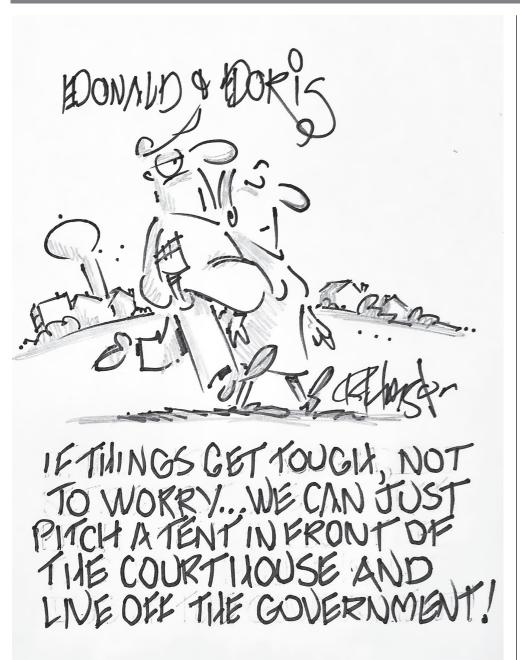
#### **A6** Stevens County Times

# **OPINION**



## Thankful for ADA as school year starts

By Jill Richardson A columnist with Otherwords

s another school year starts, I look forward to heading back to the classroom. I love class when I'm teaching it. I hate it when I'm there as a student.

I'm getting a PhD at the moment, so it's not that I don't love learning. It's just that, for me and for many others, attending class as a student brings up a host of insecurities, anxieties, and traumas, built up over decades of previous school attendance.

In grad school, I fell apart with test anxiety. An open-book, opennotes quiz was enough to keep me up worrying until 4 a.m. the night before. I'd show up the next day on three hours of sleep, barely able to complete the quiz despite spending all week preparing for it.

Fortunately, I finished up the part of the PhD where I have to attend class a few years ago. Now I go to the classroom to stand at the front and

As a student, I learned how to ask myself, "What do I need?" and "How can I alter my situation so I can get what I need as best as possible?" I feel fortunate for the Americans with Disabilities Act, which gives students like me the right to "reasonable accommodation."

If you suffer anxiety, ADHD, depression, or any other mental or physical disability, you have a legal right to reasonable accommodation. You and your fellow students should be assessed on a level playing field.

Leveling that playing field might require giving students with ADHD additional time to complete an exam, or giving some flexibility with attendance and deadlines to students with conditions that can flare up at unpredictable intervals.

When I teach, more often than not, my students with disabilities are not aware that they are entitled to accommodations. Sometimes students don't want to see themselves as disabled (and yes, that can be a bitter pill to swallow). But I don't like watching students fail tests they'd be capable of passing with the accommodations they need.

It's not weakness or cheating to take advantage of your legal rights.

In undergrad, I skipped a lot of classes and fell asleep while attending the rest. I thought I was just lazy, and I'll bet my professors did too.

Now I know I was never lazy: I had a migraine every day and I suffered from mental health problems. Being sick isn't the same as being lazy.

Embracing my status as a person with a disability has improved my life drastically. I can explain myself simply to others in a way they can understand, and I can ask for what I need in order to succeed.

It's enough to say, "I suffer from chronic illness" or "I wasn't feeling well" without providing details, without opening myself up to judgment by those who will never understand.

Our society has a long way to go before it will ever be easy for those of us with mental and physical disabilities to navigate it, but the Americans with Disabilities Act provides us with some legal rights to negotiate — and receive — what we need to contribute to society.

Editor's note: OtherWords columnist Jill Richardson is pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She's currently based in Montana. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

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**EDITOR'S COLUMN** 

### Games to play at thrift store

Then I was a kid, my parents would play cards or board games with friends while the kids would play other games outside or

I'm still a game player today. I love

to try new board games or bring out old favorites, especially on holidays or during the winter.

One day when I was looking through Facebook, a post from the Someplace Safe Thrift Store in Morris got my attention. Someplace Safe is a nonprofit agency offering a myriad of services to victims and survivors of

crime, families, and communities in a nine-county region in West Central Minnesota, according to its website. It has been operating a thrift store in

**RAE** 

**YOST** Editor

Morris for several years.

The post was a photo of two vintage games that had been brought into the store on Aug. 22.

"We have no idea who brought it. It was in a garbage bag," thrift store manager Dee Daly said.

The games were dropped off intact with boxes and all the pieces which included the treasures for an arcade style game called Three Keys to Treasure.

In today's world kids get excited about the latest video game with its bright colors and realistic scenes. But I can remember being super excited about an arcade style game with the spring loaded plunger that sent marbles bouncing from slot to slot. The Three Keys to Treasure was that kind of game. The plunger propels the marbles and the player can push a flipper to direct the marble to a particular slot in order to win a prize. I don't think I can do justice to the thrill of flipping the marble to try and direct it into the desired slot. With this Three Keys to Treasure game, the player would win a

prize from within a wheel.

The flat playing surface is plastic with a plastic back that contained the prize wheel. It's beautiful.

"It's amazing it has the box and the instructions," Daly said.
The second game is the Clown Ball game. The game box says "wonder balls are light and harmless as a feather." The player tosses the wonder balls, which must be made of styrofoam, into depressions on a tin playing board. The depressions have been assigned various point values. The bright colors on the tin are bright and bold like a carnival.

The year 1957 is stamped on the box. The Three Keys to Treasure game must be from around the same year.



Photos by Rae Yost / Stevens County Times Shown above and below are the vintage games available at the Someplace Safe



The Someplace Safe thrift store receives many donations of clothes, accessories, household items and others but games such as these aren't delivered often.

"It's very cool when they do come," Daly said of such vintage items. "It's rare when they have the box and the instructions."

Daly said it would be neat to know who donated the games and more information about them.

I wonder where they were stored all these years. Did an assortment of kids have fun playing with them? Did they cause joy when a kid unwrapped them at Christmas or for a birthday?

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### To tip or not to tip

To the editor:

I'm confused about what is acceptable/proper etiquette for tipping or not tipping the carry out people at Willie's Super Valu. I have been told in the past that customers are not to tip the carry outs, but I see some customers tipping them and they accept the tips. So I'm confused. I know you should tip service workers yet I've been told the carry out people are an exception to that rule.

I would like some feedback on this issue. Do you tip the carry out people? How much do you tip? Do you keep your money and withhold tipping?

Pamela Lent Donnelly

#### Positive reaction to crisis booth

To the editor: Wow! What a response to our crisis

booth at the Stevens County Fair. Active military home on leave, Guard members, family members of active duty and veterans who all thought our table was wonderful, really needed and that we are doing a wonderful service. Maybe the highest praise came from a boy, who after asking questions, left with the enthusiastic comment, "You have a real important thingamabob table here. Really important."

Along with the enthusiasm for our booth came the other stories too. The father picking up an anger management booklet and items because his son was soon getting out of the service, and he wasn't sure just how straight he was mentally anymore. The fellow picking things up because his veteran nephew was really messed up. Another was the son-in-law having problems. The widow picking up a dog tag saying she wished she could have had it have given to her husband. And then on Sunday, word was spreading around of a former local veteran who has just committed suicide.

When people came up to our booth we explained about the importance of the crisis number and the Veterans Press 1 hotline. One lady said she was going to take close up photos of the bandana and dog tag and post it on Facebook with an explanation and ask people to send it to help publicize the numbers. Another woman said she is going to put the bandana on her dog so that every time she took it walking she'd make sure the number showed. There was even a dad who asked his kids if they wanted to play pirate and made sure the number clearly showed on their head.

For those who did not stop by our booth and pick up bandanas, dog tags, wristbands or other items, the national crisis hotline number is 1-800-273-8255 and Veterans Press 1 issue specialist.

Joan Kopacek, President VFW Auxiliary 5039, Morris

#### **MEETINGS**

#### **Stevens County Board** of Commissioners

The Stevens County Commissioners will hold their budget meeting at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 3, regular meeting at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 10, in the commissioners

boardroom in the Stevens County Court-

#### **Hancock School Board**

Hancock School board will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 26, in the board room at Hancock School.