is that all legal reasoning begins with the sentence, "It depends," and ends with the idea that all general principles carry exceptions.

Our classes employ the inverted Socratic method. Here's an example:

Student: Is it legal for that dude to hit that other dude on the head with a twobyfour? [Note the elegantly phrased question, indicating the quality of our students.]

Faculty: It depends. You're asking whether it's legal for that dude to hit that other dude on the second dude's head with a twobyfour? [Note the equally elegant answer.]

Tuition is \$100,000, payable in one lump sum at the start of each academic year, which runs for one weekend in September. Classes are purportedly online and entirely voluntary. We are proud to be smoke-free and exam-free.

At graduation, we issue real nice certificates of payment instead of the fusty diplomas of yesteryear.

2. Start Bottling Water.

If your water comes from a municipal source, bottle it. Call it “Clean and Pure; Better Than Nature’s Own.”

The cost of the water, plastic bottle and overhead will come to about a dime. Sell your product for \$1 wholesale.

You are following in the steps of Coke’s Dasani and Pepsi’s Aquafina.

3. Consider Beauty Products.

It’s been clear to me for a long time that I need to start my own line of beauty products.

Who would you rather buy your hair extensions from—me or Paris Hilton? Who has more first-hand experience with hair-extension needs? Whose hair is better? (I’m using “hair” in the singular.)

I also have extensive first-hand experience with “natural hair subtraction,” which is sometimes referred to as “genetically enforced removal of native implants.”

I will also pit my Maple Sap FaceLifter against anything peddled by Joan Rivers.

If these three value-added ideas strike you as insufficiently useful, I offer this recipe.

I have been baking James Beard’s **cream biscuits** for 30 years. The recipe appeared in his 1973 book, Beard on Bread. Oregon-raised Beard (1903-1985) learned it from his family’s Chinese cook, though, to me, they taste a lot more Southern than Mandarin.

Emeril Lagasse gave credit to Beard, television’s first chef, when he used this recipe on “Emeril Live.” After making two infinitesimally minor modifications, Emeril now carries it on his website without that credit.

Beard’s biscuits work well for Sunday brunch, touched up with ham, bacon, cheese, preserves or maple syrup. They also support stews, soups and chili.

Only health-nut Nazis would mention that cream biscuits are a high-fat, high-sugar, high-salt, high-carb, high-calorie heart-stopper.

2 cups of room-temperature all-purpose flour

1 Tablespoon of double-acting baking powder

1 Teaspoon of regular old salt

2 Teaspoons of bad old granulated white sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup of room-temperature heavy cream. I've substituted regular cream and even Half and Half in a pinch. But heavy cream works best because its fat replaces the usual butter or shortening.

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ stick of salted butter, melted in a small/deep sauce pan suitable for biscuit drowning

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Preparation time is 12 to 15 minutes, assuming you don't have to drive to the store for missing ingredients.

Sift the dry ingredients into a big mixing bowl. Stir/fold $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cream into the dry mixture by hand. [Don't use your hand to stir the mixture; use a floured wooden spoon.] You may or may not need to add some of the remaining cream to form the dough ball. I generally do.

The dough should be close to elastic in the bowl, not sticky and icky.

Flour a cutting board. Flour your hands before kneading.

Turn the dough onto the board. Knead it just enough to make it smooth and workable. Beard says to knead for one minute. You might have to add a little flour to get the right consistency.

If you over-knead it, the biscuits will lack flake and fluff, [You don't want to be known for lacking flake and fluff. I certainly don't want to encourage these qualities in American citizens.]

Roll out the dough ball with a floured pin or just press it into a circle about $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick with your floured hands.

Choose a biscuit cutter. You can buy them in various sizes or use a small glass. My glass has a 2-inch diameter. This makes about a dozen three-bite biscuits.

Get started by dunking the open end of the cutter or glass in the melted butter. Cut out the biscuits. You'll pat out three increasingly smaller dough discs to get 12 biscuits.

Drown -- not dip -- each biscuit in the melted butter.

Place biscuits in 9-inch-diameter glass (Pyrex) or metal baking plate. Tuck them next to each other for emotional support. Beard says to place them on a buttered baking sheet or in a square baking pan.

Bake at 425 degrees for about 15 minutes. Biscuit tops should be lightly browned. Tap the biscuits to sound for doneness. If they thunk, they're still wet inside. Don't over-bake or under-bake. Check at 14 minutes.

Beard says to serve these biscuits “very hot.” I’ve eaten them very hot, pretty hot, not-so hot, warm, room temperature, cold and directly out of the freezer. They adapt to all climates.

It’s not often that a writer provides three useful examples of useless information in fewer than 1,200 words. And that’s not even mentioning the bad-for-you biscuit recipe that tastes real good.

I don’t think the bar of journalism can be set much higher.

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