

# OPINION

## Tears of “Happy”

In my mother’s eyes, I’ve “made it” because I work for people’s stories. I’ve felt guilty for thinking I’m not quite there yet because this is just the beginning. But for my mother, to finally have me working at a desk after her long hours at the factory hog farm while numbing the pain of her hand deformity with medication to pay off my college out-of-pocket, I’ve definitely made it.

I don’t know how to pay her back. If what I’ve already accomplished is enough for her, than I can’t wait to see what furthering my writing career will do. But I’m still stuck wanting to do more for her.

Seeing my name in print for the second week in a row made her cry in our kitchen. She was hugging me, and I didn’t know she was crying at first until I realized she didn’t want to let me go. I asked her why she was sad and my dad quickly said, “Happy.”

While I was in high school, she always told me to pursue an education so I wouldn’t injure my hands or my back like her and my dad. Now whenever I’m in the office and it’s nearing 9 a.m. I think of her administrating vaccination shots to piglets while I’m writing or proofreading. I can’t help feeling upset because for the most part she will always be burning herself out for her children and I still don’t know how to pay her back.



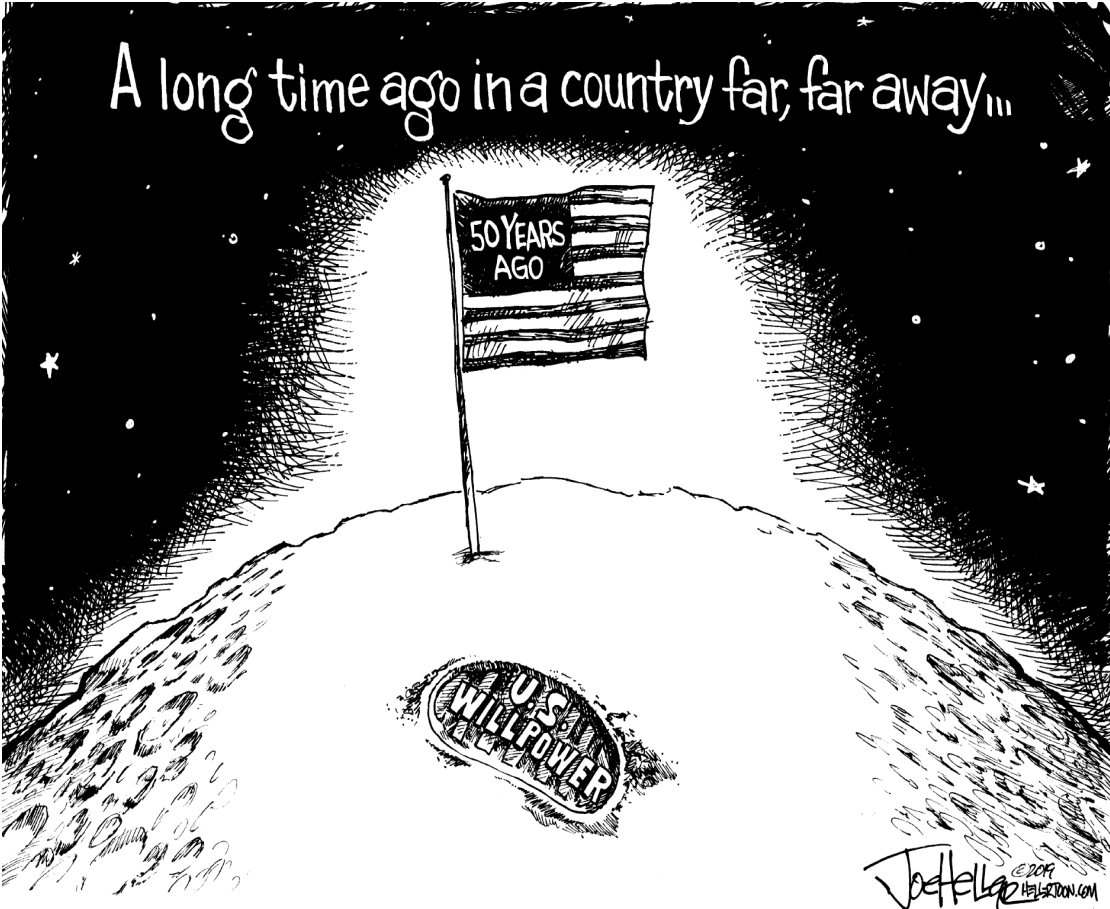
**ARELY ANAYA**  
STAFF WRITER



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**ST. JAMES PLAINDEALER**  
WATONWAN COUNTY'S LARGEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



## Ask A Trooper

**Question:** With the upcoming new hands free law that is effective August 1st, can a teen that is under 18 years old and has a driver’s permit or provisional driver’s license use their phone in hands-free mode?

**Answer:** The new hands-free law does not change anything for teens under 18 with a driver’s permit or provisional driver’s license: They cannot make or answer calls while driving (hand-held or hands-free).

They can use their phone in hands-free mode in the following situations:

¥ Using their phone as a GPS device, but only in hands-free or voice-activated mode. They must set their destination before driving. They can’t hold their phone at any time.

¥ Listening to music or podcasts in hands-free or voice-activated mode is OK,



**SGT. TROY CHRISTIANSON**  
MN State Patrol

but hand-held scrolling through playlists or channels is not allowed under the law.

Teens under 18 are allowed to use the phone in either hand-held or hands-free mode for emergency situations only.

Learn more about the law and frequently asked questions (FAQs) at [HandsFreeMN.org.dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/hands-free/Pages/default.aspx](https://HandsFreeMN.org.dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/hands-free/Pages/default.aspx)

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, [Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us](mailto:Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us))

## Letters to the Editor Policy

Readers are encouraged to express their views. Letters must have the signature, address and phone number of the writer for the purpose of verifying the information contained therein. Only names will be published with the letter. Any unsigned letter will not be published. Letters are subject to editing, condensing, or refusal of publication without explanation. Questionable letters will be faxed to Mark (Minnesota Newspaper lawyer) for libelous content. Letters can be submitted in person or mailed to 604 1st Avenue South, St. James, MN 56081 or email to [ldrafal@sleepyeye-news.com](mailto:ldrafal@sleepyeye-news.com).

## SAVVY SENIOR: MEN GET OSTEOPOROSIS TOO

**Dear Savvy Senior,**

Can men get osteoporosis or is it primarily a problem for women? When I fell and broke my wrist last winter the doctor that treated me told me I might have osteoporosis, but I never got it checked. What can you tell me?

**Bony Bill**

**Dear Bony Bill,**

Many people think osteoporosis is a woman’s disease, but men can get it too, especially in their later years. Here’s what you should know.

**Osteoporosis in Men**

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes the bones to become weak and brittle and more susceptible to fractures. Though women are four times more likely to acquire it, around 2 million American men have osteoporosis today, and another 12 million have “pre-osteoporosis,” or osteope-

nia.

Unfortunately, men are much less likely than women to get the health of their bones checked even after they break a bone. That’s because doctors are often unaware of the many factors that put men at risk of osteoporosis.

While menopause is a major component that accelerates bone loss in women, some of the key risk factors for men developing osteoporosis include: being over age 70; being thin or underweight; smoking; consuming more than three alcoholic drinks a day; having a parental history of osteoporosis; and having a previous fracture.

Certain health conditions — such as rheumatoid arthritis, celiac disease, testosterone deficiency, hyperthyroidism, COPD, kidney or liver disease, and mobility disorders like Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis or stroke — can also

increase your risk. In addition, so can taking certain medications like anti-inflammatory steroids, prostate cancer drugs, proton pump inhibitors for GERDs, antidepressants, immunosuppressants, and anti-seizure drugs.

To help you determine your risk of osteoporosis, the International Osteoporosis Foundation has a quick, online quiz you can take at [RiskCheck.IOFBoneHealth.org](http://RiskCheck.IOFBoneHealth.org)

**Prevention and Treatment**

A good first step in preventing and treating osteoporosis is to get screened. All men over age 70 should have a bone density test, and those who’ve had a fracture or have other risk factors should be tested after age 50. Screening for osteoporosis is a simple, painless, bone density test, which takes about five minutes. Many health insurance companies

will cover bone density tests, as does Medicare.

Here’s what else you can do to protect your bones.

Boost your calcium: The best way to get bone-building calcium is through your diet. Dairy products (low-fat milk, cheeses and yogurt), dark green leafy vegetables (broccoli, kale, collards), sardines and salmon, cooked dried beans, soy foods, almonds and fortified cereals and juices are all good sources of calcium. Vitamin D is also important to help your body absorb calcium.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends 1,000 mg of calcium daily for men under 70, and 1,200 mg for those over 71. They also recommend 800 to 1,000 international units (IU) of vitamin D if you’re over 50. If you’re not getting enough vitamin D through sunlight or food, consider taking a supplement. Most daily

multivitamins contain at least 400 IU.

**Exercise:** Weight-bearing exercises like walking, and strength training with weights or resistant bands three or four times a week, can significantly improve your bone health and reduce the risk of a fall that could cause a fracture.

Control these vices: Avoid smoking, limit alcohol to no more than two or three drinks per day, and limit caffeine (coffee, tea or caffeinated soda) to three cups a day.

Consider medications: The same drugs to treat osteoporosis in women have also been approved for men. The most widely prescribed for osteoporosis are bisphosphonates, a class of drugs designed to slow or stop bone loss. Talk to your doctor about these and other medication options, as well as potential side effects.

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