

If this applies to you, act now

The Honorable Jerry Hawks, Norton's Municipal Court Judge, delivered a letter to the editor the other day that should cause some people to break out in a cold sweat, and others to offer support for a project aimed at getting fines paid. That seems to be an ongoing problem in most communities. Reasons vary, but in the end the money owed for breaking the law just seems to take a back seat. And it shouldn't.

Here, in its entirety, is Judge Hawks' letter:

To: Norton Telegram
Norton, KS 67654

Re: Delinquent Court Fines

Dear Editor:

I would like to inform your readers of a new development coming from Municipal Court. Beginning in June, 2007, the Norton Municipal Court will begin conducting monthly or quarterly warrant nights. The court will be issuing bench warrants for the arrest of individuals who have failed to comply with court orders.

In other words, if someone is over 30 days past due on paying a Municipal Court fine, then a bench warrant will be issued for that person's arrest and they will be brought to court to either pay all of their past due account or go to jail. A \$25 warrant fee will also be added to their previous balance due.

It would be advisable to get any past due fines owed to the Norton Municipal Court paid by **June 1, 2007**, or to make arrangements for a timely payment.

Sincerely,

Honorable Jerry Hawks
Municipal Court Judge

The judge has spoken. If you fit into this category, you know what you must do, and the sooner the better. The judge's leniency in allowing you to work out a timely payment is generous, and he may not be so inclined next time, so take advantage now.

Also be appreciative of the fact he is giving advanced warning of the planned action. That's not always the practice.

We will be watching closely to see how this 'warrant night' fares.

—Tom Dreiling

Greensburg can use our prayers

Tornadoes are just a part of life in Kansas. That can't be changed. But the tornado that destroyed the community of Greensburg Friday night, isn't the norm. It was described as the most powerful storm of its kind to ever hit the state. The force was placed at EF5 with winds in excess of 200 miles per hour.

The thing about this tornado, said meteorologists, was its size — greater than a mile wide, closer to two miles. And the end result of something of that magnitude can be seen in a town that once was.

Nine people are dead, in excess of a hundred injured. Basements, which we all count on to provide the most protection in a tornado, didn't entirely fit the bill with this one. Many homes crashed into their basements.

It seems we are in an unusually difficult tornado season. Those who study these storms shake their heads at the number and the intensity so early in what is called 'tornado alley.' It's been brutal and deadly.

As far away as we are from the southcentral Kansas town of Greensburg doesn't diminish our heartfelt sympathy for those who lost loved ones in the tornado, and for those people in general over the loss of their town.

We pray for Greensburg's residents. We pray that in this time of crises, they are given the strength needed to carry on and to eventually rebuild amidst the rubble we now see.

When the sirens forewarn that a storm is anticipated, please take cover. Mother Nature can't be bargained with.

—Tom Dreiling



Death silences a truly great voice

We buried another old friend from the little farming community where I grew up. Lela Huff was a big woman with a voice to match. I likened her to a white Mahalia Jackson. She had the kind of voice that made the hair on the back of your neck stand up when she sang. My dad loved to sing with Lela. He had a very deep bass voice and they really sounded good together.

Lela was more than just a voice, though. She was one of the most fun and fun-loving people I ever knew. Her family may have had a little more financial resources than other farm families in our community, but whatever Lela had she shared. It was a party wherever she was. The Huffs had a pontoon boat they kept at the lake. They hosted the greatest church youth group and 4-H parties.

And, the food. There was always food. Good food and plenty of it. At the funeral, one of her grandsons said, "Nanna didn't think a pie should ever be cut in more than four pieces."

Someone else recalled the time, at 1 a.m., Lela woke everyone in the house to make fudge.

I worked for Lela one summer. She had me come clean house. I thought she had the most beautiful and elegant house I had ever seen. With a grand piano in the front room. There were two bathrooms in the house (that alone was pretty impressive). And, a thoroughly modern kitchen.

Tragedy was also part of Lela's life. Grief that few know could have brought her down. But, that wasn't Lela. She was

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



a Godly woman who put her trust, entirely, in God. Her testimony was her life. She never lost her faith.

—ob—

My oldest daughter, Halley, had been given the task to pick up Taylor, her eight-year-old niece, from her after-school program. Unfortunately, Halley was a few minutes late. She said to the program director, "How much do I owe you?"

The director said, "Don't worry about it. You weren't that late."

Halley replied, "No. How much do I owe you not to tell Taylor's mom (Halley's sister) I was late?"

"You don't have to worry about me," the director said, "But, you might have to pay off Taylor."

"Okay," Halley said to Taylor. "How much is it going to cost me for you to keep your mouth shut?"

Without missing a beat, Taylor said, "Ten bucks."

"Ten bucks? I don't think so," answered Aunt Halley.

Taylor shot back, "Okay, five bucks and we go to Chucky Cheese."

If you've ever been to a Chucky Cheese Restaurant you know that it is pure "kid pandemonium".

Terrified, Halley countered, "I'll give you the ten bucks, but no Chucky Cheese."

Evidently more hungry than broke, Taylor said, "Seven bucks, and we eat at McDonald's."

When Halley called to tell me the story she was still laughing. But, in the background I heard a voice say, "Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order, please."

Guess Taylor won that round.

—ob—

The tornado that wiped out Greensburg, hit closer to home than I thought. My sister's grandson, Keith VanZandt, lives in Greensburg. The sketchy news she received indicated his house is gone. He and his girlfriend and their child took cover in the basement. When it was all over and they emerged, everything was gone.

I'm sure, by now, everyone knows someone, who knows someone, who was affected by the tornado. Pictures I've seen show total devastation. Still, the good news is I haven't heard one single accusation that FEMA was to blame, that the government should be issuing cash cards to the victims or that "someone" owes the residents of Greensburg something. Whether or not the town tries to rebuild, (I'm trusting it will) people are picking themselves up, evaluating what they have left and starting over. It's what Kansans do. We come from strong pioneer stock.

Other Kansans are responding. Help is on the way. We'll get through this together. And, be stronger for it. We might be beaten down, but we're not defeated.

Things aren't made to last forever

Planned obsolescence: the theory that manufacturers built things to last only a certain amount of time, requiring consumers to have to buy new things! It is up to each of us to decide if it is a theory or a fact!

So here is how my week is going ...

First, the computer! It has developed some very annoying habits. It has been squeaking and tweeting like a bird for awhile. I took it to the computer guy. He said it was a fan but he did not have a replacement piece in stock and as long as it was making noise it was working. Fine, except some days it is so loud I am worried about suffering hearing loss. Not that it would matter; I've been accused of not listening anyway!

Then the monitor started acting up. The menu for adjusting the screen settings would just appear — right in the middle of it. If I decided to try to adjust something I might be able to and then again I might not. Never mind, let's just go to exit. Oops, exit does not work. You cannot move the menu to the corner of the screen. No matter what, it sits in the middle of the monitor! I finally realized that if I could indeed exit the menu and stick a toothpick beside the button it worked pretty well. Until it didn't.

I decided to start turning my monitor off when I wasn't using it. That worked. Until one day when I turned it on and the usable size of the screen was about 70 percent of what it could be. Called the com-

Back Home Nancy Hagman



puter guys, "Oh, those monitors just go bad after awhile! You can get a reconditioned monitor for \$35!"

"How about fixing the one I have?" I asked. "Sure, but just diagnostics will cost \$45 plus repairs!"

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE!

At least, they are reconditioning old monitors! But it is probably time to upgrade to a flat screen! The landfills aren't full yet, are they? The hubby listens to the little bird tweeting away in the CPU and says, "Maybe you are due for a new computer." Our computer trouble shooter, Patricia, says, "Mom, you have plenty of computer! Just get the fan fixed." Of course, I cannot be without my computer for more than a day. So after finals she is bringing her laptop home for me!

Then there is the sewing machine. It has sewn miles and miles and miles — and it is probably good for miles and miles and miles more, except for the spool holders. They pull up and down. I always thought that was cool until the day I pushed one

down and it stayed down. Oh well, I still had another spool holder. Just a matter of days later the second developed a similar problem. Except when I pushed it down it went clank, down into the innards of the sewing machine. I took the bottom off and retrieved various pieces: the spool holder, a rubber piece that was hard as rock and broken, a cotter pin and some other junk. I have no idea how this stuff was assembled and I can't get to it to attempt any repairs because the sewing machine motor is in between.

As long as I had the thing apart I decided I just as well see if I could get the other spool holder. I pushed it on down. The cotter pin came out but the spool holder is lodged somewhere above the motor. I used a piece of soft plastic (I recovered from the innards of the machine) to shim the spool holder I got back and kept sewing.

I know nothing is going to last forever, but why did they put plastic and rubber pieces that were going to crack or wear out in my sewing machine? How much are diagnostics going to cost? How much to fix it? Or is it fixable? I have definitely gotten my money out of that sewing machine but how sad to just throw it away.

And like the computer, I can't be without my sewing machine!

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE! Every consumer gets to make up their mind but from where I am standing it is a fact! (To be continued!)

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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

Christie Anderson advertising

Veronica Monier staff reporter

Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports

Carolyn Plotts society editor

Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation

Vicki Henderson computer production