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NEIGHBORS&News

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What's wrong with human targets?

JEFF MARTINDALE
Special to The Collierville Herald

I recently read "The Magic of the Family Meal" in a back issue of Time magazine. The article stated that only one in three U.S. families eats dinner together most nights.

No surprise here with today's families scurrying between soccer practices and dance lessons, but the article also mentioned that the more families eat together, the less likely their children are to drink, smoke and do drugs and the more likely they will do well in school, eat their vegetables, learn big words and know which fork to use.

I don't know many big words, but I do know that on most nights my family eats together. Perhaps it's the byproduct of growing up in a family where if you missed dinner, then your excuse better be good, like rescuing a crash victim from a burning car.

People often wax nostalgic about yesteryear, but I honestly don't remember family pressures being different when I was a kid. Then again, I often don't remember what my wife said five minutes ago, but what else is new.

At our family dinners, Lana and I often ask the boys to discuss their school day. "What'd you do in P.E. today?" Lana asked one recent night.

Between bites, Jack answered first. I don't recall what we ate, but it's safe to assume that Jack's meal differed from everyone else's. His finicky preferences are rivaled by mine only, but while my tastes are particular, Jack's are downright singular – chicken fingers and fries. His tastes have improved somewhat, though. For example, last year, at age seven, he started eating cheese pizza. Woo hoo!

But Jack's limited tastes can exasperate Lana, who often fixes him special meals. And if I've learned anything from 16 years of marriage, it's never irritate the person who cooks your food.

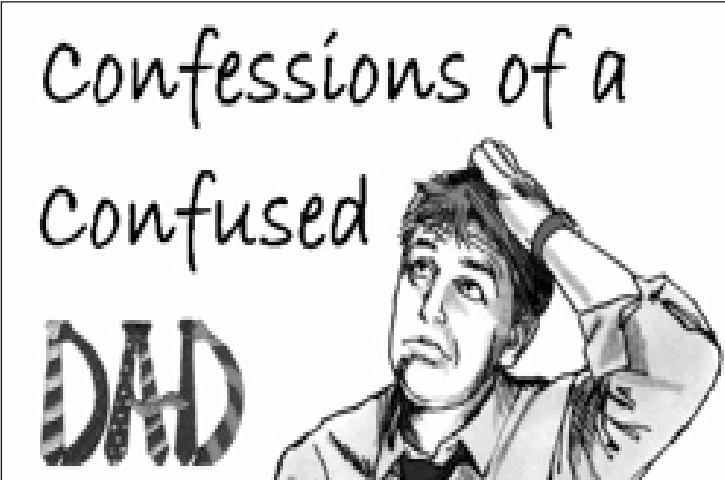
Anyway, Jack's uninspired rendering of his P.E. class took all of five seconds, then Will recounted a game played with a red ball, which immediately brought to mind dodgeball games of my youth. Out of curiosity, I asked whether they played dodgeball.

"No," Will responded. "They don't let us play games that have a human target."

"I remember playing dodgeball in junior high when ..." I abruptly stopped and thought, "Did he just say 'human target'?" And then to Will: "You can't play games with a HUMAN TARGET?"

Silence ensued, and after a moment, I began to chuckle, which prompted the boys to chuckle, and before long, the whole family had burst into hearty laughter.

Perhaps this rule is borne from our society's over-protective attitude toward children. Respected physical educators



from my generation endorsed dodgeball, and we're not any worse for the wear, although I admit that seeing a red rubber ball brings flashbacks to a seventh-grade string bean trying to protect Coke-bottle eyeglasses from dodgeball assaults. But, frankly, I wouldn't trade these memories, because for every 10 – okay, 30 – burning, red welts, there was the infrequent instance when I nailed an unsuspecting jock with a perfect strike that knocked him from the game.

What harm can dodgeball cause? It certainly can't be worse than skipping family dinners. I played dodgeball throughout my formative years and still finished in the top 10 of my graduating class, have never done drugs and can spell "antidise-establishmentarianism." Maybe I don't eat many vegetables and like European beer, but you can't blame dodgeball any more than you can blame Jessica Simpson for her IQ level.

But if educators must insist on prohibiting games with human targets, they can at least teach kids which fork to use. That's a skill they'll use the rest of their lives.

Frankly, I often wonder why some children – particularly teenagers – dislike receiving public displays of affection from their parents. But then I have to remind myself about the two basic rules of parenting: Rule No. 1 is that kids grow up. Rule No. 2 is that parents can do nothing to prevent rule No. 1.



Jeff Martindale is a Collierville resident, FedEx employee and proud father of two boys. You can learn more about his writings at jeffmartindalebooks.com.

In Brief

Animals at the Avenue

The success of the Collierville Animal Shelter's new Animals on the Avenue location at the Avenue Carriage Crossing has been surprising to shelter director Nina Wingfield.

"It's far exceeding our expectations," Wingfield said.

Open since Nov. 1, volunteers man Animals on the Avenue, which features a few of the shelter's animals. Volunteer Cathy Kemp has helped coordinate the project and organizes the volunteers and makes sure shifts are filled, Wingfield said.

"It had to be run by the volunteers," Wingfield said, due to the shelter being so busy.

The opening of Animals on the Avenue has not only led to an increase in adoptions, but it also has brought in more donations and has increased foot traffic at the shelter by roughly 25 percent, she said.

People who don't find a pet at The Avenue location are sent to the shelter at 603 E. South Street. If they don't find a pet there, they can fill out an adoption application for the type of animal they want. They will be contacted when animals fitting the descriptions come in.

Within the next two weeks, Wingfield said she hopes to have a computer at Animals on the Avenue so people can browse the shelter's available pets online.

In addition, she said the new location serves as an educational tool. Some visitors come in simply to ask questions, and "we're able to give them information about their pet," she said.

Animals on the Avenue is located at 4670 Merchants Park Circle, Ste. 616. Business hours are Friday from 4 to 8 p.m., Saturday from 1 to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

— Michael Ward/The Collierville Herald

Mississippi police chase ends in crash near Collierville

A New Jersey woman faces charges from the Marshall County (Miss.) Sheriff's Department and the Shelby County Sheriff's Office following a pursuit Friday. The chase ended in a crash near Houston Levee Road.

Rosemarie Santanello, 41, of Jackson, N.J., has been charged with a felony for evading and assaulting an officer, said Maj. David Cook of the Marshall County Sheriff's Office. She has also been charged with three counts of aggravated assault in Tennessee, according to a statement released by Shelby County Sheriff's spokesman Steve Shular.

Cook said his office received a call of a suspicious vehicle pulling into driveways on Valentine Road in Slayden, Miss., approximately 17 miles southeast of Collierville, at around 2 p.m. Friday.

While Sgt. Tommy Crouch was taking a report about the activity, Santanello drove by in her Ford Astro Van. When Crouch made contact with Santanello, "she became belligerent and tried to assault the officer," said Cook. She continued the assault as he tried to place her under arrest, and he deployed his taser, which was unsuccessful, said Cook.

Santanello entered Collierville on Highway 72 to Poplar Avenue before turning south onto Byhalia Road and then entering Highway 385 traveling west, said Cook.

Marshall County officers Crouch, Cook and Lt. LaDaryl Odum followed Santanello. The pursuit ended west of Bill Heard Chevrolet past Houston Levee Road at roughly 3 p.m., Cook said, when Santanello rear-ended one of the patrol cars. This crash caused the other two cruisers to crash, according to the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.

Collierville Police Chief Larry Goodwin said his department had no involvement in the 20-mile pursuit.

"Our lieutenant advised our officers not to assist in the pursuit," he said. "We had no involvement in it."

Crouch and Odum were taken to Baptist Memorial Hospital-Collierville and treated for minor injuries.

Santanello was not injured and was transported to the Shelby County Jail for women. She will be returned to Mississippi to face other charges.

— Michael Ward/The Collierville Herald



Simple Possession (11.13): 1 (Zaxby's parking lot; no Collierville residents involved)
DUI (11.9-11.13): 3 (Byhalia Road, South Rowlett/Main, Highway 385/Byhalia Road; involved 1 Collierville resident)
Aggravated Burglary (11.13): 1 (Legacy Lake)
Theft of Property Over \$1,000 (11.11-11.13): 2 (American Marsh Pumps, Victoria's Secret)
Theft of Property Over \$500 (11.10): 1 (Winding Valley Cove)
Theft of Property Under \$500 (11.8-11.10): 2 (Wal-Mart, Macy's; no Collierville residents involved)
Vandalism (11.9-11.11): 3 (Main Street, Collierville-Arlington Road, Duncan Woods Drive)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Text-messaging driver nearly takes man's life

On Nov. 11 at 4:45 p.m., after dropping off our daughter at cheerleading practice in Rossville, my husband, Kevin Wells, was in a near fatal car accident. The woman driving the car that hit him did not stop at the sign and hit him on the driver's side and back doors.

The car was knocked down an embankment, ditch and over into the edge of a soybean field. Kevin was pinned inside the car for over 45 minutes. Thanks to God and the excellent response by the Rossville and Piperton police departments and Tennessee Highway State Troopers and the Rossville and Piperton Fire and Rescue Squads, he is alive.

Kevin was transported as a level-one trauma and taken to the Elvis Presley Trauma Center. He has a fractured pelvis, several broken ribs and a badly bruised left lung. It is truly a miracle that he survived. A 10-minute difference and our child would have been in the car and not survived.

Kevin has kept a good sense of humor saying, "My car was not a convertible, but it is now."

Three of our children were at the scene of the accident and witnessed the wonderful caring, support and compassion of all those beautiful souls who helped my beloved Kevin. The woman that hit him only suffered a bloody nose from her car airbag deploying and did not require any hospitalization.

We are grateful that she, too, is safe and will not text message while driving again. Kevin is relearning to walk again thanks to some special caring people and a walker. He smiles past the tears of intense pain. Our family appreciates all the prayers for his recovery and God's blessings that he survived this trial of life.

Please speak to your families, friends and neighbors about the terrible risks in text messaging while driving. Do not let this happen to your loved ones. Just say no to text messaging while driving.

Have a peaceful Thanksgiving holidays to you and your families.

Patrice Dwyer-Wells and our nine children
Collierville

Thanks to Scrabble players, literacy supporters and volunteers

Thank you to everyone in Collierville and beyond who supported the Literacy Council's Scrabble FUNdraiser Nov. 9. Forty teams of players filled the dining hall at St. George's Independent School again this year.

The winning team scored almost 1,200 points in three games of Scrabble – an amazing accomplishment. But even the teams who averaged 200 points each game had fun.

Through the generosity of the players and sponsors of the event, Collierville Literacy Council (CLC) was able to raise over \$16,000 to support its programs. We appreciate that, even in less than ideal economic times, businesses, churches and individuals were willing to contribute to CLC's efforts to help those who need to improve their reading or English-speaking skills or to earn a GED diploma. When the economy isn't booming is when it is most important for our students to improve their employability.

I want to express special thanks to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, First Tennessee Bank and Collierville United Methodist Church. They supported the tournament at the top levels of sponsorship.

Others providing funding at the \$250 level or above are The Collierville Community Fund, Twentieth Century Club, Betty Owen/CPA, Collierville Chiropractic, Barrios Financial Services, Boyle Investments, Baptist Hospital/Collierville, Pepsi Americas, City Center Shopping Plaza, E-Plex, Township Development and Kirk & Associates of Ameriprise Financial.

Not to forget the essential help of all the volunteers who gave their time to see that the event ran smoothly, who obtained donations and sponsorships, and who made sure that everyone knew about the tournament. It wouldn't have happened without you!

Thanks to all who helped make our 4th Scrabble Tournament a success.

Karen Ray
Collierville Literacy Council

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Collierville Herald welcomes letters to the editor on topics of interest to residents of Collierville. This newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters of no more than 300 words are suggested. Only one letter per writer per month will be considered for publication.

All letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only the name and city of residence will be published. Anonymous letters will not be published.

Letters may be emailed to editor@colliervilleherald.net; faxed to 853.8507; mailed to The Collierville Herald, 148 N. Main Street, Collierville, TN 38017; or dropped by the office.

