

Help is available for people thinking about suicide

The death of a young person by their own hand leaves the majority of us saddened and with many unanswered questions. If you have heard someone talk about ending their lives, take them seriously. They may be joking, but only God knows who is serious and who is not.

There is still a stigma attached to getting help for mental problems. Many psychiatric disorders have been found to have physical, chemical origins. Chemical imbalances in the brain can be treated with medicine. There will be a day, we hope, when mental problems are handled like the flu or a broken arm.

Suicide affects children more than adults. Children blame themselves for a parent's suicide, much on the same scale as a divorce. It's hard for them.

If you know someone is dying, there is some preparation when the event happens. Accidents are sudden, but most of the time the victims do not choose to die. In a suicide, death is the only way that person can see to escape pain, physical and mental. They may feel like they are sliding down a black hole, trying to hang on by their finger nails. Some quit fighting.

There are people who keep saying they want to die. After repeated forced placements in mental facilities, there seems to be the moment of choice for those people. They must either decide to get the job done or finally get help.

This writer has known two people who, after repeated rescues, reach that point. Their friends realize that forced hospitalizations aren't working and they decide to stand back and let that person pick which way they want their lives to go. Stepping back is hard for these people. They really care. If there is a threat to others in the home or community, of course, there is no choice but to intervene.

One of the examples turned their life around. The other person got the job done.

Drugs and alcohol many times play a big part in suicide. Both release inhibitions. Alcohol and some drugs are depressants.

Teens, who are at that age where they feel invincible, may commit suicide without realizing its finality. Those deaths seem to be more tragic even than that of an adult.

There is a message of hope in all of this. If you feel you have no choice but to end your life, talk to a professional, a school counselor, a minister or friend. Get help. Also realize you must be willing to accept the help they have to offer. It may not be pleasant or fun, but it will not be as final as death.

As long as there is life, there are possibilities. Cry, but remember there is also laughter.

— Pat Schiefen

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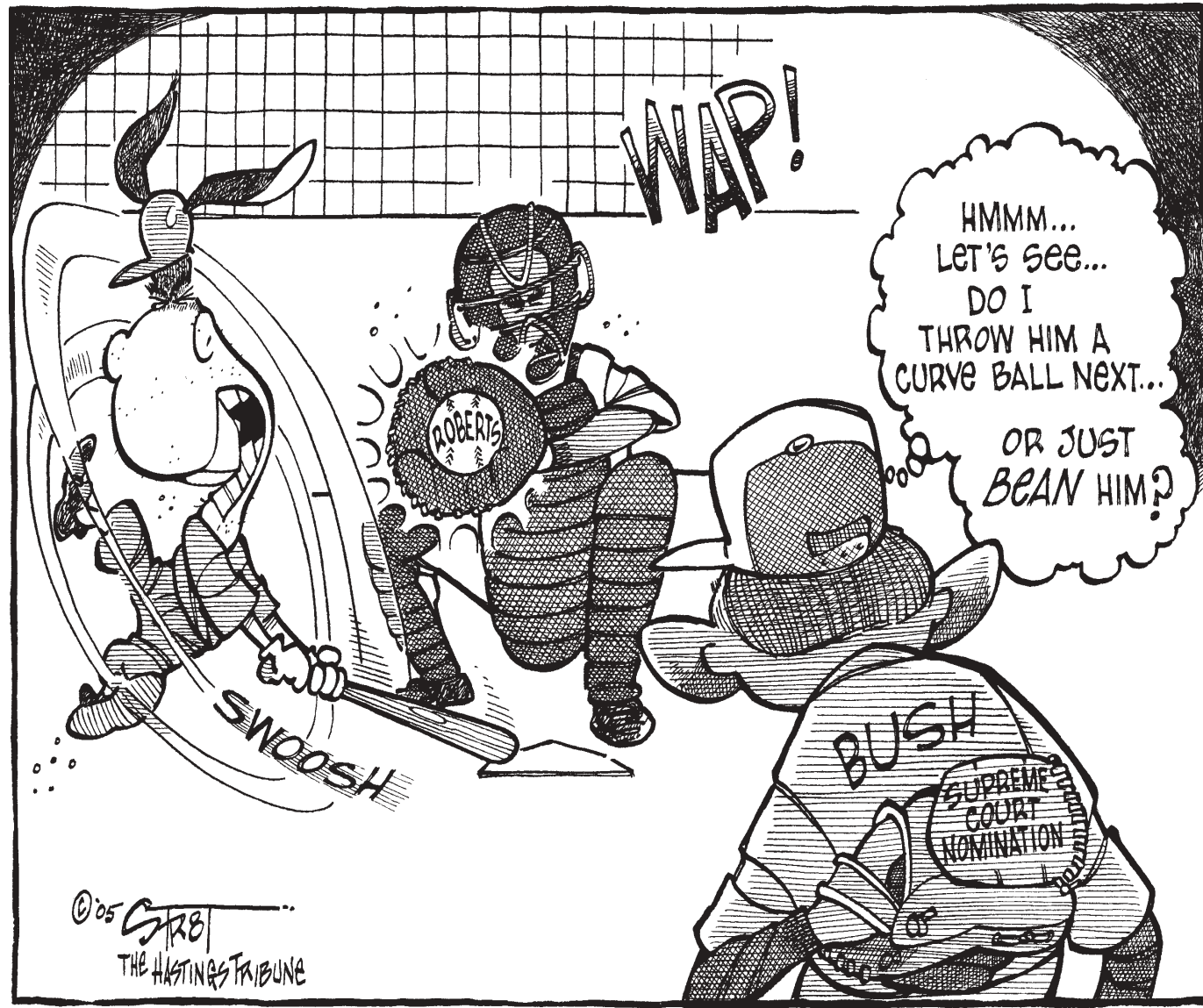
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Some adventures are better left alone

For the record — I never intended to marry a farmer. I got into this marriage under false pretenses.

Sure he was pursuing an agricultural degree, but he told me he wanted to do something in agri-business.

Technically farming is agri-business even though it isn't the business I pictured.

I'm a good sport though, so I go along with it.

Lately, I have been thinking it might be time to draw a line. I will chase, sort and help work cows. I will disc, run the combine and v-blade.

I don't drive trucks and I will not help fill silo. Not ever again.

One of the hubby's many hobbies (hobbies being something that does not necessarily make money) is back grounding his calves. That is, he feeds them from the time they are weaned until they weigh 700-800 pounds and are ready to go to a feedlot for finishing.

He is always on the lookout for cheap feed so it is known around the neighborhood that he will bale assorted feedstuffs. This fall he got an offer of some milo. Chemical failure, the weeds just flat overtook it.

After surveying the situation he decided the weeds were too big and woody to bale, it would be like expecting the calves to eat lumber. However if he made it into silage

Back Home Nancy Hagman



they would soften up and be quite palatable.

Great idea. We haven't done silage in 20-plus years, but it will be fun, right?

I was relieved when he devised a way to pull the truck behind the cutter because I don't drive trucks. I can't remember his reasoning but he wanted to swath the stuff before he ran it through the cutter.

And being such a good sport I said, "Teach me to run the swather."

Okay, bad idea.

Those swathers have zero turning radius and they are very touchy. Somehow when you back up it turns backwards or something. I don't know, it is just not natural.

The first few passes were none too straight but I did catch on. In fact, I got to thinking how fun it might be to do some wheelies.

But I didn't. One thing I have noticed, I never get away with anything. Somehow I would be found out.

Of course, I managed to misunderstand the hubby at every juncture.

He would drive off with a load (about an eight-mile round trip) and return in a cloud of dust frantically waving his arms to flag me down and tell me what I was doing wrong.

Bless his heart he is the most patient of men.

Until I plugged the swather the fourth time.

In my defense these were some awesome weeds. I am sure if the Department of the Interior had seen this field we would have had to get a logging permit. A chainsaw might have been a better choice of an implement.

There was one sort of pretty weed with some cool looking pods on it. I was thinking of collecting some for a dry arrangement so I asked the hubby what it was. Velvet leaf, why even the name sounds pretty doesn't it?

But from the level of scorn in his voice, I decided I best leave it where it was.

At some point in the project the hubby jokingly complained, "The help you get these days!"

To which I had to reply, "You get what you pay for."

Never, I say, never again! Unless I start drawing a salary. (And I'm still not driving any trucks.)

Milwaukee — a lovely place to visit

Milwaukee is a beautiful city. The river runs through the heart of it, with a lovely park and riverwalk along the sides.

The buildings are not the new, modern skyscrapers you see in most American cities. These buildings soar into the air with stonework, ironwork, grace and beauty. The city has taken the trouble to put lights on some of the more interesting buildings, and at night they gleam with an old-world patina.

Steve says that Milwaukee once was a backwater, blue collar town that was full of people with manufacturing jobs going about their business. There weren't the urban renewal types there to tear down those shabby old buildings and put up some nice, new steel-and-glass structures.

As a result, Milwaukee has marble and stone buildings with curlicues and fancy brickwork faded copper roofs. Even the new buildings blend in.

The beer industry is mostly gone, but the city's still got its working-class roots. The biggest thing downtown on Friday night are the fish fries. Every restaurant, from German to Asian, has a fish fry ev-

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



ery Friday night with deep-fried cod or perch and tasty potato pancakes. In a town that's heavily German and heavily Catholic, it's a tradition.

I gained five pounds in less than a week of eating bratwurst, sausages, red cabbage and slaw.

We were in Milwaukee for the annual National Newspaper Association convention. We saw friends from all over the country — people we see once or twice a year, if we're lucky.

While Steve was in a meeting, the girls, including me, took off to see the sights, which included the publishing company that puts out "Country Woman" and "Taste of Home" cookbooks and magazines.

They had some great sales on cookbooks and I love cookbooks, but I had to calculate the weight. It's one thing to take home a dozen books if you're driving. It's quite another when you're flying.

I settled on two cookbooks and a magazine.

I also took along a cooler to bring back sausages. Milwaukee is known for its sausage and cheese, and I picked up some of each, along with some ice. All the food came through in perfect shape, but it's amazing how heavy a dozen sausages, a few pounds of cheese and a block of ice can get when you have to drag the cooler through the airport.

I enjoyed every minute of my visit to Milwaukee, but I was so happy to get home and sleep in my own bed.

The cats were happy to see us, too. Three out of four took up the corners of the bed, each daring the other to move into its spot and no one giving an inch.

Tonight, they'll be more comfortable. They'll wander in and out. But last night, they wanted to make sure we didn't disappear again — at least not for a little while.

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