

# CONNECTIONS

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## Living Life to the Fullest

by Don Benson



I had the dreadful experience of attending my nephew's funeral this summer. What made this so particularly tragic was that I attended his funeral a week after I was supposed to attend his wedding. He was only 29, and by all accounts, had been a healthy, energetic young man. He died quietly in a hotel room from an undetected heart problem. There are no words to describe the experience his family, fiancé and friends endured, only that it has shaken us to the core of our being, a very profound grief.

The funeral lasted two hours. It was one of those funerals that could have easily been eight hours. There was not enough time to say all that could be said about my nephew. What was striking, however, was the number of stories and examples of the impact he made on so many people's lives. He was very charismatic and always upbeat. A cafeteria worker from his high school several hundred miles away drove down for the funeral. The owner of the cigar store that he frequented came and paid his respects. His interests were rich and eccentric. The funeral ended with a Sousa march, another of his passions. He was a man who walked to the beat of his own drum. And whatever interested him, he immersed himself in learning and experiencing all he could about it.



You see, my nephew had obsessive-compulsive disorder. Not the kind that we talk about loosely, like "you're too perfectionistic". His was the bona fide thing. The clinical condition. Most of us outside of his immediate family did not fully appreciate or understand the extent of this burden. It became clearer to us during those difficult days of sadness as we heard his parents, siblings, and close friends talk about him. He spent enormous amounts of time and energy attempting to manage the obsessions. He was prone to "urges", or odd compulsive behaviors. He tried and struggled with various medications throughout his life, dealing with the tension between managing symptoms, yet wanting to be and feel like himself. In spite of all this, he maintained an upbeat and energetic personality that was infectious. He lit up a room with his presence.

We all have our burdens, our "crosses to bear", or our "thorns in our side". Whatever form they take, we can learn something from my nephew. His OCD was debilitating, but he found a way to make it work for him as well. His unique, eccentric personality seemed to make it impossible for anyone to remain glum around him. More people than he could ever count (and he might try) owe him a debt of gratitude for the effect he had on their lives. My sister told me he had looked up to me. As I thought about it, I realized it was the other way around. Despite being his elder, it was I who looked up to him. For 29 years, he lived life to the fullest and made a positive and memorable impact on countless others who had the good fortune to cross his path. Now that's something to strive for.

# Three Trails Welcomes Candise Leininger

Three Trails welcomes Candise Leininger in the position of part-time counselor. Candise holds a master's degree in counseling, is a licensed professional counselor, and has been an active professional in the Casper community for several years. Candise is filling the position vacated by Linda Nelson, who moved out of Casper to be closer to family. While we are sorry to lose Linda, we are fortunate to obtain the services and expertise of Candise.



Candise received her Bachelor's degree in psychology in 1982 and provided individual and group therapy within a county mental health agency in Pennsylvania. Upon moving to Casper over 15 years ago she managed her husband's neuropsychology practice as they raised their two daughters. In 2005, Candise completed her Master's degree in Counseling from the University of Wyoming. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor and has experience with adolescent and adult female issues, stress management, disordered eating, and parenting skills. She values working with clients in setting realistic goals and expectations to allow them to succeed. She has worked with Mercer House on their Strengthening Families and Teen Experts on Divorce programs. Candise is adjunct faculty at Casper College. In addition to her part-time position at Three Trails EFAP, she and her husband are in private practice together. Candise enjoys spending time with her family, bird watching, dog walking, and traveling.

## Brain Basher

Puzzles devised by © Kevin Stone [[www.brainbashers.com](http://www.brainbashers.com)] *used with permission*



**During a recent Clue weekend, four games were played. In one game Miss Scarlet used the wrench, but not in the library. In another game the rope was used in the study, but not by Colonel Mustard. During one game the gun was used in the conservatory, whilst in another game Professor Plum was not to be found in the library. Colonel Mustard was never in the conservatory and Mrs White never used the rope. The candlestick may or may not have been used in the kitchen. Can you determine who used what and where?**

*answer on pg 3*

## “Stress Management” Groups Offered

Three Trails will once again be offering groups this year. A six week stress management group will begin on Sept. 30. This group will help participants identify signs of stress and develop strategies to manage stress in their lives. Practice exercises will be an important part of the group experience. It will run for six straight weeks on Tuesdays, from 6:00 pm until 7:15 pm. Please contact us at 237-5750 if you are interested in this group.

# In the library.....

by Don Benson



## Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder

*Richard Louv*

Although the title of this book might suggest that someone has once again created another type of mental problem, you can rest easy. This is merely a creative way for Richard Louv to drive home his point about child development and outdoor play. Louv suggests, and supports his contentions with substantial research studies, that childhood problems can be linked to the lack of unstructured and creative outdoor play. He points to several factors that are to blame, including the enormous amount of time kids spend playing video games. While this is hardly a surprise to no one, other areas that he targets are of much interest.

Louv believes that we have created a society that overvalues structured play, such as organized sports, and argues that these forms of play are not necessarily as valuable to children as unstructured time. He laments the days when neighborhoods were surrounded by woods and undeveloped areas. Children could exercise their imaginations, test themselves and each other, and build their confidence. He blames developers and city planners for believing that groomed parks are a replacement for the wild. In his view, a swing set or other manufactured play sets are a poor substitute for building a tree house. The ingenuity and resourcefulness required with the latter cannot be tapped by ready-made play areas.



However, to return kids to these experiences, adults and parents must face their own insecurities. Much of the change in children's play seems to have been driven by a fear of injury and a need to maximize safety. Louv believes the pendulum has swung too far. Better a broken arm from falling out of a tree than an over structured life that doesn't expand imagination and build confidence. His book is available for checkout at Three Trails.

## THREE TRAILS EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Three Trails Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a counseling agency designed to respond to the needs of eligible active and retired employees, spouses, and dependent family members of participating businesses and organizations.

Our mission is to provide professional assistance early and in a timely manner so that problems do not worsen. Such concerns may include workplace stress, marriage and family tensions, alcohol and drug abuse, and other difficulties that may impact individuals. Counselors at Three Trails assess the scope and nature of the presenting concerns and will either provide short-term counseling or refer the individual(s) to specialized services as necessary.

Three Trails EFAP is staffed by two full time, one part time counselor and an administrative assistant. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 237-5750 or stop by the office at 812 South David Street.

### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday	9:00 to 6:00 pm
Tuesday & Thursday	9:00 to 7:00 pm
Fridays	12:00 to 5:00 pm

We are closed through the noon hour, although noon sessions may be arranged.

Answers to the Puzzle

Culture  
Miss Scarlet  
Professor Plum  
Colonel Mustard  
Mrs White  
Rope  
Kitchen  
Lead  
Gum  
Conservatory  
Library  
Study  
Candies Stick  
Wrench  
Location  
Weapon