

Viewpoints

A new member of AARP

Sometimes the simplest of comments can have a profound impact. This occurred to me on Thanksgiving afternoon when my son announced, "Hey, Dad, I joined AARP the other day."

That's simple enough but then it sank in. My son has joined the American Association of Retired People and one must be at least 50 years old to do that!

I am now so old my son is a member of AARP!

His motives for joining AARP are in line with the Huisman way of thinking. "It's not a big deal," he explained, "but I like the discounts."

It has been a half century since my son — his name is Dirk, by the way — made his debut and that was an experience in itself.

His mother was not a large person but his father was. This child was destined to be larger than the average baby.

Working in radio at the time, I was within a minute or so of delivering the mid-afternoon newscast when one of the secretaries pounded on the glass window of Studio B and mouthed the words, "Your wife is on the phone!"

I knew things were about to happen so I took the call and hurriedly told Cindy I would be right home to take

her to the hospital. I grabbed my stack of news stories and gave them to the announcer on the control board and said, "You're going to have to do the newscast. I need to get Cindy to the hospital."

I made the quick trip home, got my wife in the car and in less than 10 minutes more we were at the local hospital. Cindy was taken into a labor room where she spent nine long, agonizing hours.

It was during her time in the labor room that she tearfully declared that she never wanted another baby. A few years later when she started talking about having another child, I naively reminded her of that statement. That's when I was told to never listen to anything a woman says during labor.

Around midnight Cindy was taken to the delivery room where fathers were not allowed at that time. I sat alone in the maternity waiting room from where I could hear my wife's cries of pain.

The next time I checked my watch and it was nearly 1 a.m. After pacing the circumference of the small waiting room multiple times and reading two-year-old magazines it was nearly 2 a.m. Then 3 a.m. and more sounds of agony but no baby. I remembered

Country Roads

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hearing of women dying during childbirth and was a mess of worry and impatience. It's 4 a.m.; still nothing.

A little before 5 a.m. I heard excited conversation from down the hall. Then, after several more minutes, I heard the young doctor shout, "My God, it's a whale!" I breathed a sigh of relief. That's my kid, I thought to myself.

In due time a nurse brought a blanketed bundle into the waiting room and I anxiously moved in for a look. "It's a boy," she said with a smile.

She must have seen the look of shock on my face. The baby's head was misshapen. My kid had a conehead!!

The nurse assured me his head would round out in a short time.

After a few hours of sleep at

home I went back to the hospital to see my wife and our son. I checked; his head was rounding out.

The doctor stopped in to check on Cindy and baby and apologized for the "it's a whale" declaration. He explained that Dirk, at nearly 10 pounds, was the largest baby he had delivered to-date and later in the day he was reprimanded by older doctors for his spontaneous exclamation. We assured him we were not offended.

These days it seems like that event was only 15 or 20 years ago but on December 19 it will have been 50 years!

Over those years a lot has happened. Dirk gained a baby sister four years later. He graduated high school and college, left home and established a career. He's a kind, bright, decent and hardworking young (well, maybe middle-aged) man.

We lost his mother 10 years ago. She would be so proud to help Dirk celebrate his 50th birthday.

And I'm left with the reality that I'm old enough to have a child who is a member of AARP.

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Share Your Views

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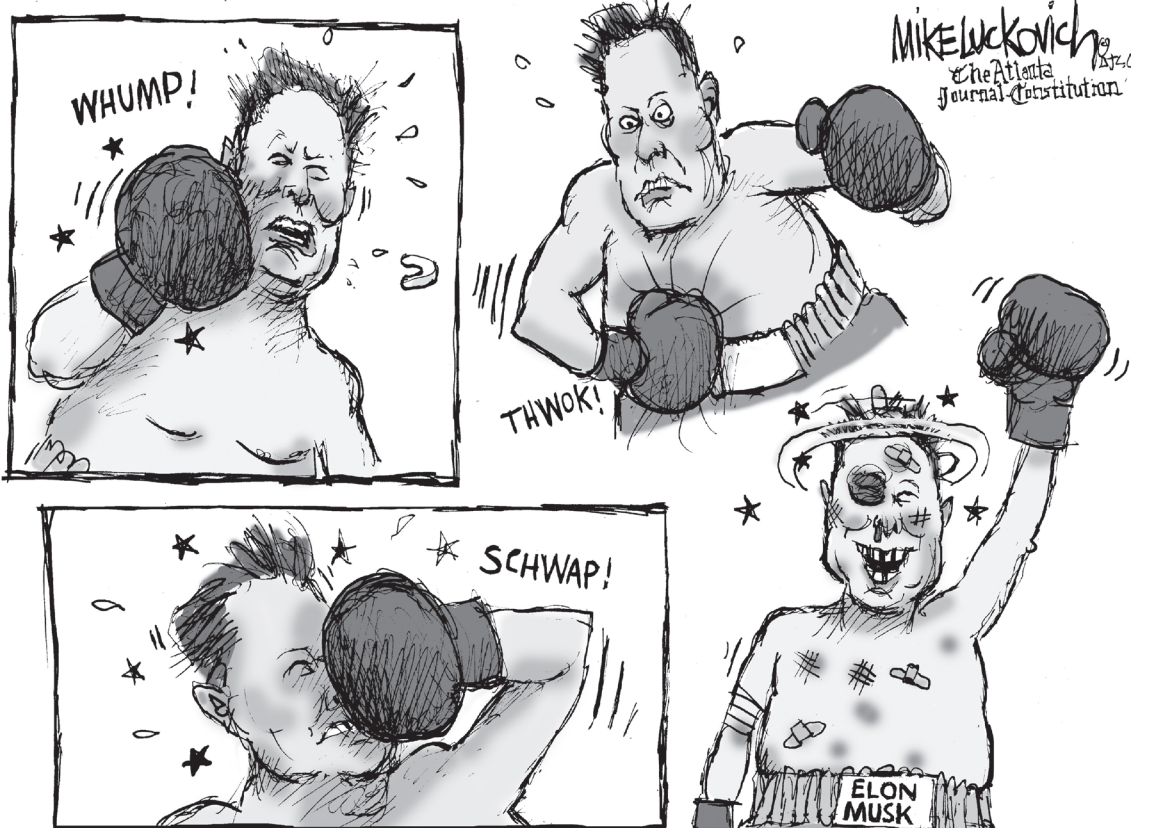
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One submission per month per writer.



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"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."



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135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1501
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Sen. Joni Ernst
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<http://www.ernst.senate.gov/public>

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How to Reach Your City Council members

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City Council meetings are held the first and third Mondays of the month at 6 p.m. at the Council Chambers in City Hall. For more information, contact the City Manager's office, 832-9151