

## My two cents' worth

When I was kid, pennies and nickels were a big deal. We could actually buy some things for a penny or a nickel. Mrs. Makoski's store on the west side of Oconto Falls had lots of penny and nickel candies, for instance. And Larsen's Ben Franklin on Main Street had lots of items you could buy for a nickel. Our Aunt Emma used to give my sister and me a nickel every time we saw her when we were little kids. So did our Uncle Ralph. I loved to see them visit. But today, who really cares about pennies and nickels? If I were to give my grandkids a nickel or a penny, what reaction do you think I'd get?

I read an article a while ago that said it costs the government over two cents to make a penny! And it costs nearly a dime to make a nickel! In other words, it costs more to produce the coins than they are actually worth. How much sense does that make?

The article said that in 2008, the last year for which statistics were available, the minting of pennies and nickels at costs well above their face values cost the taxpayers over 100 million dollars. Metal prices had pushed the costs way out of line. I did a little checking and found out that the costs of copper, zinc, nickel, the metals used to make pennies and nickels have gone even higher now. Copper and nickel prices have tripled since 2003 and the price of zinc has quadrupled, so each new batch of pennies and nickels adds significantly to our national debt.

President Obama is suggesting in his new budget that the congress give the mint permission to change the composition of coins to more cost-effective materials to eliminate a \$100,000,000 loss per year. And he's getting opposition from some politicians! Keeping the coin content the way it is means contributing to our national debt by more than the coins are worth. Why would anyone oppose this suggestion? George Bush suggested the same thing several years ago and was opposed by his own party members in congress. And Richard Nixon met the same kind of opposition from his party when he suggested it many years ago.

We've changed the composition of coins before. During World War II, we had steel pennies. We could do that again. Maybe we could have steel nickels, too. And almost all of our other coins are made of cheaper materials. "Cop-



### Backstage

Roger VanHaren

### Spotlight

**A special hats off to the local fishermen and rescue personnel who bravely went to the aid of the unfortunate snowmobilers who went through the ice two weeks ago.**



per pennies" are not copper anyway; they're 97.5% zinc and 2.5% copper. Nickels are not really "nickel"; they're 75 percent copper and only 25 percent nickel.

Our other coins - the dime, the quarter and the dollar coin - all cost significantly less to produce than their face value. So it's only the penny and the nickel that are being discussed. Our paper currency - of whatever face value - costs about 64 cents to print. No problem there.

I think we should consider a more pragmatic, but maybe politically impossible, solution to the penny problem: get rid of the penny altogether. What do we need it for? Instead of something costing \$3.99, it could cost \$4. What's the big deal? That 99 cents price is just artificial anyway. For that matter we could eliminate the nickel, too. Instead of \$3.95, it could be \$4.00. But, I suppose, if we keep the quarter, we'd still have to have the nickel to help make change. Maybe we could do away with everything but the dime. Then we'd have a nice neat decimal system. Cool?

But then there's the issue of sales taxes, I suppose. How do you figure out how to handle a 7 1/2 percent sales tax? Maybe we should have all prices include the tax? Nah, I guess that wouldn't work either. So if we can't eliminate the coins, why not at least make them out of materials that don't cost more than their face value? How about plastic coins? Well, that's my two cents' worth...or is it four and a half cents' worth?

Curtain!  
 Contact Roger VanHaren at [rjmavh@gmail.com](mailto:rjmavh@gmail.com)

# The Joy of Connections

Focus on Women set for April 17

Focus on Women — a day of exhibits and presentations for the women of Dodge County will be held on Tuesday, April 17 from 3:30 to 8 p.m. at Bayside Supper Club, W9231 Highway G, Beaver Dam.

The "Joy of Connections" is the theme of the event sponsored by Beaver Dam Community Hospital.

There will be exhibits with information on health education and services provided by area agencies, as well as products and therapies to "pamper" women.

Participants may visit booths before or during the presentations and break times between speakers. Booths will be located in the front dining room and in the lower level.

Free health screenings will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, each participant will receive a scarf courtesy of Bargains Galore.

A light sandwich buffet will be available from 4 to 6:30 p.m. for all registered guests.

Registration is required by April 5 with an \$8 non-refundable fee per person. Make \$8 checks payable to "BDCH Focus on Women" and mail it to Dodge County Housing Authority, 491 East Center St., Juneau, WI 53039. Include your name, address, phone number and email address.

For more information, call 386-2866.



Cherry Habenicht of Say Spa-aah, gives a spa hand treatment to Lois Kurtz. Kurtz was one of more than 160 women who attended a Focus on Women held at Bayside Supper Club.

### Schedule of Events

3:30 to 8 p.m. — Booths and exhibits open.

4 to 6:30 p.m. — Sandwich buffet open

4 to 4:30 p.m. — The Health Connection: "How Your Attitude Can Affect Your Health: The Power of Positive Thinking" Dr. Lindsey Cleary, Beaver Dam Community Hospital Medical Clinic-Juneau will discuss how mindfulness can improve your physical, emotional, and spiritual health and point one to a list of resources.

4:45 to 5:15 p.m. — The Internet Connection: "Being Safe and Secure While Connected" Dodge County Sheriff's Dept. Detective Michael

Reissmann will speak on safety aspects of the internet, including using Facebook, online dating and identity theft.

5:30-6 p.m. The Wardrobe Connection: "Accessories 101 - How Fun." Melissa Wierenga from Bargains Galore Thrift Store will teach you how to turn from drab into fab by adding a few key accessories to your wardrobe. You will learn simple scarf tying techniques that make a statement, how to wear jewelry and hand bags that "fit" you best, which sunglasses compliment your face, which color is best for you, and how you can turn your everyday clothing into a pulled together look.

6:15-6:45 p.m. The Generation Connection: "Communicating for a Deeper Connection." Pattie Carroll, Family Living Educator, Dodge County UW Extension will help the four generations of people who meet at home, church and in workplaces communicate by viewing each other in a different light.

7 to 8 p.m. "The JOY of Connections" Humorist and author Mary Pierce says girlfriends, sisters, mothers and daughters need each other. Our connections as women encourage us, energize us and for some of us, save our sanity. The group will laugh together and celebrate the gifts of friendship and one another.



Cleary



Reissmann



Wierenga



Carroll



Pierce

## Meet the speakers...

**Dr. Lindsey Cleary** went to UW-Madison for undergraduate studies and played varsity volleyball. She attended medical school at Northwestern University in Downers Grove, Ill., and stayed in Chicago for her residency. She, her husband and young son are back in Wisconsin living on a small farm. "As a family practitioner, I enjoy the variety and relationships with families over time. I look forward to being involved in the community and getting to know my neighbors."

Dr. Cleary practices family medicine at the Beaver Dam Community Hospital Clinic in Juneau.

**Detective Michael Reissmann** is a native of the northwoods born and raised in Rhineland, where he graduated from Nicolet College. He has been a sworn law enforcement officer for more than 15 years and has served as a correctional officer, volunteer fire fighter and first responder. Currently he is a criminal

investigator at the Dodge County Sheriff's Department where he holds the title of evidence/property room technician and is a member of the Dodge County Special Weapons and Tactics team.

He is currently assigned most Internet, mail and credit card frauds and also specializes in identity thefts and computer data thefts.

**Melissa Wierenga** has been the co-manager of Bargains Galore Thrift Store in Waupun and has provided fashion and accessories advice for the past 10 years. She has helped style hundreds of women, showing them how they can look their best through accessorizing and dressing to compliment their body type. She has been involved in many fashion shows and events, putting together show-stopping "looks for less." Her passion is encouraging women by teaching them how to look and feel their very best, helping build their confidence and self-esteem.

**Pattie Carroll** received a masters degree in education and family development and a bachelors degree in elementary education. She currently is the family living educator with the Dodge County University of Wisconsin Extension.

Family living programs enrich families and strengthen communities.

**Mary Pierce** has been entertaining and encouraging corporate and community audiences since 1996. She is the author of three books of inspirational humor for women, published by Zondervan/Harper-Collins, beginning with "When Did I Stop Being Barbie and Become Mrs. Potato Head?"

Pierce and her husband Terry have six children and eight grandchildren and a West Highland "Terrorist" named Zoey. They live in Wisconsin where Pierce dreams of getting her act together someday.

## Wedding trends

Spend less and still hold a priceless celebration

FOOD B3



## Life coaches for teens

New trend helps teens cope with pressures

FAMILY/TRAVEL B5

