

# Give Your Fitness Regimen a Lift

My underwear is now smarter than I am

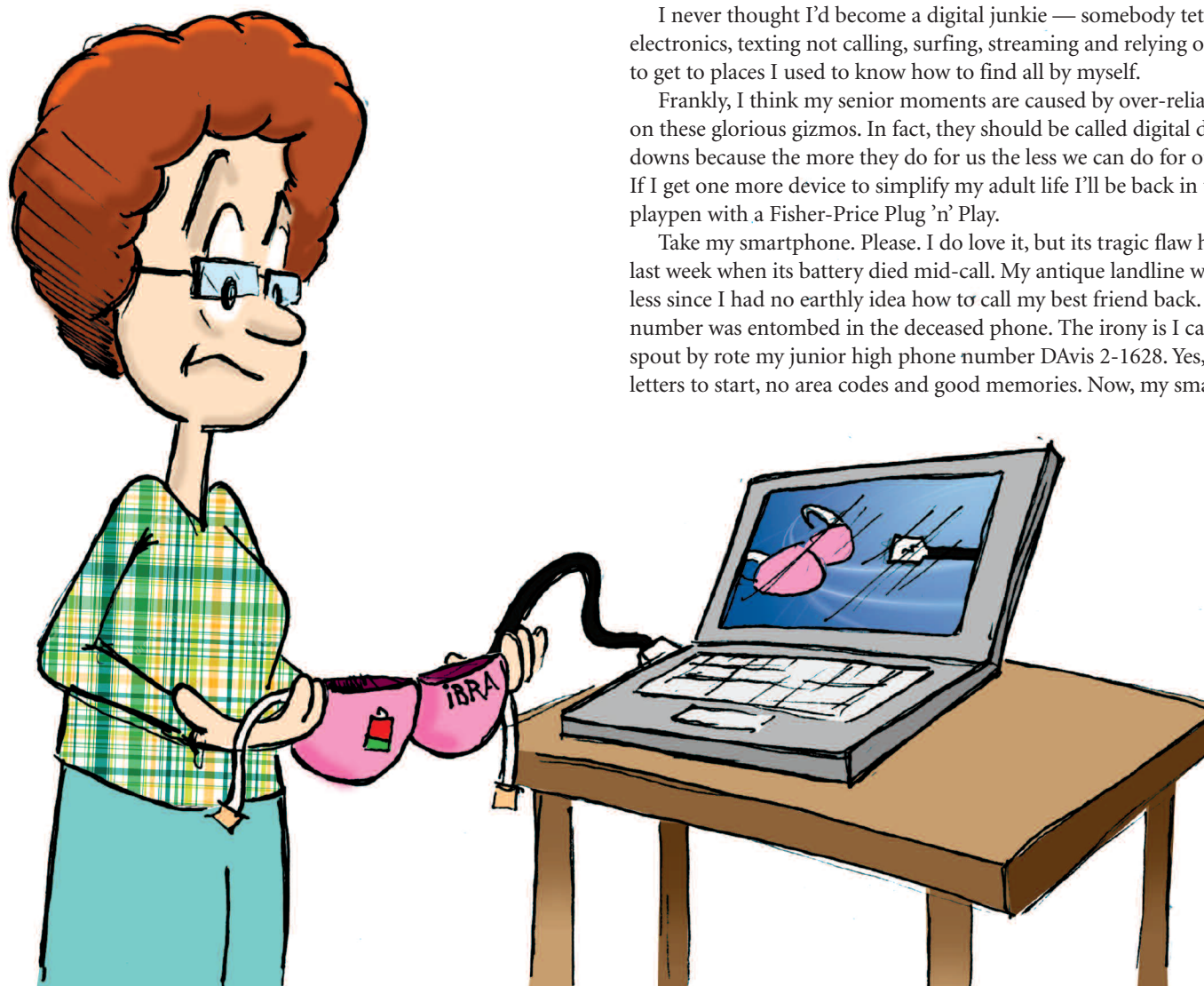
BY FAY JACOBS | ILLUSTRATION BY ROB WATERS

Spring is closing in and I'm glad. Maybe if I spend some time outdoors I can escape my digital devices which, I'm sad to say, are smarter than I am. It's been a long winter juggling smartphones, smart TVs, smart calorie counters and smart remarks from my spouse to "put that thing away at the dinner table."

I never thought I'd become a digital junkie — somebody tethered to electronics, texting not calling, surfing, streaming and relying on GPS to get to places I used to know how to find all by myself.

Frankly, I think my senior moments are caused by over-reliance on these glorious gizmos. In fact, they should be called digital dumb-downs because the more they do for us the less we can do for ourselves. If I get one more device to simplify my adult life I'll be back in the playpen with a Fisher-Price Plug 'n' Play.

Take my smartphone. Please. I do love it, but its tragic flaw hit home last week when its battery died mid-call. My antique landline was useless since I had no earthly idea how to call my best friend back. Her number was entombed in the deceased phone. The irony is I can still spout by rote my junior high phone number DAVis 2-1628. Yes, we had letters to start, no area codes and good memories. Now, my smartphone



has made my memory superfluous. The phrase use it or lose it comes to what's left of my mind.

My TV is also too smart for its own good. I got a device that can stream content from my phone to the 48-inch Sony. While I've been streaming movies for a couple of years now, this new gadget lets me stream from the whole Internet, including YouTube. Watching a 21-year-old Babs Streisand from "The Ed Sullivan Show," Billy Joel when he still had a head of hair, and 1980s "Cagney and Lacey" episodes had me planted in front of the boob tube for days on end like a drooling zombie. If the TV was truly smart it would have told me to turn it off and go to bed already.

But my latest obsession in smart technology is the digital step-counter. When my low-tech pedometer fell off my shoe, I stepped on it, doing crunches but not the kind that firm my abs. Then, my fancy rubber wristband step-counter turned my hand bile green. So I downloaded a step-counting app to my smartphone. That worked great, but the phone has to be in my pocket to work, so it missed some of my exertion.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I found a solution. The 2016 Electronics Show in Las Vegas recently introduced the world's first (wait for it) ... smart bra. Yes, people, the grand-mammary of all smart devices is a brassiere. According to the manufacturer, it measures your biometrics, like heart rate, oxygen level and steps, through a piece of clothing already worn daily.

I'll say. While I've been prone to leave my phone or pedometer home, this is one item where nobody has to warn me, "Don't leave home without it."

But how does this new kind of boob tube work? I'm always pulling out my phone to see how far I've trekked. If I check my smart bra at the mall will I be cited for indecent exposure? How reliable is this bra counter? Will it, dare I say, hold up?

The whole concept just leaves me hanging. How can an underwire bra also be wireless? And along with the regular support it provides, will it have tech support? And it better have long battery life as I shudder to think about plugging my undergarment in at the airport.

Hey, maybe they can engineer the bra to speak, reporting blood pressure and heart

rate like a GPS. Imagine hearing that emotionless dashboard voice broadcasting your vital signs to the world as it lifts and separates. Your data will no longer be just Victoria's secret.

So in light of our constantly evolving digital universe, I'm going to step back just a little for my sanity. In case of emergency, I've hand-written my important phone numbers into an old-fashioned paper address book. And while I am free to stream episodes of "The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour" or "Here Come the Monkees" on my TV, I'm going to try to stifle myself.

But when it comes to my fitness regimen, I'm going to give the smart bra a try. It's set to be released for sale shortly. I guess I'll have a choice of cup size, battery size, strapless, wireless, push-up or plug-in.

So I'm off to charge my bra. With my Visa card. When it arrives I can charge it again in the electric socket. It's all so 2016. ■

FAY JACOBS is the author of the books "As I Lay Frying — A Rehoboth Beach Memoir," "Fried & True — Tales of Rehoboth Beach" and "For Frying Out Loud — Rehoboth Beach Diaries."

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# Advertising's Disturbing Creature Comforters

Who thought dancing body parts were a good idea?

BY FAY JACOBS | ILLUSTRATION BY ROB WATERS

I'm here to talk about Big Pharmacy and the birth of the snot monster. Now I am so sorry to be this disgusting so early in my column, but I have just about had it with prescription and drug company commercials on TV. And the Snot Monster (his given name by the ad agency who birthed him), hawking the drug Mucinex is just the tip of the ice bag.

It's hard to believe that the agency that first came up with animated mucus did so a decade ago. Apparently, this terrible idea was born because nobody on TV was talking about mucus. Are we surprised?

So agency illustrators drew the little lumbering Mucus Man (not to be confused with the Broadway musical of a similar title), to waddle around, peddling the drug Mucinex.

And it worked. Really well. So, in the decade following that Green Blob's first gooey footsteps, came a new era. Body parts and bodily functions

morphed into endearing little anthropomorphic cartoon characters. Television has been overrun with bouncing body parts ever since.

From squirming, dancing bladders to creepy creatures representing sleep deprivation, these ads are the 21st century equivalent of highway accidents — you ought not stare but you cannot look away. I mean how often do you get the chance to see a roiling lower intestine? Too often, I say.



The only good thing about this alarming advertising trend is that I am no longer able to eat while I watch TV and that's a good thing. Prescription advertising mascots have curbed my appetite like no diet plan ever has. It's also curbed my enthusiasm for prime time, alas.

Face it, one minute you're watching football and the next there's a giant animated toenail on your 55-inch Sony, showing off its high-definition foot fungus. Say hello to the Jublia Big Toe. If you ask me, this is advertising putting its very worst-looking foot forward. Quick, post a GoFundMe page so this digit can get a pedicure to hide the fungus among us.

**“From squirming, dancing bladders to creepy creatures representing sleep deprivation, these ads are the 21st century equivalent of highway accidents — you ought not stare but you cannot look away.”**

And what's with those critter-like fuzzy letters in the insomnia commercial? What the hell are they? Dogs? Cats? Mohair sweaters? Spelling out “W-A-K-E” and “S-L-E-E-P,” we see little fuzzy Wake fight with little furry Sleep. I don't know whether to notify the Humane Society or the Grammar Police. Is it animal abuse or revenge of the nouns? Frankly, it's so creepy it keeps me up at night, which surely makes this drug contra-indicated. Watch this weird commercial and you may never sleep again.

And we cannot ignore television's friendly little bladder-boy. That's right, a bouncy bladder buddy holds hands with a panic-stricken woman and drags her into a succession of public restrooms. I want to watch HGTV, not somebody's over-active bladder hijacking its human. Ewwwww. I mean it's not the Syfy channel. Or is it?

As an aside to this bladder business, my pharmacological column research led me to an app for the iPhone called “RunPee.” It's an app that summarizes movies and tells you when you can safely run to the bathroom without missing much. I'm serious. This is a real thing. *RunPee*. There is

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**DIRECT BEACH ACCESS**  
Direct beach access with private walkway! Oceanfront home features, 5 BR's, gourmet kitchen, elevator, solar panels, hot tub, multiple decks & more! (706830) \$3,195,000

**CHARMING COASTAL COTTAGE**  
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**CANAL VIEWS IN NORTH SHORES**  
Water views in North Shores! Featuring, vaulted ceilings, gourmet kitchen, exceptional outdoor living spaces, elevator, spectacular views & more! (706226) \$2,995,000

**CANAL FRONT & OCEAN BLOCK**  
Waterfront home in Henlopen Acres! Featuring, canal front 3-season room, 5 BR's, 2 fireplaces, wet bar, outdoor shower, hot tub, landscaping & more! (707431) \$2,449,000

**ONLY STEPS TO THE BEACH**  
Ocean block in Rehoboth By The Sea! Home features, 5+ BR's, fireplace, elevator, office, wide plank wood floors, screened porch, deck, ocean views & more! (707161) \$2,295,000

**CLASSIC COTTAGE IN THE PINES**  
Cottage on oversized wooded lot features, 4BR's, original hardwoods, fireplace, pine paneling throughout, screened porch, wet bar, outdoor deck & more! (704766) \$1,995,000

**EXQUISITE NORTH SHORES HOME**  
Exquisite North Shores home offers, 7 BR's, eclectic lighting & décor, wide plank wood floors, soaring ceilings, 2 laundry rooms, fireplace & more! (706682) \$1,995,000

**OCEANFRONT CONDO | REHOBOTH**  
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## Flotsam & Jetsam

nothing I can say here that would be any funnier than the name of this app and the fact that it exists. But I digress.

Back on topic, we have the newest drug-pushing spokes-metaphor — the walking, squirming lower intestine. Yup, cutesy colon creature is brought to you by the drug Xifaxan. It's got a sweet turtle face and slinky body and pretty soon you are sitting there, thinking he's kind of cute and feeling sorry for him and ... Wait a minute! You're feeling empathy with an irritable bowel? You should hate his guts. But there they are, the very guts, dancing, winking, playing on your emotions. It gives me Irritable Viewer Syndrome. Frankly, this guy might be both the literary and figurative bowels of this entire genre.

And why are we seeing these ads anyway? Most are for products you cannot even buy without going to the doctor for a prescription. Call me old-fashioned, but I would prefer that the doctor recommend a drug for me, not the other way around. The drug manufacturers are banking on me going to the doctor to request a specific medication because I'm smitten with a talking intestine? It would be preposterous if it wasn't working.

And in fact, this whole business of pharmaceutical companies dealing drugs directly to patients, manipulating us with cutesy, often endearing creatures, makes me want to swallow a fistful of anxiety meds.

Of course, then I'd have to deal with the incessantly advertised side effects, which is another frightening thing about these kitschy commercials. Do I really want to take their sleeping pill if I have to worry about "narcolepsy, the danger of operating heavy machinery, confusion, hallucinations, memory loss and next-day drowsiness?"

Hell, I can skip the medication altogether and earn all those side effects by operating the heaviest machinery I own — a blender — and downing an entire pitcher of margaritas.

Although adorable Mr. Liver may then have something to say about it. ■

FAY JACOBS is the author of the books "As I Lay Frying — A Rehoboth Beach Memoir," "Fried & True — Tales of Rehoboth Beach" and "For Frying Out Loud — Rehoboth Beach Diaries."



# Truth be Told. Please.

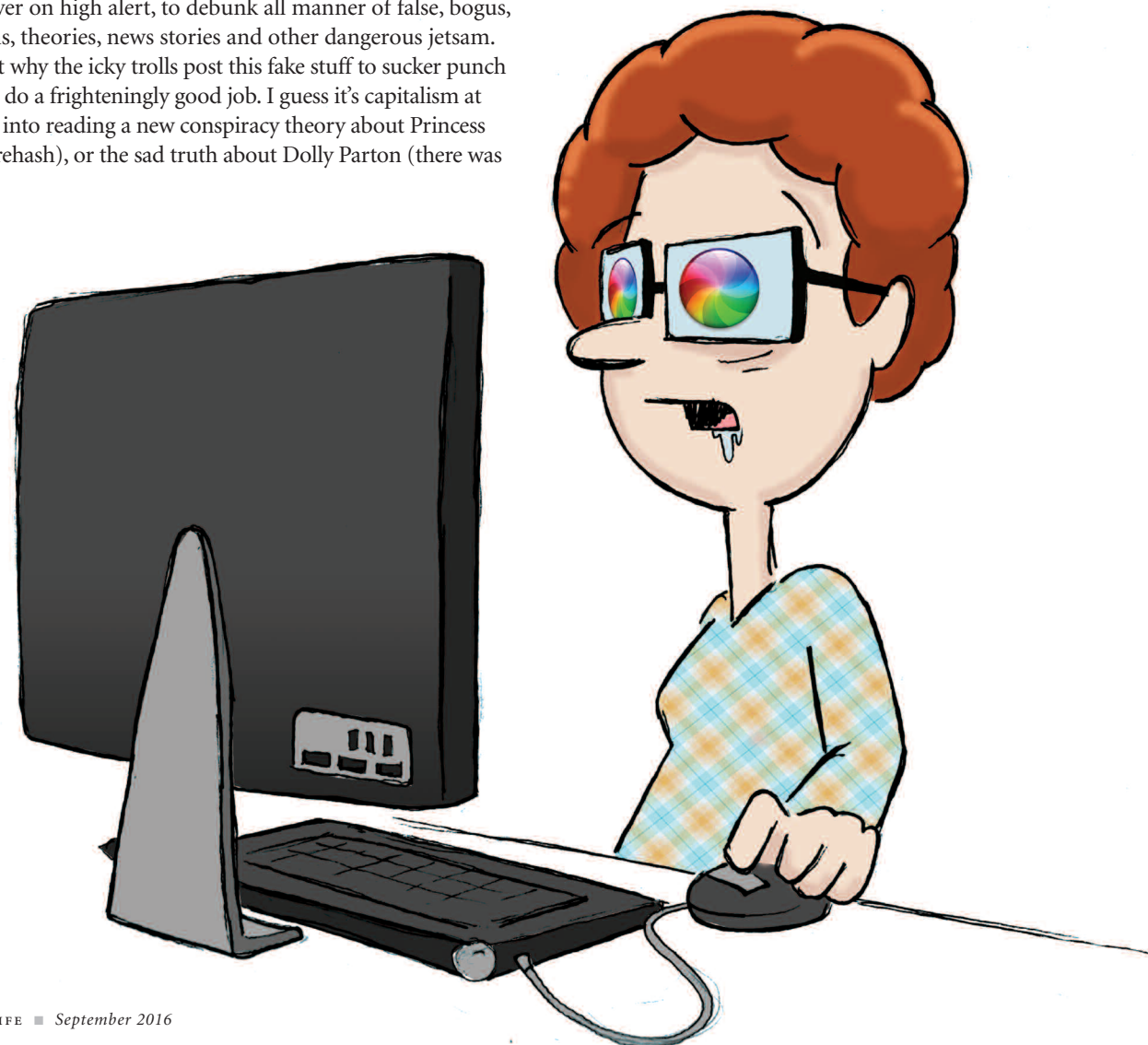
Take a healthy dose of skepticism before surfing the web

BY FAY JACOBS | ILLUSTRATION BY ROB WATERS

**O**K, people, listen up. We are digital bait. As we surf the web, mean jerks with ugly agendas are tossing online chum to stir us up. We take the bait. It's Internet flotsam and jetsam. Wow, this may be the first time I've managed to embed the name of this column in an actual essay. Cool.

And the flotsam I mean is fake news sites. I'm disgusted at having to consult Snopes.com on a regular basis. You do know Snopes, right? It's an invaluable website, ever on high alert, to debunk all manner of false, bogus, phony Internet claims, theories, news stories and other dangerous jetsam.

I cannot figure out why the icky trolls post this fake stuff to sucker punch web readers. But they do a frighteningly good job. I guess it's capitalism at play, as we are misled into reading a new conspiracy theory about Princess Diana's death (just a rehash), or the sad truth about Dolly Parton (there was



nothing sad to report), and then get bombarded with ads for miracle diets, anti-aging goop and prepaid burials.

Yes, I can be fooled into clicking this stuff from time to time. Believing it? Not so much.

But thank goodness for Snopes' Field Guide to Fake News Sites and Hoax Purveyors. According to Snopes, social media networks (primarily Facebook) have "created a predatory secondary market" that seeks to profitably exploit "their huge customer bases by spreading fake news and outlandish rumors." How that infuriates me. How that amazes me. Are people really that dumb?

In contrast, satire websites are sites that make fun of the news. These over-the-top, hilarious stories can be very funny indeed, especially in this hideous election season. But they are satire! The Onion.com is the most brilliant at it. But sadly, some folks who are humor-challenged get buffaloed and pass humor along as truth. Seriously??? You're gonna believe headlines like "Scientists Find Strong Link Between Male Virility, Wearing Motley Crue Denim Jacket," or "70% of Trump Endorsements Made after Staring at Ceiling for 4 Hours?"

The Borowitz Report is another brilliant and hilarious satire site written by humorist Andy Borowitz. The fact that the venerable *New Yorker Magazine* purchased The Borowitz Report Blog, means that a quick glance at a headline, with the attribution *The New Yorker* can cause momentary confusion. But seriously, people, read the story before passing along the headline! Do you really want to be known as somebody who believes "BREAKING: White House Authorizes Search for President's Mojo" is a real headline?

I'm also done with careless readers who don't check dates and sources. At first, even I was caught feeling sad about the death of a celebrity who actually kicked the bucket several years ago. I've seen such "news" circulate on Facebook like wildfire, caught hours and hours and hundreds of morose comments later by somebody actually paying attention. "Um, Maya Angelou died in 2014."

I have to admit, the confusion between satire and real current events is not a new phenomenon.

Apparently journalist/humorist Mark Twain wrote hoax news all the time in his hometown newspaper. There are tales of the author fleeing from the authorities over stories he made up. However, the newspaper, at some point, did note that the stories

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## Flotsam & Jetsam

were fake. I see no such disclaimers on fake news dot-coms.

And of course, “Woman gives birth to space alien” is supermarket tabloid worthy. I don’t think people believe this kind of event is possible, but why do they laugh at it in the grocery store but find it more credible on the web?

And while respected newspapers print satirical features every April Fool’s Day, it seems that online, every day is fool’s day, as these fake stories proliferate and get passed along.

“And while respected newspapers print satirical features every April Fool’s Day, it seems that online, every day is fool’s day, as these fake stories proliferate and get passed along.”

We must be vigilant. We must parse them all and make sure they are true! Like last week, when I read this headline: “Weasel Shuts Down World’s Most Powerful Particle Collider.” Ha-ha-ha!

It turned out to be true. Sadly, the weasel did not survive.

OK, fool me once, shame on me, fool me twice ... you know the rest. So imagine my skepticism upon reading the headline “Dr. Heimlich Uses His Maneuver at Retirement Home, Saves 87-Year-Old Woman.”

Oh come on! But no, it turned out to be astoundingly true. The 96-year-old physician who invented the punch-in-the-gut move to dislodge food from a choking victim’s windpipe actually had a chance the use his own maneuver. I’d say “You can’t make this stuff up,” but you can. They do it all the time. But this one was true. It’s so hard to tell the flotsam from the jetsam.

Which is why I like the nautical definition of the word flotsam: anything floating in the water from which there is no response when an offer of a cocktail is made.

There’s something I can believe. ■

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