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OPINION

Heart Association fighting for our health

Nearly one in five Florida children is overweight or obese. About 23 percent of children get no physical activity at all.

This has organizations such as the American Heart Association worried. Overweight kids are at a higher risk for high blood pressure, heart disease or high cholesterol.

So it seems right that the Florida Legislature just passed a bill requiring 30 minutes of physical education a day for every child in elementary school. After all, taxpayers are footing huge bills to take care of medical problems in sedentary children.

We applaud Gov. Charlie Christ for

establishing the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. Government needs to promote physical fitness and proper nutrition for everyone in Florida.

"It is absolutely critical that we find ways to help children adopt healthy habits they can carry into adulthood," Christ said.

But isn't that our job?

Don't we, as parents, shoulder the burden of teaching our kids to live healthy lives. And, shouldn't we as a community do all we can do insure that our children have every chance at a long life?

That's why we should support the Heart Association.

Its annual Lee County Heart Ball is

this Saturday. The group hopes to raise at least \$500,000 for its fight against heart disease through research and education.

But don't sit back and let someone else give all the money needed to fight heart disease.

If you can't afford the \$300 to attend the ball, send them something. We'll have healthier kids and healthier adults. That's a win-win for all of us. ■

Send letters to the editor to news@florida-weekly.com, or mail them to 4300 Ford Street, Suite 106, Fort Myers, Fl. 33916 or call 333-2135

Letters to the editor

What's the hurry?

Sometimes the lines from an old Simon and Garfunkel song run through my head. "Slow down, you move too fast".

Everyone seems to be in such a rush to get from their particular point A to point B that a simple thing like "common courtesy" seems to have gone the way of 8-track players and drive-in movies. (If you don't know what these are, email me and I'll try to explain).

True, some people are running late for work, doctor appointments and tee times but what ever happened to common courtesy?

Is my "agenda" really that much more important than yours?

I seem to remember a "kinder and gentler" place when people would actually take the loss of 4 or 5 seconds from their schedule to let someone else pull into traffic.

When people with a cartload of groceries would gladly let the guy behind with only 4 items go ahead of them. The time when a man would hold a door or give up his seat to a woman (please, no women's lib letters. Blame it on my parents, that's how they raised me).

So I've been taking notes, and this is what I've found. I get more thank-you's, waves and genuine smiles when I prac-

tice common courtesy than you could ever imagine.

I just wonder sometimes if that guy I let into traffic did it for someone else down the road. I would hope so. You just never know, it might become a habit with them and with the person they let in, etc. Soon everyone would be practicing common courtesy everywhere.

Then maybe, indeed, we'd actually have a kinder and gentler world. One can only hope.

**David Anderson
Fort Myers**

Why the Postage Increase?

Here we go again! The U.S. Postal Service will be implementing postage increases, effective May 14. Each time postage is increased, rumors abound as to "why" the increase is necessary. The Postal Service has found it necessary to raise the postage rate for a variety of reasons: The 9-11 attacks and terrorism threats have mandated that the Postal Service implement expensive equipment to prevent anthrax or other dangerous substances from entering the system.

Transportation costs continue to skyrocket. For each 1-cent per gallon increase in gasoline, the Postal Service costs increase \$8 million per year.

Health insurance costs rise each year for employees.

New additional delivery points (customers) increase each year. In the Fort Myers/Cape Coral area, an average of 11,000 new customers have been added each of the past several years.

As new Post Offices and employees are added, there are naturally more costs.

The new prices reflect the differences in the costs of handling post cards, letters, large envelopes, and packages. If customers are diligent in their choice of envelopes or packaging, they can actually save money as some prices are lower than those in the past.

Last year, the postage increase was a direct result of a congressional mandate for the Postal Service to put about \$3 billion into a mandated escrow account. The Postal Service, which employs 700,000 people, is funded entirely by operating revenue. It receives no tax dollars.

The U.S. Postal Service is the cheapest in the world and provides the best service.

So, when you purchase those 41-cent stamps, realize that you are getting a very good service for your small investment.

**Jody Van Cooney
Fort Myers, member, U.S. Postal Service Consumer Advisory Council**

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