

*(Big Company, continued from page 5)*

was paid to do, and it seemed it was the only function he performed, yet it appeared that somehow he felt I was imposing on him and he was being generous by providing the information I needed. He never volunteered any information, only answered direct questions. I felt his preference would have been that the person died in an African river without the body being recovered so that he would have to wait seven years before doing anything, and by that time he would have retired.

That's the end of the story, but it would lead one to wonder why the company would make it so damnably difficult to talk to them. Do they want to make sure that you really want to talk to them badly enough to endure a gauntlet of unhelpful numbers?

In my experience, most big companies have these insulating layers, not just this one big company. Why do they do it? They have all taken seminars on service levels, customer satisfaction, and the high cost of getting a new customer vs. the lesser cost of servicing an existing one. They know that word-of-mouth on bad service spreads four times as far and

fast as word-of-mouth on good service. Yet, all this information is ignored while the customer is forced to endure these frustrating, annoying, irritating difficulties. Leonard Lee of Lee Valley Tools, a company known and respected for high quality products and services, says companies that "farm out" their service departments will ultimately go out of business. He answers his own phone.

I'm not anti-technology. Heck, I was in the computer business. For example, I really like the Ministry of Natural Resources system to obtain a hunting license over a touch-tone telephone. You can do it at your convenience, even in the middle of the night on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and you can do it on the last possible day if you've procrastinated up to then. If you're a Luddite, you can mail in your application. There are many automated systems that work conveniently and well.

But why try to force fit an automated system to a requirement where it clearly will not work? I'll tell you why. It's for the ease and convenience of the company. Customer be damned. It does not reflect well on the company.

# **SOUTH BAY UNITED CHURCH**

## **Annual Christmas Luncheon & Craft Sale**

**Saturday, November 19th**

**11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Lunch is \$8.00 and includes homemade soup,  
sandwich, dessert and tea or coffee**

*Free Admission  
Everyone Welcome*

**Baked Goods and Crib Quilts also available**

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(next to the Mariners' Museum)  
South Marysburgh**