

Commentary & Opinions

Looking over at her plate!

(Editor's Note: I have received many requests for the late Linda Brown's columns to be reprinted. I have decided that it is a great idea and here is one of them. It was first printed on January 16, 2006)

I was having lunch with a business acquaintance last week and was surprised by the plate of food the wait staff sat in front of her.

Tentatively I pushed the end of my fork under a lettuce leaf

manage since by then I was licking the creamy cheese sauce that had escaped from my sandwich and was running down my hand and getting dangerously close to the cuff of my sweater.

I watched as she delicately squeezed lemon juice onto her lettuce leaves and measured out half a shake of black pepper.

"Looks, uh, yummy," I said around a mouthful of ham, turkey, bacon, sourdough bread and the sinfully delicious cheese sauce. "When's she going to bring the rest of it?"

"This is the rest of it," my friend replied tartly. I assumed her clipped speech was the result of all that undiluted lemon juice.

"No, I mean, they left off the ham and chicken, not to mention the croutons, bacon bits and hard boiled eggs. And, for heaven's sake, she didn't even bring you any salad dressing. I'll get her attention for you, she's coming this way." I licked my cheesy fingers again and made ready to hail the wait staff when my companion stopped me by saying, "This is the way I ordered it."

Horrorified I said, "You're going to pay for that? Good heavens, Mikey the grandturtle eats more

than that for lunch. You eat like that and you'll make yourself sick."

"I have to lose 10 pounds by April," my friend said while nibbling the end of a carrot stick. "I'll be fine. Tonight I get half a chicken breast."

I admire her determination if nothing else. Diets are funny things at our house. The minute somebody starts one someone else gets a wild craving for all the stuff the dieter can't have. In fact, the last time someone announced a diet in progress I bellied up to the breakfast bar and ate two bowls of ice cream, half a loaf of homemade bread, 14 chocolate chip cookies and three glasses of wine while the dieter ate steamed vegetables and lean roast beef.

I've quit trying to kid myself about the possibility that I will ever again wear a size six or be able to look down at my feet and actually see them without first holding my leg out in front of me. I also gave up the notion that I will go down to the track and run like the wind. I don't want to run anymore, and besides, there is an excellent chance that once I got to the track I'd forget why I was there.

Now, I do still have moments when I trick myself into thinking that the way my face has fallen down to my chin is a temporary situation. And, I admit to snooping around about microdermabrasion, but diet?

Back in the old days, people used to refer to me as the woman who was 'tall and really thin.'

Now it's, 'she's tall.'

Tall works.

Ummm. Do I smell French fries?

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By
Linda Brown
**Ties
That
Bind!**



on her plate and lifted its curling edge. Under it was another lettuce leaf. On further inspection, the whole plate was filled with lettuce. Marching in a neat little circle around the plate's edge was a selection of carrot sticks, bell pepper slices and celery spears.

Bringing the fork back to my side of the table I raised my eyebrows and looked at my friend in silent question.

"New year's resolution," she said.

"Ahhh," was all I could

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Kobler and Cindy Marcus. When brothers Jake (Logan Allen) and Will (Brooklyn Kurtz) Grimm can't agree on a script, they end up in a fight — pages are swapped, plots intermingled... it's a complete mess! After all, Jake likes blood and guts, and Will likes fluffy bunnies and happy endings. What's worse is that the principal (William Miller) is coming to see a production of the show in less than half an hour! The intermingled storyline now has Hansel (Dominic Sutton) and Jorinda (Hallie Fritz) on their way to meet the stage mother (Becky Kropf) and her two evil step daughters, Gretel (Abby Reid) and Joringel (Spencer Hermann) — who's so happy to be part of the "A" story, he'll do it in drag! Meanwhile, Rapunzel, (Sammy Walter) who's been demoted from ingénue to character actress, wants her son, Prince Charming (Garrett Bures), to go to the Gingerbread Castle for a ball to meet his true love, the evil witch Cinderella (Abby

Johnston). With name-calling, finger pointing and lots of "I quits," the entire show collapses just as the principal arrives. But all is not lost! The producer (Corey Bowen) rallies the troops with an incredible cheesy speech, and the cast dishes out the works of the Brothers Grimm in six minutes and 12 seconds. And although they don't truly succeed, they actually find their own path to happily ever after. Other cast members include Will Mechnig, Zia Holloway, Jorel Nicolas, Rayna Jasper, Molly Comfort, Joey Feuerborn, Alina Eggers, and Hannah Corley.

The plays are directed by April Pows, Garrett Bures, Spencer Hermann, Jenna Schmit, Lizzy Comfort, Vicki Markham, Becky Kropf, Lily Spring, Maya Corley, Nick Lybarger, Abbie Fritz, and Kate Dieker.

The cost to attend is \$5. Performances will take place at 7:00 pm on Saturday, January 12, at the Anderson County High School Auditorium. Come out and support the ACHS Theatre Program!

Departments receive funds from Kansas Firefighters

Seventy volunteer and part-time fire departments across the state, including Anderson County Rural Fire and the City of Garnett, received funds this year through the Kansas Firefighter Recruitment and Safety Grant Program administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). The grant awards will be used by fire departments for the purchase of safety gear, washer/extractor machines for cleaning bunker gear, start-up of Junior Firefighter programs and physical costs for firefighters with no insurance or ability to be reimbursed by their department.

This program was made possible with the 2018 State of Kansas budget passed by the state Legislature. Last year, 36 departments were awarded grant funds with the previous grant budget of \$200,000. The OSFM was able to award grant funds to nearly twice as many departments this year, with the funding being doubled to \$400,000.

Volunteer and part-time fire departments face recruitment and retention challenges because they

do not have the funding to provide safety equipment. Without new equipment provided by the recruiting fire department, potential volunteers are faced with not only donating their time but also providing their own safety gear, sharing gear with others, or doing without. There is also a proven increase in cancer diagnoses for firefighters, which can be caused by prolonged exposure to carcinogens, particulates and biohazards. The proper gear, regular cleaning of that gear and equipment, along with preventative healthcare is crucial for a firefighter's health and well-being.

This year, over \$1.3 million in requests from 79 departments were submitted. Fire departments received approximately \$310,000 to be used for safety gear and \$90,000 for 26 washer/extractor machines. Due to the high number of requests, OSFM will be requesting the 2019 Legislature continue funding this important grant.

"We've seen, by the sheer
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