The Government is Wasting Your Tax Dollars (Part 2)
By Ryan Grim with Joseph K. Vetter
Readers Digest January, 2008

The Tab
Wasteful Health Spending:
$60 billion (fraud, waste, overpayments) + $100 billion (modest 15 percent cost reduction) + $15 billion (closing the 12 percent loophole) + $10 billion (unnecessary Medicare administrative and drug costs)
Total $185 billion
Running Tab: $325.5 billion + $185 billion = $537.5 Billion (note that all of these are Bs not Ms—ed.)

Running Up Tabs
3. Military Mad Money. You’d think it would be hard to simply lose massive amounts of money, but given the lack of transparency and accountability, it’s no wonder that eight of the Department of Defense’s functions, including weapons procurement, have been deemed high risk by the G.A.O. That means there’s a high probability that money—“tens of billions,” according to Walker—will go missing or be otherwise wasted.

The DOD routinely hands out no-bid and cost-plus contracts, under which contractors get reimbursed for their costs plus a certain percentage of the contract figure. Such deals don’t help hold down spending in the annual military budget of about $500 billion. That sum is roughly equal to the combined defense spending of the rest of the world’s countries. It’s also comparable, adjusted for inflation, with our largest Cold War-era defense budget. (0920) Maybe that’s why billions of dollars are still being spent on high-cost weapons designed to counter Cold-War era threats, even though today’s enemy is armed with cell ones and IEDs. (And that $500 billion doesn’t include the billions to be spent this year in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those funds demand scrutiny, too, according to Sen. Amy Klobucha, D-MN, who says, “One in six federal tax dollars sent to rebuild Iraq has been wasted.”)

Meanwhile, the Pentagon admits it simply can’t account for more than $1 trillion. Little wonder, since the DOD hasn’t been fully audited in years. Hoping to change that, Brian Riedl of the Heritage Foundation is pushing Congress to audit provisions to the next defense budget.

Stimulus Payment Schedule for Tax Returns Processed by April 15
Economic stimulus payments will be issued according to the last two-digits of the main filer’s Social Security number. People who use direct deposit also will be amount the first to receive the payments starting May 2. Paper checks will be put in the mail starting May 16.

Direct Deposit

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Paper checks

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The membership is the highest authority of Local 1950
http://uaw1950.nmu.edu/scholarships.htm
Let me know if you have any questions.
Dawn L. Wilder, M & CS
Women Helping Alzheimer’s Pool Tournament & Raffle
Saturday, April 19th 9am

I am selling raffle tickets ($1) for this fundraiser. All monies will stay in Marquette County and are for respite care. This fund is for caregiver relief or travel to and from appointments. If you would like to purchase a ticket, please let me know and I can come to your work site on my lunch or break. Two years ago we raised over $7,500 for this fund and are well on track to increase this amount for this year’s fundraiser. Thank you.

It anyone has anything that they would like to donate for our bucket drawings or 50/50’s that we do during the event, let me know I would be HAPPY to pick it up.

Prizes include: Gold Necklace (value $1,200), handmade quilt, Tastefully Simple basket, PartyLite certificate, casino overnights, haircuts, oil changes, Bill Hamilton McCarty’s Cove print, Econo gift card, and lots more.

Betsy Jaakola, Bookstore

To forgive is not to forget.
Mahatma Gandhi

Table of Content

Government Wasting Tax Dollars 1
Scholarship deadline ................... 1
Stimulus Payments ................... 1
Alzheimer’s fund raiser ................. 2
Meeting Schedule/Officers .......... 2
Congratulations ....................... 2
Take-A-Break Winners ............... 3
New Officers ................................ 3
Employment Changes ................. 3
Thank You................................ 3
Legislative News ....................... 4
Senior Citizen’s Corner ............... 5
Michigan Mittens ..................... 5
Tart Cherry Juice ....................... 5
Recognition Banquet ................. 6
Historical April ......................... 6
A Dog’s Purpose ....................... 7
Cheap Tomatoes ....................... 8
Committee Reports .................. 9
Chaplaincy Corner ................... 9

Membership meetings
April 2, 2008 - Michigan Room
May 7, 2008 - Explorer Rooms

Executive Board meetings
March 25, 2008 - TBA
April 29, 2008 - TBA

CONGRATULATIONS

Trent Steven Lorens, the first child of Steve and Terri (NMU Foundation), was born December 13, 2007. He weighed 8 lbs. 12.4 oz. and was 20.5 inches long. Mom said he’s a darling.

2006-2007 Officers

President - Sue Tollefson
Vice President - Dawn Wilder
Secretary - Michelle Kimball
Treasurer - Rita Leppanen
Sergeant at Arms - Phyllis Zaenglein
Guide - Karen Smith
Trustees - Angie McCabe, Joann Jordon, and Rhonda Peterson
Bargaining Team - Grace Albert, Gary Jerry, Jeff Roo, and Pat Woods

District Representatives

Chief Steward - Grace Albert

District 1 - Terry Williams: Alternate, Angie McCabe - Cohodas, UC, A&D, and Gries

District 2 - Ray Liubakka - Services Building, Jacobetti Center, PEIF, Superior Dome, and Berry Events Center

District 3 - Dawn Wilder - West Science, Learning Resources, Magers, New Science Facility, and Whitman

District 4 - Kimber Olli - McClintock, Thomas Fine Arts, and Hedgcock
**Take A Break Winners**

January through March:
Keith Greising, (Library); Kristine Johnson (Admissions); Terri Williams (A&D); Melinda Nelson (Registrar); Julie Downs (School of Business); Rhonda Peterson (Dean of Students); Lori Rintala (English); Cindi Carlson (Financial Aid); Marilyn Libick (Financial Services); Julie Djupe (Rec Sports); Angela Maki (International Affairs); Matthew Herbig (LRC); Terri Lorens (NMU Foundation)

April 7 through May 5.
Kristi Harvala (Physics); Patti Rizzio (Transportation); Jean Schultz (Purchasing); Linda Greenberg (Student Services; Diana Waters (Financial Services)

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**EMPLOYMENT CHANGES**

**Additional Assignment**
Kara Cox's additional assignment ended on 3/21/08.

**Transfers**
Cindy Kleinschmidt transferred to the Sr. Clerk II 4D position in the Registrar's Department, effective 3/10/08.
Tammy Clisich transferred to the Sr. Secretary II 4C position in the Career Services Department effective 3/24/08, replacing Lorraine Hillock.
Rhonda Peterson will transfer to the Principal Secretary 4B position in the Academic and Career Advisement Center effective 4/28/08, replacing Cindy Schwartz.
Lorraine Hillock transferred to the Reservations Coordinator 4B position in the Conference & Catering Services, effective 3/2/08. Due to Lorraine's transfer, Kara Cox will receive an additional assignment, effective 3/2/08, to assume duties of the vacant Sr. Secretary II 4C position in Career Services.

**Increased hours**
Sherri Trotochaud's position increased from 30 to 35 hours per week effective 3/24/08.

**Reduced hours**
Kristi Harvala's hours are reducing to 20 per week for the period 5/12/08 through 8/18/08.

**Resignation**
Randy Krieg resigned effective 3/1/08.

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**New Officers**

Election nominations were made at the April 2 meetings. Several positions were decided by acclamation, as there was only one candidate. These are:

- **Vice President** - Michelle Kimball
- **Secretary** — Andrea Wrubel
- **Treasurer** — Rita Leppanen
- **Sergeant at Arms** — Andrea Jordon
- **Guide** — Kris Johnson
- **Trustees** — Joann Jordon, Angela McCabe, Linda Greenberg

**Bargaining Team** (previously elected) - Grace Albert, Ray Liubakka, Tracy VanAbel

Stewards remained the same except now there is a vacancy in District 3.

Two nominees, Sue Tollefson and Muriel Kangas, are running for President. We will be having a paper ballot for this position. Please return your ballot. Make your vote count!

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**Cast Iron Skillet Care**

Nothing holds in heat like a cast-iron skillet. To keep your pan clean, rust free, and ready for action, wash with hot soapy water and a stiff-bristled brush. NEVER soak. It will damage the smooth, seasoned finish. Towel-dry immediately and coat lightly with vegetable oil while the skillet is warm. Put a paper plate or paper towel between stored pans to absorb moisture.

Source: Good Housekeeping October 2007

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**THANK YOU**

Best wishes to all of my dear old friends and new friends of local 1950.
Thanks for the gift of books. What a thoughtful, delightful gift for the “book lady”! I’m hoping the doctor will OK my trip to Florida at the last part of the month of April but if not, I’ll get some suntan lotion, turn the lights up brighter, and Read, Read, Read!
May God’s love be with each and everyone of you.

Millie Hanson, retired

*Millie worked in our bookstore book section for many years.*
Levin, Warner Ask GAO to Review Iraqi Oil Revenues and Reconstruction Funding: 03/07/08

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., and senior Committee Member John Warner, R-Va., today asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review Iraqi oil revenues and determine how much money the Iraqi government has contributed to security and reconstruction efforts in the country. The senators voice concern that the Iraqi government has tremendous resources sitting in banks around the world while not doing nearly enough to improve the quality of life of Iraqi citizens.

The full text of Levin and Warner’s letter to the GAO follows:

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
441 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

Nearly five years ago, on March 27, 2003, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, in testimony before the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, was asked whom he expected would pay for the rebuilding of Iraq. He answered that “there’s a lot of money to pay for this. It doesn’t have to be U.S. taxpayer money. And it starts with the assets of the Iraqi people … the oil revenues of that county could bring between 50 and 100 billion dollars over the course of the next two or three years…. (7142) We are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon.”

In fact, we believe that it has been overwhelmingly U.S. taxpayer money that has funded Iraq reconstruction over the last five years, despite Iraq earning billions of dollars in oil revenue over that time period that have ended up in non-Iraqi banks. At the same time, our conversations with both Iraqis and Americans during our frequent visits to Iraq, as well as official government and unofficial media reports, have convinced us that the Iraqi Government is not the quality of life of its citizens.

According to the U.S. Department of State’s Iraq Weekly Status Report for February 27, 2008, the Iraq Oil Ministry goal for 2008 is to produce 2.2 million barrels per day (MBPD). To date through the 24th of February, the 2008 weekly averages have ranged from a low of 2.1 MBPD to a high of 2.51 MBPD, missing that goal for one week only. Exports are over 1.9 MBPD, with revenues estimated at $41.0 billion in 2007 and $9.4 billion in 2008 year to date.

Extrapolating the $9.4 billion of oil revenues for the first two months of 2008 yields an estimate of $56.4 billion for all of 2008. And that figure will probably be low given the predictions for oil prices to continue to rise over the coming year. In essence, we believe that Iraq will accrue at least $100.0 billion in oil revenues in 2007 and 2008.

We request you look into this matter and provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the estimated Iraqi oil revenues each year from 2003-2007?
- How much has Iraq and the United States, respectively, spent annually during that time period on training, equipping and supporting Iraqi security forces, and on Iraq reconstruction, governance, and economic development?
- What are the projections for oil revenue and spending for 2008?
- What is the estimate of the total Iraqi oil revenue that has accumulated unspent from 2003-2007, and the expected estimate at the end of 2008?
- How much money does the Iraqi Government have deposited, in which banks, and in what countries?
- Why has the Iraqi Government not spent more of its oil revenue on reconstruction, economic development and providing essential services for the Iraqi people?
- Your assistance in this matter would be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Carl Levin, Chairman
John Warner, Member

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Matthew 6:28

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Officers of Local 1950, but are those of the individual writers. Articles of interest submitted by Local 1950 members will be printed as space provides; however, they must bear the name of the writers. All articles are subject to review and editing as necessary and are subject to the approval of the Editor, the Local President, and the Officers of Local 1950.

Each issue of the Flame contains 5, 4-digit numbers of the member’s choosing. If you see your number, call Rita Leppanen @ ext. 2495. She will issue a $5 check to you. Carol Schirtzinger, Jeanne Wratschko, Cara Kamps, Jan Seppa, and Lara Clifton-Rice were our March winners.
Senior Citizen’s Corner

HOW TO CALL THE POLICE WHEN YOU'RE OLD AND DON'T MOVE FAST ANYMORE

George Phillips of Meridian, Mississippi was going up to bed when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window.

George opened the back door to go turn off the light but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things. He phoned the police, who asked "Is someone in your house?" and he said "no". Then they said that all patrols were busy, and that he should simply lock his door and an officer would be along when available.

George said, "Okay," hung up, counted to 30, and phoned the police again. "Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I just shot them." Then he hung up.

Within five minutes six police cars, a SWAT Team, a helicopter, two fire trucks, a paramedic and an ambulance showed up at the Phillips' residence and caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the Policemen said to George: "I thought you said that you'd shot them!"

George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

Don't mess with old people!

Thanks to Dawn Wilder, M&CS

Stimulus Payments (conclusion)

People who file a return after April 15 will receive their economic stimulus payment, but probably about two weeks later than the schedule shows. A return must be filed by October 15 in order to receive a stimulus payment this year.

A small percentage of tax returns will require additional time to process and to compute a stimulus payment among. For these returns, stimulus payments may not be issued in accordance with the schedule above, even if the tax return was processed by April 15.

Erich and Connie Hahne of Clarkson, MI have created Michigan Mittens, which sell for $25 and $30 a pair. One palm has a map of the UP, the other of below the bridge. The couple dreamed up the idea when they were driving back from their cottage in the UP. They are lined polar fleece and come in four sizes: child (ages 2-6), youth 8-12, ladies and men. For more information, their website is http://www.michiganmittens.com/index.html.

Tart Cherry Juice Concentrate

By Phyllis Zaenglein, Editor

Several months ago, a friend suggested that I try tart cherry juice concentrate for help with my arthritis pain. I was a little skeptical but thought it would be worth a try since I love cherries and do not like taking drugs. Well, let me tell you … For two weeks I drank 2 oz. of cherry juice in a glass of water and took Aleve. One day I forgot the Aleve and realized that I was COMPLETELY without pain. Wow!

Besides the arthritis and gout pain relief, tart cherry juice is an excellent source of powerful antioxidants. It improves your sleep pattern, helps maintain normal joint function, helps treat minor pain and soreness from an active lifestyle, helps protect your neuromuscular system, helps protect your heart against disease, attacks, and strokes, helps lower cholesterol, and helps support your immune system.

The juice is expensive. The best price is 64 oz for $25 at the Vineyard. Thirty-two ounce bottles run $15-$17 and are available at Super One, Econo, and the Vineyard.

For more information, check out this site:
http://www.tasteatreat.com/benefits/

A recent study found the average American walks about 900 miles a year.

Another study found that Americans drink, on average, 22 gallons of alcohol a year.

That means, on average, Americans get about 41 miles to the gallon.

Kind of makes you proud to be an American!

Thanks to Dawn Wilder, M&CS
**Recognition Banquet, April 16, 2008**

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<th>Retirees</th>
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**Sunday** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday**

A Dog's Purpose (from a 6-year-old)

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish Wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife Lisa, and their little boy Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's Death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are Shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, 'I know why.' Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, 'People are born so that they can learn how to live a good Life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?' The Six-year-old continued, 'Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long.' Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Remember, if a dog was the teacher you would learn things like:

When loved ones come home, always run to greet them. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure Ecstasy. Take naps. Stretch before rising. Run, romp, and play daily. Thrive on attention and let people touch you.

Avoid biting when a simple growl will do. On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree. When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk. Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently. ENJOY EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY!

Wasting Your Tax Dollars (conclusion)

The Tab:

Wasteful military spending: $100 billion (waste, fraud, unnecessary weapons)
Running Tab: $537.5 billion + $100 billion = $637.5 billion

4. Bad Seeds. The controversial U.S. Farm subsidy program, part of which pays farmers not to grow crops, has become a giant welfare program for the rich, one that costs taxpayers nearly $20 billion last year.

Two of the best-known offenders: Kenneth Lay, the now deceased Enron CEO, who got $23,326 for conservation land in Missouri from 1995 to 2005, and mogul Ted Turner, who got $590,823 for farms in four states during the same period. A Cato Institute study found that in 2005, two-thirds of the subsidies went to the richest 10 percent of recipients, many of whom live in New York City. Not only do these “farmers” get money straight from the government, they also get local tax breaks, since their property is zoned as agricultural land. The subsidies raise prices for consumers, hurt third world farmers who can’t compete, and are attacked in international courts as unfair.

The Tab

Wasteful farm subsidies: $20 billion
Running Tab: $637.5 billion + $20 billion = $657.5 billion

5. Capital Waste. While there’s plenty of ongoing annual operating waste, there’s also a special kind of profligacy—call it capital waste—that pops up year after year. This is shoddy spending on big-ticket items that don’t pan out. While what’s being bought changes from year to year, you can be sure there will always be some costly items that aren’t worth what the government pays for them.

Take this recent example: Since September 11, 2001, Congress has spent more than $4 billion to upgrade the Coast Guard’s fleet. Today the service has fewer ships than it did before that money was spent, what 60 Minutes called “a fiasco that has set new standard for incompetence.” Then there’s the Future Imagery Architecture spy satellite program. As the New York Times recently reported, the technology flopped and the program was killed, but not before costing $4 billion. Or consider the FBI’s infamous Trilogy computer upgrade: It’s final state was scrapped after a $170 million investment. Or the almost $1 billion the Federal Emergency management Agency has wasted on unusable housing. The list goes on.

The Tab

Wasting Capital Spending: $30 billion
Running Tab: $657.5 billion + $30 billion = $687.5 billion

Conclusion next month ...
CHEAP TOMATOES?

This should make everyone think, be you Democrat, Republican or Independent. It is from a retired California school teacher.

As you listen to the news about the student protests over illegal immigration, there are some things that of which you should be aware.

I am in charge of the English-as-a-second-language department at a large southern California high school which is designated a Title 1 school, meaning that its students average lower socioeconomic and income levels.

Most of the schools you are hearing about, South Gate High, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, etc., where these students are protesting, are also Title 1 schools.

Title 1 schools are on the free breakfast and free lunch program. When I say free breakfast, I'm not talking a glass of milk and roll -- but a full breakfast and cereal bar with fruits and juices that would make a Marriott proud. The waste of this food is monumental, with trays and trays of it being dumped in the trash uneaten. (OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK)

I estimate that well over 50% of these students are obese or at least moderately overweight. About 75% or more DO have cell phones. The school also provides day care centers for the unwed teenage pregnant girls (some as young as 13) so they can attend class without the inconvenience of having to arrange for babysitters or having family watch their kids. (OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK)

I was ordered to spend $700,000 on my department or risk losing funding for the upcoming year even though there was little need for anything; my budget was already substantial. I ended up buying new computers for the computer learning center, half of which, one month later, have been carved with graffiti by the appreciative students who obviously feel humbled and grateful to have a free education in America. (OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK)

I have had to intervene several times for young and substitute teachers whose classes consist of many illegal immigrant students here in the country less than 3 months who raised so much hell with the female teachers, calling them 'Putas' (whores) and throwing things, that the teachers were in tears.

Free medical, free education, free food, day care etc., etc., etc. Is it any wonder they feel entitled to not only be in this country but to demand rights, privileges and entitlements?

To those who want to point out how much these illegal immigrants contribute to our society because they LIKE their gardener and housekeeper and they like to pay less for tomatoes: spend some time in the real world of illegal immigration and see the TRUE costs.

Higher insurance, medical facilities closing, higher medical costs, more crime, lower standards of education in our schools, overcrowding, new diseases etc., etc. etc. For me, I'll pay more for tomatoes.

Americans. We need to wake up. The guest worker program will be a disaster because we won't have the guts to enforce it. Does anyone in their right mind really think they will voluntarily leave and return?

It does, however, have everything to do with culture: A third-world culture that does not value education, that accepts children getting pregnant and dropping out of school by 15 and that refuses to assimilate, and an American culture that has become so weak and worried about 'political correctness' that we don't have the will to do anything about it.

If this makes your blood boil, as it did mine, forward this to everyone you know.

CHEAP LABOR? (1026) Isn't that what the whole immigration issue is about? Business doesn't want to pay a decent wage. Consumers don't want expensive produce. Government will tell you Americans don't want the jobs. But the bottom line is cheap labor. The phrase 'cheap labor' is a myth, a farce, and a lie. There is no such thing as 'cheap labor.'

Take, for example, an illegal alien with a wife and five children. He takes a job for $5.00 or 6.00/hour. At that wage, with six dependents, he pays no income tax, yet at the end of the year, if he files an Income Tax Return, he gets an 'earned income credit' of up to $3,200 free. He qualifies for Section 8 housing and subsidized rent. He qualifies for food stamps. He qualifies for free (no deductible, no co-pay) health care. His children get free breakfasts and lunches at school. He requires bilingual teachers and books. He qualifies for relief from high energy bills. If they are or become, aged, blind or disabled, they qualify for SSI. Once qualified for SSI they can qualify for Medicare. All of this is at (our) taxpayer's expense.

He doesn't worry about car insurance, life insurance, or homeowners insurance. Taxpayers provide Spanish language signs, bulletins and printed material. He and his family receive the equivalent of $20.00 to $30.00/hour in benefits.

Working Americans are lucky to have $5.00 or $6.00/hour left after paying their bills and his. The American taxpayers also pay for increased crime, graffiti and trash clean-up.

Cheap labor? YEAH RIGHT! Wake up people! THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS WE SHOULD BE ADDRESSING TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR EITHER PARTY. WHEN THEY LIE TO US AND DON'T DO AS THEY SAY, WE SHOULD REPLACE THEM AT ONCE!

Thanks to Barb Munson, retired

http://www.snopes.com/politics/immigration/tomatoes.asp

Snopes.com says it’s “undetermined”.
The Center for Disease Control has issued a medical alert about a highly contagious, potentially dangerous virus that is transmitted orally, by hand, and even electronically. This virus is called Weary Overload Recreational Killer (WORK). If you receive WORK from anyone via any means whatsoever, DO NOT TOUCH IT! This virus will wipe out your private life completely. If you should come into contact with WORK, you should immediately leave the premises.

Take two good friends to the nearest grocery store and purchase one or both of the antidotes: (2339) Work Isolating Neutralizer Extract (WINE) and Bothersome Employer Elimination Rebooter (BEER). Take the antidote repeatedly until WORK has been completely eliminated from your system.

You should immediately forward this medical alert to five friends. If you do not have five friends, you have already been infected and WORK is controlling your life.

Thanks to Sue Henderson, Military Science

Chaplaincy Corner

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of Passage? His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own. The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human who might do him harm.

The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm. We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

If you liked this story, pass it on. If not, you don't even like it.

Moral of the story: Just because you can't see God, doesn't mean He is not there. "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Received in an email from my cousin's husband-- ed,