

Fender benders could cause a lot of harm

There have been a lot of fender benders in Norton lately. It's nice to know that most of the accidents in your town result in no more than a trip to the body shop and not a trip to the hospital. Still, maybe we should all start being a little more careful.

If you are backing up and hit another vehicle, you might knock out their tail light, knock their bumper off balance or scratch their paint.

All of these things are a pain, but nothing life threatening. Still remember that in the city, a little thing like a fender bender could set off some driver who is on the edge and who has a gun. If we are careful at home, we will be careful when we are on the road.

The more serious worry is children. Little ones just seem to be where they are not supposed to be, and some of them have those little trikes that make it almost impossible to see them in a rearview mirror.

So, if you know how dumb and clumsy you feel if you back up into another vehicle, think how bad you would feel if you backed over a child. Or ran down a pedestrian.

Take that extra minute. Check your rearview mirror. Crane your head out the window. Get out and see how close you are to another car, building or the gas pumps.

Let's give the police a rest and the insurance companies a break. And most of all, let's protect our little ones. — Cynthia Haynes



LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Student searches for 'Harvey Girls'

To the Editor:

My name is Marisa Brandt, and I'm a doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota. My dissertation looks at the Harvey Girls, and at the ways in which they and the Fred Harvey company forged a new image of what it meant to be a "lady."

Between 1878 and 1948, the Harvey Co. established a chain of railroad restaurants from Kansas to California. Harvey Houses, as they came to be called, set new standards for fine dining in the West. The women who worked in these restaurants — popularly known as Harvey Girls — were widely recognized as one of the restaurants' chief draws.

I'm writing because I would like to make contact with descendants of women who were Harvey Girls between 1878 and 1910 and hope that a mention of my project in *The Norton Telegram* might encourage some folks to get in touch with me. I'm especially interested in diaries and letters from that time, and of course in interviewing relatives of Harvey Girls from the turn of the century.

Contact Marisa Brandt, Department of History, 614 Social Sciences Tower, University of Minnesota, 267 19th Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn., 55455.

Marisa Brandt
Minneapolis

WRITE:

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area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk. Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Wednesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

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Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
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It was a busy weekend all around

We had one of THOSE weekends. I needed to be at a 4:30 p.m. meeting in Overland Park, near Kansas City, on Saturday. We left our house at 6:30 a.m., drove to an old friend's house just south of the city and had a nice visit with her. In fact, we got ready at her house and made it to the meeting right on time.

Afterwards, we headed back west and stopped for the night at my brother, Jim's place just west of Lawrence and, of course, stayed up way too late talking. Up and out the door early, we made it to Salina just in time for church with an old preacher friend of Jim's.

Noon saw us back on the road and pushing to get home before the little singing group we're apart of had rehearsal at 4 p.m. We kinda slid in on two wheels, changed clothes, gave the cat his shot and were only 15 minutes late to practice.

We wouldn't want to miss a thing, and usually, we don't.

—ob—

Progress Report on Mother Robin: I have come to the conclusion that she must

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



be a first-time mother. Originally, she tried to build her nest on a two-inch-wide platform and only succeeded when Jim gave her something more substantial to build on. Then, one day we came home to discover a little blue egg had evidently been laid over the edge of the nest, only to fall "ker-splaat" on the concrete step below.

There are two surviving eggs, though. I just took a mirror and held it over the nest to check. Whether she knows enough to set on them remains to be seen. So far, she hasn't earned a lot of points in the "maternal instinct" department.

—ob—

This has been a tough week on Jim. Last

Monday, he had his remaining eight teeth pulled. Having learned from past experience, he knew he wouldn't be worth much for a day or two, so he kind of camped out in his recliner the rest of Monday and all day Tuesday. Wednesday, he felt like going to work and made it through the rest of the week. But, as sometimes happens, bone chips appear to be working their way upwards and he is in a lot of pain. He's at the dentist's office right now to see if they really are bone chips that will come out on their own, or remnants of a tooth that will need attention.

—ob—

We drove home Sunday in those terrible high winds. And I can swear that they swept the entire length of the state. Saturday night, they started in Overland Park, and all day Sunday it was a struggle to keep the vehicle on the road. The further west we came, the hazier the air was. The dust was thick, completely blotting out the landscape.

Shades of the Dirty Thirties!

The real definition of a 'family'

Someone asked me a few years ago if my mother had worked while I was growing up.

I replied, "No."

Then I remembered, "Oh, yes she did, she taught school."

I didn't remember because we went to school together and came home together. She probably knew she was working though!

My dad was a pretty modern dad by today's standards. While mom was busy during the winter teaching school, dad sometimes handled the night meal (it was called dinner at Hal's Café on West Highway 36).

When it was my mother's busy time as a teacher it was my dad's slow time as a farmer and vice versa.

Consequently, I had the best of both worlds. I fed cattle and hunted with my dad and shopped and traveled with my mother. I grew up feeling loved and appreciated.

Everyone should be so lucky. Many of today's children know a very different world.

Mom and Dad are both gone for long hours each day and frequently they live in separate households.

Children bounce from Mom's house to Dad's trying to remember when to take back the library book left at Dad's or to turn in the homework assignment just completed at Mom's. It must be difficult to know just exactly where to find "home."

I think the judge back east had the right idea. The home should be given to the children and Mom and Dad should move back and forth, after all, the divorce is between them.

Children are entitled to security and stability. Of course there are times divorce is unavoidable; abuse, alcohol, etc., but

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



more often than not a divorce is deemed necessary because of irreconcilable differences or "no fault".

Ninety percent of things are reconcilable and no fault is non-existent. My dad used to say if people worked as hard on first marriages as they do on second ones, there would be fewer divorces and I think he was probably right.

Many children watch mom or dad prepare for a date, a concept which I don't think I would have ever understood in my youth and even more face the adjustment of step and/or half-siblings.

A friend told me recently after meeting her daughter's newly acquired family, "Well, they may call them blended families, but I think a more fitting word is curdled."

☆☆☆☆

After a recent column, a nephew said, "I've known you all my life and I don't know where these relatives are you talk about."

Since they are all real people I started to think about how very limited our awareness of "family" sometimes is. If they aren't from the same generation, if they are from the "wrong" side of the family or if they are seldom seen they may become mentally and emotionally distant to us, but their membership in the family is nonetheless a fact.

Sometimes we assume the knowledge of circumstances and people will be transmitted by osmosis and we don't take the time or energy to relay the bits of interest about the family. How many children actually know where their parents were born or how they met?

Sometimes the information flow stops on the receiving end with people who lack an interest in anyone or anything outside their realm.

If someone's interest is farming rather than sports do we discard them because we have "nothing in common"?

I wonder when we lost the desire/ability to really know our family members. Did it come when we became a more mobile society and could "pick and choose" our living location? Or did it come when we felt less need to rely on each other.

Perhaps it came when we became a 24/7 society with dual wage earners and little time to pass on the family notes.

Years ago Sunday afternoons and family dinners were spent telling stories of our past and to be sure each re-tell became a bit more colorful.

Frequently now that time is spent on video games, in front of the TV or on the computer with little conversation or interaction.

Even the sharing of stories during holiday meal preparation is greatly changed with less time spent in preparation and hence less in conversation. Paper plates have taken the place of china and the stories of the handed down treasures are as disposable as the paper plates.

The loss of these shared memories and divulged secrets are permanent.

As older generations die out we will lose touch with our past and consequently with those figures who define our family, like it or not.