

Summer's heat should not come as a surprise

Why is it that the arrival of summer's heat always seems to come as a surprise?

But each summer, the current one no exception, finds the media falling all over itself to let us know that, "we are in the midst of a heat wave!" As if we didn't know.

The words, "All up and down the East Coast..."

Or, "In the Midwest, people are seeking..."

Or, "Temperature extremes have engulfed..."

The descriptions almost sound the same as the prior summer's. Or the summer before. Or the summer before that.

Heat and summer go hand in hand. That's no surprise. The surprise, however, would be if it didn't warm up! If it didn't get uncomfortably hot.

The words we welcome most during the heat of summer are "cold front." Weather people like to call a forecast dip in temperature a cold front. But "cold" and "summer" don't quite go together. It's really a wind shift. (A story on today's front page talks about cold fronts.)

Why could they not call it a "cool front." That would make more sense.

We will get through this summer's heat wave just like we have done in the past. Yes, the heat causes some people to fall ill. Death is not rare in cases of extreme heat. Many communities make fans available to those in need. Some communities open air conditioned shelters to accommodate the public.

But it happens each summer. It is no surprise. It it's something we need to prepare for just as we prepare for the worst of winter.

Dress accordingly. Drink lots of water. Stay shaded when outdoors. The suggestions are many. More and more people are heeding the advice.

Some say the summer heat of 2006 could be a record-setter. That's possible.

But one thing is for certain: Heat is going to happen. No surprise there.

-Tom Dreiling

FROM THE MAILBAG:

County courthouse not smoke free?

To the Editor,
I am a person who is allergic to cigarette smoke. I went to the Norton County Courthouse to vote and was greeted at the door with the stale odor of yes, cigarette smoke. I thought this was a SMOKE FREE public building!

cannot stand the smell. Maybe more people would come out to vote if we can eliminate this problem.

Fred Kingham
Rural Norton

P.S. Most businesses in Norton are smoke free and I appreciate that.

Former resident recalls years gone by

To the Editor,
And to leftover friends from my wading pool days:

In your April 25 issue you said, "Say something good about Norton." That sounds good to me. Here we go:

On or about Sept. 1, 1939, we moved to Norton from south of Edmond, Kansas. We lived across the road from the Houston school house on the Graham County line, as I remember.

When time permits, I like to visit the banks of the Solomon River. It was there I dreamed and fished my days away and told a new story every day.

One very good thing about Norton is Elmwood Park,

and baseball games after dark, lefty throwing fast balls that hit the mark.

And the taste of wild plums on Prairie Dog Creek, the swimming place we used to meet.

They say you can't go home again. Perhaps, I'll try and see.

I have traveled lots of highways, been down many roads, none have led me home.

And here I am today, most of my good times gone.

I am somewhere west of Laramie as I inhale the scent of a summer rain,

Now, I don't have a ticket and I'm waiting for a train.

It must run through the dark of night and take me home again.

So please Mister train man, slow it down for me,

and I'll climb aboard your late night train and homeward bound I'll be.

I am looking for a photo of the Houston school house. Please help if you can.

Dean Huffman
PO Box 1226
Alvarado, Texas 76009
(817) 790-8555

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

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They are the voices the community trusts

I remember the night very well. I had gone to bed early and was awakened after midnight by our youngest son peering over me.

"Mom," he said, "we're in a tornado watch."

"Mmm," I groaned, "if it is anything too serious Deena will be on the radio."

"She is," Michael emphatically informed me. And, so armed with that knowledge, I was out of bed and had tuned in to our local station.

Deena Wentz, ever since we returned to Norton, has been the voice of calm and reason during times of danger. More recently she has been joined by fellow announcer, Marvin Matchett. Their willingness to go to the cinder block building during a time of weather threat or other crisis does not go unnoticed.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



When I was a child we did not have a local station and so, if something was happening in Lexington, we were informed. But a fire in our own town, or a threat of a tornado, did not get the "play by play" coverage we have come to expect.

Perhaps we don't say it frequently, but I, and I know I'm not alone, appreciate their dedication. And so it was that during the fire of July 24, Deena was on the scene to relay information as it occurred

and Marvin was at the station to pass it on and combine it with other information he was receiving. This service hopefully kept some individuals from going down to find out for themselves, the very thing not needed on the scene.

As we watched the smoke rising in the sky, we were able to hear the descriptive words from Deena. The emotion in her voice told of the gravity of the situation, but also spread a certain amount of calm as she described the actions of the firefighters. Marvin's questions helped create the picture.

So I'd like to say "thank you" to Deena and Marvin for being "on the scene," most recently during the fire, but for all the times past and the times to come. Your love of our community does not go unnoticed. You are the voices we trust.

Our place fits in well with country music

Do you like country music? I do. It might be my favorite kind of music. My favorite country artist is Toby Keith. I think he has a great voice.

Daughter Elizabeth, who knows about music, tells me that opera singers and country singers have very similar voice qualities. I can see that. I think I even heard that Toby was offered an opera scholarship in college (he played football instead). It is just as well. I can't envision Toby Keith in an opera costume at the Met and where would we be without such classics as "Honky Tonk U," "I Love This Bar" and "Beer for My Horses".

Another reason I like Toby Keith is because most of his songs have the right amount of irreverence. They are fun.

Keith's latest album is called "White Trash with Money." I heard that he got the name for the album from a fuss his daughter got into with another girl at school. The girl told Toby's daughter, "My momma says you all are just white trash with money."

Keith's wife was upset but he said the woman was right and used the words to make even more money.

Lately, I've been examining our poor country ways and decided we sort of resemble "White Trash Sans Money." I think I could write a country song about it. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but we have nine pickup trucks sitting in our yard. Three don't even run. A couple of them

Back Home Nancy Hagman



don't even belong to us. It's complicated. There is a reason for everything but I don't have the time, energy or space to explain.

On a plus side, it always looks like there are lots of people here so no one is tempted to come on the place and rob us.

I mentioned earlier in the spring that our house needs painted. Well, last week this old boy comes rolling up to the door and hands me a flyer advertising his handy man services. "I noticed your house needs painted," he says.

I tell you it is embarrassing when people just drive by and solicit your business. I will try to explain about the house. The hubby and the kids did some power washing on it so it does look bad but still — my world and welcome to it.

The area iron buyer has also been known to ask the hubby, more than once, when he is going to start cleaning up the pasture and the yard. When the junk man tells you to clean up, it is serious!

I do have a little plan for the iron. The hubby wants to buy yet another vehicle (I am willing to go along with this because

it is supposed to be for me!) I have decided I will let him when he hauls off enough old iron to pay for it. Hey, it won't take that much as we have the van to trade.

Of course, its value is going down rapidly. The family has gotten into the habit of parking one of the pickups beside the garage, just to the right of the garage door and out of my line of sight. Every time I backed out I'd think, "I'm going to hit that pickup one of these days." And I did!

Very minor damage to the van, but a huge blow to my pride. The only way I cope at all is by telling myself I am better than my surroundings. All evidence to the contrary, I still try to think of myself as a queen temporarily exiled by evil forces.

Apparently when you cause a multi-vehicle pile up in your own yard you are part of the problem.

I heard some comments about Toby Keith's concert at Country Stampede. The impression I get is it is hard not to enjoy listening to him because he is so talented and has so many great songs. At the same time because of his talent and great repertoire he puts very little effort into a performance. It grates on people because it seems like he just doesn't care.

He probably doesn't.

I do however. I hired the handy man to paint my house. As Toby says, "I ain't as good as I once was". But in a month if you drive by our house the question will be, "How do you like me now?"

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

□ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232

□ 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, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

□ State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

□ State Rep. John Faber, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

Don't forget Friday is 'Thumbs Up' day