

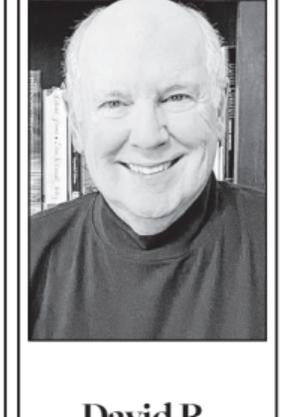
An hour on Facebook

An hour of mindlessly browsing through Facebook posts is as maddening as it is entertaining.

Do you use Facebook (FB) or, do you, like so many (mostly men, it seems) dislike

Social Media altogether?

Are you one of the 3 billion Facebook users? Dataportal.com says that means "...37.2% of all the people on Earth use Facebook." Are you sure you don't want to sign-up?



David R. Altman

As part of that 37%, I'm looking through Facebook right now, pausing occasionally to make notes, and I see a lot of great things (and a few not-so-great) that Facebook offers:

My FB friend, Tom, caught a record brown trout in the Chattahoochee (yes, I get 'fishing' alerts, don't judge).

In my "Bird Lovers of Georgia" group, a bird photo just posted of Cedar Waxwings in Marietta. Why don't these birds visit Braselton? I can't find a Cedar Wax Wing or a Baltimore Oriole anywhere—despite these orange peels and bird-tasty raisin suet—which the other birds devour, although my wife is not wild about me putting the suet on Amazon auto-delivery).

Up next, a post from Joni Mitchell's site, this time an old artwork album cover, (takes me back to my college days, and did you know what a great artist she is?). Facebook allow us to connect with celebrities (entertainers, athletes, clergy, scientists, etc.).

One after another, the posts update: here's a video with Grizzly bears catching trout at a waterfall (definitely a "like").

Oops, hang on...there's our granddaughter Evie trying to call us on Facetime/Messenger—I'll be right back (yes, we always take the calls from the grands—and often from their parents).

Uh oh, talk about going from precious to atrocious: after hanging up with little Evie, I got another solicitation text from a presidential campaign (sorry, folks, not this time!). I love responding to political texts with the word "STOP". Don't you? Facebook gives us a choice.

In comes another post from a proud Mom: our 5-year-old neighbor lost another tooth! Good for you, Parker! Facebook lets us know what's going on next door—in this case so we can respond with a Birthday Cake emoji (if you hate emojis, get some help).

It never stops: another Friend Request came in—this one is a friend of a friend of a friend, so I'll pass (Rule #47 on Facebook—don't say "yes" to all friend requests).

Hey, can you guess the country with the largest number of FB users? No, it's not the United States. India leads the pack with 370 million users, while the U.S. was a distant second with 186 million users. (Aren't you glad to know this—maybe it will come up at your next Trivia Night). Facebook provides fun facts.

Another FB post, this one a link to a news item about FB's parent company, META. It seems FB founder Mark Zuckerberg paid \$187 million for 1,600 acres of land in Hawaii, but he's not building a resort. According to Yahoo.com, "...he is reportedly building a massive, self-sustaining apocalypse bunker." Folks, we shouldn't expect an invitation, as it's not for FB friends, only FB brass. Facebook informs us, even (sometimes) about themselves.

Another post quickly appeared from a neighbor who went back to visit her childhood home, and a wonderful photo of her being hugged by the neighbor-woman across the street—who knew our friend when she was a child. Facebook, at its best, connects us with our past.

Memory triggered: I remember when we took our (now) grown daughters to my childhood home in Ohio and it was unforgettable. Standing next to our old duplex on Lakeview Avenue (\$89 a month while Dad went to night school at Ohio State), my arms were now around our three young daughters, overlooking a public park where my brother Jim and I spent many hours playing baseball and fishing in the Olentangy River, some 60 years ago.

Hey, here's a good neighborhood post that just surfaced: "Does anyone have any sourdough starter they will share?". Facebook strikes again—this time with recipes!

Yikes, another FB solicitation! This time from "Fanatics"—wanting to know if I wanted to buy a Jelly Roll T-shirt! I had never heard of Jelly Roll until this past New Year's Eve with Ryan Secrest (Jelly Roll's story is impressive). The only New Year's Eve act I knew this time around was Green Day (who still rocks). I'll pass on the Jelly Roll shirt.

Okay, if you are bored reading this, I apologize, but on a morning when I was going to be fishing and a 39-degree rain and East wind shut me down ("wind out of the east, fish bite the least"), FB seemed like a safer, dryer choice.

Before the next post shows up, just remember this: Facebook, at its core, can be very entertaining. It does, after all, even with its downsides, keeps all of us connected. And, in this chaotic and polarized world, that's a "like" for me.

Can you believe it? Another Facebook ad just popped up for Bass Pro Shops.

Sorry folks, the plastic worms are on sale. Gotta run.

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