

STAFF VOICE

A column is one person's perspective on any given issue, published as a regular feature in the newspaper. A column does not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper.

I should've been Tinkerbell

A gas station attendant once told me I have a voice for a cartoon star. I giggled at his suggestion. Then I let it sink in as I drove home from my job as a catalog writer at a book warehouse in downtown Minneapolis. The thought of earning Hollywood wages by simply reading scripts for characters like girl chipmunks or tiny fairies seemed lovely. That thought was especially appealing when I arrived home to my husband bent over a pile of bills at our tiny apartment with no air-conditioning in the middle of summer. I should also mention I was seven months pregnant and our shared car had no air-conditioning either. I remember it as both a brutal and beautiful time in my life.

When I was in high school, I interned at the Grand Rapids Herald-Review. I didn't get paid in money - but in experience. So, during that time, I also planted hundreds of thousands of seedling trees for Blandin Paper Company, too. While I spent the money I earned at the tree farm for gas and fast food, I used the experience I earned from the newspaper to hone my skills as a writer and reporter. When it came time for me to

go on to college, I kept my "What do you want to be when you grow up?" card close to me at all times. Because, I knew from my first assignment for my hometown newspaper, that I wanted to write for my community. I wanted to inform people of important issues. I wanted to tell the stories of those without a voice. I wanted to help record our community's history.

When my husband made my dreams of moving back home reality, serendipity landed me a job back at the Herald-Review. As a cub reporter, I worked late shifts covering three school boards, the library board, airport commission, city council, and about two to three special events a week. Nearly every weekday evening until about 10 p.m. (or earlier if there were no agenda add-ons), I learned a lot about local government. At home, my husband learned how to play with dolls and color rainbows with our baby daughter.

Britta Arendt



HeraldReview

Fourteen years ago, I was promoted to editor - at my newspaper! During these years, I've learned a whole lot of other things. I now know not to let rouge reporters use four-letter words as a challenge to free speech; not to publish photos of snowmen that may appear to have pinecones for genitals; and not to back down when a story is sensitive but relevant.

Some people have bashed our newspaper online, others have visited our office to scold us in person. We take all critique seriously and we learn from it. We make effort to understand.

If I could make millions as the voice for the Chipette Eleanor I would want to share my earnings with the wonderful people at the Herald-Review for the work they do for this community. We cover hours upon hours of government meetings, put the time into researching a myriad of topics and then report on them so

that a third-grade reading level can comprehend what decisions are being made by local leaders. We show up at Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and Lions Club meetings. We serve on executive boards and volunteer at schools. We donate to fundraisers throughout town. But, most importantly, we publish literally millions of public service announcements about everything from winter parking ordinances and school programs to fundraisers for cancer patients and counseling columns.

What we do not do - here at the Herald-Review - is revel in finding and publishing stories to promote scandal and sensationalism. Many, many news outlets like that kind of stuff. However, we would much rather veer far away from that whenever we can. Why? Because we believe in our community - we believe that most people here are good.

I definitely don't make the big bucks I might if I were the voice of Tinkerbell. But I do take the First Amendment seriously, especially when it is in the name of public service.

Books to bucks @ your library

Get ready for deer hunting with non-fiction books and DVDs from Grand Rapids Area Library. We have a collection of classic texts and new items to help you prepare. Already a Buckmaster? Check out a good book to keep you company on-stand. Nervous about taking a library book into the field? Browse our Friends of the Library bookstore! I prefer paperbacks - they fit easily into the front pocket of my hunting coat. Good luck!

Books:
 "500 Deer Hunting Tips: Strategies, Techniques & Methods" by Bill Vaznis
 "Bowhunting Tactics That Deliver Trophies: A Guide to Finding and Taking Monster Whitetail Bucks" by Steve Bartylla
 "Bows, Does & Bucks: An Introduction to Archery Deer Hunting" by Michael DiLorenzo
 "Essential Deer Hunting for Teens" by Jonathan Ceaser
 "Jackie Bushman's Top 50 Whitetail Tactics: Hunting Techniques That Really Work" by Jackie Bushman
 "The Pocket Deer Hunting Guide: Successful Hunting With A Rifle Or Shotgun" by Stephen Carpenter
 "Rattling, Calling, & Decoying whitetails: How To Consistently Coax Big Bucks Into Range" by Gary Clancy
 "Whitetail Advantage: Understanding Deer Behavior For Hunting Success" by David E. Samuel
 "Woman's Guide To Hunting: Learn To Hunt Pheasant, Turkey, Waterfowl, Deer" by Berdette Elaine Zastrow
 DVD(s):
 Majestic Whitetails
 SoloCam Pro: How to Video Tape Your Own Hunt
 Tom Miranda Advantage Adventure series - four discs
 Ultimate Guide to Deer Hunting
 And more.

CHECK-OUT WHAT'S GOING ON AT GRAL

Friends of the Library Holiday Book Boutique, Saturday, Nov. 3, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Will you be out and about shopping the gift and craft bazaars in the Grand Rapids area? Stop in at the library for the Holiday Book Boutique, hosted by Friends of the Library. Check out a special selection of crafts, refreshments, holiday-themed and many other gently-used books, puzzles and

Library Voice



By Will Richter
Reference Librarian

more. Enter-to-win a gift basket and get some holiday shopping done. All proceeds benefit library programs and special projects.

National Novel Writing Month Saturday Write-In, Saturday, Nov. 10, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Find a quiet nook in the library or join others in the Big Riverview Room.

"I'm My Own Person" - The Persistence of Self in Persons with Dementia, Tuesday, Nov. 13, 6 p.m.

Presented by Anne-Marie Erickson and Dr. Sylvia Olney
 Hear brief excerpts from essays and participate in a conversation about dementia with a writer and a medical anthropologist. Are those living with dementia really "gone" or is there a persistent sense of self that remains?

Create a Hand-Stamped Cuff Bracelet, Thursday, Nov. 15, 6 p.m.

Presenter: Jen Anfinson
 Create a personalized, hand-stamped cuff bracelet using the arts of metal bending and jewelry stamping during this hands-on workshop. Space is limited. Register at the Reference Desk. Ages 15 and up.

Wednesday Writing Group, Wednesday, Nov. 21, 3-5 p.m.

Join the library's writing group—the third Wednesday of each month. All genres and styles welcome. Space is limited. Recommended for ages 16 and older.

Note: special time due to early holiday closure.

Saturday Story Time, Saturday, Nov. 10, 10:15 and 11:15 a.m.

Join ECFE teachers in the Story Circle for books and songs, then move to the Community Room for a snack, a craft, and a time to play and visit. Families may earn one Baby Steps coupon for attending this Story Time.

Special note: No Book Time Monday, Nov. 12. GRAL is closed in observance of Veteran's Day.

For Teens: Anime Club, Friday, Nov. 9, 3:30-5 p.m.

Watch anime, eat snacks! Start off your weekend right by watching anime at the library.

When sweets were good for you

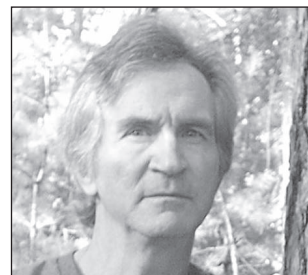
My wife is my first line of defense against typographical errors that inevitably occur in any written document. She also may offer an opinion as to the subject covered. After proofreading the last column, The Psychology of Propaganda, she offered this: "I see you've written another 'cheerful' column." One can imagine the prophets of old coming home to their multiple wives after a long and fruitless day of warning their brethren of impending doom and hearing: "You know you'd have more friends if you weren't always so negative."

But clearly, based on the recorded history of our species and documented in artifacts from prehistoric groups of humans, we appear to be doing something wrong, or are we? There should be a way to settle disputes with our ethnically and culturally distinct neighbors without resorting to mass slaughter of our own kind, one by another. There should be a better way to operate as citizens of a particular country and the planet than by the economic subjugation of the largest segment of the population by a relative few. Our own country was founded on the belief that a "well-educated citizenry" could in effect govern themselves. Our founding documents begin with "We the people," a statement unheard of in the history of human civilizations. There was no royalty to revere, no idol to bow down to. The Founders trusted in the collective judgment of an informed electorate, an assumption that is continually being tested perhaps more so today than ever.

Despite the atrocities humans have committed against each other and Nature, there is one bright spot, at least for us. We are still here. We didn't do anything so radical as to render our species extinct, at least not yet. In fact, our success was so great as to create so many of us that our sheer numbers now threaten our own existence. We might consider that what was a "positive" in the past may now work against us.

For instance, for nearly all of human history, sugary foods were not only delicious but also good for us. That was

Science Voice



By Terry Mejdrich
Freelance writer & former science teacher

because sweet foods were mostly fruits loaded with energy and nutrients. Our ancestors gobbled them up whenever they came upon them. The grains they ate were whole grains with lots of fiber that made for slow digestion with long-lasting energy for an active lifestyle. The U.S. population today is dealing with a diabetes epidemic because of our evolved lust for sweets, which has turned into a

cash cow for the processed sugar and grain industry. Processed sugars provide nothing else in the way of nutrition and processed grains are rapidly digested. The result is an overweight population struggling with related health issues.

Evolution tends to reward members of a species that possess favorable variations with reproductive success. Members of the species without those favorable variations are slowly phased out. So from an evolutionary standpoint, and the fact that we are still here, we have to consider the possibility that most of what we've done so far, and various mutations present in humans today, have in some way led to our success. This means that the human tendencies of territorialism, tribalism, what can be termed the "herd" or "pack" instinct, and the protection of each with deadly force, might be responsible for our presence on Earth up to this point. We protected our "space," we operated with others we could trust in groups, and right or wrong we more often than not did what the group did to maintain that trust.

Those three evolved characteristics of the human species, which have led to wars and millions of deaths, i.e. territorialism, tribalism, and the "herd" instinct, were nonetheless essential for our early survival. We have not shed those characteristics in modern times, but perhaps we should consider some moderation. Or else conflicts precipitated by each will continue unless we collectively decide that we are just one tribe on territory defined by one finite Earth.

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