

Should county calls really be long distance?

It's a crying shame that Lenora, Almena, Edmond and Clayton are long distance calls from Norton.

These towns, plus part of Norcatour and a whole lot of countryside, are all part of Norton County. However, the phone companies make practically everything a long-distance line.

Calling areas should be made larger. They should at least cover the county, preferably several counties.

Five miles from home shouldn't be a long distance today — we're not using a horse and buggy to get to these outlying areas anymore and we shouldn't have to call long distance to talk to folks in those towns.

In some states, huge areas — five and six counties — are local calls.

Why not here?

Why is it that if you want to call your mother in Almena, you have to pay extra?

Why is it that if you live in Lenora and want to know if the grocery in Norton carries size AAA batteries, you either have to pay extra or drive to the store and find out?

It's no wonder that more and more people are opting not to have home telephones at all, but are going with a cellular phone that has no long distance charges and can go anywhere.

We still think there is a place for home-based phones. They are necessary for businesses and cell phones have a lot of interference problems that make them harder for older folks to use.

So please, phone companies, get with the program. Give us larger local calling areas. We're tired of long distance calls and we're tired of long distance companies, but that's a whole different complaint and we'll not get into that today.

— Cynthia Haynes

Kansas congressman honored for his work with wheat growers

Congressman Jerry Moran was named as the 2004 Wheat Leader of the Year by the National Association of Wheat Growers, the Wheat Export Trade Education Committee, and U.S. Wheat Associates. The award is presented each year to one Representative or Senator who has gone beyond the call of duty on behalf of wheat producers, and is the highest Congressional honor bestowed by the wheat organizations.

The award is scheduled for presentation at the North American Grain Congress, the combined annual convention of wheat growers and the National Grain Sorghum Producers in February 2005 in Reno, Nev.

With two of the wheat growers' priorities being disaster aid and improving the ability of crop insurance to handle successive years of drought, Congressman Moran has been ideally placed to be of service to wheat growers, and he has delivered.

"Kansas is the wheat state and I am proud of that title, of our heritage and of the hard work and dedication that wheat producers across our country put into making sure that America has a safe, abundant food supply," Moran said. "While lower prices and drought have hurt the industry in recent years, it has not broken our spirit. When times get tough, the American farmer perseveres. I am proud to represent agriculture and am honored to be recognized with this award."

"We're very pleased to recognize Congressman Moran for his strong support of wheat producers," said National Association of Wheat Growers President Mark Gage. "He solicits our counsel on a num-

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



ber of important issues, and has been very helpful in moving items like disaster aid and hearings on crop insurance."

The President of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, Jerry McReynolds, said "We're extremely pleased and proud that Congressman Moran has been named the 2004 Wheat Leader of the Year. He has been a wheat leader for Kansas producers and for farmers around the nation for a number of years." The Woodston, Kansas wheat producer continued, "Jerry Moran has worked tirelessly for wheat in many different fashions, and has taken leadership positions in working for disaster aid for the wheat industry. He has supported our industry over a period of time and assisted in handling many issues, and not as just a one-time or occasional supporter." And, McReynolds said, "We applaud Congressman Jerry Moran of the 'Big 1st' District of Kansas as 2004 Wheat Leader of the Year."

Moran joins an elite group of past recipients of the Wheat Leader Award, including Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), Congressman George Nethercutt (R-Wash.), Congressman Larry Combest (R-Texas), Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), and Senator Conrad Burns (R-Mont.).



Life is precious — be sure to treasure it

Parents never cease to be their children's teachers. During the holidays I am reminded of this more than ever.

When our children were young, I would put up my Christmas tree as early as I dared. Each ornament was hung as I remembered its past and mine. Each carol echoed the sentiments of the holidays and the spirit within.

I left the tree up as long after Christmas as I possibly could. I think, I saw this as my safe time. The tree and holidays were mine to enjoy and celebrate. Nothing could go wrong.

Then the unthinkable happened. By some peoples' measurements he was an old man, but in our family of centuries he was just a kid, not quite 78. The call came as we were awaiting news of his successful bypass surgery.

After all he was in great health, slim, non-smoker, exercised, why wouldn't it be successful?

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



But, I think, in my Dad's heart if he couldn't live exactly the same way he always had, or if there was a chance of becoming like his mother, who undoubtedly had Alzheimer's, he thought it was time to check out.

And anyone, who knew my Dad, knows even God wouldn't have argued with him. So there I was, December 14, 1984, in Reno, Nev., surrounded by a loving husband, five great children, and wonderful friends.

My mother called and the words still ring in my ear, "Mary Kay, I have some-

thing awful to tell you."

In my usual manner of dealing with things I said, "No, don't tell me, I don't want to know."

But of course that changes nothing, my Daddy (which is what I always called him) had died.

On top of that he died while my Christmas tree was up. Didn't he know nothing bad could happen during that safe time?

But it did and I survived and now it has been 20 years.

The Christmas tree is up, each ornament is hanging and the carols ring happily.

I still miss him. I wish he knew my grandchildren and that I live in his house. I wish he knew the old farmhouse where he was born is full of his great grandchildren's laughter.

But most of all, I am thankful for the legacy he gave me even in his death. There is no safe time. Life is precious. Treasure it.

Turkey and gifts... the holidays are here

Ah, Thanksgiving. I'm thankful for my brother, John, or else we wouldn't have a turkey dinner.

Not that I particularly care if we eat turkey or not. If it came down to it, we wouldn't have it if it was up to me to make it. Get up at 5 a.m. to cook a bird? I think not.

My mom feels the same way. I love telling people that she's never cooked a turkey in her life.

The look on their faces is great. Especially when they ask, "Never?"

Nope, never.

G'ma cooked it before the tradition went to John. She's vowed never to make Thanksgiving dinner again. Poor John. Looks like he's stuck with it.

And once again, thank God 'cause he makes a great tasting bird.

So I consider it a family tradition to never cook a turkey. A family tradition that I hope never to break. That way, if I ever have kids, they can tell other people that their mom has never made a turkey and get a holiday laugh themselves.

Speaking of the holidays, Christmas is just around the corner. And with Christmas comes family togetherness, love and joy.

Although by the time the holiday season is over, most families (at least mine) are usually just a tiny bit ready for the fam-

Night Noise Veronica Monier



ily togetherness to come to an end.

It sounds callous, but one of our family mottos is "too much quality time is a bad thing."

It's said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. Whoever said that obviously had too much "family togetherness".

On a more pleasant, and materialistic, note, the holidays are also about giving.

I love giving presents. Hunting for just the right gift for someone I love and then watching their expression as they open the present.

It's truly unfortunate when the person getting that thoughtful gift plasters on the fake smile and tells the gift giver that they think the present is great in a voice practically dripping with false cheer.

We all know what this looks and sounds like. And if we're honest, we've all done it a time or two ourselves.

It's also unfortunate and supremely annoying when the gift recipient rips into

the present, failing to notice the wonderful wrapping job that took hours to accomplish and be appropriately grateful.

This year, like every year, John is waiting until the last minute to buy presents because, of course, he has no money for whatever reason... blah, blah, blah...

He never was much of a gift giver. My mom and I say repeatedly that we feel sorry for his future wife, whomever she may be.

Mom has recently discovered eBay and has been online continuously for the past several weeks. When she can't find it in town, she finds it on eBay. It's going to be a big present year for all of us, thanks to the shops in Norton and eBay.

However, we might have to find an Internet Anonymous group somewhere soon. If she doesn't get her daily online fix, she gets kind of cranky.

She also gets cranky when I accidentally discover what she's getting me for Christmas, which I've accidentally done several times already this year. The problem is that it really has been an accident every time, but she doesn't believe it.

In years past, we've gone Christmas shopping together, so that there's no mistake about who wants what. It was lovely. But, this year, she's going at it on her own.

Who knows what the holidays will bring?

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:

8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Phone: (785) 877-3361

Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman circulation
Carol Erlenbusch advertising rep.
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-2332

★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

★ U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

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

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.

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

