

## Yes, Virginia, money grows on some trees

Reports on CNN Thursday morning early, told about another CEO who was given the boot (they called it retirement), because of less than anticipated performance by the company he was hired to run.

Of course it wasn't a sour grapes thing. How could it be when the company he apparently didn't guide to fiscal acceptance gave him \$210 million as a going away present. To be fair, his retirement package was negotiated before he was named CEO. Maybe these companies need to put a clause in their contracts that would reduce those pots of gold at the end of the corporate rainbows if performance didn't weather the storm.

\$210 million? The same CNN report listed nearly a dozen other CEOs who left their companies, or were asked to leave, and stuffed their pockets with millions upon millions of dollars. One CEO broke the billion-dollar barrier.

These are the same people — CEOs and their boards — who, along with lesser paid individuals, but still raking in the big bucks, tell us how good everything is. Enron being an example, everything was super great for their top guys, until the ugly ducking raised its head and shouted "foul!"

The excessiveness of salary insanity also invades the world of sports: \$50 million here, \$100 million there, another \$150 million. Who was it a while back received a \$250 million contract? What athlete is worth all that? None! It's a runaway world of foolishness, but, unfortunately, we as fans encourage this activity by attending games and idolizing those on the field of play.

Are we jealous? Hardly! Money has never been a pacifier. But when we read and hear about people forced into retirement with more money in their pockets than our school district, our city, and our county controls, questions abound.

Often we question the salaries our United States Senators and House of Representatives pay themselves. But when you compare their salaries (around \$154,000) with other segments of our society, they pale.

Yes, we are the land of opportunity. But it seems like nowadays, opportunity is knocking on fewer doors. Times are not great, as some channels' shows try hard to convince us otherwise. Those people need to take a bus tour (not climb into their private jets) out to rural America and see how *real America* is dealing with these *great times*.

They might be surprised at what they see.

- They will see that the robust economy they so quickly hail, hasn't invaded *real America*.
- They will learn why *real America* cannot understand or even imagine the amounts of money they talk about.
- They might return home from *real America* victims of a guilt trip.
- Their television shows might begin talking about *real America* for a change, not what they see from atop their gold-lined buildings in the financial centers of our largest cities.

When we read or hear about the piles of money following these executives as they go into forced retirement, or otherwise, we can only shake our heads in disbelief.

It's hard for us to understand all of that in *real America*. But it's real.

—Tom Dreiling

## Thumbs Up to . . .

√**Dr. Mark Klein**, for sharing your safari experiences with *The Telegram* readership.

√**Bob Barnett** and **Jim Plotts**, Norcat, for pulling a visitor to town out of the mud. (called in)

√**All those linemen**, who will be working miserable hours in cold snow up to their ears trying to restore power. (e-mail)

√**"Old Man Winter"** and **"Mother Nature,"** for teaching us once again that the Lord is in charge of the weather. (e-mail)

√**Everybody** who gave warmth, light and shelter to "orphans of the storm." (e-mail)

√**Those** who went out and shoveled out a senior citizen, or delivered a jug of milk or orange juice to those who couldn't get out, checked with the homebound, delivered mail and otherwise loved their neighbors with action and assistance. (e-mail)

√**The Norton couple**, for helping us in a difficult situation on US-283 south of town during the storm. We didn't get their names. (e-mail from three Phillipsburg residents)

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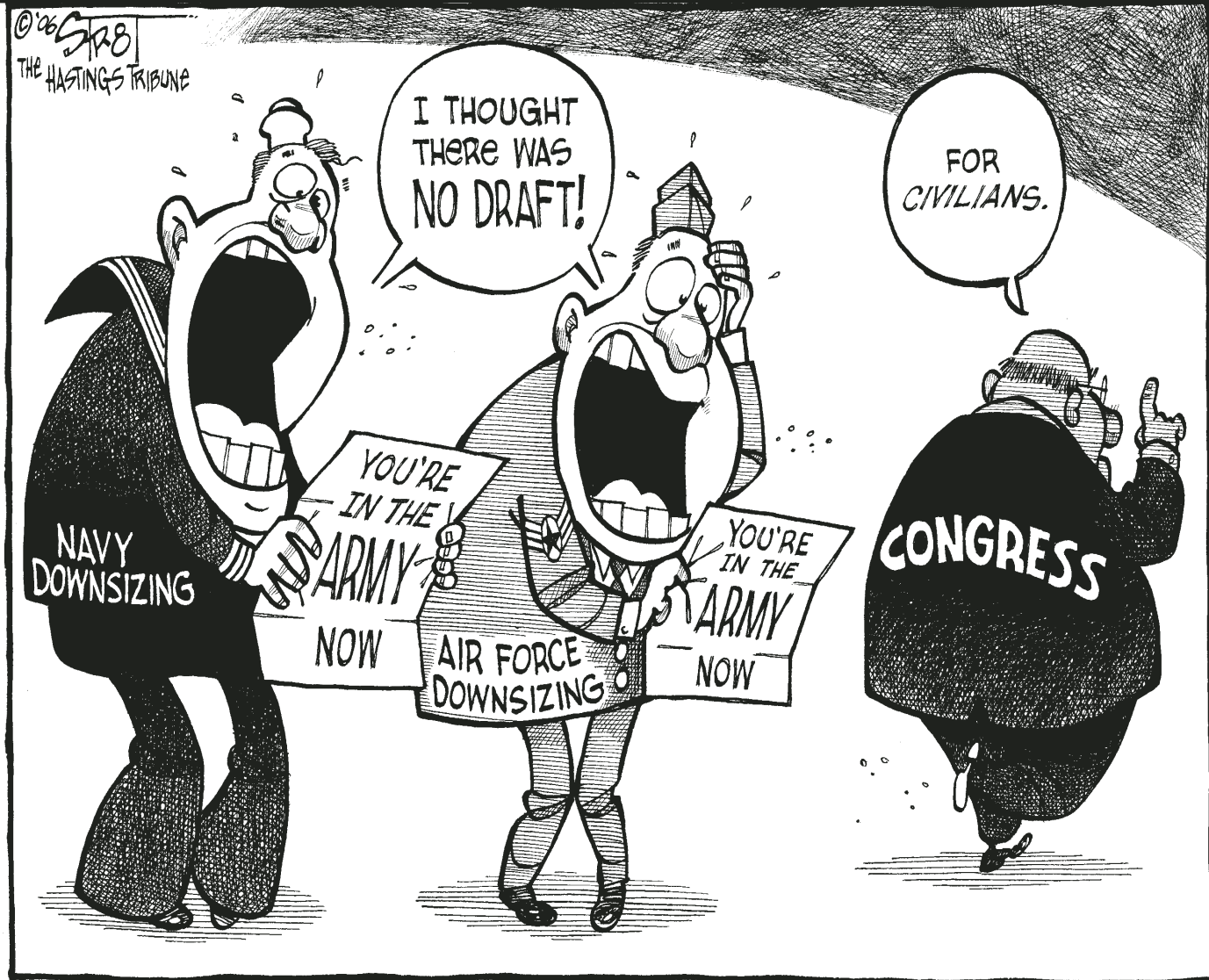
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### Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002  
Incorporating the Norton County Champion

Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



## We spent a couple of days in a daze

Oh boy, when weather conditions figure into your schedule and chaos prevails, you wish there was some place to hide. But there isn't. Our newspaper woes really wore staff down. Stress replaced smiles. It was tough. But when you get down to it, it was a lot tougher on a lot of other folks, folks without power, living in the dark and cold. In their own homes. When I reflected on those unfortunate people — and there were, and are, many — I thought to myself our headache with the newspaper is nothing. Sure, our wish was that everything would suddenly go away and we could do what we do so many days throughout the year — get our product to you. One thing this delayed delivery brought to light was the large number of people who missed us, who were routinely accustomed to getting their newspaper on certain days and at certain times. We can only thank all of you for your patience and understanding. We are heralding a big THANKS! in a large advertisement elsewhere in today's *Telegram*. You are indeed a cool bunch (no pun intended). But again, that's Norton!

-td-

Thanks to C-Span, I watched just about everything they had to offer as the nation said a final good-bye to President Gerald Ford. As far as presidential funerals go, this one most certainly should rank at the top. There was something special about his final journey from Palm Desert, Calif., to Washington, D.C., and then onto Grand Rapids, Mich. where he was laid to rest on the grounds at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

It was special because of the special circumstances surrounding his rise to the presidency. President Richard M. Nixon picked Michigan Congressman Gerald Ford to replace Vice President Spiro Agnew, who resigned after becoming involved in a business scandal. Not long after that, President Nixon was forced to

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



resign, because of his role in the Watergate scandal. That allowed Vice President Ford to become the nation's 38th president.

President Ford served for slightly more than two years, and did so much to calm the turbulent waters created by the Watergate mess. He lost his bid for election to Jimmy Carter. One of President Ford's decisions — to pardon Richard Nixon — was one of the deciding factors in his loss to President Carter. Through the years, however, it turned out that the Nixon pardon was the proper and appropriate action to take at that time. President Ford saw a need to remove the Watergate scandal from the nation's front pages and the lead story on the nightly television news and put the nation back up on the track, which he did.

President Ford was the guy next door. Down to earth. Thoughtful. Compassionate. A veteran of the United States Navy. He was destined to win a full four-year term, many thought. But that failed to materialize.

Despite that, he served us well, very well, if only a half-term in office.

One thing I will remember, is the way former first lady Betty Ford so graciously handled herself. It had to be a struggle, both emotionally and physically. She is 88. But surrounded by her loving and supportive children and grandchildren, she made it through. Too, it was a class act by the couple's four children to personally thank as many of the people as possible, who viewed the casket in the Capitol's

rotunda, with a handshake. That was a first — a Ford first.

-td-

I seldom get into sports in this column, but I can't resist touching on a topic that brought chuckles to me last week. It involved the Boise State Broncos and Oklahoma University Sooners in the Fiesta Bowl, won by Boise State in two overtimes, 43-42.

The reason I was chuckling was because those know-it-all announcers had problems trying to keep from laughing when they talked about what they called "a mismatch." All along this season, Boise State was putting away opponent after opponent, and ended the season 13-0.

The poll bunch, who often suffer brain loss when determining who is best and who isn't, far too often overlook what some call "the little schools" — like Boise State. Well, Boise State faced the rough, tough, superior, Stoops supermen and ...you know the rest of the story.

I am a fan of the Big 12 and embrace all of them, except when they are playing our teams. And a Sooner win over the Broncos would have been nice, but the only reason I brought it up was because the big mouths behind the mikes got it shoved right down their throats.

If Ohio State prevails in the BCS championship game next Monday night vs. Florida, they will end the season 13-0. Now, does Boise State, also 13-0, come in second in the final poll? Or are we going to find all sorts of reasons to not do the right thing. Or, hold on, if Florida (12-1) wins and they go to 13-1, and Ohio State falls to 12-1, where do you think Boise State goes at 13-0?

I toss this out for you to chew on. Could be a lively discussion.

-td-

Have a good evening. And remember that church is a very special event each week.

## Let's clarify what mental illness isn't

The news media too often leads viewers and readers to believe that people with mental illness are dangerous, violent, and will "go crazy" with little or no provocation. When, in fact, research and studies indicate the opposite; that people with major mental illness are more likely to be the victims of violence rather than the perpetrators.

A recent study from North Carolina State University and Duke University found that people who suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or psychosis are more than twice as likely to be attacked, raped, or mugged than members of the general population. Homelessness and alienation from family and friends often contribute to their vulnerability.

Other studies indicate that the majority of people who have a severe mental illness are no more violent than anyone else. Factors such as youth, gender (male), poverty, and a history of violent behavior are all stronger predictors of violence as compared to having a mental illness.

The general public wonders why a depressed woman like Andrea Yates would

drown her five children, or why a man like John Hinckley, Jr. became obsessed with the movie star, Jody Foster, and also tried to assassinate President Reagan.

Crimes such as theirs are very rare in people with mental illness, but each is an example of how a psychotic disorder or thought disorder can result in extreme behavior.

In contrast, many individuals who suffer from a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, delusion disorder, or bipolar disorder, do experience a great deal of private torment, yet would never commit a violent act.

When violence does occur in a person with a mental illness, other factors should be taken into consideration. Individuals with major psychotic symptoms, such as

### Health Perspectives By KEN LOOS

paranoia, usually function better on psychiatric medications. If they quit using their medication, in spite of cautions from their therapist, physician, and family, their behavior will tend to become more unpredictable.

Alcohol or drug abuse also increases the chance of violence. If their behavior does become threatening or violent, it is usually focused on family members, or someone they know well.

Thus, it is vital for friends and family who are aware, to know their own limitations when dealing with the person, and call for assistance from a mental health professional and/or law enforcement if any situation feels unsafe.

People who are burdened with a severe mental illness face challenges on a daily basis that are difficult for others to understand, or to imagine.

But, when it is assumed that everyone who has a mental illness is a potential criminal, waiting to explode, then their burden becomes even heavier.

This column courtesy of the High Plains Mental Health Center, Hays.