

Business or Busy-ness?

Editor's note: The following editorial was published in WMJ, Volume 35, No. 1, p. 42, January 1936

While this writer disclaims having reached the over-ripe age in which the Present is likely to be viewed astigmatically and the Past through rose-colored glasses he is among those who regret the passing of some of the amenities of the "horse and buggy days." Other Victorians have bemoaned the lost arts of conversation and letter-writing and we have much to say in the way of regret for the loss—even though it be doubtful if we have many to listen.

Doubtless conversation was not so interesting way-back-when, as we oldsters like to believe it was. For one thing, the wits of the nineties had no such stiff competition as "The New Yorker," which furnishes the present day "well-known clubman and man-about-town." Cheap newspapers and cheaper radio reception make old stuff, in a matter of seconds, of

what in the good old days would have inspired a scribe to whittle a quill and scratch for hours on an epistle to a far-away relative or friend, later furnishing a motive for a series of neighborhood calls.

But be that all as it may, Modernity hasn't yet so successfully outmoded certain kinds of correspondence as some physicians, and many others, seem to think. "Saying it with flowers" doesn't say it as well as a personal card can be made to say it. Telepathy is too doubtful a medium to replace an unobstrusive and well-timed word of appreciation of a referred patient or other mark of favor. Indeed it would seem oftentimes to the cynically minded that about all that our various time-saving devices have been able to do for many of us, is to rob us of the leisure which professional gentlemen formerly had so abundantly and used so graciously. —H.E.D.

WMJ

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In Response to 'Rustproofing People'

We chuckled at the idea of rustproofing people and felt well-understood with Darold Treffert's story of his mother wanting to ride on the Harley and Dr T's own wish that he had attended fewer professional meetings and had taken flying lessons.¹

There has to be a balance between reasonable measures for health and taking the time for

some joy. But do doctors get caught up in rustproofing, excessive testing and health measures, partly to build practices, to avoid errors and complaints, and out of their own persistent deep fear of death? It's a proven fact that even a car with three coats of rustproofing will eventually go kaput. Thanks, Darold.

William Houghton, MD, and Mary Alice Houghton, MD, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REFERENCE

1. Treffert DA. Rustproofing people: beans or beef? *WMJ*. 2015;114(6):233.

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WMJ

WMJ (ISSN 1098-1861) is published through a collaboration between The Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The mission of *WMJ* is to provide an opportunity to publish original research, case reports, review articles, and essays about current medical and public health issues.

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