

OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

JEFFREY W. OWEN
PUBLISHER
E-mail address:
jowen@thejournalnet.com

SCARLETT SYSE
EDITOR
E-mail address:
syse@thejournalnet.com

"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER
founding editor, 1963

AT ISSUE

Heart disease and stroke kill a higher percentage of women than men.

OUR POINT

Valentine's Day can serve a reminder for women to take care of their hearts.

Do your heart a favor to mark Valentine's Day

The Daily Journal

Today is a day for lovers.

Across the country, men and women will exchange cards, candy and flowers.

Valentine's Day has become such big business that the American Greeting Card Association estimates that 25 percent of all cards sent each year are valentines.

Quite a change from a holiday linked to ancient Rome and a man named Valentine who, while imprisoned, sent messages to the young girl he fell in love with. The notes were signed, "From your Valentine."

Because of its connection to hearts, the American Heart Association declares February National Heart Month.

While heart disease and stroke kill one in every 3.7 men, one in 2.4 women lose their lives to them. They are the No. 1 and No. 3 killers of women. By comparison, breast cancer kills one in 29 women.

A local initiative aims to help women assess their personal risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Women often are busy taking care of everyone else and don't take care of themselves, especially their hearts, says Dr. Marc Gerdisch, director of cardiothoracic surgery at St. Francis Heart Hospital Indianapolis.

Gerdisch will conduct a free program about women and heart disease at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Inn of St. Francis at St. Francis Hospital Indianapolis, 8111 S. Emerson Ave.

Over several decades, deaths from heart attacks have continued to climb, especially for women, he said.

"When you look at sudden death, 50 percent of men with no previous symptoms drop dead of a heart attack. It's 60 percent in women," Gerdisch said.

That can all be changed, and women can enjoy a quality life by adjusting their lifestyle and seeking a cardiovascular specialist if they have any risk factors, he says.

A specialist can analyze their predisposition to cardiac disease. If it is recognized early, it can be treated.

"My goal is for people to be healthy and happy, so they can enjoy their family. I don't want them crippled by heart disease," Gerdisch said.

So celebrate the holiday. Enjoy the romance and the cards, flowers and candy.

And take a moment to remember your heart.

Focus: Love

Archaeologists unearth emotional Neolithic story

Scrrips Howard News Service

Not far from the city where Shakespeare set "Romeo and Juliet," archaeologists have found evidence of another, much older, doomed love affair.

They excavated the grave of a young couple who died between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago.

The skeletons were locked in an embrace, and it was clearly important to the mourners that the young man and woman be buried that way.

All the archaeologists could say definitely from first glance because of the state of their teeth was that the pair were relatively young and the death undoubtedly sudden. It's remotely possible that forensic examination may determine the cause of death, but what will remain a poignant and tantalizing mystery is the story of these young lovers, if that's indeed what they were.

And as Valentine's Day approaches, we choose to believe that they were lovers, perhaps even the lineal and literary ancestors of Romeo and Juliet.

We mark Valentine's Day in the United States with our usual excess, nearly \$17 billion spent on flowers, candy, cards and dining out. But at some vital level the day still honors the selfless Roman priest, martyred in the third century, who became St. Valentine, the patron saint of sweethearts.

We now know that deep emotional and physical bonds extend at least into the Neolithic era, when mankind began taking up agriculture and organizing itself into groups that were the rudimentary precursors of modern society.

Archaeologist Elena Menotti said that the young couple's grave "was a very emotional discovery. From thousands of years ago we feel the strength of this love. Yes, we must call it love." Yes, we must.



OBAMA SHELTER

YOUR

VIEWS & COMMENTARY

Mileage markers are used to check speedometers

To the editor:

If you are on U.S. 31, you had better learn that the little blue markers with mile numbers on them are to be called "speedometer check numbers" (according to a 911 operator and the sheriff's office dispatcher).

Driving up U.S. 31 between Edinburg and Franklin on a cold and windy morning (21 below wind chill), I noticed in the southbound lane a motorist in front of his car with the hood open and the blinker lights on. I assumed this to be a bad situation and looked for the little blue mile marker (which is what I had assumed they were since they are a mile apart beginning from the southern state line) as I dialed 911.

I explained to the 911 operator the situation and reported the supposed mile marker. The operator explained that there were no mile markers on U.S. 31 and that I would have to be more specific about the location.

An argument almost followed about the blue marker with a mileage number on it.

I was told that these were speedometer checks. I did tell the operator of the surroundings and was told someone would look into it.

A little time later, I called the dispatcher at the sheriff's department to discuss the situation and was again told that there were no mile markers on U.S. 31 and that the blue markers are speedometer checks. Also, that a car had already been sent to the location described and no stranded motorist was there.

I wondered why we have speedometer check numbers that run all across our state. Could it be that we want to see if we can run from speedometer check number 0 to speedometer check number 65 in one hour to verify that our speedometer at 65 mph is correct?

WRITE A

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

GUIDELINES

- Letters published must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Make sure the e-mail letter includes the writer's name, mailing address, telephone number and

e-mail address for verification.

• Opinion columns for the community forum section of the editorial page also will be considered for publication. The article should be kept to a reasonable length and should include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification.

• Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

Mail	E-mail	Fax
Letters to the editor The Daily Journal P.O. Box 699 Franklin, IN 46131	letters@thejournalnet.com Drop-off 2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31) Franklin	736-2766

I hope we have not spent tax dollars for these blue markers to check our speed.

Or could it be that these blue numbers are for odometer checks? Plus, help us locate where we are in case of an emergency.

Joe Mathis
Franklin

Eliminating property tax will require joint effort

To the editor:

Once again, property taxes are taking center stage this year at the Statehouse. Legislators from both parties and both houses are concerned with the increases in property tax and the effects it has had on Hoosiers.

Despite this being my first session, I didn't want to waste any time before getting involved in this debate that is important to so many Hoosiers. There are two proposals being discussed in the

Senate now that I'd like to share with you.

Most homeowners are surprised to learn that while working on a solution rests with state legislators, state government spends only 0.1 percent of property taxes collected.

Eliminating the property tax in Indiana will require a cooperative effort across the state. Some of the costs of local government need to be shifted to the state level. In addition, we will have to provide mayors and councils alternatives to their heavy reliance on property taxes to ease the burden placed on property owners.

One proposal is the three-step approach to elimination.

First, change the Indiana Constitution to forbid any future authorization of assessing residential or business property taxes.

Second, cap state spending so that the accumulated savings create a property tax replacement

trust to fund projects historically paid for by property taxes.

Third, establish flexibility for units of local government to replace lost revenue.

I have joined a long list of legislators as a co-author and sponsor of this legislation. We think this plan will permanently protect property owners from property tax increases; permanently protect homeowners from losing their homes if they can't pay their property tax; permanently protect non-profits from being forced to pay property taxes; let citizens decide if they want to permanently repeal property taxes; and not repeat history by only temporarily lowering property taxes.

Another proposal that has bipartisan support would have the state permanently assume responsibility for all school general fund expenses and juvenile detention costs and share the cost of child welfare.

These are significant drivers of property tax increases. Local government would have local taxing options, tied to cost of living increases, as well. County boards would be granted oversight authority on all local construction projects currently funded by property taxes. These projects would include schools, libraries, etc. Granting this oversight would contain costs and avoid overburdening taxpayers with too many projects simultaneously.

Two significant Senate proposals are moving through the legislative process this session. Both have merit, and the authors have the task of building consensus for the best elements of their plans.

Your opinion matters to me, and I would like to hear your thoughts on this costly issue. You can write me at: Sen. Greg Walker, Senate Chamber, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46208; or e-mail me at S41@IN.gov; or call my office at (800) 382-9467.

State Sen. Greg Walker
Columbus

Fast action saves incurable romantic



Norman Knight

from. All the good ones have been taken. Here's one. Hmm, I don't suppose I could get by with a "Happy Valentine's Day to my favorite aunt" card, could I? She is an aunt, after all. Nah, better not. I'll just go back home and make a card on the computer. She'll appreciate the creativity.

I wonder if they have flowers here? Hmm? A cloth rose in a little plastic tube. I wonder if that will do? I don't know; I'm thinking that is somehow not enough. I can't believe they don't sell fresh flowers here.

What kind of drugstore is this? Oh, well, I think they have flowers at the grocery store down

the street. I'll try there.

Whoa. Looks like I got here too late, as well. Not much more than some broken stems and loose petals floating in the water. I suppose I could scoop those petals up and somehow attach them to the stems. She would think that was cute, wouldn't she? Well, probably not.

You know, I could just make some flowers out of tissue paper. Yeah, use a variety of colors, spritz some cologne on there and voila! Handmade flowers to go with the computer card.

She doesn't buy into this whole over-commercialized, Valentine's Day gift-giving hype anyway. Keep it simple; keep it real.

That's her style. And speaking of gifts, I should have looked at the drugstore before I left. Well, as long as I'm here at the grocery, I'll check it out. Looks like potato salad is on sale. That's not real romantic, though. I'll go to the non-food aisle. Paper products, shampoo, glass cleaner, kitchen utensils. Gosh, not much here.

I guess I could get her a gift card. That's not a bad idea. It's practical. She shops here anyway. She could get something she really likes to eat. Heck, I'd even help her cook it. I'll buy one of these spatulas to go with the card. For her, money is no object.

Now we just need to locate some candy. That should be simple, right? This is a grocery store. Let's see, I could get one of these big bags of Kisses. That's pretty romantic. Yeah, that's it. I'll even spring for the ones in the colored wrappers. They will go with the tissue paper flowers. Color-coordinated and everything. What a plan!

OK. Now all I have to do is drive home and get to work on the card and flowers. I can't wait to see her face when she sees her gifts. I can't help it; I'm an incurable romantic.

Norman Knight, a teacher at Clark-Pleasant Middle School, writes this weekly column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.