

Our planet badly needs a 'time out'

Wouldn't it be nice if the world could call "Time Out!" But we know it can't. Sadly. But now would be the time for such a call before we end up killing millions of innocents for reasons, in many cases, that defy logic.

The latest *engagement* is in the Middle East where Israel and Lebanon are exchanging missiles. The death toll mounts. The damage is beyond comprehension.

North Korea has launched several missiles as a demonstration of its emerging might as they, too, want to be taken seriously as a major player on the international stage.

We're fighting terrorists in Iraq. And Afghanistan. Terrorists aren't decked out in military uniforms. They look just like everybody else. They strap themselves to bombs and mingle in crowded places and then blow themselves and others up. They specialize in roadside bombs and numerous U.S. soldiers have died as a result.

If you take a look at a map of the world and keep abreast of the wars going on, you would find it staggering.

You get to the point of wondering if your own leaders can do anything about any of this. At this point in time it looks like they can't. They, too, are scratching their heads.

It is an unsettling time. And in many respects, as unsettling as it can get.

On the homefront, we failed to get a constitutional amendment through the Congress that would have outlawed flag burning. It sounded good, but questions were many. We are still squabbling over the immigration issue. President Bush's call for 6,000-plus National Guard troops to help patrol the border between the U.S. and Mexico has become mired down in political mud. A drive has started to get "under God" removed from the pledge. Congress has enjoyed an increase in pay. Minimum wage workers will continue to work without a hike in their pay checks. The economy, the experts say, is showing signs of fatigue. The list is endless.

The temperature the past several days has been in triple digits. 105+ here. Outlook indicates that could easily continue. Places like South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota baking in temperatures of 113, 117 and 117 degrees, respectively, over the weekend.

We can't do a thing, nothing, about the weather. But we can do something about all the other things mentioned above. But we must want to. And that seems to be what's lacking.

God Bless America? No. God Bless Our Planet.

—Tom Dreiling

Consider children's mental health

A child's physical needs are obvious: healthy meals, adequate shelter and clothing, play and physical activity, rest and relaxation, and appropriate medical care. Children have mental and emotional needs as well. Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially, learn new skills, build self-esteem, and develop a positive mental outlook.

Here are some suggestions to parents and other adults on what children need for good mental health:

- Unconditional love: children need to know their parents love them for who they are, not only for what they accomplish.
- Praise and encouragement to nurture their confidence and self-esteem.
- Encouragement to play, which helps children be creative, develop problem-solving skills and self-control, and learn how to get along with others.
- Good adult role models who will talk about their own feelings, apologize when

High Plains Mental Health

Karen Beery

needed. express anger constructively and use active problem-solving skills.

- Appropriate guidance and discipline: be firm, but also realistic.
- Good communication; listen and talk together about what is happening in their lives.
- Strong family relationships based on trust and close connections.

When a child's behavior becomes of concern, parents should consult with teachers, counselors, psychologists and other professionals. Early identification and treatment can help children with mental health problems to build up their strengths, protect them from risks, and succeed in life.

Don't forget Friday is 'Thumbs Up to... day'

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

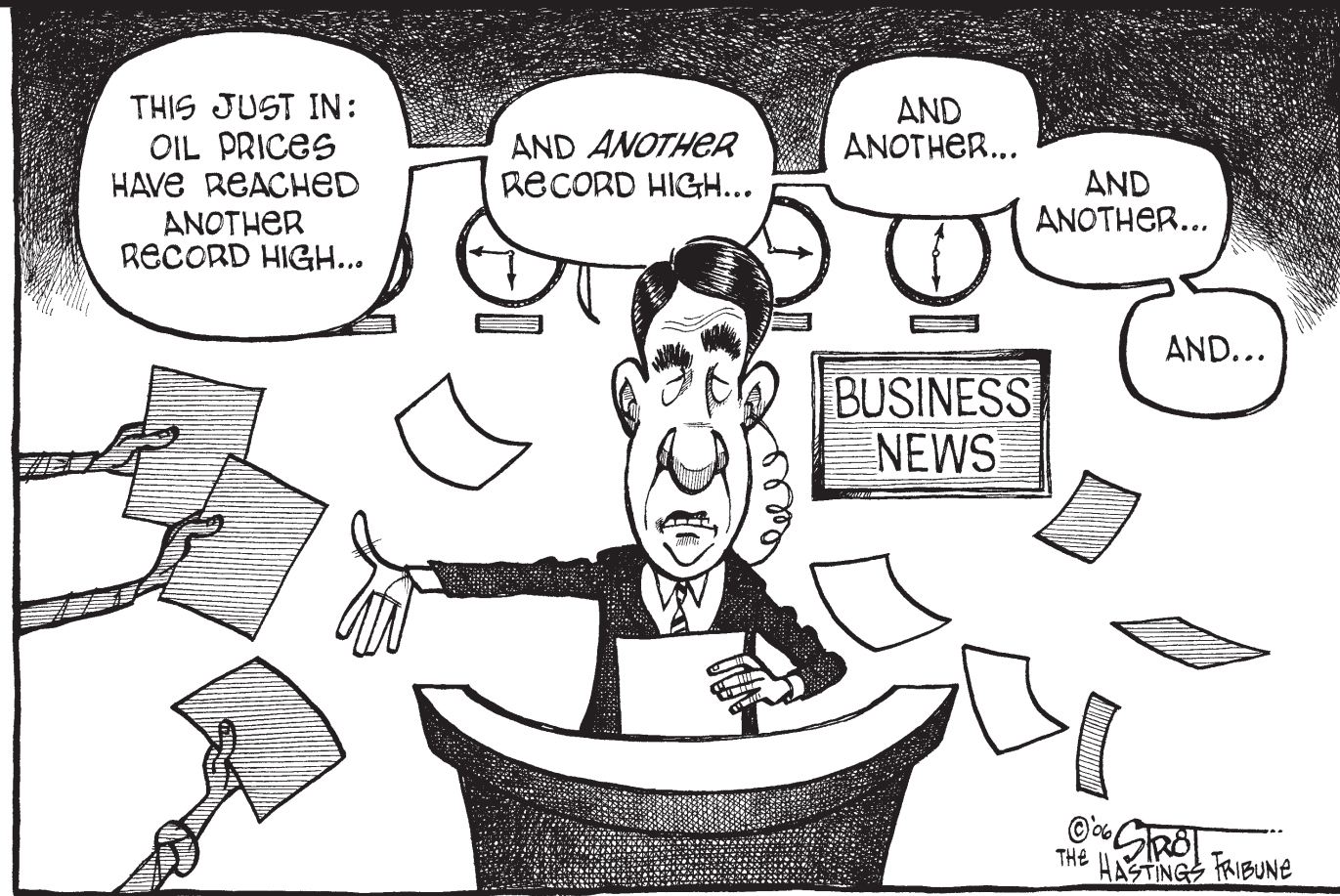
Nor'West Newspapers

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

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

Tom Dreiling editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Hypatia Day advertising



He's gone, she's asleep and I'm relaxing

The house is quiet. Jim left for work a little after 6 a.m. and Taylor is still sleeping. This is my favorite time of day.

I don't get a chance to do it much anymore, but, in the mornings I love to just sit outside with a cup of coffee and watch the day wake up.

Because of the heat, I've been doing my watering in the early morning and I usually see some of my neighbors taking their morning walk.

I watch the birds grubbing in the lawn for bits and pieces to add to their nests. It's a beautiful time of day.

The quiet will end soon enough. Taylor needs to be awakened and then my day, officially, starts.

Her father called and I could tell he was missing his little girl.

I heard her side of the conversation as she kept reassuring him, "But, Dad, it's only 14 more days."

I have to give Adam and Kara, credit, though. Taylor is their only child and they

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



are pretty wrapped up in her life. They have natural fears for her safety as any parent would. But, in her absence I think Kara's imagination runs away with her. We were talking on the phone one day and I told Kara for the umpteenth time that I would watch Taylor closely. "I know you will," she said. "But, death lurks around every corner out there."

Now, I always thought rural Kansas was a pretty safe place and it was the big city you had to watch out for. I guess it all depends on your perspective.

This heat has been absolutely oppressive. Like I said, Jim left for work shortly

after 6 this morning. He said he's going to knock off about 2 p.m. when it gets really hot. I think the Mexicans have it right. A siesta is the smart thing to do on these dog day afternoons.

A lengthy phone conversation with our expectant daughter in San Antonio informed us that she is confident the baby will come this week. She said everything is ready and waiting. I know we are ready and waiting.

Have you heard about Red Fridays? My brother, Bill, sent me an e-mail about an American movement called Red Friday.

To show support for our troops overseas, and to remind us of the blood they've shed, everyone is asked to wear red on Fridays.

You don't think twice about wearing school colors or your favorite pro team's colors. Join me, won't you. And, let's turn America red on Friday.

FROM THE MAILBOX:

Plan to remove downtown trees causing concern

To the Editor,
I understand there is a quiet movement to remove our downtown trees. This was briefly mentioned in *The Telegram's* report on the last city council meeting. The city was to contact the donors of memorial trees to see if they would object having a new tree planted in a park.

Wait, how does the rest of the city feel about that?

Those trees have been downtown for 18 years. Why remove them now? I called the city office to ask that question. The answer was they are messy, and stuff tracks into stores. Golly darn! Weren't they messy years ago? Haven't they always been messy? It wasn't that the city 18 years ago didn't know the kind of tree they approved.

The trees are Bradford Pears. They have white flowers that open in late spring, followed by small rust colored fruit that birds consume. They have a glossy foliage that turns crimson in autumn. They are a good street tree reaching a height of 15 to 25

feet. This information is from *The Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Gardening*, Copyright 1978.

On Nov. 3, 1987, the city council approved plans to plant Bradford Pear trees in the downtown pods (created by the State Street Project). The trees were placed where they stand today to avoid interfering with the stop signs per City Council Roundup printed in *The Norton Daily Telegram* on Nov. 4, 1987.

On March 25, 1988, Arbor Day, local volunteers planted five Bradford Pear trees on the street corners in downtown Norton.

An article and picture of the planting was printed in *The Norton Daily Telegram* on April 15, 1988. This article explained how the trees, brick planters with benches and a future park on State Street were planned and financed by the Community Development Fund.

The Community Development Fund had accepted donations and memorial funds to purchase the trees and provide

monies to complete their projects. Many of the donors were listed in *The Telegram's* article.

The flowers in the brick planters that we enjoy are still taken care of by volunteers. We have an active and productive behind-the-scenes committee that takes pride in the beautification of our downtown. Imagine those flowers and planters without the trees.

I feel it would be wrong for the city council to consider removing the trees for the reason I have been given.

The trees give our downtown area a dramatic impact.

Merchants, put out a floor mat and I promise to wipe my feet if it means we can keep our trees and make you happier.

Thanks to the ladies at the library for their assistance in finding the articles mentioned in this letter.

Harriett Gill
Save Our Trees
Norton

Stories from retiring staff brought back memories

To the Editor,
I've enjoyed reading all the teacher/administrator life stories in *The Telegram* these past few weeks.

Your commentaries were heartfelt, wistful and downright tear inducing! All of you overwhelmingly showed your love for your profession and your students. However, one common and valid complaint that you had (articulated with delicacy and taste), was having to work within the government's mandates. Reminds me of Pharaoh telling the Israelite's to make more bricks with less mortar!

As a homeschool mom/teacher, I cannot begin to imagine how difficult it would be to encourage creativity and meet the challenges of each unique child within such a large, overly bureaucratic system. From personal experience with the Norton schools I do know that you try very hard to do so in spite of the system. I understand that a general mainframe of rules, procedures, etc. needs to be in place when structuring the education of such a large number of students. But I do believe the times we live in are choking the life and creativ-

ity out of the student/teacher relationship. You have my utmost respect.

Several months back a friend of mine was telling us of his continued respect for a particular teacher he had here in Norton some three decades ago. When she would come into his place of employment, she would receive immediate attention by him, even at the consternation of customers who were there first. This same teacher also had a profound and humorous effect on his buddy who, upon seeing her enter a restaurant, would immediately straighten up his posture, get his elbows off the table and look serious about eating his meal! You see, we have our memories of you, too.

Your stories brought me back to my own childhood and adolescent days of school. It was then that I realized how much I also remember. I especially recall the teachers that validated my worth, and the ones that wounded me. My 4th grade teacher, Mr. Ashmead, walked with a limp given him from a childhood bout with polio. Though scared to death at giving my first book report, "Twenty and

Ten," his smiling eye contact gave me the confidence to continue. I still remember the book, the speech and him.

Yet, it is the teachers themselves that had the most impact upon my life and memories, not what knowledge I've learned. I also learned my value through their interest, or lack thereof, in me. The personal attention, the eye contact, the taking the time, etc.

All of this made me who I am today. I listened to all the words, saw their attitudes, learned their character. Knowledge is necessary and good. But it was my teachers themselves that had the greatest impact in my life.

Having grown up in the Twin Cities, I never met any of my teachers again. However, small town students run into their teachers throughout the course of living in their small towns. I do hope that the students of this town fully appreciate and show that appreciation every time they see their 'old' teachers around. I wish that I could.

Robin Somers
Norton