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## Paper 'n Ink:

*If that don't beat all get out...*

by Lynn Brisendine

Watching newscasts lately sees a viewer needing a spreadsheet detailing all of the enemies we have abroad.

For a West Texas kid, several old sayings crop up which, at times, are the only way I have to address this bunch of bad actors.

The idea of putting these thoughts on paper has been wandering around in my mind for some time. And with those musings rushing around, a few new twists and turns have brought them to the fore.

Dennis Rodman's recent attempt at diplomacy with the most foreign of foreigners, Kim Jong-un, had me uttering the only words I could muster to describe my feelings about this meeting of two weird minds. *If that don't beat all get out...*

Watching ABC's George Stephanopoulos try to conduct a serious interview with the much pierced and tattooed former basketball "star" was an interesting experience. Viewers could see an intelligent, well read and totally prepared newsman try to make his interviewee make some sense.

"Guess what? I liked this guy (Kim Jong-un). He's a good guy. Guess what? He's my friend," Rodman enthused.

Stephanopolous was having none of the sweetness oozing from Rodman concerning the North Koreans. He continued to interrupt the ramblings of Rodman with comments like... "but, you do know that the North Korean government is one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, don't you?"

"Guess what?" Rodman kept beginning his sentences with that question or comment or whatever you wished to think he was trying to communicate. Rodman then told the audience that he didn't approve of what his new friend does, and it didn't seem like it really mattered to him that North Korea not only takes their citizens' freedom away, but starves them to death.

After all of this Rodman diplomatic stuff took place a couple of weeks ago, his new-found good guy buddy and his pals have once again threatened us with war. And this time it is an actual threat of using a nuclear weapon on the United States.

Again my West Texas roots kick in. *If that don't take the rag off the bush...* How, my mind considers, does this diminutive dictator and his military advisers even think they can fire one missile our way without us sending back a missile swarm of total destruction? It's kind of like a flea threatening to bite a lion on the nose. Perhaps that kind of terminology would make sense to these dolts.

Sending a nuclear-tipped missile into our territory is a serious threat we cannot take lightly. It's kind of like a little boy with an erector set trying to compete with a huge construction company using the newest machines.

It sounds funny, but it's anything but a comical gesture.

This current press struggle of a nation issuing threats points out ever more clearly why another rogue government, Iran, should not be allowed nuclear weaponry. They seem to have no conception, or fear, of using such terrible weapons on other humans.

At times it seems the Cold War has begun anew. And with it, there's a bunch of players with *their elevators not going all the way to the top...* One of these tyrants who had no fear of offering us insults, threats and a continuing hatred died this past week.

Once again a lot of regular folks in this country quietly celebrate the demise of a perceived enemy. Some others, too many of our celebrities, are saddened to see Hugo Chavez, their acknowledged "man of the people," leave the scene. Most of us, however, utter a simple good riddance.

Chavez not only cultivated a growing list of USA haters, he was funding several of them. Cuba, Iran and Syria come quickly to mind.

His death leaves questions and probably more problems. It's kind of like *better the devil you know than the devil you don't*. Chavez' death has probably shaken some other old devils, the Castros, to their core. Fidel Castro was a mentor and a hero of the younger Venezuelan and they have to wonder if the succor offered by Chavez will continue.

North Korea, Iran, Syria, Cuba and too many other countries with huge problems continue to *rattle their swords* at us ugly Americans. War with any of them is unwelcome and should be a last resort. Still, *where there is smoke there is fire...* and our leaders and our military should be planning ahead.

In West Texas we call that *planning for the worst while hoping for the best*.

IT IS WELL THAT  
WAR IS SO TERRIBLE--  
LAST WE SHOULD  
GROW FOND OF IT.  
--GEN. ROBERT E. LEE



## Clear Water from a Triangular Paper Cup Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

Something I read recently about Texas times a few decades ago when there were such things as streams of clear, pristine water prompted me to remember experiences that underscored the contrast between then and now.

Much of what I knew as forested land has seen a great deal of the trees removed to make room for drilling rigs in a natural gas boom that began a couple of decades back. Some of the removal, of course, predates the gas strike and was the result of natural population growth and expanded farming and ranching operations. This is particularly noticeable to me in my home county.

In my early childhood years (until age 8), we lived in a series of three rural rental houses in Freestone County before my parents felt they could afford to buy a house "in town" — Teague. My folks grew up in farming/ranching families and, following both their families' traditions, leased additional farming land and grazing acreage from the earliest days of their marriage. Ultimately, they came to own several fair-sized tracts for a period of time and continued to lease additional land as the need arose.

Recollections of my life's

earliest years included an occasional fence-riding foray with Dad around some of the land. "Riding fence" involved going by horseback around a particular tract, checking the fence conditions while monitoring the cattle.

Of course, I didn't know or understand any of that. I just knew I was getting to "play cowboy" with Dad on occasion when he figured there wouldn't be a lot of chasing cows or repairing fence. Much later, I learned it was more of an exploratory trip, on his part, to size up potential problems.

At this point, I only had one younger brother (in a family that was to grow to four sons) and he wasn't much more than a toddler when I had my grand adventures of riding fence with Dad.

As my parents began to enjoy some modest success in farming and ranching, and as progress will have it, checking fences by horseback was gradually replaced by mechanized means and my younger siblings didn't get to experience it as much as I did.

My mother was one of the most protective, attentive moms anyone could ever have. At times, all four of the sons felt

some resentment about tight reins, but none of us suffered any ill effects from frequently having to champ down on the bit.

I suspect the length of time between my riding fence forays with Dad increased as her requirements for safety guarantees for "her boys" placed some shackles on his freedom to go about his business while "wet-nursing" one of us as his "helper" for the day.

When Mom and Dad decided to allow me to take the occasional riding-fence trip, Mom asked about drinking water. Dad didn't carry a canteen. Streams through much of his property, particularly the forested segments, were protected from some of those elements that can pollute a creek and thus could be trusted for a "clean, clear drink of water."

Mom and Dad showed me how he cupped his hands and scooped up a mouthful of water. My hands were too small and I couldn't put together a decent

"drinking cup" in my hands. So, Mom took a sheet of notebook paper (not the coarse Big Chief tablet paper) and made a triangular-shaped cup that I could fold and keep in my back jeans pocket. When Dad and I were thirsty, we'd find a clear creek and while he used his hands, I had Mom's triangular cup with which to drink.

Thankfully, within a year or so, I grew enough that my hands formed an acceptable cup for slaking the thirst on a hard day of riding fence. I doubt anyone would drink directly from a creek today.

Of course, soon Dad was doing the checking in a pick-up truck and he carried a huge jug of water along with a lunch.

Ahh, times got much better. We'd moved to town and gotten involved in school and sports and riding fence fell by the wayside.

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](mailto:wwebb1937@att.net).

## Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

I talk often about walking with God and how important it is to have this particular form of exercise in your life. Walking with God is vital to your spiritual fitness. But, today I want to talk about standing. I was watching a movie recently about the American Revolution. In one scene, in a church building, a man is trying to build a militia and no one is with him. A young lady gets up and gives an impassioned speech about the opportunity to stand for what they said they believed in. She really calls them on the carpet about their walk and their talk. Finally, the young soldier asks again who is with him. One by one, the men of the church stand and commit to go to battle for the freedom in which they so strongly believed. A very moving scene. It has stayed with me.

What would you stand for? I was telling the students after we watched this particular scene that I had seen many of them fall for anything, but I really had not seen them stand up for much. I asked the students this same question; What would you stand for? I got one answer. One young man said he would stand for his country's freedom. I got several nods of the head on that one. But, as I said, this scene and more importantly, this question has stayed with me.

In the Bible, in Nehemiah, we find a man who stood. Nehemiah was made aware of how the walls of his home, Jerusalem were falling down. This was heartbreaking to him. So, what did he do? He went and stood before the king. The king gave him the chance to go and repair the walls. So, then he stood before the people and told them what needed to be done. The people joined him and they stood together and repaired the walls. Nehemiah was called upon to stand before his enemies. But, because Nehemiah had shown himself to God to be one who would stand when the need arose, it says over and over in the book of Nehemiah, "the good hand of God was on him" And as the story continues, even his enemies saw him stand and recognized that God was blessing him.

A man who stood so strong that even his enemies could see God in what he was doing. I want to stand like that. I want to stand where God has placed me and be the one God uses. I want to stand so that others will stand with me. I don't want to be one who falls for anything. I want to stand for God. So who is with me? Will you stand? It will make a difference!

## Upcoming Tax Deadlines are Real, File or Extend or Face Penalties

By Jason Alderman

Congress could well debate the debt ceiling, tax reform and other important economic issues until the cows come home, but one thing's for sure: If you don't pay your income taxes — or at least file for an extension — by April 15, you could be in for a world of financial hurt.

That's because the IRS probably won't give you a break on the penalties it levies on unpaid taxes unless you were the victim of a natural disaster, suffered death or serious illness in your immediate family, or experienced another catastrophic event.

You must file your 2012 federal tax return (or request an extension) by midnight on April 15, 2013, otherwise the penalty on any taxes you owe will increase dramatically. You'll be charged an additional 5 percent of taxes owed for each

full or partial month you're late, plus interest, up to a maximum penalty of 25 percent of the amount owed. (The interest rate currently charged is 3.22 percent.)

If you file your return or extension request on time, however, the penalty drops tenfold to only 0.5 percent per month, plus interest.

Here's how it adds up: Say you owe \$2,500 in federal income tax. If you haven't requested an extension, you would be charged an additional \$125 (5 percent), plus interest, for each month you're late in paying off your bill. Had you filed for an extension, the penalty would drop to only \$12.50 per month (0.5 percent).

Be sure to contact the IRS early if you won't be able to pay on time so you keep as many payment options open as possible — either call 800-829-1040

or visit your local IRS office. Also check out the IRS' "Filing Late and/or Paying Late" webpage for helpful information ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

One way to avoid this penalty is to pay by credit or debit card before the filing deadline. You'll pay a convenience fee, which is tax-deductible if you itemize. Fees vary depending on which payment processor you choose. (See "Pay Your Taxes by Debit or Credit Card" at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for details.) If you use a credit card, make sure you can pay off the balance within a few months; otherwise the accrued interest might exceed the penalty.

**Other payment options include:**

- If you can pay the full amount within 120 days, you may qualify for a Short-Term Extension. If granted, you'll still owe interest on your debt, but will avoid the application fee for an installment agreement.
- If you need longer than 120 days, an Installment Agreement lets you pay off your bill in monthly installments.
- To apply for either, fill out

an Online Payment Agreement Application at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call an IRS representative at 800-829-1040.

• Under certain dire financial-hardship circumstances, the IRS will allow some taxpayers with annual incomes of up to \$100,000 to negotiate a reduction in the amount owed through an Offer in Compromise. For step-by-step instructions, read the IRS Form 656 Booklet.

If you're unable to make payments on your installment agreement or offer in compromise, call the IRS immediately for alternative payment options, which could include reducing the monthly payment to reflect your current financial condition.

Also read the IRS's guide, "The What Ifs for Struggling Taxpayers," which contains helpful information on the tax impacts of different scenarios such as job loss, debt forgiveness or tapping a retirement fund.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To participate in a free, online Financial Literacy and Education Summit on April 17, 2013, go to [www.practical-moneyskills.com/summit2013](http://www.practical-moneyskills.com/summit2013).

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