

FEBRUARY 2026

FEB 2026 EDITION

There's so much to mention in this February edition:

1. **The Nancy Guthrie kidnapping** – We are watching as a local sheriff attempts to raise his own professional profile instead of trusting a **professional Public Information Officer** to do their job and manage the news coverage. This well-intentioned official appears to have mishandled evidence while also disclosing clues that were meant to remain confidential. We can all learn how to keep ourselves from getting out over our skis.
2. **Personal Safety:** We are now all more vigilant and cautious of our surroundings. To protect yourself from personal harm when shopping and traveling every day, check out www.defensebydesign.com. Owner **Jeff McKissack** will keynote the March 12 HEB Chamber luncheon, sharing details on what we can learn from this kidnapping story to keep us safer in our daily routines.
3. **The most clever Olympic moment** [was when a dog jumped into the cross-country skiing competition.](#)
4. **Fast Food Restaurants** [are increasing their fish offerings in time for the Lenten Season,](#) which runs now through Easter. I offered to give up asparagus and eggplant, but Rebecca convinced me to be more sacrificial, walking away from doughnuts and chocolate! Only 34 more days to go!
5. **Just days away: The big IndyCar Grand Prix Race** takes place in Arlington on March 13-15. What could **POSSIBLY** go wrong on Friday the 13th? I wonder if there will be a promotional partnership with 7-Eleven that requires every competing driver to drink a **Big Gulp** on every lap!

And remember to **early vote in the March 3 election now** through this Friday, February 27.



FEBRUARY 2026

Favorite 2026 Winter Olympic Moments

- American skater **Ilia Malanin** landed two backflips – the first one ever to be achieved in the Olympics.
- **A dog crossed the finish line** with two Olympian cross-country skiers.
- Our **American Men's Hockey Team** won gold on the 46th anniversary of the Miracle on Ice in 1980. And our **American Women's Hockey Team** also won gold – with both wins over the Canadian team in the finals.

And now... my most distressing Olympics story ever...

Oh, No!... Apolo Ohno

Apolo Ohno continues to haunt my dreams even today.

On Monday, February 25, 2002 – the day after the **Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City** ended, USA Today listed the five biggest winners of the competition.

Among the five biggest winners was **Apolo Ohno**, who won the gold medal in the 1,500-meter short track speedskating and the silver in the 1,000-meter short track speedskating. He would skate victoriously through the 2010 Olympics, earning a record **10** medals.

USA Today stated that Apolo had been in a collision with other skaters behind the leader in the final turn of the 500-meter race, but that he had the presence of mind to climb out of the pack and back onto his skates, cross the finish line, and, in doing so, win the silver.

The newspaper suggested that since he had received a severe cut on one of his shins in the collision, he should receive an endorsement from Band-Aid.

My first thought was: **Unless, of course, he didn't use the Band-Aid brand. What if the Team USA trainers used Spenco Second Skin... which was my Waco-based client!!!**

At the time, I owned **Fletcher Communications**, a Waco-based advertising agency. I asked my team to reach out to the Salt Lake City hospital, where Apolo had been treated, to learn whether he had received treatment with **Spenco Second Skin**.

There is a legal, honest, and ethical way to gather the information.



JANUARY 2026

The agent agreed to allow Spenco Medical to:

- use Apolo's photo/likeness in print and broadcast advertising, as well as on the Spenco Medical website
- hold one photo/video session per year of the agreement
- feature Apolo in two speaking engagements at trade shows or corporate events: Format would be Q&A – Apolo would never do a podium speech, and subject to his availability on requested dates

I negotiated a fee of less than \$100,000 per year for three years with an option to renew – remember, this was TWENTY-FOUR [24] years ago, so I can only imagine what that fee would be today.

My public relations director said that the hospital personnel would not release the information because it was confidential.

I then called the hospital and asked for the emergency department director of nursing. I introduced myself, and the nurse immediately said, "I know who you are. You're with Fletcher Communications in Waco, Texas. We can't release that information. It's confidential, and you know that! **Dr. Heiden** is the attending physician, and he won't tell you either."

I then replied, "**I don't need that information at all.** I represent the makers of Spenco Second Skin. I'd appreciate it if you could check your records and, if you DID use Spenco Second Skin, please call Mr. Ohno or his representatives and ask them to call me. Tell them that I have already negotiated a sponsor endorsement with his agent that would earn him almost \$100,000 per year for three years." I gave her my phone number and waited.

Within minutes, I received a call back. "Hi, John, this is Dr. Heiden... **Eric Heiden** (yes, the very SAME Eric Heiden who had won **gold medals in all five speed skating events** in the 1980 Olympics at Lake Placid).

"I want to thank you for the way you asked the question. It's clear that you understand the limitations of what we can and can't tell you. I've reached out to Apolo's manager, and he gave me permission to tell you that we did use Spenco Second Skin."

And now... the REST of the story!

I was sitting in rarified air:

- I had **recognized an opportunity** and responded **quickly with an Olympic hero**
- Apolo Ohno's team had **approved the endorsement**
- The client was enthusiastic about the **three-year deal**
- The endorsement would **benefit my client greatly**, celebrating an Olympic hero
- This endorsement would **elevate my firm's profile for creativity and promotional achievement**

Unfortunately, the client's CEO, in an unrelated matter, terminated my client, the company president, who was the champion of the endorsement. **TIMING IS EVERYTHING.**

The CEO said that he was not in the mood to discuss any endorsement due to the disruption in his executive suite. Essentially, the deal was off.

I gave the CEO two days of breathing room and tried again. However, the deal was dead.



FEBRUARY 2026

For the past 24 years, Apolo has tormented me...

- **People Magazine** named him one of **America's 50 Most Beautiful People of 2009**
- He won **Dancing with the Stars** in 2007 with partner Julianne Hough
- His list of **endorsements** eventually included such giants as **McDonald's, General Electric, Vicks, Coca-Cola, and Alaska Airlines**. For the 2010 Olympic Games, the airline even designed a Boeing 737-800 jet with his image wrapped on the side
- He appeared as an **NBC commentator** twice—for the **2014 Sochi Games** and the **2018 PyeongChang Games**
- He was inducted into the **U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame** in 2019

Please pardon me if I don't truly enjoy the Winter Olympics – particularly the short-track speedskating event– every four years, because it reminds me of the colossal deal that almost was.

And I still have Ohno-phobia!



Wisdom of the Savannah Bananas

The **Savannah Bananas** have formed the ideal partnership with **Dairy Queen** – a first-of-its-kind co-branding program. Effective yesterday (Feb. 23), DQ released the **Savannah Bananas Split Shake**, featuring vanilla soft serve, milk, banana, strawberries, chocolatey shavings, and whipped topping.



TIEBREAKER

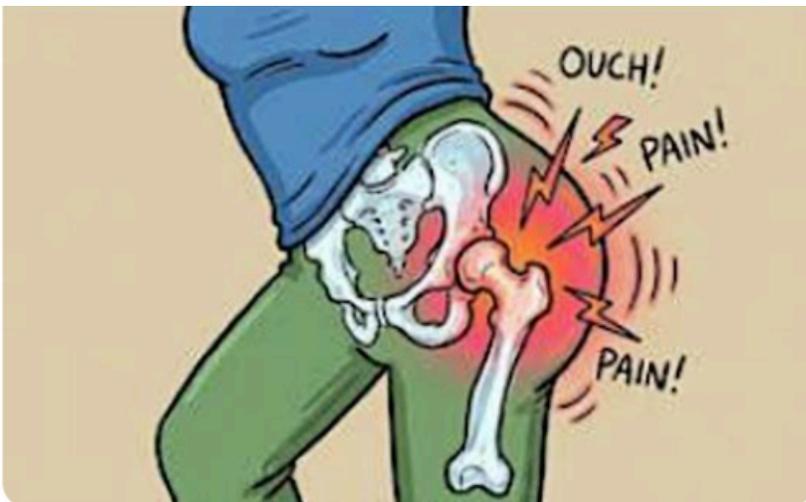
Lose 10 pounds in 2 days. It's genius!

Is it just me, or are you also tired of seeing online postings that promote everything from life hacks to losing weight with the phrase, "It's genius!" For example, "**Remove odors from your bathroom. It's genius!**" "**Lose 10 pounds in 2 days. It's genius!**" "**Save big on this car insurance. It's genius.**"

This is obviously clickbait to drive extra clicks to a website, and it appears to work somewhat.

We all want to be seen as smart – even as a genius – at least once. While these messages may entice us from time to time, they are becoming annoying. Perhaps I'm already a genius, just like you are!

[Please email your thoughts](#) on the "genius" ads.



This New Sciatica Breakthrough Has People Baffled – It's Genius

