

We were showered with blessings in 2004

As we look back on 2004, we realize what blessings we have received and how lucky we are.

While Norton lost a major business when City Motors closed, several businesses have expanded and another, Quiznos, has opened its doors. If you've been watching the paper, you will see that the Chamber of Commerce has been busy holding ribbon cuttings for dozens of smaller establishments. Those little, sometimes mom-and-pop, places provide jobs and money to our community. They fill up the empty spaces in downtown buildings and make the town look more prosperous.

It may seem strange that just looking prosperous helps, but it does. People planning to invest in businesses or those thinking about moving here want to live in a place that looks alive, not someplace that's appearing to be on its last legs, with boarded up storefronts and abandoned buildings.

We are lucky that people care enough about our health facilities to put time and money into making them the best they can be.

As our population gets older, it is more and more important to have good health care near at hand.

The hospital renovations and the improvement in emergency medical services go a long way towards keeping people here in Norton County. That sort of thing also is important to anyone looking to relocate, their family or their business.

Another thing people want is good schools. Education is important both for those with school-age children and those without. The school holds the community together in many ways. It provides entertainment and excitement as the young athletes, musicians, actors and artists give their best.

Then there are the people — the most important element of any town.

Here we are blessed with young people who work for the betterment of the community, are pleasant and outgoing.

The service and social clubs offer both camaraderie and help to those in need. There's no reason to sit at home and feel sorry for yourself around here. There's something to do almost every night, with church services, community functions, soup suppers, meetings and activities.

And, let's not forget the adults.

There are many who work tirelessly to provide food for the hungry, care for the sick and help for the young.

A special thanks to all those who service on boards or committees to help make our towns and county a better place. They go out when it's cold or the big game is on or supper ready for the table to make decisions and offer advice on the best way to run the schools, county, city, airport and hospital.

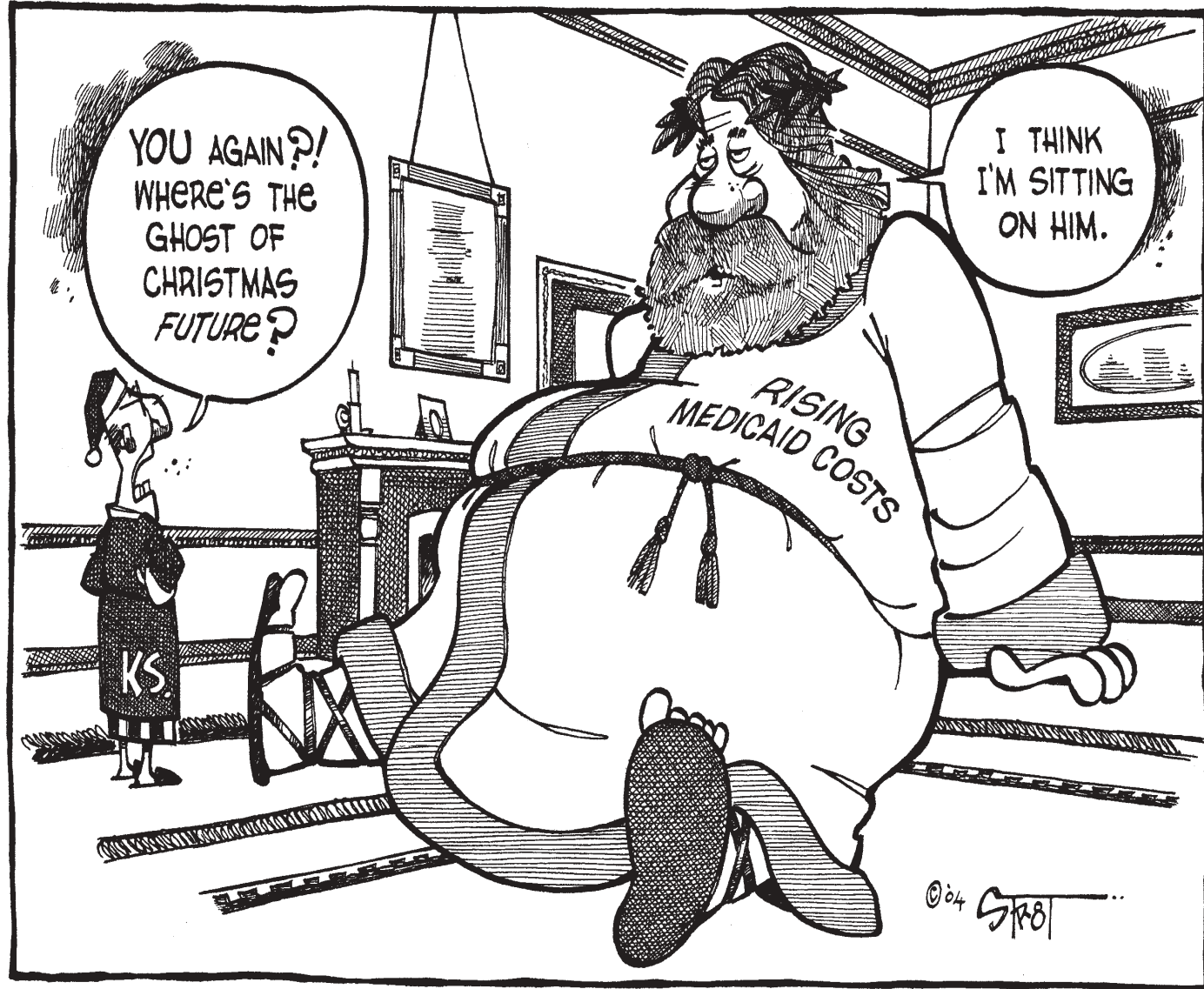
And don't forget those who stand for election.

Remember, being the last picked for dodge ball when you were 10? How about putting your name and reputation forward to run for public office, knowing that your friends and neighbors may choose someone else?

It takes courage. We thank those who won, and those who didn't, for their courage, their time and their nobility.

It was a good year, 2004, with good people and a good place to live. We are all blessed.

— Cynthia Haynes



Box fetish leads to a few chuckles

I'm a box saver. If I see a nice, sturdy box I save it. You never know when you're going to need a box that's the perfect size for containing a necktie, a dozen cookies or a pair of overalls.

The downside to wrapping presents in boxes that belie what waits inside is that moment of disbelief when the gift-receiver first removes the outer wrapping paper and, for a fleeting moment, believes you really did give them a dozen moth balls or a set of hinges.

My five-year-old granddaughter called last night to thank us for her Christmas present. I had made a pink chenille neck scarf and wrapped it in a small box that, at one time, had contained laundry detergent tablets.

Taylor said, "G'ma, I thought you had given me soap."

—ob—

We returned Saturday night from another week in Juarez, Mexico, where we accompanied a team from a Mennonite Brethren Church at Fairview, Okla. We built a three-room house for a Mexican family in two and a half days. It was our

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



second trip with this team and our time with them was like a reunion of old friends.

Several teenagers came with the team. And what a neat bunch of kids they were. When they realized that one of the windows would be facing directly to the side of another building, they determined to at least give the family something to look at. They decided to design a mosaic mural for the wall.

They scavenged the empty lots for broken pottery, tiles, glass, marbles, bottle caps, even an old CD. After it was assembled, it was colorful, creative and made with love.

The team also had several small children. Little Rebecca was only five, and the youngest, but she was quite an addition. On their trip down she said to one of the adults, "I bet you're glad I could come this year. Last year I was four and I couldn't come; but this year I'm five and I could."

Josiah is eight years old, but well on his way to doing a man's share of work. On the first day of building we pour the cement foundation. Josiah appointed himself "water bucket filler."

Fifty-gallon barrels of water were standing by as our supply. Josiah couldn't lift full buckets of water out of the barrels, so he found a discarded gallon milk jug and had someone cut the top off, leaving the handle, to make himself a pitcher.

He soon learned why the jug had been thrown away. There were several holes in the bottom. But still, he could fill and empty the pitcher faster than the water could leak out.

So he set the bucket he was filling on the ground, and began to dip. It wasn't long before the water level was lowered enough that he had to dip way down. Somebody got a cute picture of him from the backside with nothing showing but his little cowboy boots, legs and hip pockets.

The oldest members of the team were a 74-year-old husband and wife who had been missionaries to Mexico at one time in their lives. What a beautiful couple.

So never say, "I'm too old to do anything." If you want to go with us next time, the bus leaves Feb. 12.

Feliz y prospero año nuevo. (Happy and prosperous new year.)

Depression can follow holidays

Many people experience feelings of sadness and even depression following the holiday season, and the reasons can vary.

Sometimes it is due to disappointments regarding the past few weeks. Family gatherings may not have taken place as hoped, or the events that did occur did not live up to personal expectations.

For some people, the stress of the holidays became overwhelming, and they just haven't yet had time to recover. And for others, the new year may be bringing major life changes, such as a job change or family move.

Post holiday blues are not uncommon for a few weeks after the beginning of a new year. In some places, the cold, dreary

High Plains Mental Health

Karen Beery

winter weather contributes to feelings of sadness.

It's not as easy to get out to spend time with others, and those opportunities have also diminished compared to the holidays. For most people those feelings of sadness will decrease and go away with a short time.

But for a few, even when the weather improves and other events are taking

place, their feelings of sadness will linger and can even develop into depression.

To decrease those feelings of sadness, keep the following in mind:

- Stay involved, even when you might not want to. Isolation can contribute to depression.
- Take good care of yourself. Get enough rest, eat properly and exercise regularly.
- Stay active. Start a new project, or finish one that you have been putting off.
- Volunteer to spend time or help others. Doing something good for someone else is a great way to feel better about yourself.

If feelings of sadness or the blues continue for too long, talk to a friend or family member or contact your physician, clergy or a mental health professional for assistance in understanding those feelings and in making changes to avoid serious depression.

Mail questions to:
High Plains Mental Health Center
PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Dept.
208 East 7th, Hays, KS 67601

Christmas was good for wide-spread family

I was in such a snit about getting left out of the family trip to Boston I for got to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

This was a good Christmas for us. On Sunday I hosted my side of the family. Everyone made it, including Brent and Natasha all the way from Chicago.

The hubby's family was not able to get to the same place at the same time but we did get to see everyone. There are now three little ones to fuss over there. The most recent is only 2-weeks old. What fun.

Mental health experts tell us we expect too much from the holidays. If things do not go as we hope we become depressed. We get stressed out shopping and cooking and cleaning. We compare ourselves to our neighbors and friends and come out badly.

Even if Christmas day goes well there is the letdown when everyone goes home and we are left with a messy house and nothing to look forward to.

We fight with relatives. Yep, my sister wasn't here 10 minutes when she picked up the paper and read about how I had been left out of the Boston trip.

For the record, our Dexter ancestor did fight in the Revolutionary War, then left for Canada. I guess this is recently discovered information. (It supports my position that no one tells me anything.)

I gave my sis a hug and told her everything I write is true on some level but sometimes I have been known to embroi-

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



der the details to make a story more interesting.

A hug is an amazing thing. I did not hear another word about it.

If only all our problems could be solved so easily:

A sister-in-law is scheduled for additional testing after some suspicious lab results, a classmate begins chemotherapy, a friend's cousin dies. Halfway around the world there's a tidal wave. And I remember a dear friend is visiting India this Christmas.

Joy to the World? Sometimes you have to look for joy. Sometimes you have to look really hard.

The Declaration of Independence says we should have the right to "the pursuit of happiness."

Yet our forefathers wisely avoided passing a law guaranteeing it.

Santa can't put it in your stocking.

But we can pursue it. Sometimes we pursue it too hard. And sometimes (just like at Christmas) our expectations are too high. But it is always a possibility.

My friends: HAPPY NEW YEAR! And don't forget to hug someone.

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

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.

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

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

