

## Can rhetoric become solutions?

Elections are supposed to be about issues, but when the smoke clears we are left with the prospect of more of the regular political process and little chance things will change much.

Politics is the art of compromise, which means policy is made in incremental steps to accommodate as many people as possible. That does not mean it is wrong, but that many issues which were specific points in the election are not going to look the same when the political process is done with them.

Issues such as abortion or stem cell research bow more to the emotions and the political power of a vocal minority than to the real sentiment of a majority. These are moral issues, and it is hard to legislate morality. That does not stop the political process.

People who want them stopped will flex their political power to bring the law into line with their thinking.

As time and science continue to advance, other issues will test the moral code of our citizens, but as the population changes from decade to decade, the themes will also change and the law will bend in new directions.

Larger issues like health care costs are so complex that an incremental approach will whittle away at the edges of the problem without actually attacking the heart. There are as many plans to deal with the myriad of health care issues as there are members of Congress, and behind them will be the lobbyists for the insurance and drug companies to keep the process moving as slowly as possible.

Those of us who are finding it difficult to stay afloat in the depths of the cost of health insurance will pray that at least once those in office will do the right thing, and find a real solution. It would be great to say there was a simple way to cut the costs and provide adequate health insurance to everyone. The issue is complex enough to find it swamped in the morass of the politics of compromise which helps keep the costs high and reduces the ability of an individual or a small business to help their employees with the benefit of health insurance.

When there is an issue that might have a simple answer, the very idea is met with ridicule and outright laughter. In recent years the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars have been championing the passage of a law to make it a crime to deface or burn the American flag.

The emotions run high with the veterans, who see the flag as the symbol of the country, and the unifying symbol of the brotherhood of veterans who have fought many years for the preservation of the country it represents.

They cannot see anything beyond making it illegal to burn the flag, and do not feel such deprecation of the symbol should be protected by the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech.

A former congresswoman from Colorado, Pat Schroeder, once suggested a simple solution to the issue. She said if you don't want the flag to be burned in protest, declare that all flags are to be made of nonflammable material.

The suggestion was dismissed as being ridiculous, and no one truly looked at it as an alternative.

Making all American flags out of nonflammable material would not change the situation overnight, but it eventually would make it more difficult to burn the flag in protest.

It's a simple solution that would keep the First Amendment intact, and give the veterans organizations a victory in defending their symbol of brotherhood.

— Tom Betz

## 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-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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## A birthday is not to be moaned about

If you see my little brother, wish him a "Happy Birthday". He was 50 on the 17th. The hubby's little sister, Susie, was 50 earlier this month so I guess it's official — we are all grown up.

I was almost 3 when David was born. I think I remember talking to my mom before she went to the hospital. I definitely remember how surprised I was the first time I saw him get his diaper changed. I had two sisters. This was sure something different.

I never asked the husband if he worried that his sister was missing something. He had a brother.

His sister got a big party for her birthday. Her husband, Dave, is a couple of weeks older so their kids split the difference and had a surprise party. It went well, the best part was they were genuinely surprised.

It is fun to have goofy celebrations for these milestone birthdays. But on some level it nags at me. Two of my husband's

Back Home  
Nancy Hagman



favorite women cousins died of cancer; one was not yet 40, the other far from 50.

How I would love to see them again. How I wish they had lived long enough to get bifocals and hot flashes. It seems insulting to roll a 50 year old around in a wheelchair and give them black roses when they have received such a wonderful gift, the chance to celebrate another birthday.

Old age is not what it used to be. Or does it just seem that way the older we get?

In October my Aunt Virginia celebrated her 99th. At her party there was a

sign that said, "Nothing is free, not even a long life, it comes with the price of old age".

I should go see my Aunt Virginia more often. She was always a very reserved person and we never visited them much, but she only lives in Hill City and she is very much with it. She knew me and knew about what Kate was doing because Kate keeps in touch with one of her great-grand-daughters and Stacey had filled her in.

I was very impressed since she has more than 40 great-grand children, I'm not sure I could even keep track of them.

So happy birthday David, Susie, Dave, Aunt Virginia. I hope you had a good day.

The best birthday sentiment I ever saw is, "It's not important how many years you lived but how many people are glad you did."

I'm glad you did.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

### Norton man remembers those who died

To the Editor:  
I want to thank you for the special edition, Veteran's Day week, in regards to the World War II vets.

A special thanks goes to the sponsors and their concerns and thank yous.

Much of this letter is by memory, so if I am incorrect, please forgive. Also, I know I will miss some.

I would like to mention some of our comrades lost in World War II — Abe, Joe, Vale, Tommy, Dewey, Chevey, Gene, Lurod and Jack E. — we salute the Norton countians.

The Korean War was to be a skirmish, but it did not turn out that way. Many of our young men served with pride.

The Vietnam War, I think, was the greatest injustice in our history. Though many of our young men and women served with pride and valor.

For Mike, Glenn, Bart and John, we will not forget.

To Stan, Curt, Gary, Joe, Larry U., John, Ron, Vance, J.B., Larry S., Larry P., Dick H., we appreciate your concern to serve.

Many of our men and women are serving in this present conflict. We must have compassion for their call to duty.

If any of you have a chance, stop by one of the V.A. hospitals for a visit. I assure you it will make their day and yours.

Sincerely,  
Jack Ward

Editor Note: Thank you, Mr. Ward for reminding us for those who did not return. We knew there were men from Norton County killed in the war but had no practical way of finding their names and remembering them.

You have done it for us.

Thank you also for remembering our sponsors. The newspaper employees do the work but the sponsors pay the bills and without them there would be no special sections and no newspaper.

### Caregivers are recognized nationally

To the Editor:  
November is National Family Caregivers Association month. What is Family Caregiving?

Family caregivers provide emotional, financial, nursing, social, homemaking and other services daily or now and then.

Caregiving itself is multi-dimensional. For some, it means providing 24-hour care for someone who can't dress, feed, go to the bathroom, or think for himself or herself. For others, caregiving is an emotional roller coaster because a condition has not exhibited debilitating symptoms — yet.

Caregiving can last a few years or a lifetime. It means re-evaluating finances and job opportunities, and making compromises.

Caregiving is learning how to work with doctors or other health professionals so they treat you as an important member of your loved one's team.

Caregiving includes learning about wheelchairs, lifts and little gadgets that help you button a shirt.

Caregiving is wondering why no one ever asks how you are.

### Tribute to veterans is appreciated

Letter to the Editor:  
Thank you for publishing an outstanding issue about the veterans of the Norton area. What a great way to pay tribute to them.

Clair and Norma Rumford  
Norton

Caregiving is dreaming about being alone in your own house.

Caregiving involves learning about Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other public programs.

Caregiving is the joy you feel when your spouse says he or she felt good today.

Caregiving is hard work, it is pain, it is loving, giving and sharing. Caregiving is accepting and learning new things and going on, and on, and on. It is lots of questions and few answers. Caregiving is being out of the mainstream.

Caregiving is all these things and a whole lot more.

For more information on the Family Caregiver Support Program, contact Joan Parker at the Northwest Kansas Agency on Aging, (800) 432-7422 or (785) 628-1164.

Glenna Clingingsmith  
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Hays