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**Technology,  
 Tools, and Life**

By James M. Decker

What good is new technology, anyway?

That's not a rhetorical device to suggest that new technology has no positive qualities. Far from it. It is a sincere question that merits thoughtful consideration. Today, "technology" has a connotation of computers and connections to the internet, but the actual definition is far simpler. Technology is merely the application of scientific principles for practical purposes. That is it. This sounds far-fetched in the Year of Our Lord 2023, but once upon a time, "fire" and the "wheel" were the most revolutionary technologies ever seen.

The practical application of technology comes in the form of tools. Tools can run the gamut from the simple (a garden hoe) to the complex (the iPhone). We can talk about "technology" in an abstract sense, but tools are where the rubber meets the road of technology in our life. In his seminal and controversial 1988 essay "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer," Wendell Berry set forth nine rules for considering and adopting new tools. Those rules are in the full length version of this essay at Westof98.substack.com, but in essence, they center around the following concerns: cheaper, smaller, better quality, less energy, easily repaired, sold and repaired close to home by small businesses, and not disruptive to good things like family and community relationships.

These rules are both simple and highly common-sensical. How are we doing with them, though? Not great! We have made most tools cheaper and many tools smaller, but how the rest? Hoooo boy. I would say our application of technology and development of new tools has done the exact opposite of those rules. Our tools are generally shoddier. You can't sell and re-sell tools repeatedly when they are built to last. Our tools are ever-more impossible to repair by ordinary people, either due to disposability or complexity. Our tools are

manufactured and sold by outlets ever larger and farther from home. And how about that last rule that our tools should not replace or disrupt good things like family and community? We have done the exact opposite with practically every tool. In fact, if we had set out to intentionally destroy community and family dynamics with our adoption of new technology throughout society, we could not be much more successful than what we have done in reality.

Last week, I wrote about the insightful perspective of the Luddites of 19th century England. The Luddites did not reject technology, but they were wary of it and they sought to adopt technological innovations that would serve everyone, not just a selected and powerful few at the expense of the rest of society. In many ways, Wendell Berry's rules for new tools are a modern and specific outline of the Luddites' general sentiment. We must not lose sight of the fact that tools and technologies are mere human creations and their consequences are the human-made consequences. If humanity destroys good and wholesome things, it is not the

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**NOTICES**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

The City of Bronte will hold a Public Hearing to hear comments on the FY23-24 Budget rate increase to Water and Sanitation services and approve Ordinance 23-11 Fee Schedule at the Regular City Council Meeting at Bronte Housing Community Center, 116 NE Railroad St., Bronte, Texas on October 19, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

15-1tc

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MICHAEL PATRICK CERVENKA, Deceased, were issued on September 28, 2023, in Cause No. PR2300091, pending in the County Court of Coke County, Texas, to VIVIAN ANNE CERVENKA.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: LAW OFFICES OF  
 BENJAMIN W. CLAYTON, PLLC  
 Benjamin W. Clayton  
 PO Box 287  
 Ballinger, Texas 76821  
 DATED September 28, 2023.  
 Benjamin W. Clayton  
 LAW OFFICES OF

**...School Menus**  
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**Blackwell CISD**

**Breakfast**

**Monday, October 16**  
 Cereal, fruit, juice, milk

**Tuesday, October 17**  
 Waffles, fruit, juice, milk

**Wednesday, October 18**  
 Pizza, fruit, juice, milk

**Thursday, October 19**  
 Biscuit, sausage, fruit, juice, milk

**Friday, October 20**  
 Banana, blueberry, zucchini or chocolate bread, fruit, juice, milk

**Lunch**

**Monday, October 16**  
 Nacho supreme, pinto beans, Spanish rice, lettuce, tomato, milk

**Tuesday, October 17**  
 Cheeseburger macaroni, sweet carrots, green beans, bread, milk

**Wednesday, October 18**  
 Hornet chicken bowl (popcorn chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, gravy, cheese), roll, milk

**Thursday, October 19**  
 Hot dogs, chili, cheese, chips, milk

**Friday, October 20**  
 Chicken on a bun, sliced pickles, smiley fries, milk

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