

OPINION

Princeton, Ky.

Saturday, April 5, 2008

Quality people are winners



JIM DAVIDSON
All About Life

Each year, Money Magazine produces a list of the best places to live in America. This past year the best place, according to Money, was Fort Collins, Colo. This small community, home of Colorado State University, is nestled at the

foot of the Rocky Mountains and has a lifestyle that appeals to many urban dwellers who have moved to Fort Collins to escape the rat race of big city life. One of the things I noted about Fort Collins, along with all the other communities on the list, was a low crime rate.

The murder rate in our country was up 11 percent in 2006 over the previous year. This is not something most of us think about on a daily basis, but it is becoming more of a problem in our nation, especially in larger cities, because we have trended toward a more violent society. We have seen a University of Miami football player murdered, along with another who played for the Denver Broncos. In the past year we had a young bank teller in Little Rock shot in the back during a robbery.

No Chamber of Commerce likes to talk about crime, especially murder, because that kind of news won't attract many new people to come there to live. Yet, we know from all accounts that the "quality of life" is one of the things we would all look for in choosing a new place to live. In my hometown, we even have a newly formed "Quality of Life Council."

While it's not a pretty thing to say, the quality of life only applies to those of us who are still living, and not for those who have been murdered.

I would like to say that, rather than focusing our attention on the quality of life, we need to focus on the quality of people. It's the people in any given community that make it a great place to live, anyway.

Over the past several decades we have become a nation of sports fanatics. We have gone from having a competitive spirit of always wanting to win to one of wanting to win at all costs. There are many reasons, but like most everything else, the major reason is money. When both players and coaches are making astronomical amounts of money, you have changed the dynamics of the game itself. I am not saying that it is sports that are causing an increase in crime, especially murder, but it is contributing to the increasingly violent society we are living in. When you combine this with illiteracy, illegal drug use, gangs, and a myriad number of addictions, you have a snapshot of what the future holds.

We have to look ourselves in the mirror and say, "Is this what we really want? Are we content to continue on as we have in the past and see our society become increasingly more violent with more crime and more murder that reaches down into even the smallest communities?" I can't change this. Only the American people can decide to do that. Over time, we can do that through our elected representatives.

It's just human nature to want to win, and we all want to be a winner. Let me tell you who the real winners are. It's not necessarily the ones who set the records or get the trophies, or even those who drive the Hummers and live in exclusive neighborhoods. The real winners are quality people, and you can find them in every walk of life. I believe we need to spend more time in the future producing quality people, especially in our homes.

Here are four character traits that I believe every quality person has. No. 1: A deep and reverent respect for the rights and property of others. We must value human life. No. 2: Honesty. When we restore honesty in our national fabric, we will solve many of our problems. No. 3: Hard work. We feel best about ourselves when we earn what we receive. No. 4: A spirit of gratitude. We never achieve success all by ourselves.

(Jim Davidson is a syndicated columnist who appears each Saturday in The Times Leader. He can be contacted at 2 Bentley Drive, Conway, AR 72032.)



Basketball still big news in state

College basketball will crown its national champion Monday night, but our focus today is on basketball within the confines of the Bluegrass state. While the season may be over for our in-state teams, the news remains quite interesting.

A story out of Bowling Green Thursday was enough to catch anyone's eye. The headline on the Bowling Green Daily News website proclaimed: "Bobby Knight not coming to WKU."

The idea of Knight going to Western sounds like an April Fool's joke gone awry. But the Bowling Green paper had a full-fledged story discounting rumors that Knight was a candidate for the position vacated when Darrin Horn accepted the South Carolina job.

WKU President Gary Ransdell was quoted as saying there is "absolutely zero" chance Knight will be named the Hilltoppers' head coach.

Seems the rumor linking the winningest coach in Division I men's basketball history — and perhaps the most controversial coach — was squelched when WKU officials said there had been no contact with Knight. And those officials weren't in a laughing mood over what they termed a "cruel joke."

It appears media reports and Internet message boards fueled the fire on the Knight assertions.

UK standout freshman Patrick Patterson had ankle surgery last week, which will sideline the SEC's Co-Freshman of the Year for four to six months. But we've never seen such attention focused on a doctor as we have on Robert Anderson, a Charlotte, N.C.-based surgeon who handled Patterson's case.

Just shows you the incredible fan



CHIP HUTCHESON
Publisher's Notebook

interest in everything associated with UK basketball.

The Lexington Herald-Leader named the various high-profile professional athletes whom Anderson has worked with. It went on to give his medical resumé.

The story reported that Anderson has practiced medicine with OrthoCarolina since 1989. In his days at the Medical College of Wisconsin, he consulted with the Green Bay Packers. He has since been a consultant to nearly every team in the NFL, as well as teams in the NBA and MLB, according to the OrthoCarolina Web site.

We'd venture to say that if a medical procedure was required for the president, you wouldn't get that much information!

The unexpected death of "Mr. Wildcat" Bill Keightley, 81, this week means the loss of a Kentucky legend. He was the equipment manager for the UK basketball program for 48 years, and his love and loyalty to the players, the program and to basketball was well documented in his funeral.

UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart remembered much more than Keightley's work ethic. "He was humble...he was never about the spotlight; he was about doing his job and preparing for the next thing. He was very encouraging. He was always there to squeeze the back of the neck or shake the hand of someone who needed an encouraging word. As Coach (Billy) Gillispie said, he always made you feel like you were his best friend. Coach Hall said the same thing. Bill had a way to make many people feel that way. His advice and his wisdom were wonderful and always delivered in a timely fashion, discreetly and very considerate. He was a wise man with a servant's heart."

Protecting your turf... from a cat's perspective

It is Caity Campbell in with you today. I have to tell you about something that is as mom would say, "the bee's knees."

Most of you are aware that when children consider something is theirs, it is. Don't fall into thinking that it is any different with animals, or furry family members.

Alex has a nice basket with lots of padding and toys in and around it that is HIS! You had better not go there unless you want to put up a fight, and since I've had some health issues with arthritis, I really don't want to take him on these days.

There is also another basket located just behind HIS basket. He rarely ever uses it or even notices that it is back there.

The other day I was surfing the net on mom's computer and ran across a couple of really good things. The goodies included Priceline and Cheap Tickets.

Immediately, I went there and was given information on this really neat basket in my neighborhood that I could get for a terrific price. You should have seen the look on my face when I discovered it was the back basket, presumably owned by Alex.

I instantly secured a lease on that facility and was tickled with the bargain. It just happened to be what I'd been looking for to take my naps in.

Before finding this great deal, I had been using an old throw on the floor in the back bedroom. This new place was everything I could want, except Alex's basket.

The first day I took possession of the basket, no one hardly noticed ... especially Alex. My nap was so rewarding and when I awoke, I felt totally refreshed.

With a lease on these new digs, I began regular use of the facilities. Then it happened.

Alex discovered that the back basket was now occupied. He made no fuss the first time he noticed. I guess he just couldn't believe someone had leased a part of something that he thought was his.

After a few times of awareness that I was using the basket, he proceeded to make a fuss one day. Dad stepped in and set him straight.

He told Alex that he held the deed to the facility and that I had followed appropriate guidelines in leasing the facility and to back off. He backed off, but the situation was long from over.

One evening I decided it would be a great place to spend the night since my nap that afternoon had been so totally rewarding. By now, both mom and dad had gone to bed as well.

Alex decided to apply the rule: I think it belongs to me so you WILL vacate the premises. There was a mini-Donnybrook between the two of us with me using the New York raspberry several times.

Naturally, this scuffle awakened mom and dad and soon Alex and I were joined by the deed-holders of the facility.

I was comforted and allowed to return to the confines of the basket, which was moved to where my old throw had been. It just wasn't the same. I couldn't get to sleep there and eventually slept in the hall.

The next day dad put the basket back and gave me a copy of the lease. Then he turned to Alex and told him that in our house lease-holders are legal and I think it is mine-ers are out of luck.

Yippee! It is mine and I owe it all to Priceline for getting me such a good deal.

(Caity Campbell is the pet of Lifestyles editor Susan Campbell.)



CAITY CAMPBELL
A Cat's Point Of View

The five prominent myths of health care

By SALLY C. PIPES

Guest Contributor

Fictions don't become facts through repetition.

Keep that in mind next time you hear a politician breathlessly decry the horrors of the American healthcare system and then explain how he intends to fix it. Some of the most popular talking points in the healthcare debate pass as the gospel truth simply because, well, they're popular — not because they're true.

Below, I debunk the five most prominent healthcare myths.

1.) 47 million Americans do not have health insurance.

This figure comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. What most people don't know, however, is that the figure also includes 10.2 million illegal immigrants, and approximately 14 million people who are eligible for public healthcare programs like Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program but have yet to enroll. And nearly 10 million of the "uninsured" have household incomes of more than \$75,000 — so they can probably afford to buy health insurance but choose not to.

2.) Universal health care coverage can be achieved through an "individual mandate."

According to the federal census, nearly two-thirds of the uninsured are aged 18 to 34. This makes sense — healthy people aren't going to pay for expensive insurance they'll never use.

Those who support an "individual mandate" — like Sen. Hillary Clinton and several governors — believe that by legally requiring all Americans to buy health insurance, the young and the healthy will increase the size of the risk pool and therefore lower premiums for everyone. As a way to enforce an individual mandate, Sen. Clinton has suggested garnishing wages as a means of enforcement.

But many states require insurers to charge everyone the same rate. So young people would end up paying far more in premiums than they

should — or could — pay. It's patently unfair to force people to purchase insurance they can't afford.

Even in Massachusetts, which offers substantial premium subsidies for low-income residents, the government had to exempt a fifth of Bay Staters from the individual mandate because insurance was still so expensive. And, the plan is already \$147 million over budget.

The real way to attract young adults into the insurance market is to lower premiums — not to impose draconian sanctions. This can be done by having states reduce costly mandates like in-vitro fertilization and allowing people to buy insurance across state lines.

3.) Expensive prescription drugs are a big reason why healthcare costs are increasing.

The real price of prescription drugs is actually decreasing. In 2007, inflation rose by more than 4 percent, while drug prices increased by just 1 percent. So in real terms, drugs were 3 percent cheaper last year than they were in 2006, on average.

What's more, drug spending is but a small slice of total healthcare spending — less than 11 cents out of every healthcare dollar goes to prescription meds.

And drugs actually reduce healthcare costs in the long-term. Medicare, for instance, saves \$2.06 for every additional dollar it spends on pharmaceutical drugs, according to a paper recently published by the National Bureau of Economic Research. This is because prescription drugs often obviate the need for expensive surgeries and hospital stays.

4.) Drug importation will save patients a fortune.

At most, according to the Congressional Budget Office, foreign drug importation would save Americans one percent over the next decade.

Brand-name drugs are cheaper in foreign countries because their governments impose price controls. Drug-makers can only afford to sell pills at cut-rate, controlled prices in Europe

and Canada because Americans pay full price.

If American politicians allow foreign drugs to enter the U.S. market, they'll in effect be importing price controls too. Such action will not only create practical problems, like shortages, it will also deny firms the return on investment necessary to plunge into the next round of research and development into new cures.

It takes nearly \$1 billion to bring a new drug to market. Investors are willing to take on such a risky investment because the rewards of developing a cure for Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, AIDS, or diabetes are considerable. If the profit motive vanishes, the miracle cures for which America's drug industry is responsible would vanish.

5.) The state-run healthcare systems in Canada and Europe are better and cheaper than America's.

People who make this claim usually point to the fact that life expectancy is higher in Canada and Europe. But life expectancy is influenced by a number of variables aside from the quality of a country's healthcare system — like diet, genetics, exercise, smoking, pollution, and even marital status.

A study published last year in the British medical journal The Lancet suggests that America is much better at treating cancer than Europe or Canada. Researchers found that Americans have a better survival rate for 13 of the 16 most prominent cancers. An American man has nearly a 20 percent better chance of living for five years after being diagnosed with cancer than his European counterpart.

This study's findings tell us a lot more about the quality of a healthcare system than life expectancy rates do, because the relationship between treatment and outcomes is tighter, clearer, and more direct.

(Sally C. Pipes is president and CEO of the Pacific Research Institute and author of "Miracle Cure: How to Solve America's Health-Care Crisis and Why Canada Isn't the Answer.")