

Editor answers several questions

Dear Readers:
Over the last several months, we've received a lot of requests to write about things and some questions on how and why we do what we do.

A note with a subscription renewal asked why we don't drop the *Monday Extra* and go to three papers a week. Money is the simple answer.

We don't have the manpower to put out three good papers a week. We tried it and it didn't work so well. We do the Extra because our advertisers want the total market coverage it gives them. Lots of our readers enjoy getting the more comprehensive classifieds and the calendar each week.

But news is expensive. Our small staff can only do so much, and we want to focus on news about Norton and Norton County.

If we put out three papers a week, we would have to pick up the Associated Press news service again. Then we could put stories about Iraq and Washington and Topeka in your paper. This would cost us about \$80 a week or \$4,160 a year.

We would rather run a local paper. People who want the news from other places can subscribe to *The Salina Journal* or the *Hays Daily News*. They're the big guys. They cover world, national and state news.

We're a little guy. We'll tell you about Norton County and the people who live around here.

Another reader asked if we could put in bits and pieces from our other papers. We could do that. But to get that news in, we would have to leave out stuff about Norton and the people here. We only have so much space and we'd rather spend it telling about this little corner of the universe.

Anyone who wants to see something in those other papers is welcome to stop by our office — we get a subscription to them, we sell them or you can check with the library — they may take them.

Another suggestion was that we write an editorial about the big jump in milk prices. There might be something to that, but unfortunately, the editor doesn't know a thing about dairy prices or milk. We do try to have a few facts before hitting the computer keys.

Several readers were angry about a recent editorial on President Bush and the war in Iraq, but said they didn't think we would run opposing views.

We love letters to the editor, and if you disagree with us, so much the better. The editorial page is supposed to be about opinions, yours and ours.

We want to be an open forum for community discussion. We won't run unsigned letters or attacks on your neighbors, but we want to hear what you have to say on public issues.

We sit here each week and put our views and our name in the paper and take the heat. If you want to do the same — good for you. We'll make space for your opinions, too.

And we always appreciate suggestions about the paper.

— Cynthia Haynes

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★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715

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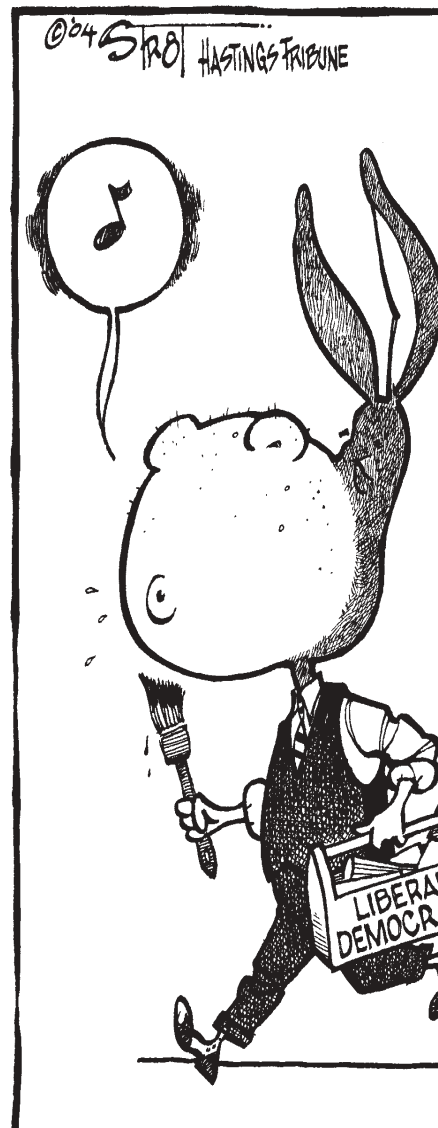
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Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
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Incorporating the Norton County Champion

Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



- Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal
Presidential
Ten Step Recovery Program
1. ADMIT TO PRISON GOOF-UP.
 2. APOLOGIZE FOR SCANDAL.
 3. FIRE RUMMY.
 4. ADMIT HALLIBURTON IS EVIL.
 5. APOLOGIZE FOR HALLIBURTON.
 6. FIRE CHENEY.
 7. ADMIT FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF 9-11.
 8. APOLOGIZE FOR 9-11.
 9. STEP DOWN FROM PRESIDENCY.
 10. ENDORSE JOHN KERRY.

LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR: Students reflect on service work

Norton Community Junior High students took part of a day out of the classroom to learn by doing during a Service Learning Day last month.

The young men and women and their sponsors cleaned, scraped, painted and fixed along the highway, the carnival area and downtown and at the hospital, theater, Andbe Home, swimming pool and lake. The next day they wrote their reflections on the learning day activities.

Here are some of those reflections:

I picked weeds at various locations. It feels good to help make the community look better. I had lots of fun with my group and leader. I would volunteer like this again.

This was a good project to do because now when I look at the flowers with no weeds I know that I helped make them like that.

I think that you should have to do many hours of volunteer work to graduate.

— Eighth-grade girl

It felt good helping other people with stuff. I raked lawns and cleaned yards. I had fun to.

Yes, I would volunteer for projects on

my own. It was a beneficial project to me. Yes it should be tied to graduation.

— Seventh-grade boy

I went out to the lake for service cleaning day. I felt it was good we cleaned up the lake. I thought it was quite a bit of fun.

I mean, we get out of school to go help out in our community. I probably would volunteer again on my own, because I liked helping out our community. I think it was a very beneficial project.

We helped to make the lake a funner place to visit.

We helped so the animals wouldn't eat the trash or get caught in it.

That is what I thought about service learning day.

— Seventh-grade boy

This year helping out was enjoyable. I cleaned up the theatre and I had fun.

I would probably consider volunteering on my own on a service project.

Yes it was beneficial because now when I go to watch a movie

I know I help to make it look nice.

I don't think service should be tied to graduation.

— Eighth-grade girl

What I did in service learning day was

polishing new carnival rides for this year's carnival.

After I was done working I felt very proud that I had helped someone out. It was hard work, but at the same time I had a very fun time.

I will probably volunteer for some more activities when I have time. I think this was a very important and kind thing to do for other people.

I do think volunteer work should be tied with graduation. I really enjoyed service learning day.

It was hard work, but fun too!

— Eighth-grade girl

I liked helping because it felt good to do something for others that can't!

I helped clean out a room in the basement of the Andbe home! It was fun because I got to see a lot of things and decorations that were put up during different times of the year around the Andbe home.

I also liked hearing some stories that Darleen told us about people! This was a very beneficial project to do because it let everyone experience the feeling you get after helping someone, that most people will not get because they will not do it on their own.

— Eighth-grade girl

School finances still causing upset

Senate Doings

Sen. Stan Clark



School finance proved to be the elusive issue for the Kansas Legislature this year, with no plan passed to date.

Last fall, a district judge issued a preliminary order on school finance. Among his findings were that at-risk and bilingual students are not performing as well as the average student, and he recommended additional money for these areas.

In any plan, regional and urban-rural politics comes into play. Johnson County generates about 25 percent of the income in our state. They want to direct as much of their own money to their schools as they can. The rub is that the judge says that a student, no matter where he lives, should have an equal opportunity.

Rural schools point to the difference in class offerings between their schools and their urban counterparts. Urban schools complain about the amount spent per student in rural schools and want to change the funding formula. Schools that have declining enrollments suffer the most.

As many as five plans per day were produced near the end of the session and yet none passed. I voted for the two that passed the Senate and have recorded votes for others and agreed to other plans that only were presented in caucus.

Were they the ideal? No.

The last plan that passed the Senate 26-10 with 3 absent and 1 passing really was a pretty good plan.

On the funding side, it placed an emphasis on at-risk and bilingual students. Under this plan, rural districts would have fared pretty well. School districts would have received the following increases per student next year:

Almena-Northern Valley, \$204;

Atwood-Herndon, \$177; Bazine, \$203; Blue Valley, \$122; Brewster, \$198; Cheylin, \$203; Colby, \$161; Dighton, \$183; Dodge City, \$236; Ellis, \$186; Garden City, \$208; Goodland, \$181; Grainfield-Wheatland, \$194; Grinnell, \$181; Hays, \$158; Healy, \$205; Hill City, \$189; Hoxie, \$172;

Jennings, \$219; Kansas City, \$230; Lenora, \$191; Leoti, \$186; Liberal, \$211; Ness City, \$168; Norton, \$173; Oakley, \$206; Oberlin, \$174; Palco, \$210; Plainville, \$182; Quinter, \$182; Ransom, \$204; Rexford-Golden Plains, \$222; Rolla, \$246; Salina, \$190; Scott City, \$172; Sharon Springs, \$185; Shawnee Mission, \$133; St. Francis, \$178; Stockton, \$183; Topeka, \$208; Tribune, \$203; Triplains, \$204; Utica, \$233; Victoria, \$157; WaKeeney, \$172; Weskan, \$202; Wichita, \$214.

The money would have come through an \$82 million prepayment from the Highway Fund to the General Fund. Every year, the Highway Fund pays for the Highway Patrol and motor carrier enforcement.

The proposal would require that the funds pay the \$82 million the last week in June instead of making a quarterly payment of \$20.5 million.

The Highway Fund spends about \$1.3

billion each year and generally has about \$500 million available for cash flow. This would provide the necessary money up front for schools. The worst downside is that the Highway Fund would be asked to continue this practice a second year.

The Kansas economy is improving. Tax receipts for the first 10 months of this fiscal year are \$230 million more than last year.

The second key feature of the bill was that it sought to identify in law the required areas of instruction and education goals to help the courts in establishing a baseline for determining "suitable provision" for education funding. This feature had previously passed the House.

These included 17 areas, from math and science to history, patriotism, citizenship, fine arts and performing arts, industrial technologies and career education and others.

The legislation allowed school districts to prioritize the expenditure of state money but said that the money provided shall be expended first to pay costs related to the 17 areas of instruction.

The effect of this feature was that the emphasis would be placed on funding specific courses of study.

It was opposed by most, if not all, school lobbyists.

Those that spoke did not want any specific areas of instruction and they wanted funding based on outcomes.

The difference in funding based on inputs instead of outcomes is hundreds of millions of dollars per year in Kansas.

Regrettably, the House rejected this bill and neither the funding nor the policy will become law this year.