

We're heading into the home stretch

The Democrats are off and running. They ushered in their convention in Denver Monday with an Obama-Biden ticket. Obama, as in Sen. Barack, and Biden, as in Sen. Joe. The ticket is being hailed as tough and ready to mow down the opposition.

Well, that's what the Democrats say. Next Monday, in St. Paul, Minn., the Republicans will open their convention with a McCain-Romney ticket. McCain as in Sen. John and Romney as in former Massachusetts governor. We might be a little ahead of ourselves, but it's fun getting in on the guessing game, too. The ticket will be hailed as tough and ready to mow down the opposition.

Well, that's what the Republicans will say. A year or so ago, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton was expected to be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. That didn't happen. A year or so ago, former New York City Mayor Rudy Guiliani was expected to be the Republican presidential nominee. That didn't happen.

Instead, both Clinton and Guiliani will have roles at their respective conventions as keynote speakers. In this case, what a difference a year made.

As soon as the conventions exit Denver and St. Paul, the gloves come off and the fight begins. Hold tight, it'll be breath-taking. And when the final bell rings and the fight is called a draw, then that's when we, the voters, step in.

If you are not registered to vote, we would strongly suggest you do so. And if you are, make sure you show up at the polls on Nov. 4.

Each presidential election year they tell us, "This will be the most important election this country has ever held."

So, now in 2008, "This will be the most important election this country has ever held." Of course we disagree. One is no more important than another. We have been through many, many, many presidential elections over the years and each one, in its own way, was important.

We will do our duty and vote. Then, regardless of which candidate ends up in the White House, we will stand behind that man as our president and as our commander-in-chief. And it would be awfully nice if the crazies on the 24/7 cable news channels would feel the same way. And quit stirring the pot after the fire's out.

Go, Barack!

Go, John!

Go vote!

— Tom Dreiling

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Let's do our own poll!
Obama?
McCain?
Simply call us at any of the following numbers: 877-6908, 877-3361 or 874-4394

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So, how's my retirement coming along?

I am probably typical of most stay-at-home wives. Every morning it's up early to get my husband out the door and off to work. Recently, there's been no decision about what to make Jim for breakfast. With tomatoes rapidly ripening on the vine, he is 'hooked' on bacon-tomato sandwiches. It's one for breakfast and another one packed in his lunch box.

After multiple cups of coffee and my morning 'fix' of home improvement TV shows, I have chores to do. Perhaps it's not typical, now-a-days, to have calves and chickens to water and feed, but in our little town, it makes sense. Fresh eggs every day and once-a-year homegrown hamburger or a check from the sale barn when the calves get big enough.

Watering the garden and flowers occupies a chunk of my mornings. But, I always seem to get distracted pulling weeds. They are the bane of my life. No sooner do I get one bed cleared and another has become overgrown. Again. The

Norton Valley Hope just celebrated its 41st Anniversary with our Alkathon on Aug. 16. We had more than 260 people in attendance to enjoy the day with us. It gives us an opportunity to renew old friendships as well as make new connections that are oriented toward healthy, productive and recovering lives.

As I was looking over the crowd, I found myself wondering how much Norton knows about us and what we do? How much have we helped our friends and neighbors in the community understand the concept of addiction as a disease and

the importance of recovery, not only for the addict/alcoholic but also for the family? I had to admit, we were lacking in this area. So that is how I came to the decision to reach out to our local newspaper, *The Norton Telegram*, and see if we could begin to provide some education about the disease of addiction and possibly answer some questions along the way.

The American Medical Association designated alcoholism as a disease in 1956. What exactly does that mean? I will

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



only good thing about weeds is that the chickens love 'em. Every day, they look forward to their fresh tossed salad when I pitch the weeds over the fence.

I have to force myself to do housework. Sometimes I win the battle and get the bathroom cleaned, beds made and dishes done — sometimes a good book wins. I have always said I'm a good house-cleaner but a lousy housekeeper. Some homemakers seem to effortlessly keep a tidy home. I'm not one of them. But, the door is always open and company is welcome.

Don't misunderstand. I am almost always busy. Last week I baked whole

wheat dinner rolls, cinnamon rolls and a bread braid; made wild plum jam and jelly; and tried a new recipe for chicken enchilada casserole.

This week looks about the same with two boxes of peaches waiting to become jam; a big bag of tame plums will also become jam and/or jelly; plus fresh beets to be pickled.

The best thing about being home is having the time to plan and prepare our evening meal. Jim has always wanted dinner served at 6 p.m. and until I quit working outside the home, he never got it. I was lucky to get home by six. Not that Jim couldn't feed himself if he had to. Like my dad, if he could fry it, he could cook it.

But, that's not what either of us wanted. We wanted a regular meal time and a calm evening. We wanted a home life. Now, we have it. It's not perfect 'cause I'm still working on my time management skills.

But, I'm getting the hang of it.

Mission: Bringing Valley Hope into focus

Where There's Hope
Carla Moore

leave you with the World Health Organization's definition of alcoholism (which can also be applied to drug addiction) to begin to ponder and over the next few weeks, we can talk about what the words really mean. Here it is: "Alcoholism is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by continuous or periodic: impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial."

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

Have a wonderful week.
(cmoore@valleyhope.com)

How about some 'soot' with that stew?

Soot, It's What's for Dinner. Sounds tasty, doesn't it? This book, which I bought in Chama, N.M., is a compilation of recipes by members of the Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, and the title is apt.

While on a recent vacation in Colorado, we took a ride on the Cumbres, an old narrow-gauge railroad that winds back and forth across the Colorado-New Mexico border for 64 miles. The train is pulled by a coal-burning engine, which throws sparks and cinders into the air with the abandon of a Mardi Gras carnival-goer tossing candy and beads.

Environmental officials have suggested making the railroad change its historic engines over to burn oil, but so far the line, owned jointly by the two states, has resisted the change.

You have a choice. You can board the train in Antonito, Colo., and ride to Osier, Colo., which is a mountain meadow in the middle of nowhere reachable only by train or a gravel track. Or, you can board in Chama and ride to Osier.

Open Season
Cynthia Haynes



At Osier, there is a large dining hall and a small gift shop. Passengers have their choice of taking picnic lunches or eating in the cafeteria-style lunchroom. When I say cafeteria-style, I mean as in high school cafeteria, not the multi-choice places at colleges. The food is decent and plentiful, but not cuisine. They cook it. You eat it.

Our train consisted of an engine, coal tender, three coaches, snack/bathroom car, parlor car and an open gondola. The parlor car costs twice as much as seats in the coaches, which have neither electricity nor water. Steve selected the second passenger car and got us seats near the front.

The cars are coupled together so that you can walk between them via little platforms. The doors at each end are kept open to facilitate movement.

As we huffed and puffed up the mountainside, I could see what looked like a fine rain falling through the space between the cars. It was a sunny day, not a cloud in the sky. I soon realized, looking at the floor, that what I was seeing was soot and cinders. My white jeans were soon smudged, and when I took off my sunglasses, you could see where they had been. While Steve roamed the cars and talked to the crew, I read my cookbook, contemplated the free ingredients, which were spewing from the engine ahead of me and thought:

"I'm glad Gov. Kathleen Sebelius isn't on this trip. She'd try to get the whole railroad closed down."

Fortunately, she's governor of Kansas, and Bill Richardson is governor of New Mexico. He's a former secretary of energy, and a liberal Democrat, but they say he loves trains.