

No Such Thing as Free

By Mike Harris

There is no such thing as "free." Someone has to pay in some way for what is offered as "free." The market place demands balance. There has to be payment for whatever is being offered as free, and whoever is paying, feels that they will make a profit at the completion of the transaction.

For example, on being offered at King Soopers' "buy one, get one free" the special is one at the regular or inflated price, plus the free. It stands to reason, with a little diligence, that something is not right. What is wrong?

The original price did not move the merchandise off the shelf! Since the merchandise has a shelf life, and will not be allowed for sale beyond a given date, the original is dropped in increments. With no movement or not enough movement to the point where a total loss is possible the merchant finally saves the cost by offering a fifty percent cut in the original price of the item.

On the internet one finds "free offers" but you give an address and an Email and perhaps a credit card, and the promotion is usually tagged to a letter or manuscript for a reduced price and cancellable in thirty or sixty days, with full refund. If not cancelled the offer is automatically extended at the regular price and charged to your credit card; once you have missed the cut off date, you are hooked!

Data is the life blood of internet commerce. The collecting of data is the sole reason for an entire industry. With no compunctions, any way that data can be collected and analyzed, regardless of right or wrong, it is gathered shamelessly by the collectors, and information categorized and sold to different parts of the commercial internet. Thus you have Google, Yahoo, Twitter and social networks where individuals reveal their likes, wants, desires, and dreams. All the above is collected, and new products appear that seem to satisfy the apparent desires expressed in the revelations of those who give innocent information.

Then let us not forget the pharmaceutical industry that with scare tactics promises remarkable cures to deadly diseases. Also the beauty industry that promise to keep you looking young all your life.

Let us not neglect the dental profession, starting with braces to straighten teeth for that million dollar smile that will cost you a million dollars at twenty dollars a visit, to a set of upper and lower dentures that runs into the four figures. Now the new technology of implants direct into one's gums.

How about hearing devices? Yes you will hear marginally better, but the extravagant claims are ridiculous, as are the prices of said aides.

So prosthetics of all types are offered but so far do not meet the perfection of nature.

I will end this diatribe with the caution, nothing is "free." Look carefully for the string attached and hidden.