

### Tip: Read paper from back to front

The front pages of our nation's newspapers are more colorful and compelling than ever. From the smallest county-seat weekly to the largest city tabloid, action shots reach out to the reader, trying to draw you in.

We try our best to help you stay informed, even as you blog, GPS and phone-video your way through the world.

But while there's plenty of interesting news in the front, we find the back of the paper even more important. We invite the reader to join us there.

The public notices in most newspapers appear in the classified section. In some states, that is because the law considers them classified ads. In others, it's simply tradition. They've been there for all of our lives. Lewis and Clark used public notices. Most state constitutions were drawn up with the help of public notices.

Now they are so much part of our tradition that we sometimes forget them. These notices are part of the three-legged stool of democracy: open public meetings, public records and public notices.

They let us know about tax increases, zoning changes and property foreclosures — when they are allowed to work.

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire drew attention to these notices this year when she signed a bill requiring her governments — state and local — to go back to using public notices to inform citizens. The law she signed was a reaction to a state Supreme Court decision involving the owners of a small business whose property in south Tacoma was condemned to make way for a train-station parking lot.

The public notice provided by the transit authority was posted solely on the agency's own Internet website. There it announced condemnation of private property. The property owners never saw the notice. They sued, but the Washington Supreme Court said notice on an obscure website was good enough.

The state legislature thought otherwise. It now requires notices to be mailed to property owners — and a notice to be put back into the newspaper, where people will see it. As the state of Washington has acknowledged, people have a right to know. And notices are meant to be noticed.

Newspaper notices also help get people back together with something they have lost — unclaimed property.

In most states, an unclaimed property fund exists in the state treasury for assets in long-forgotten bank accounts, uncollected insurance claims and personal property, all belonging to someone who has not yet found it or laid claim to it. Not surprisingly, some state governments happily sit on these assets. In the days of more vigorous newspaper notices, readers could pore over interesting catalogues of unbound heirs and uncashed checks — and let their friends know of an unbound bounty. Today, in many states, notice of these funds has shrunk to a website page buried in a state computer.

A federal judge in California has stepped into that state's hoarding of these rich deposits. He stopped the state from continuing to rake in the contents of abandoned lock boxes and the like. He demanded a better effort by the state to find rightful owners. (The list of unclaimed property in that case included a Medal of Honor and Navy Cross awarded to a World War II hero who is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.)

One big problem with California's program is the lack of newspaper lists of the property. The public's right to know is served when we can see for ourselves what is going on. Other states should pay attention to this lesson of government accountability: a government website doesn't do the job.

The Internet is going to be an important channel for delivery of newspaper information. It also will help newspapers provide broader public notice. But the Internet must not become a tool of secrecy for our governments. Washington's governor and legislature understand this principle. The California judge knows visible public notice is important. Newspapers provide public notices week after week where people can see them, not locked away on some obscure website.

That's why so many readers are like us. We read the paper from back to front. — Steve Haynes

This editorial was distributed to publications across the country for the observance of National Newspaper Week this week. Steve Haynes, publisher of The Oberlin Herald and president of Nor'West Newspapers, which operates six community newspapers in northwest Kansas, including The Norton Telegram, is president of the National Newspaper Association. He is a former president of the Kansas and Colorado Press associations.

### Thumbs Up . . .

To Jay Sharp, on your promotion with the Butler County Sheriff's Department. (Telegram)

To Pamida, for being the first business in Norton to install automatic doors. Thanks for keeping the disabled in mind, it makes entrance easier. (called in)

To the gentleman who called 911 after my wreck. He found me and helped me out of the car. (Shawna Black)

To Tech. Sgt. Sandra Downing, on completion of the Weather Forecasting Course at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Miss. (Telegram)

To the Norton Community High School homecoming parade organizers, for a job well done. (called in)

## THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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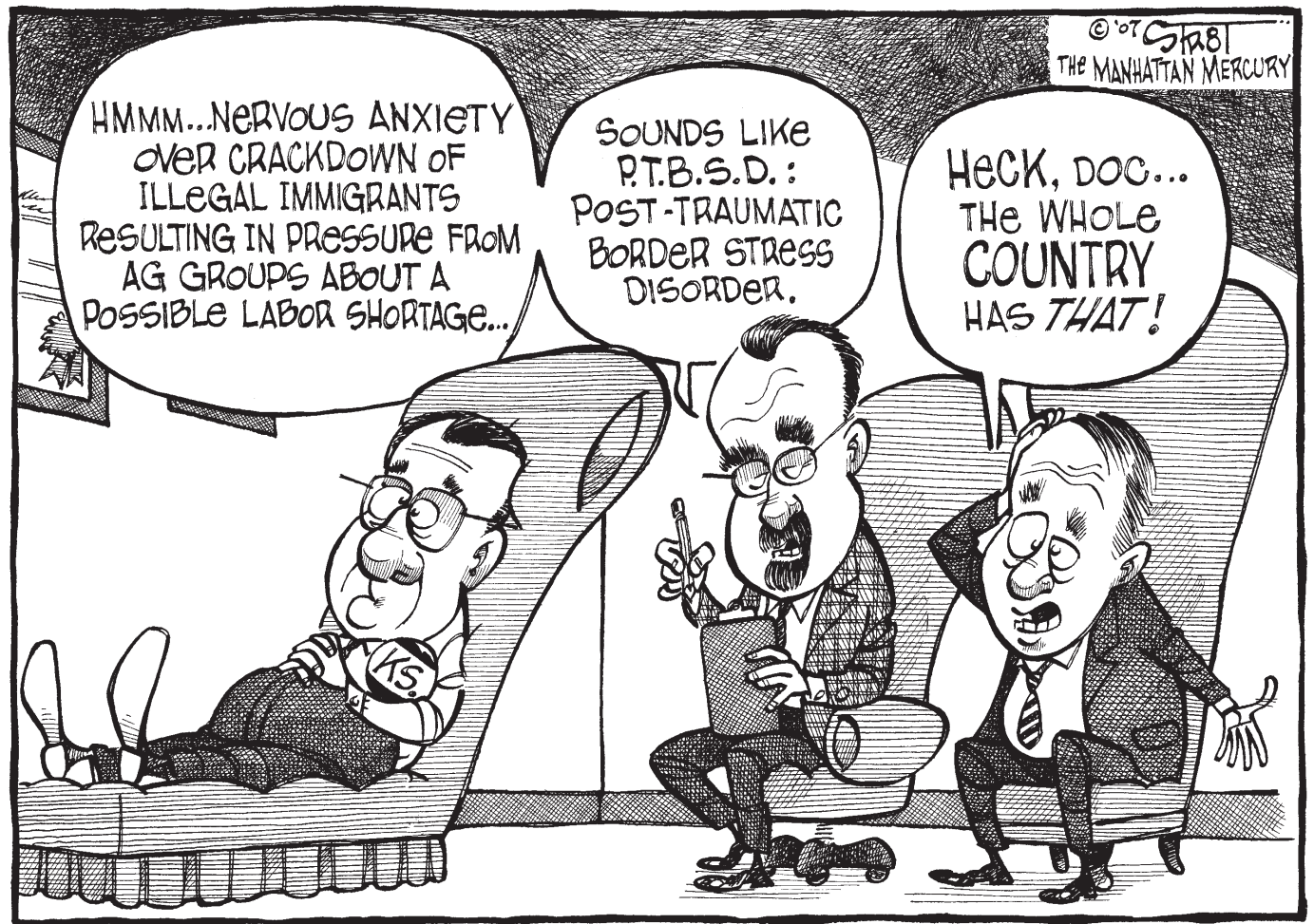
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### 'Take just one. You are being watched.'

I like Halloween. No, I don't put on a costume and trick-or-treat, instead I buy goodies and await for the little ones to arrive with anxiety and excitement. I generally put the goodies in a large container, sit it on a chair outside the front door and place a large sign that reads, "Take just one. You are being watched!"

It's fun from inside the house to watch them approach the chair and goodies, see the sign and then slowly look around to see who is watching. For most part they sort of skirt the guidelines by cautiously taking two or more pieces of the good stuff....and then hurry away.

It's just my way of treating the tricksters. And it adds a little extra fun to the occasion.

-td-

The Rockies' season-ending run was nothing short of miraculous. Then to kick the Phillies out of the way and advance in the playoffs was a dream come true. Wow! Let's hope they've got something left up their sleeves to dispose of the Diamondbacks. Wouldn't that be great?

Denver's cheers are for the baseball guys, their moans are for the football bunch.

Go Rockies!

-td-

Forty-one days from now we will be celebrating Thanksgiving! Mercy, where has the time gone! I have not done one thing I had on my will-do summer list. Of course summer has come and gone. I can barely remember September, and now I am glancing at October and we are about at the mid-point.

When we get this far into October, plans are starting to be made with attention to weather forecasts. We'll still have a lot of nice days before Old Man Winter enters the picture for good, but as October moves along and November awaits its turn on

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



look presidential. You may see him differently, and I respect that. Former mayor Rudy and former governor Mitt were at one another's throats. Mitt Romney looks more presidential than the other candidates. Rudy always reminds me of one of the slick guys from the city, with the word trust hanging in the balance.

I hope it doesn't boil down to a Rudy-Hillary race in November 2008. Neither is on my radar screen.

-td-

I wish the television networks would take their sports graphs and put them.... well, in their back pocket. It is so frustrating to be watching a football game and as a team breaks huddle and comes to the line the viewer is confronted with some silly graph that, at times, stays on long enough to wipe out a play. If they feel they must show those things they can at least use a split screen so we can see what's happening on the field. I watch the games to watch the games. Graphs seldom add anything.

Advertising, however, has its place because without it we wouldn't get to see the games, and I wouldn't have anything to complain about.

-td-

Have you ever wondered why you have to "put your two cents in," when it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? What happens to that extra penny?

-td-

And why do visitors to the city take an elevator to the top of the tallest building, put money in a contraption that looks like binoculars, so they can look at things on the ground?

-td-

Have a good evening. And this weekend, keep your feet on the ground because that's where you will find the church of your choice.

### Plea made for area cemetery's project

To the Editor,

My name is Ken Tharman and I live between Long Island and Woodruff. I moved to this area in 1991. As time has passed, I have become involved with several community organizations. I currently serve on the board of Granite Township as the treasurer. I am also affiliated with the American Legion Post #304 in Long Island. These two positions may seem to have nothing in common, but in reality, there is a strong link.

Every year the Long Island Legion performs Memorial Day services for five surrounding cemeteries. Originally, Memorial Day was a time to pay respect to fallen veterans, but has since evolved into a time in which we honor ALL of our departed loved ones. Many people attend these ceremonies each year — including the service at the Woodruff Cemetery.

Over the past few years, many people have mentioned that they would like to see some improvements at the cemetery. The Township Board (Dane Christensen, Thad Schemper and myself) discussed those concerns. We feel strongly that there is a need to have some immediate issues addressed. Some of those repairs include headstones that have been damaged from weather and time as well as dirt work around the plots. Others have

also indicated a wish to have a nice two rail fence put up around the cemetery perimeter.

We realize that many of you reading this do not reside locally or may not have noticed the problems, so we want you to not only be aware, but also know that we are diligently trying to make improvements. Of course, all these things require money — which is limited for all of us. We have been told that to have a headstone reset will cost between \$100 and \$150 per stone. Two rail fencing was priced over a year ago, so I am sure the price has fluctuated.

Currently, the cemetery receives funds each year from the county, but the amount is based on the taxes paid by people who reside in Granite Township. Because of low census, that money is barely enough to pay for the mowing and basic upkeep of the cemetery. There is not much we can do to cut back on expenses or raise the taxes, so we felt that it would be best to involve those of you with connections to the Woodruff community that may be able to help us. Please consider donat-

### LETTER

ing whatever you feel appropriate to a fund that has been set up with the First National Bank in Phillipsburg, Long Island, or Logan. We appreciate whatever you can do to help us. Please make your checks out to "Woodruff Cemetery" and put "Renovation Fund" in the memo line or on a note so the bank knows where to direct the donation. Once we feel that we have adequate monies, we will begin the necessary projects.

As a Township Board member, I realize that each of these tasks is expensive, but I also believe that it's the right thing to do. It is important for people passing by to be able to look up at the cemetery and recognize the unique rural respect we have for our community. It is also a testament to those buried and the families that visit their loved ones.

Please do not think of this as an expense, but rather as an investment in the final resting place of our family and friends.

We greatly appreciate whatever you can give to help us in this important project! If you have any questions, please contact me at (785) 653-2527.

Ken Tharman  
Rural Long Island