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MAMA WORLD HERALD
SERPENT

ASSAULT WEAPON EVERYONE CAN AGREE ON!!!

Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

Have you ever had a broken heart? Of course you have! We all have had our hearts broken at one time or another. One day, when my grandson was very small, he said to me, "Grandma, it just breaks my heart when you make me mind you." He used his most pitiful little voice. It was precious and yet he still had to mind me. I thought as he told me this, that there would likely be many more heartbreaking events in his little life than just me making him mind. And it is interesting isn't it, that we use our heart as the seat of our emotions when we really know that our emotions are really brain things. Down through the years, and in the Bible, the heart is always seen as the center of our feelings. I suppose that is because the heart is so key to survival and when our heart is "broken", we often feel

that we can't go on living.

So what do you do when your heart is broken? Do you wallow in the self-pity that we all love so much? Do you eat your way through everything in your kitchen? Do you go for a run or lift weights? People handle heartbreak in all kinds of different ways. But there is one way that is the best way. And of course, you know what that one way is. We should turn to God. In Psalm 34:18, David writes that "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." My Father understands my broken heart and He comes even closer to me when my spirit is crushed! Not only that, in Psalm 147:3, we read, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." He is going to heal my broken heart! I won't have to feel this way forever! My Father is

going to hold me and heal me. What more comfort do we need than this?

If you are young and your heart has been broken by some boy or girl or perhaps an injury that has kept you from doing what you love, God wants to be close to you and He wants to heal your heart. If you are old and maybe words have hurt your heart, or maybe the loss of loved ones has your heart so broken, God wants to be close to you and He wants to heal your heart. Oh, please let Him! This is what He does best of all! I have always said that if God had a business card, it would say, "I heal hearts."

If your heart is broken today, turn to the One who gave you that heart. Give it all to Him and let the healing begin.

It will make the difference.

Pecked by a Blue Jay Develops Character

Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

Someone once said that we (any and all of us) are the total of all those we've known and all of the things we've experienced. It would follow that our character is developing for the entire span of our lives.

What brought this to mind was an experience with some neighbors when I was a boy in Teague. I'm the eldest of four sons and that benefited me in many ways, one of which is I got to witness a lot of things that happened to my younger brothers that could be defined as building character.

At the time of this particular incident, there were only three Webb sons, the youngest (Clydell) being a toddler.

Our next door neighbors were the Horns. Mr. Horn was retired from the railroad, the principal job provider in Teague. Horn, as he was called by toddler Clydell ("Mister Horn" being too big a mouthful), suffered from diabetes and a heart ailment.

We were allowed to go to Horn's house once in awhile. He taught me to play solitaire, a

game I enjoy to this day. I didn't think too much about it at the time, but Horn had so much time on his hands and his physical movement was so limited that solitaire and his very slow, deliberate walks around the yard were the most enjoyable things in his life each day.

Horn would amble slowly around his yard and ours. Clydell moved from window to window in our house, stood on his toes on the baseboard, and talked to Horn, who loved every minute of it. I'm convinced that Horn's affection for Clydell and those little daily encounters extended the older man's life. Horn's son and his grandchildren lived in Houston. His inability to travel and his grandchildren's two-times-a-year visit limited his time with the grandkids. So, Clydell filled a void in Horn's life.

Occasionally, Mother would let Clydell outside when Horn was out. Clydell would hold Horn's hand and they'd saunter around the two yards. A broad smile stayed on the old man's face the entire time.

On one of the toddler's visits

to Horn's house, they were out in the yard and a baby blue jay fell out of his nest. Clydell picked up the little bird and clasped it gingerly in both hands and began walking toward our front door to show Mother his "prize."

Uh, oh. Big mistake.

Mama Blue Jay took great umbrage at this tow-headed toddler's seizing her baby and began squawking and started dive-bombing Clydell, giving him several pecks on top of his head with each swoop. Clydell maintained his grip on the baby bird and extended his arms where he was holding the little jay directly in front of his chest. Despite what I know had to be painful pecks, Clydell maintained his clutch. I was paralyzed with fear and amazement and couldn't move for what seemed a long time but was probably just a few seconds.

Horn, however, was laughing uproariously and enjoying every second of what he deemed a comical scene. Clydell's anguish finally convinced him discretion was the better part of valor. He dropped Baby Blue

Jay and Mama Jay scooped it up and returned it to the nest but continued a squawking condemnation of humans from the treetop.

Mama Jay's noisy chastisement of us three humans was still going when Mother came out of the house to see what the commotion was. Horn was still laughing and I was still gawking with bug-eyed amazement. Mother gave us her "why-didn't-you-two do something" look and we brushed the smiles away with great difficulty.

I was admonished for not acting faster and saving my little brother from the pain and the fright of the bird dive-bombing him. I suppose you could say I developed a little character from that experience but probably not as much as little brother did from the painful infliction of those dive-bomb attacks by Mama Jay.

Willis Webb is a retired community newspaper editor-publisher of more than 50 years experience. He can be reached by email at wwebb1937@att.net.

Paper 'n Ink:

bringing them back...

By Lynn Brisendine

I read a news story this past week which detailed radical steps being taken in New England waters to save the Codfish.

It is a species of fish which has fed a lot of the world for centuries. Fleets of fishing boats have plied the North Atlantic fishing banks for 400 years, some making trips from Spain, Portugal, and other European countries over those centuries to harvest huge numbers of this edible staple.

Vast shoals of these fish seemed to be an inexhaustible supply. Millions of tons taken has seen this fish supply an industry along the Atlantic coast. But, and for some suddenly, the Codfish is in trouble. Some fishery experts say it could be going the way of the passenger pigeon, an estimated half a billion birds wiped out in a decade by market hunters.

Last week, the catch quotas for this species were reduced significantly. This action has fishermen howling in protest as they see not only an income stream shut down, but a way of life in jeopardy.

Saving a wild ocean fishery isn't really a new project. Texas saw its huge population of Red Drum collapse in the 1970s. I took my first trip to Aransas Pass and Port Aransas in 1973. At that time, the region was in an uproar about one of the favored catches from both commercial and sport fishermen. Size and slot limits were imposed on the fun to catch and good to eat fish. Lots of carping was going on and some were against the program.

But after a few years of protection of the wild population and some innovative hatchery techniques, Red Drum made a tremendous comeback. And the fish now fills stringers of fishermen lining the jetties, casting in the surf, and plying the waters of the bays. The Red Fish story is testimony of how conservation can bring back fish stocks.

It is easy to understand the hardship it places on people who make their livings fishing on the banks and harvesting these highly prized food fish. Still, a few years from now if the conservation plan works, Codfish will once again fill the iced down holds of a working fishing fleet.

Saving species has become a cottage industry in this state and nation. Many ranches in Texas are homes to some unique animals from all across the globe. Huge antelope, rare deer, even giraffes, rhinos and elephants are being bred and raised. Some are harvested each season by hunters who can not make it to their home ranges in Africa, Asia or other exotic locales.

Many times, these animals are rescued from areas where poaching and illegal snare traps have decimated their numbers. In some areas, the stock on Texas ranches may be nearing extinction on their far away native lands. The idea is to have live animals to save gene pools which can be and are reintroduced in their actual habitats.

As a matter of fact, the Tiger which once roamed a wide and wild Asia is in danger. These huge striped cats can be found in more numbers in the backyards of America than in those Asian haunts. Many other exotic beasts likewise have large numbers roaming fields or filling large cages all across the United States.

Many times these numbers are being considered an advantage for maintaining a viable population.

While much of these imported animals are being saved, some are also offering, if not outright danger to humans, at least some major problems. A couple of years ago a private zoo containing really dangerous animals saw its owner commit suicide after he opened the cages and loosed lions, tigers, leopards and bears. It was a mess where local law enforcement officers had to hunt down and shoot a lot of these huge animals.

Letting lions and tigers and bears out is bad enough. But other animals that have been freed after becoming too large and dangerous to keep as pets are causing a lot of harm.

Last month, a bounty was offered to hunters in the Florida Everglades to hunt down, capture and or kill pythons. Some of these tropical snakes have grown into monsters 10 to 15 feet long, they have multiplied and have decimated the native mammals in this huge watery park. These non-native snakes have hunted down and eaten so many of the small and medium size Florida mammals as to make them near extinction.

Closer to home are the herds of wild hogs which have become huge pests in every county in Texas.

Saving some while killing others results in some serious conservation.

Letter to the Editor

Mr. Brisendine and Mr. Wright:

I am a long time subscriber to the "The Seminole Sentinel" and I read both your columns every issue. About two weeks ago you printed a disgusting picture of our President, Barack Obama: huge ears, out of focus eyes, etc. On January 23rd you did it again. This time you added huge eyebrows.

This letter is not about politics. It is about decency and respect for the Office of President. Regardless of your politics, Mr. Obama is the President and deserves respect as such. You insult and downgrade the Office of President of the United States by printing pictures such as these.

As adults is our responsibility to set an example for young people. We have the right to disagree and the right of free speech but not the right to disrespect our country's President. As newspaper professionals you can do better than this.

Jamiel Aryain

Thanks for reading the Seminole Sentinel

Avoiding Tax Refund Identity Fraud... Scams Abound

By Jason Alderman

Many people file their income tax returns as early in the year as possible. Some are eager to claim their tax refund right away, while others are simply following their New Year's resolution not to procrastinate until midnight, April 15.

Let me add another good reason to file your taxes right away: tax refund identity fraud.

That's where someone uses your Social Security number (SSN), birth date and other private information to file a fraudulent income tax return in your name and then pockets the resulting tax refund. Often, a victim's first clue is a letter from the IRS contesting their legiti-

mate tax return, saying one has already been processed under that name. It can take months—and mounds of paperwork—to unravel the mess.

This scam has proliferated in recent years thanks to a confluence of events:

- There's a thriving black market in personal information stolen from healthcare facilities, nursing homes, schools, insurance companies and other institutions that require an SSN as identification.

- The IRS is pressured to begin issuing refunds shortly after taxpayers start filing returns in mid-January, even though employers and financial institutions aren't required to

submit withholding and income documentation until the end of March. Thus, disparities often aren't caught until months later.

- The growing popularity of electronic filing, where hard-copy documentation (like W-2 and 1099 forms) isn't required.

- Many people receive refunds via direct deposit and prepaid debit cards. Criminals open and close accounts using bogus addresses long before the theft has been detected.

Thanks to severe budget cuts and chronic understaffing—not to mention constantly playing whack-a-mole with thieves who dream up new schemes—the IRS is hard-pressed to keep up. In one extreme example, the

agency issued more than \$3.3 million in refunds for 2,137 tax returns filed to a single address.

But all is not lost. The IRS has significantly beefed up its fraud-prevention efforts. In 2011, they intercepted nearly 262,000 fraudulent tax returns seeking almost \$1.5 billion in refunds related to identity theft. And they now issue special personal identification numbers (PINs) to impacted taxpayers to protect their future tax filings.

So what should you do if you've been victimized? Typically, the IRS will send you a notice that:

- More than one tax return for you was filed;
- You have a balance due,

refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year in which you didn't file a return; or

- IRS records indicate you received wages from an employer you don't recognize. This could indicate that someone has used your personal information to get a job.

If you receive such a notice, don't ignore it. Complete an Identity Theft Affidavit (IRS Form 14039 at www.irs.gov) and return it with a copy of the notice to the address provided on the notice. If you did not receive a notice but believe you may be at risk, the form contains separate submission instructions.

The IRS's Identity Theft

Protection website (www.irs.gov/uac/Identity-Protection) includes tons of helpful information, including ways to tell whether your identity may have been stolen, how to report a breach and tips to avoid identity theft.

And finally, file your tax return as early as possible to beat potential scammers to the punch. If you owe money, you can always file your return now and mail the payment by the April 15 deadline.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.

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