As we celebrate our independence on July 4 – thought these 4 bits of flag trivia may come in handy (from Real Simple):

Who cut an American flag into pieces and was celebrated for it?
~Explorer Robert Peary. He scattered the shreds at the North Pole.

Is it ever OK to fly the flag upside down?
~Yes, but only in case of emergency. It can be used to signal a cry for help.

What is a vexillologist?
~An expert on flag history.

Who suggested the five-point star instead of George Washington’s original six-point idea?
~Betsy Ross. And to show him how easy it was to make, she skillfully folded a piece of paper and cut one with a single snip of her scissors. (Yes, she was a star-spangled seamstress.)

On a totally different note, I recently read a newsletter from the College’s auditing firm Brickley Delong (Tax & Business Letter). One of the headlines caught my eye:

“Do you just say or do customer service? “

A part of the article noted a complaint as being an opportunity —

Nobody in business wants an unhappy customer, but when a customer complains, think of it as three opportunities in one.

1. An opportunity to get free feedback on something that’s not working right in your organization.
2. An opportunity to convert a disgruntled customer into a loyal customer.
3. An opportunity to head off negative publicity as the complainer shares his/her gripe with others.

How do you turn a complaint to your advantage? Here are the four steps you need to take.

The initial response. The initial response to a complaint should be respectful and helpful, not defensive or “it’s not our fault.”

Understanding the complaint. Make sure you really understand the true complaint. This is perhaps the most important part of the process. By allowing the customer to vent, you’ll defuse a large part of the hostility and ill will. Also, this step provides valuable feedback to pinpoint the exact problem and find out exactly what went wrong.

Fixing the problem. Employees must know clearly who has the responsibility and the authority to fix a problem. You may choose to compensate the customer for inconvenience, but at a minimum, you must remedy the customer’s immediate concern.

The follow-up. A supervisor or higher level manager should always follow up with the customer to make sure that the problem has been resolved. This is a key step in turning the customer from “disgruntled” back to “loyal.”

Have a Happy Summer and remember the words of John Erskine —

“I have never had so many good ideas as when I worked in the garden.”

Diana R. Osborn
Communicating Better at Work
By the editors of Communications Briefings

Employees often show concern about the quality and quantity of communication at work.

Some claim that management gives only lip service to open communication but does little to really communicate with them.

Others contend their organizations believe that posting notices on bulletin boards and sending out memos provide adequate communication.

Still others say they receive vague instructions that are difficult to follow.

Ineffective communication often results in poor cooperation and coordination, lower productivity, undercurrents of tension, gossip and rumors, and increased turnover and absenteeism.

Experience shows there are many ways managers can improve internal communication. Here are some things you should do:

- **Understand that** communication is a two-way street. It involves giving information and getting feedback from employees. It isn't finished when information is given.
- **Put more** emphasis on face-to-face communication with employees. Don't rely mainly on bulletin boards, memos and other written communication.
- **Ask yourself**, each time you give an instruction, if the message is clear. Most vagueness is caused by failing to be specific. **Example:** Don't just tell an employee to “show more interest” in his or her work. If an employee spends too much time chatting with others, be specific about it.
- **View information** as “service to” employees and not “power over” them.
- **Listen to employees**; show respect for them when they speak. They'll feel like part of the team and will tend to be more dedicated and productive. **One way:** Ask questions to show interest and clarify points.
- **Don’t just** talk open-door policy. Practice it by walking around and talking to employees. Allow people to disagree and to come up with new ideas.
- **Conduct one-on-one meetings.** Ask each employee to tell you how you can help him do a better job. Then how he can help you do a better job.
- **Prepare publications** frequently. Emphasize current issues that employees care about; don't substitute quarterly “prettier” publications for substantive, up-to-date ones.
- **Concentrate** on building credibility with employees. Managers who lack credibility and fail to create a climate of trust and openness aren’t believed—no matter how hard they try to communicate.

Teach Employees the Value of Money
-Speaker’s Library of Business Stories, Anecdotes and Humor

Insurance executive Peter Frame uses the following analogy to help people get a handle on how much a billion dollars represents: Let’s assume that you have a billion dollars and decide to transport the bills to your bank by truck. How many trucks will be required? By accurately weighing a one-dollar bill, it is found that it weighs 1.02 grams; it will require 445 bills to equal one pound. By computation, it is found that the billion bills will weigh 2,247,191 pounds and require 1,123 one-ton trucks to transport them, with enough one-dollar bills left over to fill a half-ton pickup and still leave $84,995 for pocket change.”
Creative & Performing Arts Department
July Events

Overbrook Art Gallery Exhibit
“44th Annual MCC Student Fine Art & Graphic Design Exhibition”
Open Thru September 13

Gallery Summer Hours—
Monday—Wednesday
9am—4pm
Thursday & Friday 9am—3pm

Gallery Hours July 21—August 15
Monday—Friday
9:00 am—3:00 pm

Theater
The Fantasticks
Muskegon Community College—
Center for Theater & Howmet Playhouse Presents:

A classic coming-of-age story, The Fantastics, features two meddling, matchmaking fathers who scheme to get their children together. But once the couple is united, the real drama begins! Featuring the beloved songs “Try to Remember” and “Soon It’s Gonna Rain,” this is a celebration of love-first love, lost love, and ultimately, true love.

Written by Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones, The Fantastics has delighted audiences across the world—including a record shattering 17,162 performances at the Sullivan Street Playhouse, where it made its Off Broadway debut in 1960. Whether it’s an old favorite or your first time, you won’t want to miss this timeless show that’s certain to steal your heart.

July 3, 4, 5, 6—Howmet Playhouse—
231-894-4048

Wellness Tip
Label Reading

The first thing you’ll see is the label on the front of the food package. Manufacturers can say most anything they want on the front label (to get the real story, see the Nutrition Facts panel on the back). Here are some terms you may see there, and what they really mean:

Fortified, enriched, added, extra, and plus - This means nutrients such as minerals and fiber have been removed and vitamins added in processing. Look for 100% whole-wheat bread and high-fiber, low-sugar cereals.

Fruit drink. This means there’s probably little or no real fruit, and lots of sugar. Look for products that say "100% Fruit Juice."

Made with wheat, rye, or multigrain. These products may have very little whole grain. Look for the word "whole" before the grain to ensure you’re getting a 100% whole-grain product.

Natural. The manufacturer started with a natural source, but once it’s processed the food may not resemble anything natural. Look for "100% All Natural" and "No Preservatives."

Organically grown, pesticide-free, or no artificial ingredients. Trust only labels that say "Certified Organically Grown."

Sugar-free or fat-free. Don't assume the product is low-calorie. The manufacturer may have compensated with unhealthy ingredients that don't taste very good -- and have no fewer calories than the real thing.
E=MC²

E=ECC
Education = Muskegon Community College

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Happy Birthday

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*Please Note:
The Bookside Bistro will be CLOSED for the rest of the summer beginning Friday, July 4.
It will OPEN again for business beginning Tuesday, September 2.