

## One weird law isn't such a bad thing

It's nearly time for Kansas school districts to publish their executive salaries again. We want to serve fair notice that this newspaper will print the salaries reported by area districts and compare them with other public officials.

The reporting requirement is sort of a screwball law, but it's not a bad idea. It originated a couple of years ago when someone found that an old Kansas law required Kansas school districts to pay for a legal notice to publish administrator's pay.

There was much wailing and gnashing of teeth, and school groups tried to get the Legislature to repeal the law. Instead, it was changed so that school districts only have to give out a press release with the salaries. It's up to the newspapers and broadcast stations what to do with it.

We happen to think it's a healthy thing for the voters to know what they pay public officials, elected or hired. Salaries of all public employees are open information, and any citizen can go to the courthouse or the school office and see them.

In some states, in fact, county and school payroll is published each month. There would be nothing wrong with that.

One of the things you give up when you take a tax-paid job is a certain amount of privacy. As a public employee, you know when you take a job that you may be in the public eye, and your salary is not private.

We think it's hardly fair to pick on school administrators, though. If their salaries are going to be in the paper, we think other public executives — county officials, city administrators, hospital executives — should be there as well.

These people are your employees, your administrators, running your tax-supported agencies. You pay them; you deserve to see how much.

School people seem to be a little defensive about this, because on the whole, they make more than most public officials. They may well be worth it, considering the years of education and experience their jobs require, and the importance of the task they are charged with. That is not for us to decide.

Rather, the voters need to have this information so they can make informed judgments on who gets what, who needs what and who deserves what. Maybe some officials are underpaid.

We plan to present the information in an objective manner, and let you, the taxpayers, voters and readers decide what you think.

We won't be revealing any secrets, but unless somebody does the legwork, it's hard to make comparisons. All the officials will get a chance to comment. The voters have the final say.

And that's how it should be in a democracy.

— Steve Haynes

## WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-you 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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Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



## The wait for tomatoes is getting hard

Our tomatoes still haven't ripened. But when I mentioned we wanted BLTs for supper, my friend Ila took pity on us and sent us home with some of her produce. When ours finally do turn, I'll return the flavor, uh, favor.

—ob—

Mom used to say, "Expect the unexpected." And nothing could have been more unexpected than the news we received this week from my brother Don's family.

Don's wife Liz has had a series of "mini strokes" and had been at their daughter Pam's in Phoenix when she needed to be hospitalized. Don flew from their home in Arkansas to Arizona to be with Liz. However, when he got there, he became ill, was taken to the emergency room, admitted for testing and learned that he has a form of lymphoma.

With both her parents in the hospital, Pam feels like she is living there, too. The good news, though, is Liz is much improved and ready to go home. Don feels good and is going home a few days ahead of her to remodel their bathroom from a tub to a shower facility. His doctors are encouraging about treatments and Don himself has a very positive outlook.

## Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



—ob—

We made major progress on our remodeling project last week. We're focusing on the kitchen right now, and finished painting the walls. Jim ran the gas line for my cooktop and more electrical for an exhaust fan.

He also put in the heat ducts and leveled out the floor with some concrete. But the biggest change came when he laid out the frame for the cabinets themselves. I can stand in the middle of what will eventually be my new workspace and dream of the gourmet meals I will someday prepare.

Beans and wieners are gourmet, aren't they?

—ob—

Lemon meringue pie might not be gourmet, but I had the urge to make one this

weekend. I had a fresh lemon in the crisper so I grated the rind and squeezed the juice. The pie itself turned out fine, but I always have trouble with the meringue. First, it was flat, it pulled away from the sides and got "weepee". I follow all the experts' advice about sealing the edges, using a chilled bowl and beaters to no avail. It's the main reason I don't make more cream pies.

Besides, when I do, Jim feels compelled to ask everyone, in his broadest hillbilly accent, if they know what "ma-rang" is.

The unsuspecting victim will always answer, "No."

That's when he grabs my left hand and declares, "That's what my wife wears on her 'fan-gur'."

—ob—

There were three old friends out playing golf one day. All three were hard of hearing.

The first old man said, "It sure is windy."

The second man contradicted him and said, "No. It's Thursday."

To which the third man replied, "Me, too. Let's have a drink."

And confusion reigned supreme.

## Mother's doing much better

Mom's doing well. Thank you to all who asked about her. For those, who don't know, my 79-year-old mother broke her hip a couple of weeks ago.

Two weeks ago Friday, I headed for Concordia to see her. This was my third visit since she fell. The first was the day after and the second was the day she got home from the hospital. The first trip turned into an all-night vigil to see that she tolerated her surgery and the second was mostly a one-way conversation.

When I arrived on Friday, however, she was in bed reading. Mom loves to read, and my sister and I spend a lot of time scouring bookstores for her favorites — historical romances with no sex.

These books have names like "Miss Merryweather's Secret" and "The Dangerous Duke". The covers always show a man and a woman in period dress gazing wistfully at each other.

You know one the minute you see it, but they're not as popular as they once were, and we have to look mostly in used bookstores.

When I walked into Mom's room, however, she was happy to put her book aside and spend some time with me. We gossiped about my nephew's new job and my youngest daughter's move to Columbia, S.C. Youngest daughter's furniture was picked up by the moving company the end of July. It still hasn't been delivered and she's getting a little ticked.

Then Mom suggested we go outside. I was surprised, but said it was a great idea. Then I was really surprised as she told me to position her wheelchair next to the bed.

She levered herself out of bed, took two steps, sat down in the chair, looked up at me and smiled and said, "Let's go."

## Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



We went outside, where a couple of her cronies were enjoying the flowers and cool breezes. It was time for more gossip and a dissection of the supper menu.

After the other women left, we stayed on the porch watching a couple of tiny lizards run in and out of their holes. I love little animals and Mom was having fun, too.

We would have stayed longer, but her physical therapist came to find us. It was time for her arm-strengthening exercises. If your legs don't work so well, it's good

to have strong arms.

While Mom pulled on giant rubber bands, I went to see what the nursing home cat was looking at out a window. It was a dinner-plate-size turtle, headed straight for the window.

The cat didn't seem to know whether it wanted to attack or retreat. Since the animals were on opposite sides of the glass, neither would have been very effective, but sometimes it's just fun to watch a nervous cat.

After Mom's physical therapy, we petted the cat for awhile and got her ready for supper.

When I left, she was looking at the menu with a jaundiced eye. But, that was OK, since I had bootlegged a malt in to her when I came. I just wanted to get out and on the road before the nurses found out and came after me.

Like the cat, I like to keep something between me and them.

## A FUNNY FOR TODAY

Three men were sitting together bragging about how they had set their new wives straight on their duties. The first man had married a woman from Missouri and bragged that he had told his wife she was going to do all the dishes and house cleaning that needed done at their house. He said that it took a couple days, but on the third day, he came home to a clean house and the dishes were all washed and put away.

The second man had married a woman from Nebraska. He bragged that he had given his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, dishes and cooking. He

told them that the first day he didn't see any results, but the next day it was better. By the third day, his house was clean, the dishes were done, and he had a huge dinner on the table.

The third man had married a Kansas girl. He boasted that he told her his house was to be cleaned, dishes washed, the cooking done and laundry washed. And this was all her responsibility. He said the first day he didn't see anything and the second day he didn't see anything but by the third day some of the swelling had gone down so he could see a little out of his left eye!