

VIEWPOINTS

EDITORIAL

Teaming program shows cooperation

The Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow program in the Kiel and New Holstein school districts is a shining example of what cooperation between multiple entities can accomplish.

That was on display Monday afternoon at a recurring progress update meeting held in the New Holstein High School library. In attendance were administrators and educators from both school districts as well as representatives of the businesses and organizations which have provided funds for years to help make the program successful.

There is so much right about Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow that it is hard to know where to begin. The vision of the program which has been around for a handful of years is to work to ensure that all youths in both communities are successful in school and life. To reach that vision, businesses and organizations in both communities annually donate funds to the two school districts so that they can run a myriad of programs and activities which benefit not just students but the entire families of students.

The program was the brainchild of Mike VanderZanden, president and CEO of Amerequip, who was present at Monday's meeting and remains a strong backer of Teaming. VanderZanden knew that there was a need for more programs to improve the overall health of local families. Local businesses and organizations had the funds to provide such programs but neither the expertise nor staff. Local schools had the expertise and staff but were lacking the funding. These entities coming together and working together have made Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow possible.

But the cooperation does not end there. Another of the uplifting aspects of Monday's meeting was seeing how the two school districts are working together. There always will be healthy competition between the neighbors on the athletic fields and courts, but in the Teaming program there is only cooperation and sharing.

As a matter of fact, one of the programs New Holstein's representatives said they are getting off the ground is a hygiene closet for middle and high school students to receive free items that perhaps they are not getting at home. Kiel already has that program in place and shared with New Holstein things they have learned and changed along the way. Kiel representatives even said they had some excess supplies they want to give to New Holstein to help get their hygiene closet started.

There is a long list of other ongoing programs which Teaming has funded—Sources of Strength peer leader groups in both districts, Caring School Community at New Holstein Elementary School, Kindness Week at Zielanis Elementary School, the Student of the Month program at New Holstein High School, seventh grade camp at Kiel Middle School, the Feb. 22 Steve Jones presentation at Kiel High School, and many more.

Keep supporting this great example of cooperation.
—Mark Sherry

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COLUMN

Lots of balloon experts out there

Well who would have thought when last week started there would be so much interest in a balloon up in the sky—and who knew there were so many balloon experts in the U.S.?

I'm talking about the much-discussed and debated Chinese "weather" balloon which gently floated from Alaska to Montana to Missouri to just off the shore of South Carolina where it had a rather sudden date with a U.S. missile.

During and—even more so—since the balloon made its flight over the U.S. the debate has taken more twists and turns than the balloon itself.

The millions of military/balloon experts who apparently all frequent social media certainly knew what to do with this balloon, starting with "shoot it down immediately!"

For starters, this was not your run-of-the-mill birthday party balloon. The balloon itself was 200 feet tall, and the apparent data gathering package underneath it was described as being the size of three buses or a small airliner.

"Well it sure didn't look that big on TV," some of our experts might say. That is because it was 12 miles up in the air! I think on the side of it was written "Caution: Objects 60,000 feet in the air may be larger than expected." Unfortunately, it was written in Chinese so hardly any Americans could read it.

Yes, there are a lot of wide open spaces in Montana and chances are it would not have damaged any humans or man-made structures had the military downed it there. On the other hand, can you imagine the condemnation of our

BEHIND THE FRONT PAGE

By Mark Sherry



government if this thing had fallen in downtown Choteau, population 1,700?

My first reaction to the "blow it up now!" people was, "Um, what if there is a weapon of some sort in there, including a bio weapon?" But that was just me being silly—the Chinese would never intentionally or unintentionally be the source of a disease which creates a world-wide pandemic, right?

We should be thankful to the Chinese government for the many humorous moments this incident has provided, led by their supposed anger that we shot it down. So let me get this straight: If we fly a balloon over Beijing you're all going to just go outside and wave to the attached camera? Not likely.

I'm not sure what is scarier—that China may be testing something with this "accident," or that so many Americans don't trust that our best and brightest military leaders examined every possible angle and option of this event. Actually, I do know what is scarier, and it is the latter.

COLUMN

Pantry restocked for week

My grocery list the other day contained the following items: potatoes, sugar cubes, honey, pudding mixes and carrots.

We have corn and green peppers in the freezer. I also "shop the basement" frequently for home canned tomatoes (juice, sauce and stewed), green beans, applesauce, jams and pickles (sweet and dill) to supplement our grocery trips. Hubby does most of the cooking and baking around our house, and he's really good at it, too.

We use unprocessed potatoes in a variety of ways—baked, fried, scalloped, potato pancakes, potato salad (German and American) and more. Our family prefers the Yukon Gold variety, and we successfully grew them last summer in one of our garden boxes. We rarely make mashed potatoes, so we keep a box of good quality instant potato flakes on hand.

I recently learned online that there is a secret ingredient that can be added to instant mashed potatoes to make them more like the real thing. For those who don't cook, the real thing involves actual potatoes, peeled or not, that are boiled in water, drained and mashed with butter and milk. I read on eagerly, expecting the secret ingredient to be an added seasoning, broth or some such improvement. It turns out the secret ingredient is...potatoes. Canned potatoes, that is. This technique involves heating up the canned potatoes in a pan with a little milk or water, draining them and mashing them briefly before added them to the already made instant potatoes. What effect do the canned mashed potatoes add to the instant mashed potatoes? The answer is lumps. Apparently lumps in mashed potatoes are a good thing. Who knew?

The next item on my list was sugar cubes. I haven't thought about these little things for years. They have been around for 150 years, although the long-ago cubes were really more like lumps than cubes. Old movies and TV shows from the 1950s often had a hostess asking guests, "One lump or two?" The desired number was then elegantly dropped in the guest's coffee cup using tiny tongs.

We have a box of sugar cubes on our liquor shelf. They are used for mixing up Old Fashioned cocktails. Hubby likes an Old Fashioned occasionally, but they are not my cup of tea. Speaking of which, I have been using the sugar cubes lately in my daily cups of tea. The whole point of sugar cubes is to accurately measure one teaspoon of sugar per cube, whether

RUTH'S REFLECTIONS

BY RUTH WASMER



added to a hot drink (I use two) or muddled (crushed) in the bottom of a glass when mixing up a cocktail. I now have a small bag of sugar cubes in my desk drawer at the office, which is much easier to use than a spoonful of sugar—not as messy either.

We could buy honey just about anywhere, but we like to get ours from a small business in the north woods. The owner also has a sugar bush and sells maple syrup. When he is out and about, the sales are on the honor system. There is a cabinet holding the honey and maple syrup in various sizes next to the house, along with a slotted lock box for cash "deposits." We stop in when we're up north, but sometimes settle for store bought.

I like to have pudding mixes on hand to use up milk nearing its expiration date. I prefer the kind that needs to be cooked, because they taste better than the instant variety. The pudding can be made up quickly after supper in the microwave—eight minutes or less. The large boxes take three cups of cold milk and make four large servings or six smaller ones, and the small boxes take two cups of cold milk and make two large or four smaller servings. Hubby and I like to eat the first servings when they are still warm.

We eat a lot of carrots at our house but we have not had good luck growing them ourselves. Some years, they haven't even sprouted. Other years, they grew, but turned out small and spindly. Fortunately, whole carrots are reasonable and available to buy in the grocery stores all year round. I really don't have any use for the pre-prepared baby carrots, or the carrot chips or carrot straws, for that matter—they don't seem to have much taste. We like to prepare carrots at home, whether sliced, diced, grated or sticks.

For this trip, I remembered to take my list along, which is always a good thing. With fridge and pantry restocked, we are ready for another week's meals.