

Three letters to a healthier America

Hold your fire! Hold your fire! And while you are doing that, keep these three letters in mind: E and PI. I think I know why obesity is running out of control among our young people in the NiftyFifty. Many kids today, not all of them, but many of them, pig out day in and day out on stuff seemingly designed to pack on the pounds. If you've got kids at home you know what I'm talking about. Overlooked, sadly, is something so vital but so absent.

Man of the Plains

Tom Dreiling



The problem, as this 'Man of the Plains' sees it, is simply something kids did when I was growing up that just doesn't seem to have any room in today's world. In my day, we had some kids we would call 'fat', but they couldn't begin to hold a candle to what's going on in our obesity community in this day and age. As I look back on my years as a youngster- late 1930s to the late 1940s-- when the school bell rang sending us home for the rest of the day, we walked home, tossed our books on the front room couch then hit the kitchen for an apple or an orange, and then out the door we went. We would join our neighborhood buddies and walk a block or two to an empty field where we'd engage in a baseball game with other friends already there. Or we would cross the street to a friend's home where a basketball goal was nailed to the front of the garage and see who could hit the longest shot and make the most free throws. Or we would determine, while walking home from school, that football would be the game of the day and began a search for a vacant lot. Or we would see how far we could run before needing a break, then head back and see who could reach home first.

These weren't just 'now and then' activities, they were practically commitments. By the time supper was ready, we were ready to sit down and eat with our parents and siblings and engage in conversation. (We had breakfast, dinner and supper. We didn't 'do lunch'.)

All of the activities mentioned above were forms of... okay, what's the word? "EXERCISE!" - one of the three letters mentioned above.

That is the simple ingredient missing from the lives of many, many young people today. And folks, exercise is free. Stuffing your kids with foods that sicken, is costly. And eventually your child becomes part of the obesity crowd. You can ward that off by inserting the "E" word in each day's routine.

Unfortunately, today's youngsters come home from school, and in many cases sit down in front of a computer, or put their latest state of the art phones to work, and the only things getting any exercise are their fingers and their mouths.

Enter letters PI. That stands for Parent Involvement! And without question parents certainly can do a lot better job. Sure you are tired from a day at your workplace, but the youngsters at home need your focus when you enter that front door. And if your family doesn't eat the evening meal together, may today's a good day to start. And the conversation can be centered around obesity and the need for exercise. Once obesity takes over, well...good luck!

My little straw poll is not off to a good start, and some of you responding are of the opinion I shelve it until the rest of the wannabe presidents get into the race. So I'll hold off for that to happen and use the few I've already received later.

Briefly, on the political scene, here is what I see: Michelle Bachmann's dream of becoming the Commistress-in-Chief just isn't going to happen; former governor Mitt Romney will get the Republican nomination for president; President Barack Obama is hanging by a thread that could snap at any time if he doesn't refocus on the middle class and 'my class'; Texas Gov. Rick Perry just might be Mr. Romney's running mate; Donald Trump won't run as president as an Independent; Sarah Palen will probably end up owning the bus line that courting here all over the place; and best bumper sticker, "Forget it! It's Already too Late!"

Snippets will return in my next column; lots of them to share.

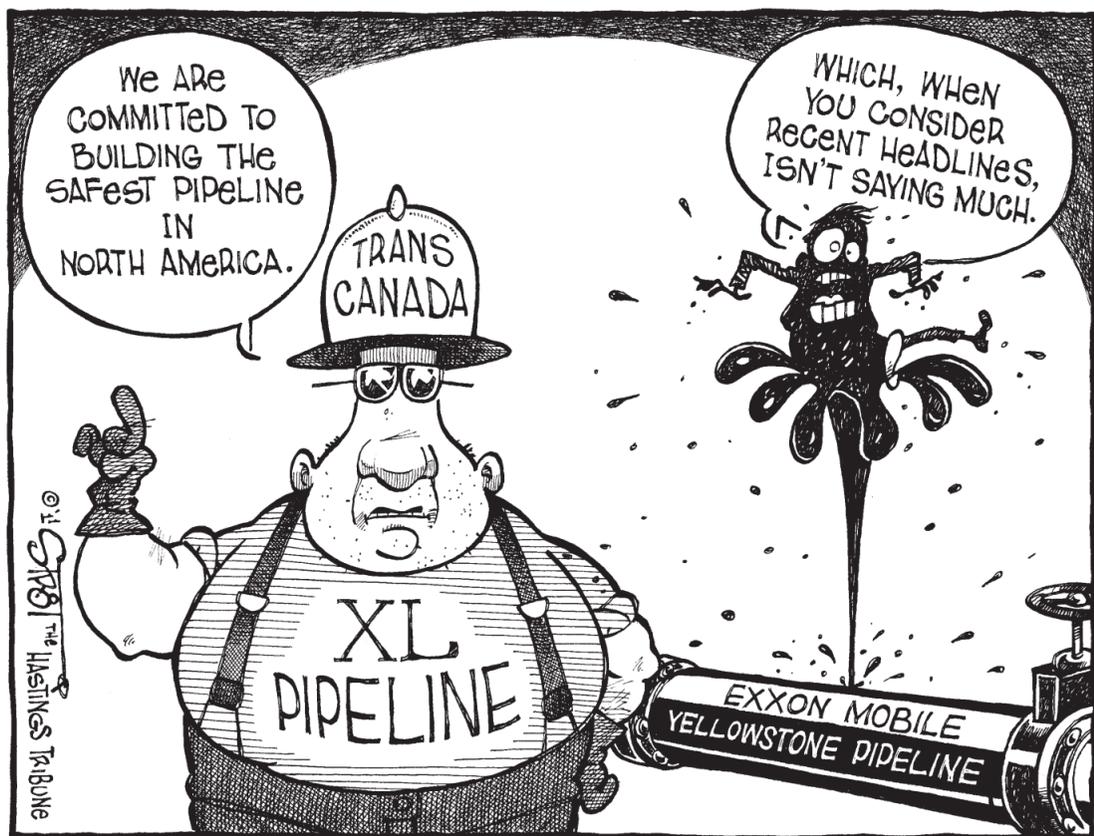
Won't you be glad when winter gets here?

Your comments on anything that appears in your favorite newspaper coming from my computer, are always appreciated, regardless of the tone. Simply email me at milehitom@hotmail.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The United States is saturated with propaganda and belief that a four-year university education is key to a well-paid career. Educators, guidance counselors and politicians all extol the benefits of university education as if the students and the country would benefit if even more students took this training/career path. The reality is far different. About half of those who enter college never graduate and gain little except college debt. Already about 40 percent or 17 million university graduates, are in jobs that do not require a college degree. We unambiguously do not need more "college graduates". We do need more degreed engineers, scientists, and software experts. We do need more tool and die makers and precision machinists. Instead, the country continues to produce millions of liberal arts majors, many of whom never find jobs in their field or any field that pays what they expected to earn via a degree.

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The moments that define our lives

Amy Winehouse died. She was a 27 year old singer. She won a bunch of awards including some Grammys. One of her most famous songs was "Rehab". If you don't know who she was, suffice it to say, she performed what she knew!

I read something praising the richness and depth of her voice----"in her prime!"

It's depressing to think a 27-year-old was past her prime. Here I am, hoping mine is yet to come. Another illusion shattered!

I'm sure the PHD candidate in the family has something, proven by obscure research, to say about which areas of the brain music effects and the power it holds over us.

Most of us are simpler than that. Music motivates, relaxes and evokes powerful memories. Just like the movies, it is the background to our lives.

We recently attended an event featuring the music of John Denver as performed by the local (loco?) trio, Taco and the Chips or is it Slim and the Pickin's? I can't keep track.

During the interludes Taco (I guess it was Taco, it sure wasn't Slim) speculated on possible hidden or not so hidden messages in the lyrics, Rocky Mountain High, anyone? John Denver was subtler than Amy Winehouse. Or perhaps we were more innocent in the 70's. I know I was!

After the structured (I use the term loosely) part of the evening ended. Some of us went to the kitchen, but in the hall it morphed into open mike time.

We heard the chorus of Simon and Garfunkel's "Cecilia", so I continued with the verse "I got up to wash my face

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



when I come back to bed someone's taken my place." My niece and daughter were shocked!

In the hall the jam session turned to "The Roller Skate Song", by Melanie Safka. Some of us (who by the Amy Winehouse standard approached our prime about the time that particular song was a hit) broke into a rollicking chorus: "I've got a brand new pair of roller skates; you've got a brand new key. I think that we should get together try them on and see. I've been lookin' around awhile you got something for me. Oh, I got a brand new pair of roller stakes; you've got a brand new key."

More perplexed looks from the younger set. What does that mean????

Who knows what it means? It didn't really mean anything. It was a catchy little tune we sang over and over! Unlike "Rehab", it was fun!

One of my contemporaries acknowledged there may have been a sexual connotation. We mulled that over a bit. It became apparent the waters were becoming more muddied for the kids.

Finally we realized the core issue. The girls had no concept of a roller skate key! By the time it was explained a lot of the charm of that little ditty was lost in translation! (Still, I can't get the stupid thing out of my head!)

At the John Denver's songfest you

could see the emotional connection audience members had to the songs by looking at the faces. It crosses generations. My mom, in her 60's during his heyday, loved John Denver. Her absolute favorite: "Take Me Home Country Roads".

Denver was fun in "Grandma's Feather Bed"! He could be poignant; sappy yet eloquent. "Sunshine" expresses so well my goal I write "If I had a tale that I could tell you, I'd tell a tale sure to make you smile."

He gave good advice. Taco referred to the song "I'm Sorry" as the "Husband's Song." Laugh all you want, fellows! Those two little words have power!

Denver died in 1997 when the ultra light plane he piloted crashed into the Pacific Ocean. He was 53; probably past his prime. I thought it longer ago than that. I remember him young. I remember me young.

I think the writer who referred to the quality of Winehouse's voice "in her prime" may have meant "at her best." She was a talented young woman who moved many; just as "Annie's Song" did at a seventies wedding.

It is difficult to pinpoint our finest hour, our prime. In truth it's rather sad to think there is a moment from which it is all downhill. Though as my friend Cindy often remarks when we discuss our general health and soundness of mind, "it's not going to get any better!" Oh well, that's a whole other issue!

I have a notion we should view our lives a little differently. Rather than look for the apex live every day on the mountain top, striving to be our own best version of ourselves.

A bleak outlook of our nation's future

Right now our country's greatest threat comes not from those individuals or groups we have identified as the enemy, but rather from a group of do-gooders. Truthfully, I don't think it is their intention to harm the country but they operate with an ideology likely to bring the U.S. to its knees. In their narrow minded thinking, they have actually become a pawn in the game of terror. Bringing down the country financially works as well for the Taliban as does a plane in the Towers. In fact, probably better because it destroys the very fabric of our operations. Al Qaeda has realized bringing down a physical structure allows for re-growth; the failure of the monetary establishment will send shock waves throughout the Western World leaving us vulnerable in our daily lives.

The tea party's hold on the Republicans in Congress is a bit puzzling. Of

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



the 2010 candidates embracing the tea party agenda, only 32 percent successfully won seats in Congress. So how is this seen as a mandate to those traditional Republicans who would work together to find a fiscal solution? What is it they fear from this handful of activists? A group of so called do gooders holds not just the economic health of the nation hostage, but the world financial markets as well. Because of their stand the possibility of havoc is looming. Call them what you

will, do gooders, fundamentalist Christians, idealists, etc. the result will be the same, the defaulting of our loans will have long term irreversible results with the potential for unbelievable chaos. Not my words, but rather those of bipartisan economists and independent think tanks with expertise in financial markets. They know the dangers facing our country if we default.

Cuts in Medicare will affect everyone's health care. Hospitals treating primarily an elderly population receive much of their income from Medicare patients. Cut Medicare, cut veterans benefits, cut the health and education of our children and the country will begin a downward spiral. Believe me it won't be business as usual; it will usher in an era based on selfish desires and judgmental philosophies. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Thumbs Up to Darlene McEwen and the Andbe Home staff and board members for putting together a wonderful 50th birthday celebration.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumps Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansan.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

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Publishers, 1970-2002



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