

Please keep your Thinking Cap engaged

What could we have done in 2007, but didn't, to better our community? The answers to that question will be as many as there are people in our community. It's always that way.

Perhaps your idea could become a reality in 2008. Of course no one will know what you have in mind if you don't tell someone who could possibly do something about it.

Maybe what we need is a *Community Thinker's Cap*, a group dedicated to weighing suggestions from the public and then passing the suggestions to those who could do something about them.

If you keep your ears open at the coffee shops, or the grocery stores or other businesses where Mr. Adam and Mrs. Eve congregate, you can hear all sorts of possibilities for community improvement. But like most of us, Mr. Adam and Mrs. Eve will share their suggestions with others at those places, but feel uneasy, or not quite comfortable enough to share with those who could seize on your suggestion and in the process make us an even greater place for the homefolks and those coming to our town to shop and visit.

Studies bear out the fact there are numerous people with eye-opening suggestions for a town's improvement, but harvesting those ideas is always difficult. Maybe what is needed is for each of us to pay close attention to things we see in other communities — in and out of state, big and small — that would perhaps look great in our location. We could use those to throw in the mix.

We think there is a lot of excitement as it relates to the downtown park which is in its early creation. Those who came up with the idea are to be lauded. They were putting their *Thinking Caps* to good use. It will be an attraction that will cause positive comment within the community and you can bet it will be an eye-catcher for visitors. It replaces two buildings lost to fire.

Those good folks behind the park project — at the corner of State and East Washington — picked up the ball and ran with it. They didn't just keep it to themselves. And one day we'll look at the park as an example of an idea from a few people that became reality, and in the process made our community even better.

Let's put our *Thinking Caps* on in these early months of 2008, and see what else we can add to Norton — the area's top stop.

—Tom Dreiling

Thumbs Up...

- To... **Roger & Deanna Braun**, on your recent 40th wedding anniversary.
- To... **Debbie Marshall**, who will add another candle to her birthday cake on Jan. 7.
- To... **Wayne & Louise Cressler**, on your new great-grandson, Callahan Ian.
- To... **Dewayne Jackson**, on the honor accorded for your 25-year safe driving record delivering rural mail.

Here are ways to handle 'winter blues'

It is not unusual to feel sad or "down in the dumps" during and/or after the holiday season. Significant life changes and losses, or chronic health problems can be major factors. In addition the stresses of the holiday season along with expectations that did not turn out well also contribute to "post-holiday blues". Usually these feelings decrease and go away after the holidays are over and done. But for some people these feelings, sometimes described as the "winter blues", continue for several weeks or months, and can contribute to more serious health problems including depression.

Those feelings may be a symptom of SAD — Seasonal Affective Disorder, a disorder that has much to do with the lack of exposure to sunlight.

People living in the northern climates will be more affected. Symptoms can develop and increase because the hours of daylight are shorter during the winter months, the clouds will hide the sun more often, and people tend to stay indoors more when the weather is colder. Symptoms of SAD include changes from usual behavior such as the loss of energy, increase in anxiety and irritability, difficulty concentrating, and loss of interest in

High Plains Mental Health Karen Schueler

previously enjoyable activities. Difficulty sleeping and changes in eating habits, particularly significant weight gain, may also be indications of this disorder.

Increasing exposure to sunlight and bright lights can help to reduce the symptoms of SAD. It is a good idea to open up the drapes on windows to allow sunlight into the house and to turn on additional lamps to increase the lighting. In addition, take a walk outdoors on sunny days. Get in the habit of practicing good stress management; get enough rest and exercise, eat nutritiously, and spend time with friends and family. Remember, most people experience times during the year when they feel "down in the dumps." But when those sad and hopeless feelings continue for too long, then it is time to ask for help from a medical or mental health professional.



Presidential battle begins second surge

Well, we just finished year one of the 2008 presidential election, and have welcomed year two, but not with outstretched arms. Really, folks, chapter two could be even more intense than chapter one. Many current contenders will drop off as the weeks and months of 2008 unfold. And with fewer candidates, the political assaults will increase. So prepare yourselves for more television attack ads (commercials, thank you, because I think of "ads" as those things you see in the print media).

The troops — candidates — have bailed out of Iowa since the caucuses ended Thursday night. Now it's on to New Hampshire for their Jan. 8 primary election.

I don't know how the Iowa thing came out, inasmuch as this is being written Thursday, prior to the start of the caucus activity. But go ahead and tighten your political seatbelts for a rough ride the rest of the way.

"Rest of the way," meaning somewhere around 306 days until the Nov. 4, 2008 election. And wouldn't you know this is leap year so we'll add one more day to this shouting match? No break there!

-td-

Grandma made such beautiful pies! One day, I asked her, "How do you get such beautiful pies with the crimps around the edge so even?"

Well, it's a family secret," she said. "But if you promise not to tell, I'll let you in on it."

"Okay," I said. "Tell me!"

"Well, first, I roll out the dough, making sure it is flat and even. Then I cut out the bottom layer and carefully put it in the pie plate and make sure it is firmly against the sides of the plate. Then I slowly pour in the filling, making sure it's not too full. Next, I cut out the top layer and carefully put it over the filling. Finally, I take out my teeth and just run them around the edge of the pie crust and they make the nicest even impressions you ever did see!"

Care for another slice of Grandma's pie?

-td-

Well, I have now embarked on my third year in Norton. Boy, those first two sure went fast. I arrived in town to begin my re-

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



concluded at midnight when I shut things down, that the talking heads didn't know anymore than I knew.

-td-

You fishermen will like this one. A teacher was talking to her class of 7 year olds about fish. When she was done, she invited the students to join in the conversation. One of the most electrifying offerings came from a boy, who said: "Some fish are dangerous. Jellyfish, you know, can sting. And electric eels can give you a terrible shock."

The teacher asked, "How are they able to do that?"

The boy replied, "I think they live in caves under the sea where they have to plug themselves into chargers."

-td-

I have wondered about this for a long time: If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?

-td-

All you senior citizens, stand proud; you'll love this one.

A self-important college student attending a recent college football game took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen sitting next to him why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation.

"You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one," the student said, loud enough for many of those nearby to hear.

"The young people of today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel, man walking on the moon. Our space probes have visited Mars. We have nuclear energy, ships and electric and hydrogen cars. Computers with light-speed processing, and more."

After a brief silence the senior citizen responded: "You're right, son. We didn't have those things when we were young. We were too busy inventing them. Now, you arrogant little squirrel, what are you doing for the next generation?"

The student, quietly, refocused his attention on the football game.

-td-

Have a good evening. And this weekend attend the church of your choice, where the supreme inventor awaits your arrival.

We have our forefathers to again thank

The recent events in Pakistan remind us of the wisdom of our forefathers in the planning of our country. In my lifetime, we have witnessed the assassination of a sitting president, the assassination of a former attorney general and candidate for president, as well as the killing of the leader of the black community in 1968. In addition there was the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan. Each of these events could have crumbled our government, but didn't. Why is that?

Several reasons, I suppose, but one is because most of the country had studied the history of our government and we knew there was a plan in place. Because of this knowledge, not one individual or the military could step forward and deem themselves in control.

Even when Alexander Haig made the assertion, "I am in control here," when President Reagan was shot in 1981, the news media quickly let it be known to the public, Haig wasn't next in the succession

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



of power. The freedom of the press is a valuable tool as well.

The assassination of Pakistan's former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, set the country into chaos and the current leader General Musharraf even threatened to postpone the upcoming election. At this time it looks as if it will go forward, however his own rise to power did not come with an election but rather with a military coup.

Our presidential hopefuls from both parties have elaborated on their knowledge of Pakistani history and leadership in hopes of gaining votes in the Iowa primary. The belief seemed to be if you

could show an understanding of the Pakistani government it somehow cemented your opportunity to become your party's candidate. It doesn't always work that way. Back in 1999, shortly after Musharraf took power, a reporter asked a U.S. presidential candidate if he could name the person in charge in Pakistan.

"A new Pakistani general has just been elected," the candidate responded, then corrected himself. "He's not elected. This guy took over office. He appears he's going to bring stability to the country, and I think that's good news for the subcontinent."

"And you can name him?" the reporter asked.

"General. I can name the general," the candidate said.

"And it's?" the reporter pressed. "General," said Texas Governor George W. Bush.*

* <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/12/30/2008.bhutto/index.html>

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