

VIEWPOINTS

It's Going To Get Better

By Paula Damon

At first glance, Kevin Briggs seems like most people. A middle-aged guy, living an ordinary day-to-day life with a satisfying career as a highway patrol officer.

When it comes down to it, Briggs really is an ordinary guy, but his life's work has been nothing short of extraordinary.

The 23-year veteran Highway Patrol Sergeant assigned to the Golden Gate Bridge routinely found himself, not only managing traffic but talking people out of taking their own lives.

Nicknamed the "Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge," Briggs acknowledged his secret to reaching people is compassion, communication and getting them to look up.

His co-worker Lisa Locati recalled a time in the middle of the night when Briggs spent seven hours, talking a man into climbing back to safety.

When asked what finally changed his mind, the man said Officer Briggs would not give up.

In another account, 22-year-old Kevin Berthia heard a voice as he was perched ready to jump from a narrow iron bar 220 feet above the choppy waters of the San Francisco Bay.

"I know you think things are bad, but they can get better," Briggs told the young man, hoping to convince him to live.

It was the calm, kind and reassuring voice of Officer Briggs that convinced Berthia to come down. He decided to believe, and today credits the Guardian Angel with saving his life.

"He never made me feel guilty," said Berthia, now 30 and a married father of two, as he recalled that fateful moment. "I felt understood."

"They make the decision," noted Briggs, who has been recognized by the American Foundation

for Suicide Prevention and now trains officers on how to prevent suicide. "When they come back, they start a whole new life."

While the number of Golden Gate suicide deaths is well-known, the statistic of people saved by Highway Patrol, U.S. Park and bridge security officers is actually much larger.

And their work never ends.

Around the clock, officers on bicycles, scooters and motorcycles tirelessly approach pedestrians who appear to be sad or out of place, lingering by the railing without a camera and looking down."

Highway Patrol Officer Sandro Salvetti usually starts with small talk and then asks questions. When he does, people usually do one of three things: laugh at him, say they're sightseeing or begin to cry.

"The collateral damage of suicide affects so many people," Briggs advised, posing these questions:

What would you do if your family member, friend or loved one was suicidal? Would you know what to say?

"It's not just the talking that you do, but the listening. Listen to understand. Don't argue, blame or tell them you know how they feel, because you probably don't. By being there, you may just be the turning point they need."

Don't be afraid to ask if they are contemplating suicide. It's the one question that may save their lives.

"That connection is something each and every one of us should strive for. Suicide is preventable. There is help. There is hope."

SOURCES: *Huffington Post*, Dec. 11, 2012; *Huffington Post*, May 8, 2013; *Here and Now*, July 7, 2014; *Ted Talk*, March 21, 2014.

MY STORY YOUR STORY



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The Diarrhea Dilemma

By Richard P. Holm MD

A twenty-something gentleman presented to the walk-in clinic a few years ago with severe diarrhea. He was working at a feed-lot where he was exposed to cattle and all their byproducts, and he admitted that his hand-washing skills were not ideal. He had been ill for a few days, was getting dehydrated, and now there was blood in the stool, more than you would expect from just hemorrhoids.

An estimated two to five billion episodes of diarrheal illness occur every year worldwide, mostly from infection in infants. In 2013 more than one and a quarter million people, mostly babies, died from dehydration due to diarrhea, the consequence of contaminated water.

It is in the amazing small intestine and colon where roughly two gallons of fluid flow-through daily only to be reduced to about a half-a-cup of fluid

that exits in the stool, that is unless something goes wrong. The word diarrhea literally means through-flow.

The electrolyte explanation for what causes diarrhea runs-on like a chemistry teacher on too much caffeine. But suffice it to say that we are still learning the complexities of such a system that, when working correctly, turns the stuff we shove into our mouths into micronutrients and water and then carries the necessary parts of this slurry into the blood stream in order to keep us alive and working.

The diagnosis for diarrhea is made primarily from the patient's history or story. Non-infectious causes of diarrhea include problems like shortened bowel, partial blockages, immune problems like Crohn's disease and Ulcerative Colitis, and intolerance to certain foods like milk products and the gluten in grain.

Historical clues for an infectious

cause can include attending a day care or anywhere diarrhea illness is present; working where there is exposure to animals; eating undercooked or spoiled food; and traveling to another country south of the border. Antibiotics are rarely needed to treat infectious diarrhea, and in contrast, life-threatening diarrhea can result from an exposure to antibiotics.

The most challenging cause for diarrhea comes when a person is burdened with a very nervous and sensitive bowel, called Irritable Bowel Syndrome or IBS. This diagnosis is made when everything else is ruled out. A professional should evaluate any diarrhea lasting longer than a week and produces internal bleeding.

I admitted my patient to the hospital for IV fluid hydration, the diarrhea resolved spontaneously without antibiotics, and he vowed to do better with washing his hands.

Tyrades!

The Looming Water Crisis: Cry Me A River (Please!)

By Danny Tyree

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All day I faced the barren wastes without the taste of water... - The Sons of the Pioneers

In case you missed it while washing the car, watering the lawn or taking a long shower, the recent United Nations World Water Development Report extrapolates current trends and predicts that the world's water supply will fall 40 percent short of water needs in a mere 15 years.

U.N. officials have publicized the report because water shortages could be devastating to agriculture, ecosystems, economies, health and - most importantly - the wet T-shirt contests they research while in New York City flaunting diplomatic immunity.

The hardest-hit areas would be sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia; but closer to home, a separate NASA Observatory analysis indicates that by the end of the century, the worst drought in 1,000 years could

hit the Great Plains and southwestern United States.

And of course we've heard of the mandatory water restrictions and other emergency measures in drought-stricken California. But long-term hope springs eternal. Desalination plants cost a fortune, but just a few of them could provide practically limitless fresh water - and nearly enough salt for the snacks at one Super Bowl party.

The U.N. says many factors have contributed to the global problem, but unchecked population growth is cited as the main culprit. Let me get this straight: the best way to save water is to encourage MORE COLD SHOWERS. Only in America, well, only on planet earth.

I know I've been luckier than most, but I have had a little experience with water issues. For 16 years my "day job" has involved working at a farmers cooperative, so I know of the effect of inadequate rainfall on crops and pasture. And during the winter of '94, my wife

and I had running water only one day out of a 15-day period (thanks to frozen pipes and -after a one-day reprieve - a downed power line that idled the pump at the spring). Thank goodness we were able to keep some modicum of romance in our lives. ("How do I love thee? Let me count the deodorants.")

Water shortages will be an annoyance to some, a catastrophe for others - and a financial bonanza for the lucky few. For instance, makers of veterinary anti-nausea medicines. Because all those water-skiing squirrel videos will soon feature hapless squirrels riding tumbling tumbleweeds.

It will take a lot to get people to take this issue seriously. For one thing, folks have faith in American ingenuity. They assume technology will take care of the problem. You know, like a super-hero exoskeleton capable of KICKING THE CAN FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD!

If we don't get a handle

on this situation now, we will live in a frightening new world. People will sit around the campfire singing, "Michael, Drag The Boat Ashore." Youngsters in swimming trunks will replace "Cannonball!" with cries of "Tentative toe dip!!!" Right-wing talk-show hosts will rant about "redistribution of perspiration." Philosphers will ask, "Is the glass half-empty or...half-way to the next county after armed robbers hijacked it???"

Research the issue. Start out with some relatively painless ways to conserve. Really, in a hundred years, who is going to care if you had the lushest lawn on the whole &^%\$# block?

Well, okay, maybe Betty White. But she'll be too busy procuring bootleg water for a wet T-shirt contest to say anything.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The *Plain Talk* encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the *Plain Talk* will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters to the Editor, 201 W. Cherry St., Vermillion, SD 57069, drop off at 201 W. Cherry in Vermillion, fax to 624-4696 or e-mail to alan.dale@plaintalk.net.

IRS, Congress Hold Our Liberty in Contempt

By Ron Paul

CagleCartoons.com

This week the Justice Department announced it would not charge former Internal Revenue Service (IRS) official Lois Lerner with contempt of Congress. Some members of Congress requested that Lerner be charged with contempt after she refused to testify at a congressional hearing investigating her role in denying or delaying the applications for tax-exempt status of "tea party" and pro-limited government organizations.

Cynics might suggest it is not surprising that a former government official would avoid prosecution for refusing to tell Congress about how federal employees abused their power to help the incumbent administration. These cynics have a point,

but the problem goes beyond mere partisanship. Government officials are rarely prosecuted for even the most blatant violations of our liberties. In contrast, federal prosecutors routinely pursue criminal charges against whistleblowers. For example, the only American prosecuted and imprisoned in relation to the government's use of torture was whistleblower John Kiriakou!

While some officials like Lois Lerner who find themselves at the center of a high-profile scandal or partisan dispute can expect harsh treatment from Congress, this is the expectation, not the rule. Executive branch officials usually receive deferential treatment from members of Congress. I recall one hearing on government surveillance where a representative actually apologized to a government official because Con-

gress had the gall to ask that official to testify about the government's ongoing surveillance of the American people.

In contrast, private citizens called before Congress are harangued and even bullied. Congress should stop using the hearing process to intimidate private citizens and start using it to intimidate those government officials who are threatening our liberty. For example, Congress should continue to investigate the IRS's ongoing attempts to silence organizations that work to advance free markets and individual liberty.

My Campaign for Liberty organization has had to battle an IRS demand that it hand over personal information regarding some of its top donors. The IRS is either ignoring, or ignorant of, the numerous precedents protecting the right of organizations

like the Campaign for Liberty to protect their members' privacy from government officials.

The IRS is drafting a new regulation that would empower the agency to revoke an organization's tax-exempt status if that organization sends out a communication to its members or the general public mentioning a candidate for office by name sixty days before an election or thirty days before a primary. By preventing groups from telling their members where candidates stand on issues like Audit the Fed and repeal of the PATRIOT Act, this anti-First Amendment regulation benefits those politicians who wish to hide their beliefs from the voters.

Since the IRS's power stems from the tax system, the only way to protect our liberty from this agency is to eliminate the tax code. Promising to

end the IRS is a popular applause line for politicians wishing to appear as champions of liberty. This week, John Koskinen, the current IRS commissioner, responded to these cries to end the IRS by pointing out that shutting down the IRS would deprive Congress of the revenue needed to fund the welfare-warfare state. Koskinen has a point. Congress cannot shut down the IRS until it enacts major reductions in all areas of government spending.

Politicians who vote for warfare abroad and welfare at home yet claim they want to shut down the IRS should not be taken seriously. Freeing the people from the IRS's tyranny is one of the best reasons to end the welfare-warfare state and return the federal government to its constitutional limitations.

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