

Should the landfill receive an audit? It's a tough decision

Should Norton County have someone look at its landfill with the hopes of providing some ideas on better ways to run it? Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald wants to do that, but the commissioners aren't so sure it's a good idea.

The state has received a federal grant to help operators of small landfills make sure they are run as efficiently as possible. Because of this, the state is able to offer the services of an expert in landfill management to counties and cities out here at no cost to them.

On the one hand, the county would get the advice of someone who, the commissioners say, knows a lot about landfills and might be able to find ways to make Norton's new facility last longer, be cheaper to run and easier to operate.

To sweeten the pot, since fewer than half the landfills out here had signed up, the state offered to forgo inspections for a year after the audit.

Since state inspections are never popular with anyone, most landfill supervisors signed up.

In addition, the state has said that no matter what the audit shows, the purpose is just to help landfills operators learn how to manage their resources better and no disciplinary action will be taken if problems are found.

In Norton County, though, the commissioners feel that they have jumped through enough hoops over the past three years. With a landfill that has been open a mere two weeks, they wonder what an inspector or an auditor can find that is wrong.

Mr. Archibald and his crew, however, are trying to find the best way to run a new, large project. They want to do it right, and they want to do it the best they can. But they're a little in the dark about the best way to do this new job, so the state offering to help without strings seems heaven sent.

The commissioners aren't so sure. They've been around a few blocks in their time, and there's one thing they've learned: You can't trust Big Brother.

What if, as one suggested, a lot of landfills out here have the same problem and it's an expensive one — one that nobody is going to fix unless they are forced to do it.

Do you think that the state will just say, "Oh well, it was just an audit. It was just to help operators. It doesn't matter that this problem exists out there and nobody is going to fix it."

If you do, we have a bridge to sell you — cheap.

So the commissioners, while understanding Mr. Archibald's problem, are still nervous about allowing the state one more chance to muck up the process.

We don't blame them.

We're a little nervous ourselves.

— Cynthia Haynes



Helping people is better than money

Last week, one of my columnist friends wrote about what she would do if she won the lottery. Since she is a farm wife, we know where most of it would go.

Back in the '50s, my favorite television show was "The Millionaire." That was when a million dollars seemed like all the money there was in the world, but a million dollars ain't what it used to be.

Now-a-days, a million dollars is a good start for a retirement nest egg.

But, like my friend Nancy, I think it is fun to think about the "what-ifs." Also, like my friend Nancy, I don't buy lottery tickets. I think there is something wrong with buying chances. It's "greed" rearing his old ugly head that makes people buy a chance at "something for nothing."

Nonetheless, I like to think if I suddenly had more money than I knew what to do with (and not from gambling), I would be very generous. And, anonymous.

My list would look something like this:

- Ten percent off the top to my church. We're supposed to give God our first fruits, not our leftovers.
- Pay off all our debts. Rich or not, I hate

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



to pay interest.

• Educational funds for our grandchildren. If they're prepared for their future, they can make their own way.

• A trust fund to both of our favorite ministries, Casas por Cristo, and Prison Fellowship Ministries. The poor and imprisoned will always be with us.

• A year's worth of groceries to everyone who has used the county food pantry. It must be hard to ask for food.

• A generous sum to the food pantry to keep their shelves stocked. It provides a wonderful service to people who need a helping hand. A helping hand is a lot different than a handout.

• I would pave the streets of our little town. Fighting mud is one of life's frustra-

tations.

• I would find out who the single parents are in the county and pay their rent until their children are grown. I've been there, and sometimes it's a choice between paying bills and paying the rent.

You get the idea. Nobody gets a "free ride," but we all could use a little help now and then.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. And, what fun I would have giving it away.

It's speculation, anyway. We don't have any rich relation to leave us an inheritance.

Notice I didn't leave our children anything. A lot of people have been ruined by having everything handed to them on a silver platter. I love all my kids too much to do that to them.

Our children all make more than we could ever dream of anyway, so more than likely, they'll end up taking care of us in the end. I love that bumper sticker: "I plan on living long enough to become a burden to my children."

Amen.

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 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.

When did we become so afraid of things we can't control?

I was saying last week how each move brings something new to me and this one was no exception.

After two weeks of no television, have things really changed or have I?

For instance, when did CNN become tabloid news?

Last night I was watching Wolf Blitzer in the "Situation Room", which is ominous enough to begin with.

But when he says, in his most newscaster voice, from a backdrop of the map of the world and the areas affected with bird flu, "Stay with CNN for your most up-to-date information on you and your health security,"... what does that mean?

Which just goes to show if news anchors can't find something to alarm us with, they'll look until they do.

Perhaps after my two-week hiatus I re-

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



turned with better perspective. How long have we been directed by fear? — bird flu, shortage of flu vaccine, mad cow disease and of course, the war on terror.

When did we exchange the dilemma at our feet — making the mortgage payment, scheduling our annual physical, getting the kids to school on time — for a larger, bigger than life monster which we have little control over.

I'm not minimizing the threat of bird

flu, nor do I think terrorism is a made-up problem, but I do think it isn't just news stations which are sculpting these problems.

Politicians see our fears as their saviors. The desire to turn these into a politician's roadmap is not just frightening but immoral. The very people we have elected to bring balance to our world are using the

threats of disaster to make a name for themselves. Being prepared is different from being panicked.

Anchormen, politicians and "wannabes" flout their knowledge to ingrain fear in our lives.

The world begins to take on the look of the tabloid when we respond to these hysterical pronouncements.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

We should remember the sacrifices our Veterans have made

One year ago this week, Kansas experienced a great loss as two Kansans were killed in the War in Iraq.

Sergeant First Class Clinton Wisdom and Sergeant Don Clary were the first Kansas Army National Guard soldiers to die in combat since the Vietnam War. Both were members of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery based in northeast Kansas.

On Nov. 8, 2004, these Kansas Guardsmen were providing protection to a convoy in Baghdad when a suicide bomber sped toward them. Without hesitation, these men placed their own vehicle between the bomber and the convoy. Both were killed in the explosion. Their actions saved many lives that day.

Major Austin Hamner, a soldier who served alongside these men, wrote a letter from Iraq to his three daughters at home. It was published in his hometown newspaper last year during the week of Veterans Day. The soldier wrote:

Hello girls:
I have something very important to tell you about this war and the meaning of Veterans Day. Sometimes on Veterans Day, we lose connection to the real meaning of the day. Sweethearts, I've just re-

turned from the memorial service that was held for two very special soldiers. These two men were taken from this world on Monday of this very week protecting our unit.

Sooner or later all of us will pass on from this life, but those who willingly give their lives for others certainly are true heroes. Jesus once taught the world that, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." That is one way to know that these two men were real-life heroes.

I am so looking forward to seeing you again and being together. I will give you extra hugs and kisses because I know that there are children who will not get them from their dad who was taken away on Monday.

Like the soldier who wrote his daughters, it is our responsibility to ensure that our children and grandchildren appreciate the sacrifices made by those serving our country and never forget these heroes. Each year, as the percentage of our population who has worn a uniform declines, fewer and fewer individuals and families have a personal connection with the mili-

tary. Instilling in America's youth an awareness of the contributions of veterans past and present becomes even more important.

Even though many Americans will not serve, knowledge of those who have served is essential. The traits we learn from veterans — courage, honor, duty, sacrifice, patriotism, heroism — are characteristics that make us better citizens. Their everyday acts inspire us to reach beyond our limits. Their losses remind us to live a life worthy of their sacrifice. And through their service on our behalf, we remember the obligations we owe. These are important lessons only a veteran can teach us.

It is our task to share with our children that Veterans Day is more than a day off school or a department store sale. It's a day to honor the more than 250,000 veterans in Kansas and the 25 million nationwide, as well as their families, who stepped forward to defend our country. It's a day to pay tribute to those who have given so much, to those who continue to give and to those who gave all so that we may live in the greatest country in the world.

— Congressman Jerry Moran

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