



LOU BRANCACCIO
Press Talk

Looking for a maturing experience?

So we're hanging with U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell for about an hour or so, kickin' around the world's problems (see an offbeat editorial on gambling on today's Opinion Page), when the whole energy thing comes up.

President Bush's view, her view, blah, blah, blah, when she says, "Fossil fuel is a very mature industry."

Before I go any further, I want to take back at least one of the above "blahs." Maybe two. I like Cantwell a lot. She's bright, articulate and — get this — a real person! Love or hate her politics, she's good people.

But I digress.

When Cantwell described fossil fuel as a very mature industry, it wasn't the point she was making — it was quite accurate — but rather the use of the word "mature."

You see, we all are, or will be, mature. By definition, it means something that is fully developed. Sort of the end of the line. If we were a fruit, well, we'd be quite ripe.

(So right about now you're saying, "Blah, blah, blah, get to a point, please!")

OK, OK, I'll be teaching a course over at Clark College this spring. I came up with the name "Media Mayhem: Navigating Information" and will develop what the heck we'll be discussing.

So when the Clark College informational book on all the continuing education classes comes out, I'll get to see my name in print!

There's a section on Community Education. That's pretty cool. Neat stuff on things like Power-Point or how to sell on eBay. And newspapers are certainly part of the community. But I'm not listed there.

Then there's Travel Studies. Hey, maybe I could find out something on Modugno, Italy. Dolce! Because newspapers certainly take you all around the world, maybe I'll be in ... nah, not there either.

How about Professional Development? Need leadership skills for your new managers? This is the spot. A few of you out there might even call those who work for newspapers professional. But it is — again — not my spot.

Finally I come to (I told you I'd get there) Mature Learning.

Is this where my class is? Yep.

So I say to myself, "Wait just a there's-no-medical-exam-needed-for-this-life-insurance-policy second, why the heck does trying to figure out how to navigate the informational glut belong in the Mature Learning arena?"

But then I finally figured it out. (Hey, I'm not as quick as I used to be.) The college was trying to find a place for those of us (me too) who are, shall we say, seasoned in the ways of life. It doesn't mean we've got it all figured out. On the contrary, it's easier for us to acknowledge now that we still have a great deal we CAN learn. (Those young folks always think they know it all!)

So Clark College is giving those of us with a few miles on our tires a place to hang out together.

Way cool, dudes!

But do yourself a favor. Forget about the course I'm teaching. Trust me, there are many, many more interesting courses at Clark College you should consider.

Be part of the community. Better yourselves. Young or old, there's something there for you.

Take advantage of it. Make life better.

We haven't turned into fossil fuel yet.

LOU BRANCACCIO is *The Columbian's* editor. He can be reached at 360-759-8024, or by e-mail at lou.brancaccio@columbian.com.