

Commentary...

On pomp, circumstance and everyday heroes

By Kit Tosello
Columnist

This week when our youngest graduates alongside the rest of the Sisters High School Class of 2017, our family will count it a profound miracle.

You see, early in her sophomore year we were forced to let that expectation go. Broad-sided by the onset of strange and scary symptoms, she received an unusual diagnosis: Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcus Infections (PANDAS). For the next two-and-a-half years, we did our best to cope with a rollercoaster of physical and emotional challenges, with no promise of a cure. And it brought out the worst and the best in us.

So this is to thank the many of you who prayed us through to the other side—to healing. We're indebted to Dr. Kevin Miller, who somehow pulled off an early diagnosis of a disorder few physicians nationwide were even aware of. And to all the teachers and administrators who offered Chelsea a ready smile or practical support. Thank you also to Aspire and SistersGro, not to mention the array of local scholarship donors who recognized her and her peers. Amazing. Your generosity encouraged us greatly, as I'm sure it did others, and sends ripples of change well beyond Sisters.

Our season of pain grew me. I now know what it feels like to want more for your child. To avoid social events because it hurts to explain how things are so different; why our daughter isn't participating in things she used to, including school. I've even averted my eyes from *The Nugget Newspaper*, afraid I'd run into positive stories that might sadden me for things lost. On my worst days, I winced opening to the Honor Roll, or articles detailing the accomplishments of so many remarkable students who've been our girl's classmates since kindergarten. Comparing our kids doesn't sit right. But for a while there, it became easier not to open the paper at all. I've had to forgive myself.

And whenever I lamented how I just wanted

the best for her, there they were, words that always trip me up: I want. Parenting has never been about me. Besides, might my idea of what's best be limited? I don't pretend to understand why God allows suffering. But I know he redeems it. Today, in the very places our daughter was injured, vibrant shoots of new life spring. Strong shoots, purposeful and beautiful. I join now with other parents who've witnessed how young people who suffer greatly often grow exponentially in ways that matter most.

I'm learning to exchange my idea of best for what may be God's idea of better, watching her toolbox fill with gear she'll use to serve a world in need: empathy, longsuffering, perseverance, mercy, hope. And love that's tough as nails. Her disorder even helped inform her education goals and career path. So this is also a tribute to our overcomer, Chelsea.

Finally, I want to recognize and applaud the parents of kids who will never make the paper. Who won't master a foreign language or win a race. Or place second. Or tenth. This is for the moms and dads with children who, every day, endure challenges we know nothing about. These parents are heroic, quietly caretaking children, some of whom may never even develop into fully independent adults. Whenever they open the newspaper and cheer for our kids who will, they display a bravery I aspire to.

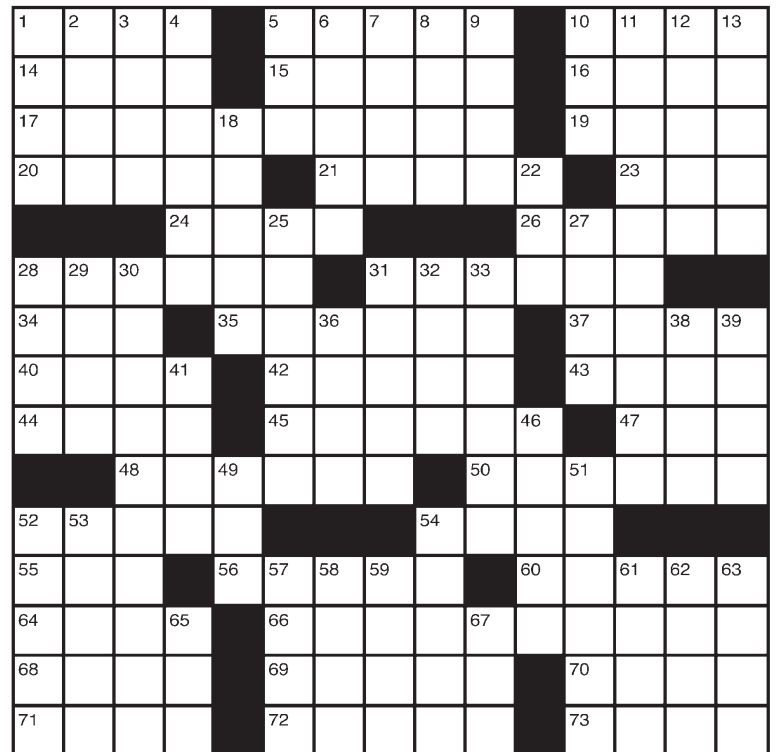
As our graduates set out on their own, may we parents of the Class of 2017 be deeply grateful they have the capacity to do just that: set out on their own. And may each of us, as parents of emergent adults, grow in new ways ourselves, expecting our kids to do great things, yes! But also anticipating they will face setbacks and seasons of pain. Perhaps they must. For these are the life experiences that will, we pray, transform them into the kind of grownups who can open the paper in any season and cheer wholeheartedly for everyone else.

For more information about PANDAS, visit www.pandasnetwork.org.

The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

- ACROSS**
- 1 ___ out; distribute
 - 5 Slumbered
 - 10 Dory or dinghy
 - 14 Ardent
 - 15 Numerical comparison
 - 16 Egg on
 - 17 Remembered
 - 19 Bering & Coral
 - 20 Jagged
 - 21 Fling
 - 23 "___ Along, Little Dogies"
 - 24 Has debts
 - 26 Blackish wood
 - 28 Inclines
 - 31 Scandinavian nation
 - 34 Lubricate
 - 35 Hilarious person
 - 37 Facial twitches
 - 40 Young horse
 - 42 Lift with effort
 - 43 Tow
 - 44 Part of the leg
 - 45 Diners
 - 47 Org. for Heat and Hornets
 - 48 Noises from an unfriendly dog
 - 50 Lustrous; sleek
 - 52 ___ out; eradicate
 - 54 Raise, as kids
 - 55 Tit for ___
 - 56 One of the five senses
 - 60 Understood, though not said
 - 64 Canton's state
 - 66 Faux diamond
 - 68 Combine
 - 69 Deep pink
 - 70 Geologic periods
 - 71 Transmit
 - 72 Take part in a school bee
 - 73 Job opening
- DOWN**
- 1 Show boldness
 - 2 Put one ___ on; hoodwink
 - 3 Star's car
 - 4 Phonograph inventor
 - 5 ___ Lanka
 - 6 Endures
 - 7 Engrave
 - 8 Dock
 - 9 Hullabaloo
 - 10 Public vehicle
 - 11 Beaver State residents
 - 12 Once more
 - 13 Irritable
 - 18 Small salamanders
 - 22 Tie the knot
 - 25 Shun
 - 27 Nickname for Elizabeth
 - 28 Punch
 - 29 Wild feline
 - 30 Unproven accusation
 - 31 Chairs & stools
 - 32 Sand castle destroyer
 - 33 Come forth
 - 36 Authentic
 - 38 Baby bears
 - 39 Kill



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 6/7/17

— Last Week's Puzzle Solved —



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- 41 Semester or quarter
- 46 Bench boards
- 49 ___ for; choose
- 51 Gives a speech
- 52 Ceases
- 53 Lake near Reno
- 54 Of the kidneys
- 57 Rainbows
- 58 Small store
- 59 Get fatigued
- 61 Chilly
- 62 ___ time flat; very quickly
- 63 Examination
- 65 Ancient
- 67 Building annex

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