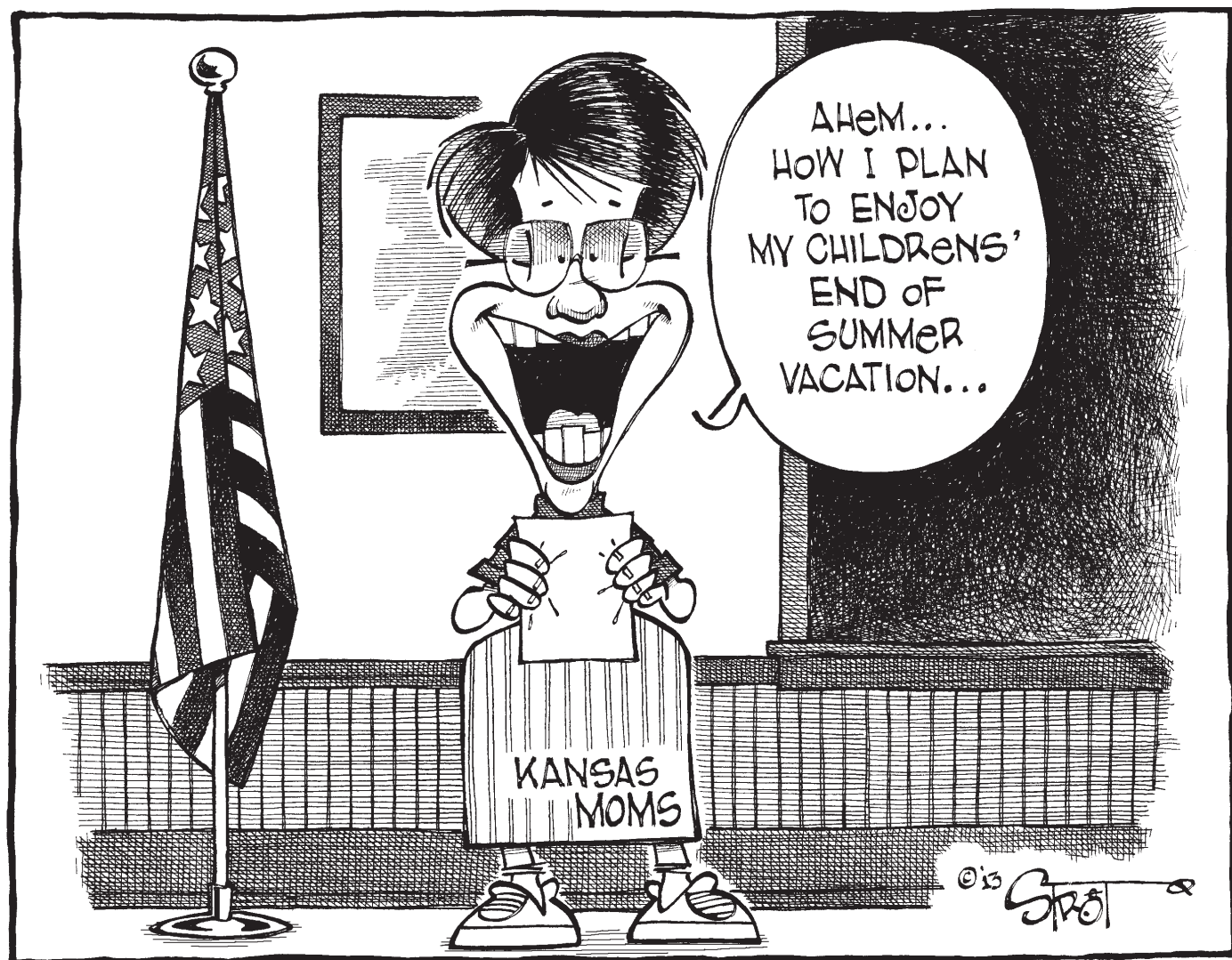


Letter to the Editor,

It was a beautiful day in late May. My sister and I were enjoying the Norton Lake. We had done some fishing, then decided to drive along the south side of the lake. When we drove into the first cove closest to the dam, three dogs came running out from a camping area towards my vehicle. One of the dogs ran under the tire of my vehicle and got his paw ran over. My sister and I immediately got out of the vehicle, as we were concerned about the dog. The owner became very belligerent and started calling me names. My sister and I got back into the vehicle and went immediately to the park station to report what had happened.

The owner of the dog tried to make an insurance claim with my auto insurance company for veterinarian bills which was denied, as my insurance company felt I was not liable. Then in May of this year, the owner of the dog took me to small claims court for \$4,000 for veterinarian bills. The owner of the dog said that the Norton wildlife area on the south side of the Norton Lake is solely for the purpose of hunting, camping and fishing, and he claims I was doing neither and that I should not have been "riding around." He was not from this area. In the end the judge still made me half liable to pay \$2,000, even after the owner of the dog admitted that he was sitting at his camping area in a lawn chair, talking on his cell phone, and he said he lost control of his dog. The judge did not come up with anything I did wrong or anything that I could have done differently that would have avoided this from happening. The judge also had me pay for his filing fees and for court costs. Again why? I didn't have anything filed and I wasn't the one that wanted to go to court. So why did I have to pay? Why am I being punished for doing nothing wrong? If this is the way our justice system works, maybe changes should be made. My insurance company did finally pay out over \$2,000, as the judge ordered. And we wonder why insurance rates are so high.

Beth Horney
Norton



Letter to the Editor,

Join us in thanking law enforcement for the work they do to keep our loved ones safe during the labor day crackdown, and all year long.

While we spend the Labor Day holiday and the end of summer celebrating with our loved ones, law enforcement officers across the country will take to the roads in an effort to stop impaired driving, prevent injuries and save lives during this year's Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over high-visibility enforcement campaign.

Holidays like Labor Day are particularly dangerous for encountering drunk drivers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 138 people were killed in drunk driving crashes over the Labor Day weekend in 2011. That's why, through September 2nd, officers will be out in force to help stop these 100 percent preventable tragedies.

Research shows that high-visibility enforcement can reduce drunk driving fatalities by as much as 20 percent. Sobriety checkpoints play a key part in raising awareness about the problem, as well as deterring people from committing the violent crime of drunk driving, and that's why it is a key component of MADD's Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving®.

Join us in thanking law enforcement for the work they do to keep our loved ones safe during the crackdown, and all year long, by signing our online thank you card. And if you come across a sobriety checkpoint this Labor Day weekend, make sure to thank the officers for helping keep our roads safe.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy Labor Day.

Warmly,
Jan Withers
MADD National President

Modern technology in events of crisis

When your family experiences a crisis you begin to lose all sense of time.

That's where we have been since about 9:45 a.m. last Sunday when we first learned our nephew, Brian, had been in an awful wreck. Minutes seem like hours and hours seem like days when you're waiting in a hospital room for some indication that your loved one will be all right.

Our experience, of course, has been as nothing compared to what Brian, himself, is going through. Nor what his parents, Bill and Betty, are facing. Nonetheless, our whole family has rallied 'round, knowing there is absolutely nothing we can do to help him at this point. Except pray. And I know we've been burnin' up the hotline to heaven this week.

We agreed, early on, that I would be the family contact person and we would

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



not bother the medical staff nor his parents except once a day for updates. Thank goodness I learned how to send multiple text messages when we got our new phones. In about five minutes I can notify 20 people with updated information on Brian's status. I do this at least twice a day. Two of my brothers don't send texts, but they read them and if they have a question, they call. At times like this, technology is wonderful.

Brian was hurt bad – really bad. It was frightening that first night to walk into his intensive care unit room and

see him hooked up to machines that breathed, beeped and blinked. His struggle to "come back" to us, though, is amazing. Seven days ago a machine was breathing for him. As of Sunday night he is breathing on his own, he squeezes his mother's hand, he looks at you when you talk to him, he gave his doctor a "thumbs up" and even said, "Ouch," when his nurses were turning him in bed. All very encouraging signs.

We know he faces a long recovery, but Jim is already planning to give Brian a hard time about going to extremes to get out of helping him pour concrete. I worry that some of his cousins are going to visit him before his ribs are healed enough to take the strain. They might have him laughing so hard he'll break his other ribs.

When your smart phone is smarter than you are

Is there a shift in human focus and concentration, or is it just me?

While waiting in the foyer of a well-known seafood restaurant in Kansas City, I counted a half a hundred people milling about, engaged in some form of interaction – primarily with themselves.

Yes, there are others with them, but these people are head-down on their phones. I'm certain you have both seen them or been one of them. Maybe you're reading this on your mobile device right now.

Phone usage and etiquette have changed significantly during the past few years. Before Apple launched its iPhone on June 29, 2007, all you could do on a phone was send and receive calls – and painfully text.

Can you ever forget your first text – 1,2,3 or maybe it was a,b,c. In technology terms, that was eons ago.

Cellular phones are smart today. Most of the time they are smarter than their users, especially in my case. They are as much app driven as talk and text.

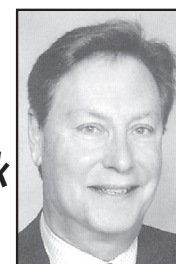
Consider all the possibilities: e-mail and the Internet, personal calendars, Facebook, Google, the latest news and markets, camera, music, movies, solitaire and other games, PayPal and who could live without Amazon, and if you think about it – your phone or tablet has become your end all, be all communication device.

I'm waiting for the next great apps to come down the pike like the cab, chauffer, house, maid, cook, house cleaner – you know a phone that will literally take care of me and pamper me while I'm busy communicating.

There are plenty of other technological marvels just around the corner like voice recognition that may just be the

Insight

John Schlageck



latest, greatest breakthrough.

Many of us are not masters of our own phones. We use the programs we need and rarely explore new ones, unless badgered to do so by a friend. Don't believe me, think about the apps you use.

Most people who know me realize I am still mired firmly in the Dark Ages of smart phone technology. I sought out a young, computer wizard friend the other day to help me with the fundamentals of smart phone usage. Here are some of the best how-to-dos it we came up with:

- 1) How to use it mechanically – not just to turn it on and off. Your phone holds the key to mysteries and magic that can fill the hours with joy, mirth and most importantly dividends once you master its technology.
- 2) How to use it mannerly. You know, the when and how loud are key to your perceived image.
- 3) How to enhance your communications. Texting is the new black? Data transmission exceeds voice transmission – by a lot. When e-mailing how are you perceived? How do they read it? You tell me. I don't abbreviate.
- 4) How to use it to allocate your time. Use your stopwatch feature to measure the total amount of time you spend on your phone. Your total at the end of the day will shock you – but not as much as multiplying the total by 365.

5) When you're by yourself – be aware of the time. Minutes soon become hours and hours days.

6) When you're by yourself, but others are within hearing distance, speak at half-volume, and keep it brief.

7) In an informal gathering, ask permission first. Use your judgment as to what to ignore. Be respectful of the time and attention paid to people you're with.

8) In a business meeting – never.

9) In a restaurant. Beyond never. It's rude.

10) In church. Don't even think about it.

On a flight to California a couple months ago I thought I'd stepped into a bad movie when the following scene played itself out before and after we landed. First the milling of the masses up and down the aisles as all the overhead luggage was stowed. Then the passengers were safely buckled and the flight attendants told everyone to power down. Plane landed and every passenger was on his or her phone or staring at it. Exit, door left and they walked off the plane like lemmings marching to the sea.

In reality, people are walking into walls, tripping, bumping into one another, and crashing their cars while looking at and using their smart phones. I saw a cartoon in The New Yorker a few months ago that showed a woman on her phone saying, "I've invited a bunch of my friends over to stare at their phones."

Like it or not, the smart phone is here to stay. It's economical to use and applications are increasing daily.

Our challenge is to make the best use of it we can.

THUMBS UP! Thumbs up to the Eagles and the delicious cream can meal (WED). A great meal and a great deal. Thanks for all your work – it is greatly appreciated! Emailed in.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave.
Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs 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.

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