

New drug plan causing frustration

Reports from all over the country paint a picture of mass confusion and impatience at pharmacies dealing with Medicare Part D, the much heralded prescription drug cure-all.

The plan, or plans — and there are countless numbers of them — kicked in on Jan. 1. Well, they were supposed to kick in on Jan. 1, but there are so many wrinkles in the program that those in the know feel it will be a month or two before seniors see any benefit. Some reports go so far as to say pharmacists, when they call in to register complaints of customers to Medicare, or other hotlines established to help them work through the nightmare, are put on hold and many calls end up in limbo.

Of course anytime the government gets involved simplicity is tossed out the window. There is just no commonsense approach because the monster they created — Plan D — defies logic.

Many millions of seniors are still sitting on their hands and not taking part in Medicare Plan D. They, and this publisher is one of them, aren't quite certain of the opportunities. It just isn't setting right. The initial mailing from companies anxious to get their business was overwhelming. Understanding the options was off the table. They opted to wait to see how the Plan D flight operates once it's airborne. But right now it is still on the tarmac. They always say if you don't understand something, don't jump into it.

We aren't advocating that there isn't some good in Plan D. Because there is. It's just a matter of doing what probably should have taken place long before the details of the program were released. Maybe a dry run would have been a sensible approach.

Many seniors thought Jan. 1 was the deadline to get enrolled. It wasn't. That's the date it all was supposed to begin. May 15, if the material received is understood correctly, is the final date to take advantage of your plan of choice for the rest of 2006.

Maybe what is needed is a plan to cover the plan we choose — just in case. —Tom Dreiling

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Owner says business is not closed

To the Editor:
Masters Touch Fitness and Massage has not closed its doors. It has moved to 102 1/2 S. Kansas (upstairs) across from the courthouse in the old Masonic Lodge. Thanks to all our members for their commitment to this business and to better their health and wellness. We have had many struggles and difficulties this past year, but we remain committed to bringing health and wellness to our community. Members and others have told us that exercise is great, but isn't enough to reach and maintain wellness goals. They have questions about mental health and wellness, and other related issues that my staff and I are not qualified to address, thus we will be bringing qualified people in to hold classes and workshops to help you

reach a new level of health. Commitment is the key for better health and a better life. And remember that you are never too old or too young to add exercise and committed wellness. This is why we have changed our membership packages this year. Please check with us for details. I will continue with therapeutic massages at our new location. I will also continue to travel to the Andbe Home, Whispering Pines and local businesses for hourly massages. We invite you to stop by and see the new facility, where an elevator is available for those who would rather not use the stairs. Jenny Tibbetts
Masters Touch Fitness & Massage
Norton

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Plants, kids will keep you on the go

It's Monday morning and I am sitting in my easy chair pondering life and the first day of the new week.

My mind wanders and I notice the dieffenbachia plant needs to be turned. I have to rotate the giant periodically because it grows into the window and messes up the drapes.

When it's turned away from the light, though, the branches and leaves hang directly in my line of sight between my recliner and the television.

I spend two weeks leaning to the left at a 45-degree angle in order to see around the foliage. After the leaves start to turn eastward again, I have about a three-week reprieve before it's time to rotate the plant and start the process all over again.

All this thinking about house plants leads me to remember I haven't watered any of the plants for at least two weeks. That's not all. I carried all my outside potted plants to the office for the winter, and I haven't watered them either.

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



It's good they thrive on neglect.

Talked to my youngest daughter, Kara, over the weekend. They just returned from a week's ski vacation in Colorado.

It was their 7-year-old's first time on skis and she took to it like a pro. Kara said she was on a run down what is called a "rookie slope" when she heard, "Hi, Mom," as Taylor went sailing by. Kara could only yell to her daughter's back, "Taylor, slow down. Slow down. Make big turns."

To no avail.
Taylor is fearless.

She also knows how to defend her position.

Taylor is the shortest child in her class and on the soccer team. Conversely, her friend Claire (a year and a half younger) is the tallest amongst her peers. Even taller than Taylor.

Both sets of parents are sensitive to their daughters' emotions regarding their body image. Both assured their child that small or tall was best.

Claire and Taylor were playing when they began to argue about which was best, to be tall or to be small. Kara listened for a while, hoping they would settle it themselves, but finally realized she would have to intervene. "Everyone is different," she said, "and everyone is special."

"Taylor was silent for a moment then said, "Yeah, but it's always the smallest who gets to be on top of the cheerleaders' pyramid."

Can't argue with logic like that.

Birthday wish surprises classmates

I was reading a rather interesting column in a high school newspaper about a senior student who, when quizzed as to what he wanted for his birthday, caught his classmates by surprise, as well as his family. Imagine, an 18-year-old not wanting for himself, but for someone else. I will let the column, which he wrote for his fellow students, speak for itself.

"What do you want for your birthday?" My parents and friends popped the annual question a couple of weeks before my birthday, and for once in my life, I could not find an answer. Usually, a response sprang from my tongue, ranging from new clothes to an acoustic guitar.

However, this year was different. I browsed through catalogs, paid closer attention to ads and went window shopping at the mall, but nothing caught my eye. It seemed silly to ask for any more material possessions; I had all I needed so why add anything else? That's when it finally hit me. I live a comfortable life, but millions live in poverty. I have luxuries while others don't have food or shelter. Finally, I could supply an answer to my parents and friends, "I want to sponsor an African child."

Although I was excited about my gift, I did not know exactly how to go about sponsoring a child. About Schmidt provided the only real knowledge I had about the subject (which was only a scene where a character in the film sponsors a child), so I did what any teenager would do and turned to the Internet.

Using my nifty Google toolbar, I explored my options, ultimately choosing World Vision to fulfill my birthday wish. Then the hard part came: picking a child! All of them were in need, but I could only choose one. I scrolled through World Vision's list of children, unsure of which

My 2¢ Worth Tom Dreiling



one I should sponsor. After a few minutes I came across Kofi Manu, a thirteen-year-old boy from Ghana, Africa. Once I saw his picture, I fell in love with him and knew he was the one I should sponsor. I couldn't explain it, but when I saw him my heart melted, for this kid that I didn't even know. I pulled up his biography and read about his interests. He loves to play soccer and his favorite subject is math. He seemed so perfect and an uncanny similarity put the icing on the cake: we have the same birthday.

I received information from Kofi two weeks later, along with an address to send him letters. I immediately composed my first letter to Kofi, asking a barrage of questions about Africa, his family and his life in general; I can hardly wait for his response.

Sponsoring Kofi gives me joy beyond any material gift. I'm not saying that everyone needs to abandon his or her belongings and pursue a life of asceticism; however, I encourage you not to wait 18 years, as I did, to reach beyond your comfort zone and help someone in need. I think Itzhak Stern, a character from one of my favorite movies *Schindler's List* puts it best, "Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire."

You have the power to change the world just by helping one life! I know that sounds cliché, but it's true.
So I challenge you Green Mountain,

this week do something nice for someone else. Take a fellow student to lunch, volunteer at a soup kitchen, give someone a hug or, my personal favorite, leave pennies lying heads up in the parking lot; the possibilities to make this a better world are infinite.

Give it a try, I promise that you won't be disappointed.

(The column was written by nephew Matt Dreiling, of Lakewood, Colo. His e-mail is mjdreiling2006@aol.com.)

E-mail to me this morning told about a Norton child's response to a question at the dinner table following her first day in kindergarten: "It's nice but how long does this go on?"

I got a big chuckle out of it. E-mailed asked me to share this with you and also asked that their name not be used. If you have something for this column, simply e-mail me at tom@d@nwkansas.com.

Or snail mail it to me at the office at 215 S. Kansas, Norton. Thanks, in advance!

The Judge Samuel Alito hearings are coming off as expected. Tough questions. Forward answers. He'll be put through the wringer, but in the end confirmed to the United States Supreme Court.

I smirk when interviews are aired with various senators who you know wouldn't vote to confirm Judge Alito if their life depended on it, but want to come across as being *fair minded*. It's a game they play. Most all of them know how they'll vote. Are the hearings then a waste of time? Your feedback would be appreciated.

Don't forget to go to church this weekend.

Have a good evening...and a good weekend!