

A cure for childhood obesity?

By Don Lein

"We've done diet and exercise studies for a hundred years and they don't work well, it's time to look at different causes" indicates Dr. Richard Atkinson, co-editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Obesity.

Indeed the Federal Government spends over \$1 billion on nutrition education, yet a recent study by McMaster University of 57 such programs found that 53 had no impact and the remaining four's impact was minimal.

Conventional wisdom proclaims TV to be the culprit and if we could simply get the youngsters away from TV, we'd be a fitter nation. Alas, in the last three decades obesity has spiked while the average increase in TV watching has increased 7 minutes during the same time span. Also, when TV is turned off the average youngster does not go out and play basketball or run, but rather turns to another sedentary activity.

Recent studies are pointing in another direction, which appears to be counter-intuitive – that youngsters can become less obese by doing the antithesis of activity, namely sleeping more. All the studies agree that children, on average, who sleep less are fatter. This is confirmed by worldwide studies done in Japan, Canada and Australia that show that those children who get less than 8 hours sleep have a 300 percent higher rate of obesity than those who get 10 hours. In a study done in Houston, middle schooler's and high schooler's odds for obesity went up 80 percent for each hour of lost sleep.

Why is this so? Dr. Eve Van Cauten found a "neuroendocrine cascade" linking sleep loss to obesity. She found that sleep loss increases hormones that stimulate hunger and fat making, while decreasing those hormones that suppress hunger and breakdown fats. She has also experimented with slow wave sleep and how its interruption can cause additional hormonal activity linked to obesity. Studies have also shown that the less sleep a child gets the less active they are. Therefore a good night's sleep promotes calorie burning the ensuing day.

With these alarming findings you would expect some startling pronouncements by government agencies who fund obesity studies. In 2007, the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Center for Disease Control were not prepared to comment on this kind of research even though they spend hundreds of millions each year on obesity research. However, now the CDC recommends that high schools consider later starting times, with their agents indicating that a change in school start times can change lives.

That, however, is another column. You can get a head start by looking at the success of starting later in the day in Edina, MN, where after they changed the starting time of the school from 7:25 to 8:30 a.m., the top 10 percent of their student's SAT scores jumped 56 points in math and 156 in verbal. In Lexington, KY, an hour later start time resulted in a 25 percent reduction in teenage car accidents.

The moral seems to be, sleep more and perform better, on a leaner frame.

Don Lein is a Chatham resident involved in a variety of civic organizations.

Micro-dwelling on past politics

By Jeff Davidson

The University of North Carolina produced a comprehensive exhibit a few years back showing which buildings and infrastructure were constructed with the help of slaves. Instantly, present-day black students comment that when they walk by such and such a building it changes their outlook of campus.

Broaden this phenomenon to all society and you quickly understand that to keep recanting the past down to the most minute detail harms as much as it helps. What if UNC were to create an exhibit that listed the location of every incident of, say, men accosting, attacking, or raping women on campus? Print up the map, distribute it to all women on campus, and none of them could go a hundred feet without knowing that, here too, was part of the university's ignominious past.

Slavery has existed in every major society on earth starting from thousands of years before Jesus of Nazareth. Western societies led the efforts to put an end to it. Slavery exists today in the Sudan, Niger,



Silent Sam, the UNC statue of a confederate soldier, has been a frequent source of historical controversy.

Mauritania, parts of Thailand in the sex industry, and even in the U.S. with as many 18,000 to 20,000 people in some form of forced labor or sexual service. Where is the hue and cry about today's victim's of slavery?

Study the past, learn from the past, and then move on. Opportunity in the U.S. facing all Americans today, even in a very tough economy, is magnificent compared to our brethren, and has never been greater in education, in the arts, in the sciences, in progressive organizations, and for entrepreneurs. Needs of the populace don't disappear: they shift.

Keep micro-emphasizing the past, and you'll keep people enslaved to it. Fail to teach about the abundance that is possible for those who apply themselves and you will condemn adherents to mediocrity and meandering.

Jeff Davidson, "The Work-Life Balance Expert," has written 56 books, and is also a professional speaker. His websites are www.BreathingSpace.com and www.Work-LifeBalance.net.

Large dailies are sick and shrinking

A few days ago a short news article reported four large newspaper companies have come out of bankruptcy after shedding \$ 2 billion in debt. None of those companies are nearby but the \$2 billion figure just happens to be the debt of the McClatchy newspaper chain that owns the Raleigh News and Observer.

So far as I know, no one has suggested, reported, or hinted that any part of McClatchy is going to planning to declare bankruptcy. With that out of the way, it worked for four others.

Incidentally the poor debt holders who were hoovered out of two billion bucks have not been identified. They were probably banks. The newspaper or companies chose Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy laws that allowed them to publish as usual and held off creditors until they could settle their debts.

The system certainly favors the companies but is a thousand times better than a newspaper getting a two billion dollar bailout package from the federal government. Is it possible? Would the N&O even accept such a deal? We hope not. The paper and its owner are already head over heels, in the tank, over the top, all hands on deck supporters of liberal and Democrats.

Those papers are as close to being Pravda as you can get. They finally had to put John Edwards on the front page after hiding the bad news inside. They finally ran the ACORN scandal inside with a brief report and two long columns of ACORN's alleged "good deeds."

I believe ACORN is a carbon copy of Brown Shirt storm troopers spending millions of federal dollars to spread the word for the party.

Media Meditations

by R.L. Taylor



There is no evidence anywhere that indicates the News and Observer is losing money. I hope it is able to help the mother company to survive because newspapers of any kind are important to Americans to get all views of any issues. But there are some grim figures.

According to last year's Audit Bureau of Circulation the N&O lost about 19,000 subscribers.

Newspaper executives estimate the American family has 3.3 members which means the N&O lost about 50,000 readers

The question is did 19,000 homeowners call the owners and say, "Stop the paper now." I doubt it.

I think a lot of papers are cutting back on purpose to save money on papers and delivery costs. They can get by with it because iron-bound circulation figures are not as important as they were 15 years ago. The big chain retail stores only want certain zones in a community and don't like to waste money in the slow pay-no pay areas.

That is a ticklish problem for newspapers. No one, liberal or conservative, wants to admit they don't deliver in certain areas because the residents don't count. Frankly, I don't now how it works. If the papers admitted they tightened their operating perimeter the public might think better of them.

Either way, the big city newspapers are in trouble while the small community papers and bi-weeklies are happily chugging along. When those owners go to the bank, they putting money in and are not on their knees begging for another loan.

R.L. Taylor has been a newspaperman for more than 50 years, working as a reporter, editor and publisher.

BRIEFS

continued from page 2.

Derby Party at the Clubhouse at Briar Chapel on May 1.

This is our main fundraising event of the year and will be held from 3 to 7 p.m.

Heads Up! has served special-needs children in Chatham County for nearly 20 years, and we have continued to grow as a result of substantial support from volunteers and contributors, all

united in the mission of providing therapeutic riding services to those who can benefit from equine experience and interaction.

In 2009 we received a generous bequest and this gift has enabled Heads Up! to move to a larger facility at 4721 Alston Chapel Road in Pittsboro. Heads Up! will once again offer a summer horse camp in June and we are currently accepting applications for these sessions

Tickets for the Kentucky Derby Party fundraiser are \$30 and include a gourmet buffet, live music, cash bar, hat contest, silent auction and race coverage on big screen TVs.

Tickets can be ordered online at www.headsuptrp.org or by phone at 542.6207 or they can be purchased at the door.

Got briefs? Email your news to chathamcoline@mindspring.com