

### Tuesday's Snippets

#### Your Comments

• "I like paying my bills the old fashioned way too; and, thanks for putting some sense into these town halls. Some people don't understand democracy!"

• "Mr. Haynes was right on with his commentary on the town hall gangs. That's what they are!"

• "Isn't it great that some pea-brained Kansas republican senators and representatives sign a 'no new tax' pledge before each session. This basically allows them to 'take off work' on school finance. Ask the parents all over Kansas who now pay \$300 for driver's training (it used to be free); or \$200-\$300 or more per child for work books and extra-curricular activities that used to be free; some schools now charge students for band, sports, cheerleading, etc., that used to be free. No new taxes?"

• Snippet from Tuesday, 8-18-09..... "It is difficult to understand how anyone could drive a tractor onto the railroad tracks in front of an approaching train"..... "It is difficult for me to understand how anyone could make a judgment like that, as I am sure that they did not investigate the facts regarding the incident. It is even more appalling that someone who has the title of Editor would actually waste the ink necessary to print such trash."

• "Reference your story on the train-tractor crash. Accidents happen, that's why they are called accidents — unavoidable, surprise events. Rather than be critical, we should be thankful no lives were lost."

• "Talked with an older man recently — he was opposed to any attempt to reform health care, because he himself has a sweet deal, and he doesn't want to risk jeopardizing it by letting the government get involved. His sweet deal? 'I've had five operations and it didn't cost me a dime.' All paid for by Medicare. All paid for by us all. And Medicare is headed for collapse because of unrestrained healthcare cost inflation. If government does NOT get (further) involved, his sweet deal will soon turn very sour. Like many people, he could not afford private insurance out of his own pocket."

• "Please, please do not put the Bluejay with the bad attitude on the water tower. If you want it on your car that's fine. We will have to look at this 'Beek' for a long time. Would be curious about the extra cost???"

(Join the conversation. Email tom.d@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, write to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office.)

### Alkathon served us well again

It's Sunday afternoon and I'm sitting here thinking about how wonderful the 42nd Alkathon was Saturday at the Catholic Parish. The weather, the crowd (which numbered close to 300) and the staff were in rare form! Smiles, laughter and some tears marked our day with a sense of shared celebration of the ability to claim another day sober!

One of the best things about the Alkathon for me is seeing the proof that what we do at Norton Valley Hope works. We focus on loving people where they are at, looking toward their future and encouraging them that a life sober, facing everything that can come, is better than numbing ourselves with alcohol and drugs and missing out on life all together. Addiction is a strong disease which does not let go of the alcoholic or addict easily.

It's funny that the addiction tells us that it can help us to ease the emotional and sometimes physical pain that life can bring. What it doesn't tell us is that it brings its own brand of pain... which is far beyond anything that a life lived sober could ever produce.

Addiction also does not tell us that one of the costs of attempting to live life with little or no pain also means we live life with little or no joy.

Our Big Book tells us that "...pain is the touchstone of growth." Initially, this is hard for an addict or alcoholic to swal-

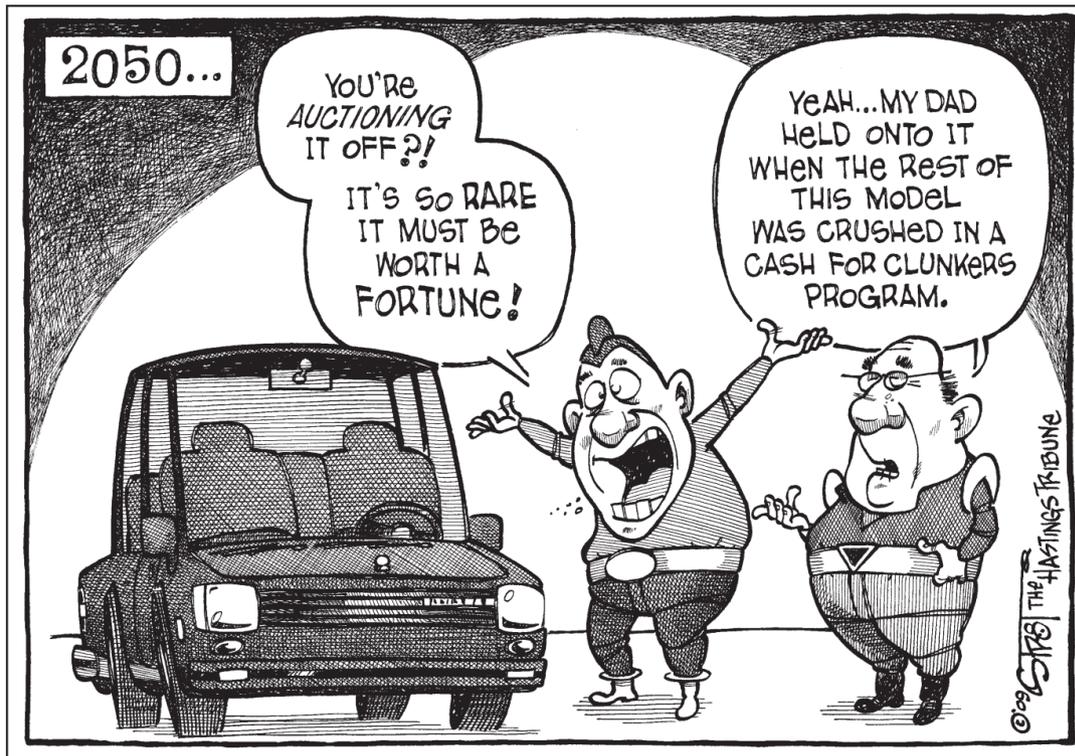
low. We have spent a lifetime trying to run from uncomfortable emotions, situations and thoughts only to discover that they are necessary for personal and spiritual growth. If you think about your life, you will note that moments of great personal growth have come from some of our most painful experiences. As I look back on my own life, I realize that when things are going well — job, home, relationships — I have little to no motivation to make changes in my life. Actually, I am motivated to keep things going the way they are!

Life, as it seems, requires everything that lives to keep moving forward and the attempt at staying where we are becomes very painful. One of the comments we often hear in recovery rooms is, "Until the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the fear of change... we will not change." That has proven true over and over for me. In this, I have become more comfortable leaning into the pain and realizing it is here to teach me something about myself and others — usually how to love better. Pain in this focus is not a punishment, but proof that I am growing. Some days I'm better with that than others.

So back to the Alkathon — we spent a day Saturday sharing experience, strength and hope that life is do-able, pain is something to be shared and learned from, and that life on the other side of the pain is better.

### Where There's Hope

Carla Moore



### At our house we're working 24/7

By the time we are ready to leave for our trip to Texas I'm going to need a vacation. Getting ready to go is the hard part. Especially, during canning season. Every night I've been making peach jam, canning tomatoes and freezing produce. I love to do it and it's so nice to have a supply of home-grown veggies and fruits tucked away for the winter but, as any homemaker will tell you, it's hard work.

My daughter, Halley, is coming home with us for a two-day visit and in the back of my mind I keep thinking, "How I leave it is how Halley will see it." Talk about pressure.

On top of that Jim and I both have been pushing to complete the house project he's been working on the past several months. So, it's literally been "work all day, work all night". We are so ready for a break. We have enough kids in Texas that we can "spread the love" around so that no single one of them gets too tired of us. Wasn't it Mark Twain that said something about fish and family having a lot in common. They both begin to stink after three days.

-ob-

I don't believe in chance. I think everything happens for a reason. Things

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Well, that interested me. "Really? What kind of a book is it? Are you selling any copies?"

"Sure," he said as he went around to open the trunk.

Gary Kraisinger and his wife, Margaret, have produced a beautiful book called, "The Western, The Greatest Texas Cattle Trail 1874-1886". It contains tales and true accounts about cowboys, cattle, saloons and watering holes on the trail north as related by cowboys and homesteaders. The book focuses on The Western from Dodge City to Ogallala, Neb. A quick leaf through the pages and I knew I had to have a copy. It contains lots of pictures and maps. It looked like the perfect companion for our road trip south. The author even signed it for me with the note, "Happy Trails". I can't wait to get into it.

-ob-

Death is just a part of life and it seems like we've been surrounded by it lately. A friend's mother died last week and we got to be part of that family's farewell.

Sunday, the husband of one of my childhood friends lost his battle with cancer. I had been one of the bridesmaids at their wedding and can only imagine Janie's pain. Rest in peace, Richard.

### This is one of those sweet times in life

#### Insight

John Schlageck

Now that gardens across Kansas are bearing vegetables, it's time to taste, enjoy and appreciate the fruits of our labor. Just a few short weeks ago, many folks walked out to their machine sheds or garage and plucked a spade out of one of the dark corners or cranked up the turf tiller and headed for the garden. Springtime on the farm or in town always means preparing the soil, planting seeds and growing food.

During a typical year, most Kansans are experiencing the dog days of summer — you know blistering heat, strong southerly winds and little if any moisture. But this summer has been different in many regions of Kansas where timely rains and abundant moisture have produced 11-foot corn, beans with leaves the size of footballs and vegetables galore.

Every day across Kansas people are picking tomatoes, potatoes and cucumbers by the armfuls. The tomatoes my mother used to grow in Sheridan County still are the juiciest. Growing up in the late '50s and early '60s, fresh produce wasn't as abundant in the grocery store as it is today. Knox market, located on old Highway 24 on the west edge of Hoxie, did boast cantaloupes and watermelons trucked in from as far south as Arizona and New Mexico.

During this period, families grew

their own. Many couldn't afford to go to the store and buy their fresh fruits and vegetables.

Today, while most people can afford to buy their produce from the local grocery store, some still prefer to grow their own.

You just can't beat a fresh ear of corn, picked in the early morning and served slathered with butter for dinner or supper. The kernels taste as sweet as candy. Yep, tomatoes, cucumbers, cantaloupes and watermelons all taste better when they're "fresh picked."

Also, there is nothing more satisfying than to walk out to your own garden, pick a couple of tomatoes and head for the kitchen. Once inside, wash and cut the red delight, sprinkle on a little salt and pepper. Umm they're so good. I believe many a person said this long before Mr. Food.

And that's another thing. People are discovering once again, or in most cases for the first time, how good foods taste raw.

If you don't believe me, just bite into a fresh carrot, radish or slice up a cool,

refreshing cucumber and slip it into your mouth. The proof is in the tasting.

Some of us were born with a sweet tooth. I'm one of them. Fresh fruit, ice cream and chocolates are my favorites. If you've ever picked fresh strawberries and sprinkled them on a heaping bowl of vanilla ice cream, you know you've just experienced a little bit of heaven right here on earth. Sometimes popping a few fresh ones right from the vine and into your mouth is even better.

For those concerned about saving energy, eating fruits and vegetables fresh off the tree or out of the garden could be another option. Once you acquire a taste for fresh produce, you may never go back to cooking fruits and vegetables again.

So the next time you're out working in your garden this summer and the sweat begins to drip down your face and into your eyes, think about all those wonderful fresh strawberries, tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers you'll soon eat on your own dinner table. When you harvest the fruits of your labor, you'll know it was worth it.

(John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

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To... Genny Poage, for removing weeds around the Welcome to Norton sign on east Hwy 36. (email)

To... Norton's football 'Jays, for the nice weather they ordered for all of us to sit out and watch their towel scrimmage Saturday morning. (email)

To... the Welcome flag people, for making sure the flags were up and flying over the weekend. (email)

(To render a salute, email tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)