

Small town people care about and support each other

One of the greatest advantages to living in a small town is that you learn not to take anything for granted. Survival in a small town is dependent on everyone learning to support one another in a variety of ways.

We were privileged this past weekend to be a witness to that support.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Norton County held its first annual Dinner Dance and Silent Auction.

It involved the work and cooperation of dozens of people and businesses supporting our local organization and in exchange provided a fun-filled evening for adults.

Norton has always valued its youth and this was no exception.

The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program is designed for children from single-parent homes, however numerous youth are involved, whose teachers or counselors felt they could benefit from someone extra to help with schoolwork.

In addition to helping young ones, the program, which involves adults mentoring children, also allows high school students to become involved in mentoring a grade school youth.

The taste of volunteerism can never be introduced too young.

Businesses and individuals donated food, gift items, time and money in support of this program, but it goes beyond supporting the program. It speaks precisely to the need itself.

People in this community care deeply for children. When the community hears there is a child involved, they respond. If you look around, you see the result of things deemed important to this area.

Renovation of the theater has provided a place for the kids.

Elmwood Park was recreated for safety and a place to bring families together. Ball parks, a skateboard park and the football field all provide opportunities for our youngsters, and at one time or another, have needed money and labor.

We have a beautifully built and maintained swimming pool and, on a hot summer day, one only needs to drive past to see what ages benefit.

And a favorite is the "taking a main", something that has been outlawed in many cities.

The caring concern of so many creates success for all.

It is good to be to be a citizen of this unique and caring place called Norton County.

— Mary Kay Woodyard

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: There is such a thing as a stupid question

Recently most of us saw on television or read in newspapers a statement, "Was it war or was it murder?"

It is my opinion that anyone who asks such a stupid question should be tried for treason against the U.S.A.

My understanding of treason is anyone trying to undermine the government of the U.S.A. These soldiers were sent to Iraq by order of the President of the U.S.A.

None of them chose to be there but they did choose to serve their country and defend us against our enemies.

As a parent and grandparent of soldiers in Iraq, I take great offense to this statement, "Was it war or was it murder?"

Take a minute and put yourself in their shoes. You have two seconds to decide — shoot or be shot. Oops, you're dead. Sorry.

How many of our soldiers' lives do we lose before we get back to the basic rules of war, KILL or be KILLED. This sounds

harsh, but ask the families of the thousands of soldiers already lost and then tell me how bad it sounds.

If people feel the need to blame someone, let me suggest a few — heads of a lot of two-bit countries, but worse yet, a lot of multi-billion dollar companies right here in the U.S.A., who have and continue to make money from war material sold on the open market to the highest bidder.

To these people the money is secondary. The real goal is POWER, which comes in many strange ways and forms.

My son's name and address is: Jerry Chambers, 17th CSB/3-1013th QMCO, APO AE 09334. (Family address is Oberlin, Kan.)

My grandson's name and address is: Justin Pachner, McCook, Neb. (son of Jeanne Pachner, 714 E. Commercial, Oberlin, Kan.)

Bruce T. Chambers
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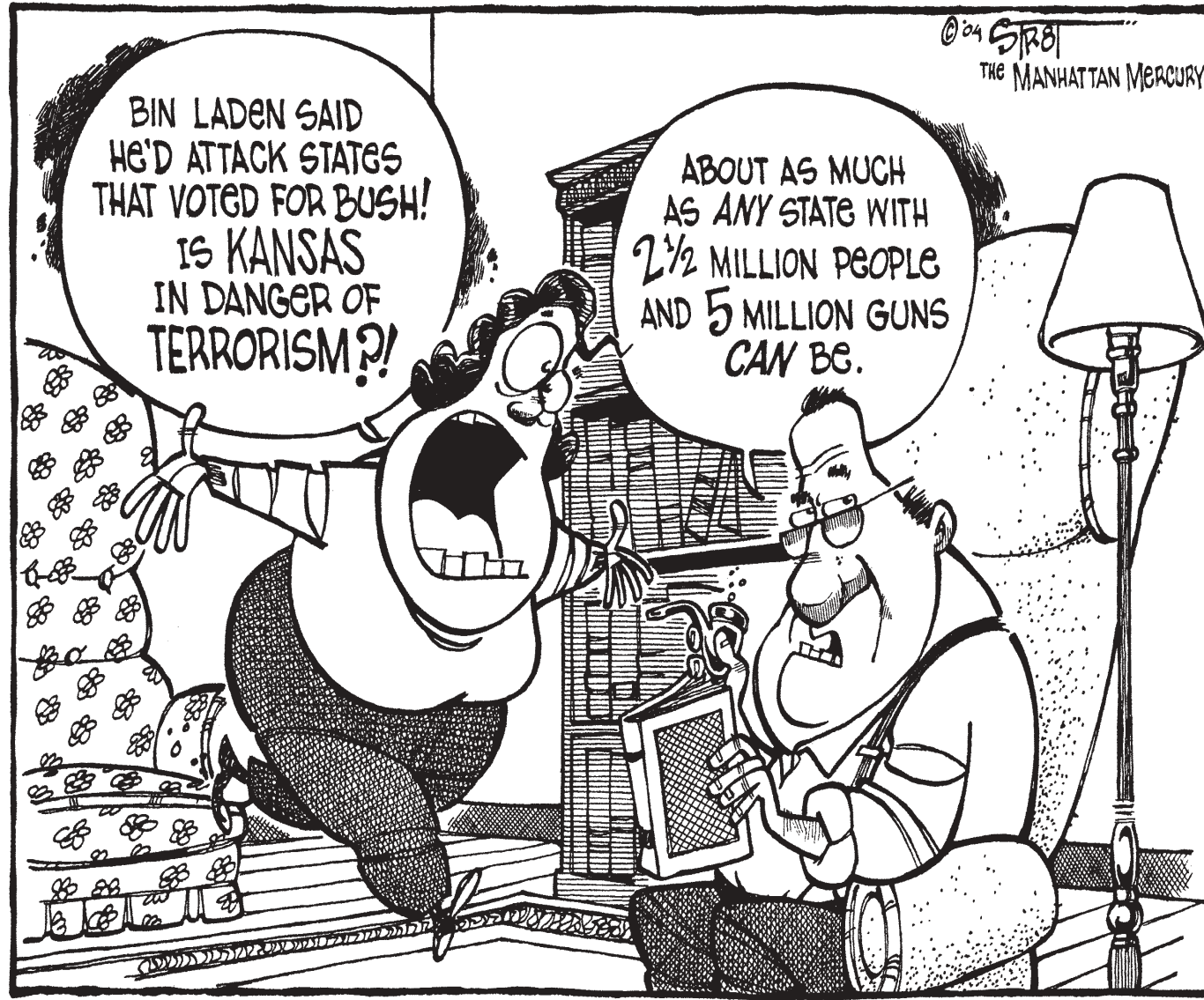
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Peppered hair doesn't mean you're old

Some of my old friends still aren't used to my salt-and-pepper gray hair. I know it must have been quite a shock for them, but to someone who never knew the "before," this is just the way it is.

Jennifer, Alexandria and I drove to Texas on Saturday to get a head start on Thanksgiving preparations at my daughter Kara's. We stopped for tacos and chicken strips at a little town just across the Oklahoma line. It was Jennifer's treat and the checkout lady said, "That will be \$5.38. And with your senior citizen discount, that will be \$4.97."

Jennifer tried not to look at me, but then I jumped up on the counter and screamed, "Senior citizen discount? I'll give you a senior citizen discount! You could have at least asked. You didn't have to assume. I'd rather pay full price!" It was kind of hard for her to ignore me.

"Excuse me," Jennifer said. "I'm paying and we're taking the discount. Get over it. It's just the hair."

That made me feel a little better, but I fussed and fumed the rest of the way to Dallas.

—ob—

Roses are still blooming in Texas and

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



my son-in-law Adam planted pansies in the back yard this morning. We sat outside on the patio in our pajamas and drank coffee until it was time to get ready for church. The kids were even running around barefooted. It is balmy. I lived in Dallas for seven years, and I do miss Texas winters.

When winter finally comes, it may snow once. Maybe twice. But winter lasts about a week, and then it's spring again.

—ob—

Part of my job at the newspaper is to write feature stories. Since I'm kind of a natural snooper, it's perfect for me. I really like people, especially interesting people. And interviewing people is nothing more than talking to them.

Last week, I met a young couple who should start writing their own book. They

are the parents of a 2-year-old and a set of triplets. My, my, my. The stories they'll have to tell. I admire them for their positive attitude. Never once during our time together did either one of them complain about their lot in life or what they have or don't have.

Perhaps more importantly, I never heard any fussiness or crying from any of their children, a good sign that everybody is getting plenty of attention. This is not an easy task with four children of any age.

My mother always said you could take care of two kids with one hand tied behind your back, but that third child just upsets the apple cart. Wonder what she would have said about having three at a time?

—ob—

A dear friend of ours lost one of his sons to cancer last night. He called to tell me the news. We cried over the phone together. His words to me said it all: "I have the comfort of knowing my son was saved."

In the end, nothing else matters. Have you given that comfort to your parents? Do you have that comfort about your children?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Holidays aren't happy for everyone, do what's comfortable

To the Editor:

For many people, the holiday season is a special time of year marked by festive celebrations and gatherings with family and friends. It's a time to look ahead with excitement to the approaching New Year. For those struggling with the death of a loved one, the holidays are a difficult time full of painful reminders that may magnify their sense of loss.

Holiday songs on the radio catch you in the car. Television commercials reflecting Norman Rockwell images of the season come into your living room. Neighbors' homes are decked with lights and wreaths. Sounds and sights of the holidays may seem inescapable. Coping with grief at such a time seems discordant with the world around you. Feelings of loss tend to be intensified.

A suggestion for coping with grief during the holidays is to give yourself permission to do what's comfortable. At a time of year often guided by tradition, find the way that feels right for you to make it through the season.

Some people find it helpful to be with family and friends, emphasizing the familiar. Others may wish to avoid old traditions and try something different. Others will find new ways to acknowledge the season.

Ever since Mike was a young boy, Thanksgiving was a time to bring family, friends, and neighbors together for a feast. Card tables were set up in the living room, the picnic table was brought in from outside, every chair seemed to be full. The year after his death from lung cancer, his wife and kids just couldn't find the strength to host another Thanksgiving

event. That year, for the first time, they had a Thanksgiving meal at a local inn. It was smaller, more intimate, and has become a new tradition for them.

They gave themselves permission to do what seemed comfortable. While it seemed to go against family tradition, it actually provided the family with a special time to focus on memories of their father and the many Thanksgivings of the past.

Hospice professionals offer some additional suggestions for coping with the holidays:

- Plan for the approaching holidays. This might be a difficult time for you. The additional stress may affect you emotionally, cognitively, and physically; this is a normal reaction. Be prepared and gentle to yourself.

- Recognize that the holidays might not be the same. Expecting everything to seem the same might lead to disappointment. Doing things a bit differently can acknowledge the change while preserv-

ing continuity with the past.

- Be careful not to isolate yourself. It's all right to take time for yourself but don't cut yourself off from the support of family and friends.

- The holidays may affect other family members. Talk over your plans and share your feelings. Respect others' choices and needs, and compromise if necessary.

- Avoid additional stress. Decide what you really want to do, and what can be avoided.

- If you, or a loved one, are struggling with grief and loss, consider contacting your community hospice. Hospices have trained bereavement professionals on staff and may be able to offer some further suggestions or sources of support.

Additional information about hospice is available from: Hospice Foundation of America, www.hospicefoundation.org or (800) 854-3402.

Sandy Kuhlman
Hospice Services
Phillipsburg

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.

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.

Remembrance appreciated

To the Editor:

We wish to thank you for the publication and write up of the World War II veterans and the reception was special. Thanks for remembering.

Dale and Katherine Severns,
Norton