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DIANE JOHNSON: PRAIRIE PONDERINGS

Re-minding our manners

By DIANE JOHNSON



A Fortune magazine article recently stated, "In 2024, over 60% of U.S. companies will enlist the help of

etiquette training companies to teach their employees how to dress appropriately for the office, interact with clients and respect shared spaces."

Topics most requested by managers include dressing professionally, how to write professional emails, making eye contact and how to take appropriate lunch breaks. It appears the youngest workers have minimal conversational skills in working with others who have different opinions.

Despite generational differences in office etiquette, the courses will be directed to all workers. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the work environments have changed and so too have worker attitudes. So far, these courses seem to have helped reduce workplace hostility.

It all boils down to a lack

of civility. Rules of etiquette provide humans the ability raise themselves up from animal behavior. If you want proof of the difference, just watch someone with no table manners gobble up a plate of barbecued ribs with all the fixins, chewing with his mouth open, and ending the meal with sauce all over his face and a loud belch.

Etiquette used to be taught at home beginning at a very young age, but in the past generation or two it seems to have become a lost art. Families now rarely have sit-down meals together at a table with real dishes and silverware where table manners are taught and conversational skills learned. It may not seem important, but eventually most children will be in employment or business situations where those skills and manners can make a difference in getting hired or getting a pay raise.

Holed up in our homes for several years during the pandemic and the rise of social media have caused even older generations to forget their manners. Professional garb became pajamas, or many times professional on the top and party on the bottom if one had a Zoom

meeting. With minimal in-person interaction, the anonymity of social media brought out the worst of mankind — rudeness, degradation, narcissism and total disrespect of differing opinions.

Our society seems to be headed in a downward spiral back to our animal instincts and behavior. Animals live by survival of the fittest. Their narcissistic behavior takes food or nests from other animals. They are simply guided by instinct and have no ability to reason. There is no respect or compassion.

As humans, we can rise above that. We have the powers of reasoning, communication, intellect and empathy. We create general rules of conduct to control our environment, making it a kinder and safer place for ourselves and other human beings. The trick is to know the rules and follow them.

If etiquette and civility are disappearing, then we need to find new ways to teach those skills to our young. If it isn't being taught in the home, then the schools or other organizations need to step up.

Some colleges are now offering etiquette classes to help

prepare young adults for the business world, but etiquette should go way beyond the work environment and definitely should be taught from early childhood.

Most of us want a world where people just get along with one another. It starts with teaching a child "please and thank you," followed by learning the golden rule of doing unto others what you would want done to you. Gradually, they can learn proper manners and respectful communication. When a child is able to have a polite conversation or discussion with someone who is different or has differing opinions, the parent has made a great impact on societal civility.

We all need to re-educate ourselves regarding respect, politeness, and compassion. Children are watching us. Do we really want our world going to the dogs?

Diane Johnson is a retired Paxton business owner and resident who writes a regular column for the Ford County Chronicle, mostly on musings about life or the community. She can be reached at dkj4748@yahoo.com.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Ethanol plants have goldmine in CO2: Use it; don't bury it

By Dr. JEFF BONAR
CEO CapCO2 Solutions



The ethanol industry is sitting on a potential goldmine that can modernize the agricultural

industry and take the next step in the field of renewable fields — a key step toward realizing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), without a pipeline needed — and an Illinois facility is leading the way.

Why bury carbon (CO2) when it can be used as a resource to aid in addressing climate change and decarbonization efforts — all while adding revenues for ethanol plants?

Pipelines and underground burial should only be considered after exploring the opportunity of new products made from the CO2 — called carbon capture and utilization. Why throw that resource away when it can work for you?

By focusing on carbon capture and utilization, significant new revenues can be generated from climate-friendly products while driving carbon reductions throughout the entire farming supply chain.

There is a huge opportunity, particularly for CO2 that comes from biological sources like ethanol, manure treatment and wastewater treatment plants. Not only can those facilities deal with their CO2 waste, but they can also generate significant new revenues from climate-friendly products and make large strides in reducing their carbon impact. In particular, that CO2 can be used to generate green methanol on-site at each plant. Green methanol is a net-zero, clean fuel that is already in wide demand worldwide.

Our company, CapCO2 Solutions, is working with the Adkins Energy LLC ethanol plant to capture the waste carbon and combine it with hydrogen to make green methanol. This both cuts the carbon intensity of the ethanol and creates a significant commercial opportunity with a valuable net-zero fuel. A plant like Adkins that makes 60 million gallons of ethanol will both add 75 cents per gallon of ethanol for their low-carbon ethanol and make 41 million gallons of green methanol that sells for more than \$240 million.

Green methanol is being used as fuel for the shipping industry. Juggernauts, like Maersk, are pivoting to use green methanol to power their fleet with hundreds of green methanol ships under construction. It is also a key building block in a wide range of climate-smart consumer products including plastics, insulation, cosmetics and coatings.

We should be electrifying everything possible as a first

step toward improving our environment, but that isn't a fit in every situation. For example, green fuels are needed for large ships, large trucks, tractors, combines, aircraft and people in rural areas.

The big opportunity now is green methanol production, with SAF in the future as that technology matures. Both products require biogenic CO2. The Midwest, in particular ethanol plants, could build a next-generation decarbonized business around those products.

CapCO2 is focused on ethanol plants now. They are urgently seeking a solution to lower the carbon intensity (CI) score for the ethanol required by climate-conscious markets. CapCO2 Solutions is offering a climate-smart business solution with an immediate pathway to profitability for ethanol plants and beyond. This technology is not limited to ethanol facilities, it has been purchased for use at a cement plant. A detailed GREET analysis by Incite.Ag shows CapCO2 Solutions will lower an ethanol plant's CI score by 25 points, effectively cutting it in half.

CapCO2 Solutions deploys innovative modular technology methanol equipment that scales up on-site without the expense or complexity of conventional methanol plants, which typically take 15 acres and cost \$200 million. Green methanol is then transported to customers by rail, over-the-road trucks, or even barges.

Reducing the carbon footprint of their inputs increases the value of their ethanol. If they want to play in emerging climate-smart commodities like SAF, they need to confront the demand for carbon-smart ethanol. That said, ethanol plants make a huge mistake to throw away the commercial potential of upgrading that CO2 to climate-smart products like green methanol.

The Midwest's ethanol industry has the opportunity to deliver a win-win-win by capturing its carbon to create the next generation of renewable fuel: a win for the environment by addressing the carbon, a win for the ethanol by lowering the CI score, and a win for the farmers growing the corn who can turn around and sell their harvest at a higher price.

CapCO2 Solutions delivers substantial returns to the entire agricultural ecosystem and the rural communities that support that agriculture. We are sparking the evolution of the ethanol industry by shrinking the carbon footprint and taking a step into the next generation of renewable fuels.

Action must be taken now to decarbonize. Again ask, why bury CO2 when you can use it to create valuable products?

Dr. Jeff Bonar is chief executive officer of CapCO2 Solutions.

CHARLES MAGUMBA: NOTES FROM AFRICA

The power of copying: U.S. wrestling made in Uganda

By CHARLES MAGUMBA
For the Ford County Chronicle



Some folks in Uganda have watched U.S. wrestling from afar for far too long — so long, actually, that they have come up with

an idea: If you can't attend wrestling shows in the U.S., how about bringing the sport to Uganda? After all, why should the Americans always steal the show? Can't one make some greenbacks on this side of the Atlantic?

OK, then! Tighten your seat belt, because here comes the interesting story of U.S. wrestling, made in Uganda!

Uganda is no U.S.A. and fancy training grounds and fighting rings are no easy things to come by here. Therefore, to achieve the American wrestling dream in Uganda, locals have had to do some deep thinking as well as innovation.

The French news agency AFP notes that, "like WWE, the Ugandan version (of wrestling) is as much theater as sport, with bouts announced using the gimmicks of American shows and supervised by a referee in a bold black-and-white striped top. ... The sport copies the style of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) in the U.S."

AFP shares the story of a group of barefoot youngsters training in what has been termed "soft ground wrestling" at the Bumbash Wrestling Academy in the town of Mukono, about 30 kilometers west of the Ugandan capital, Kampala. These Ugandan wrestlers, who have now attracted media attention in Uganda and elsewhere, endure tough training as they live in equally harsh living conditions.

AFP describes how "in a mud pit ringed off by bamboo poles and two thin, yellow ropes, a young Ugandan woman lies face-up after being



Courtesy of AFP

Wrestling takes place in a makeshift ring in Uganda.

tossed upside-down by her opponent. She gets a second wind and takes down her rival with one swipe at her feet — to the delight and cheers of dozens of fellow wrestlers watching from the sidelines of the rickety ring." In fact, local folks are already debating the safety concerns related to this Ugandan version of WWE wrestling. Folks fall on bare ground "cushioned" only by mud! These folks literally put their lives on the line.

It is reported by AFP that the amateur acrobatics have raised concerns among medics, who have warned of possible injuries, especially to the spine.

"You stay safe when you know how to land, but you are at risk when you don't know how to land," the academy's founder, Daniel Bumba, explains.

To find out what the Ugandan wrestlers endure in comparison to their counterparts in America when slammed onto the floor, I decided to check out some basic facts on what wrestling rings in America are generally made out of. One online

forum guest shared: "The ring has a metal frame with a base of plywood, covered by some padding and then draped with the ring fabric. The plywood is held by the metal frame so that it has enough give to it from impacts and doesn't splinter or crack. ... In modern-day rings, there is a giant spring under the center of the square. This is where the ring gets its cushioning effect. ... The ring is designed to cushion the blow of landing on the mat. ... The floor outside the ring is frequently covered in standard gymnastic mats covering the concrete or wooden floor of the building."

So, what motivates our Ugandan friends to slam one another onto bare ground and endure the pain?

"The boys and girls here will be tomorrow's Hulk Hogan and Sasha Banks," Daniel Bumba told AFP.

And it is their "determination to escape the poverty of their home villages" that "under the blazing sun, they pump weights and practise chokeslam, powerbomb and other throwing techniques, with their heavy

falls cushioned only by a layer of mud," Bumba told AFP.

My friends, these folks are hoping that their skills might one day lead to fame and glory. Now, that is what I call the power of copying. If you can't go to the U.S.A., then bring the U.S.A. to Uganda. And the result? Well, the "American dream" is now right here! The greenbacks ought to fly in, too.

As usual, I would like to invite you to join me for my Sunday morning broadcast at 9:15 a.m. on 104.9 WPXN FM Radio. I share the Word of God, but you can also be sure the African perspective to things will be shared, and there will be such interesting things to learn.

Charles Tucker Magumba lives in Uganda and serves the Freedom Project and Child Celebration Network in Uganda. Ford County residents may remember how he and his wife were stranded in Paxton amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. To give your feedback on his column, please contact him through email at magumbact@yahoo.com.