

Stupid thoughts

In the big picture of life it was nothing.

Last Wednesday I ran into someone and made a passing comment meant to be a rhetorical question. I didn't expect an answer and meant it to be a friendly greeting. The person, someone I did not know well, responded with a sarcastic comment in front of a number of people and suddenly I felt small and stupid. Embarrassed might be a better word.

Earlier in the day, I had received a similar treatment from two others, and again later in the day, a rude dismissal during a phone call with a local business.

So, that evening as I went for a walk I asked myself the question, "Why does this bother me so much?"

I had been stewing over this, and knew most of it was not a deliberate attempt to cut me down. These particular people don't know me that well and couldn't care less about me, honestly. I was not on their radar of things to worry about that day, or any other day.

Most of the time I don't consider myself to be a stupid person, either, so what could it be? I was making a very real attempt to find an understanding and figure out what I could learn from the situation.

As I walked along I thought of how words can either bring people up or tear them down. I had found my plank.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Many of you will recognize this statement as the words of Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount when he talked about judging others.

I was ready to hold this grudge and feel all defensive when in reality, how many times have I made someone feel the same way? Can I even count? Probably not, and how would I ever know? People don't come up to you and say, "You just hurt my feelings and made me feel stupid!"

Thanks to the events of this particular day, I was reminded I needed to correct a behavior of my own. There are so many times, especially when I am with my siblings, that I pipe up with wisecracks aimed at making them laugh. And, they do. But, I also need to be aware of whether those laughs are coming at someone else's expense.

I have to figure out where to draw the line, and maybe even have a conversation with my usual "victims" to see how they really feel about it all. Maybe they love it... or maybe they don't.

This is my public declaration that I will try to make a split-second analysis of each wisecrack before it's made, to determine whether or not it will hurt someone. So siblings, if I happen to go quiet, either I am busy analyzing or there was a lot I shouldn't have been saying in the first place! We shall see. Our "normal" family dynamics might be in jeopardy.

As long as we are on the topic of stupid, how about those dumb blond jokes and comments? I can honestly say they don't make me feel dumb at all. Years ago when I worked in the front office quite a bit, there was a man who came in regularly. When he saw me, his eyes lit up, because he had found his target for a few dumb blond jokes. In my mind he was attempting to make me look dumb so he would look smarter. It didn't work.

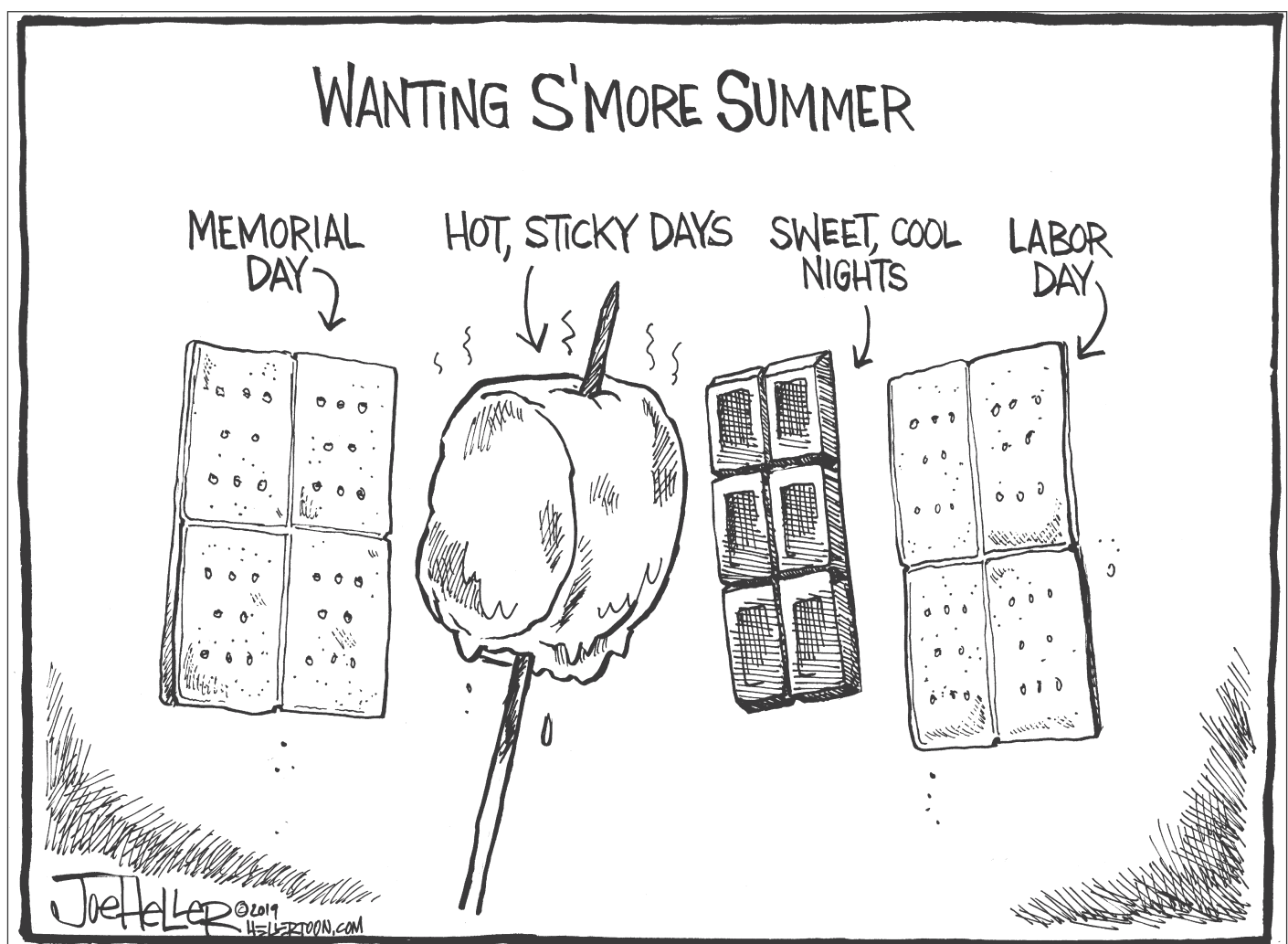
I suffered through his jokes, resisting the urge to say what was actually on my mind. They weren't funny – they were just stupid. How's that for restraint?

"They" say, not everything that goes through your mind has to come out your mouth. I say, you don't write about it all either. In my case and for your sake, that's a good thing!



by Diane Leukam

Random Reflections



The Sonnek boom

Hello again, loyal readers. Guess what – this week celebrates my first anniversary of moving to Sauk Centre and working for the Herald! I'm celebrating by hiding in Ireland.

OK, OK, it's nothing against you personally. For those of you who skipped reading my column last week, you should know I got married last Friday in Virginia where my now-in-laws live. Maggie – who is my fiancée as I'm writing this, but who should be my wife by the time this gets published – has always wanted to go to Ireland. She can trace back her Irish ancestry to specific counties, for heaven's sake, so where else could I suggest for a honeymoon? I've never been to Ireland myself, so I'm looking forward to it. Again, barring unforeseen complications, I should be there right now.

Getting back to the original topic of this column, I've been working for the Herald for a year now. It also means next week is the one-year anniversary of this column, too, so I figure it's time for a small-scale history lesson.

I had some columnist experience before I started Ultra Sonnek. When I was a senior at Benedictine College in Kansas, I was also a reporter for the BC Circuit, the college's bi-monthly news publication. While there, I was able to convince the Circuit we needed a humor column, and so the Short Circuit feature was born. It was a pretty popular addition to the paper, if I do say so myself, but I also think it was the reason the college president registered a double-take at my diploma as I walked across the graduation stage – true story.

Then, less than a year after I graduated and the Short Circuit concluded, Ultra Sonnek began. You'd think my editors, seeing my résumé and my expression, would have known better than to have let me name my own column,



by Ben Sonnek

Ultra Sonnek

but here we are. Choosing my column's name wasn't an easy task, though. Here are some of the other candidates that didn't make the cut:

- Super Sonnek
- Hyper Sonnek
- Nega Sonnek
- Sub Sonic
- I'm A-ramblin', Man
- The Padded Office
- Nothing Informative Here
- Arguing with Myself in Public
- Huh?
- Column-nundrum
- S-news Button
- Didn't Think This Through

- This Is a Coded Message
- Reading Incomprehension Test
- Insert Name Here
- Easy Cheese
- Paper View (say it out loud)
- Editor's Nightmare
- Interpretive Dance
- Ninja-nalism (again, say it out loud)
- Christopher Column-bus
- Slo-Writa (for all you pop music fans out there)
- Paper Tiger
- Another Column

As you can clearly see, there were plenty of names I could have used for this little corner of the editorial page. Who knows, maybe someday I can look into changing Minnesota's nickname as well. I'm thinking, "God's Weather Testing Ground" or "Land of 10,000 Hidden Submarines."

What do you think? Don't tell me now; I can't hear you, all the way over in Ireland.

Letters to the editor accepted

Letters to the editor and other opinion articles are welcome. Letters must be signed with a first and last name and include an address and phone number. Letters must be under 400 words and be submitted by Monday at 5 p.m.

They can be emailed to office@saukherald.com, mailed to *Sauk Centre Herald*, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, MN 56378 or dropped off at the office.

Round two

Last month I shared about my first class reunion of the summer. Well, this past weekend the second one took place. I didn't graduate twice, as I had mentioned. I attended Kimball High School from ninth grade through eleventh grade and my former classmates have been kind enough to include me in their reunions.

The day started by cleaning the stretch of Adopt-A-Highway in memory of a former classmate of ours, Jake Klein. Jake and I were very close growing up; he was like a brother to me. I remember the day I got the phone call from my mom that he had died. I was away at college and my mom immediately told me to sit down and then told me that there had been a plane crash. At his funeral they had little ribbons made from these plaid shirts that he always wore. I took one from each pattern because I had so many memories associated with each one. I still have them. Jake's parents were there that day organizing the cleanup. I haven't seen them since the funeral, and I can't tell you how good it was to hug them. As we walked the highway we caught up and shared memories of Jake. You could definitely feel his presence, especially when we all piled in the back of the trailer to pick up the bags, his mom hanging out the back, just like he would have been.

After the cleanup we said our goodbyes to the Kleins



by Sara Thompson
At the Centre of it

and then grabbed lunch before going our separate ways for the afternoon. Over lunch one of my former classmates, who lives and works in London, was talking about how much she loves Kimball and how she would someday like to return and maybe run the local paper. This turned the conversation to the town and the local newspaper, at which point I had to mention this little column and the fun I have writing it. She told me it was the best thing she had learned all day – keep in mind that it was barely noon.

Lunch was over and I came back home for a little while. When I stopped to get gas, I grabbed a copy of the Sauk Centre Herald. I wrapped a bow on it and brought it back to the reunion with me as a gift for her to read on her red-eye back to London the next day. She works for a major media company so let's hope she enjoyed a few minutes "At the Centre of It."

Originally, I was only going to go to the highway cleanup and the lunch, but my former classmates convinced me to come back for the evening and I am pretty glad they did. We ate, we laughed, we took photos, we boomeranged; it was all pretty basic, but it was a good time.

At the centre of it, a morning cleanup and an evening catch-up were the perfect ways to celebrate 20 years with this Kimball class.

Sauk Centre Herald

522 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
Phone: (320) 352-6577
Fax: (320) 352-5647

www.star-pub.com

HOURS: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Subject to change during holidays.

Periodicals postage pending at Sauk Centre, MN

THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD (USPS 482-220) is published weekly on Thursdays by Star Publications, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378. Second-class postage paid at Sauk Centre, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SAUK CENTRE HERALD, 522 Sinclair Lewis Ave., Sauk Centre, Minn. 56378

Advertising: Classified advertising and Classy Canary advertising are on a cash-only basis. Our ad takers have no authority to bind this newspaper, and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

Subscription Rates: Stearns, Todd, Douglas, Pope & Morrison Counties, \$48.00. Elsewhere in Minnesota, \$55.00. Out of Minnesota, \$58.00.

Staff

Mark Klaphake.....	Interim Editor/General Manager.....	mark@saukherald.com
Joyce Frericks.....	Business Manager.....	joyce@saukherald.com
Pat Turner.....	Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....	pat@saukherald.com
Brian Dingmann.....	Co-Production Mgr./Graphic Design.....	brian.d@saukherald.com
Amanda Thoof.....	Graphic Design/Page Layout.....	amanda@saukherald.com
Janell Westerman.....	Graphic Design.....	janell.w@dairystar.com
Maddy Peterson.....	Graphic Design.....	maddy@star-pub.com
Diane Leukam.....	Proofing.....	diane@saukherald.com
Andrea Borgerding.....	Writer.....	andrea.b@dairystar.com
Jennifer Coyne.....	Writer.....	jenn@saukherald.com
Ben Sonnek.....	Writer.....	ben.s@saukherald.com
Herman Lensing.....	Writer.....	herman@melrosebeacon.com

Katelyn Asfeld.....	Writer.....	kate@saukherald.com
Missy Traeger.....	Sales Manager/Marketing.....	missy@saukherald.com
Kayla Hunstiger.....	Marketing.....	kayla@saukherald.com
Jaime Ostendorf.....	Marketing.....	jaime@star-pub.com
Warren Stone.....	Marketing.....	warren@star-pub.com
Robin Brunette.....	Inside Sales Representative.....	robin@saukherald.com
Emily Hoiun.....	Bookkeeping.....	emily@saukherald.com
Gretchen Jennissen.....	Bookkeeping.....	gretchen@saukherald.com
Lorie Swedenburg.....	Receptionist, Circulation.....	lorie@saukherald.com
Logan Thomas.....	Sign Design.....	logan@saukherald.com
Irene Henry.....	Sign Design.....	
Mike Indieke.....	Insertor.....	