

### Your turn

## Old technology a waste of money

To the Editor,

Reading the article in Friday's *Telegram* about Sunflower Electric wanting to install two new power plants, I thought, "Why is the Norton County Economic Development board and Sunflower Electric so set on using old technology to meet our power needs?"

These power plants will use non-renewable energy sources which are already disappearing at an alarming rate. As these sources continue to dwindle, the cost of producing electricity will continue to rise astronomically. A year or two ago, in one of its newsletters, Midwest Energy stated that power companies throughout the nation were already having problems supplying the ever-increasing demands for electricity. And new electronic toys like power hogging HDTV will make the problem worse.

I have no idea how much these two new plants will cost initially, but they will cost more as the price of the energy source for their operation continues to rise. If the economic development board continues to support this archaic, inefficient technology, then I suggest they must change their name to 'Norton County Economic Destruction Board,' because economic destruction is precisely what will happen. Fuel costs will continue to rise and Sunflower Electric will have to continually increase charges to their customers to meet these costs. As customers have to pay more for electricity, they will have less to spend for other goods and services. Retailers in the community will have to continually raise their prices to defray their electricity costs and may have less profit to do it as the customer base has less to spend. And the spiral will just keep spreading. Does it really take much thought to see what must eventually happen?

I still strongly advocate the installation and use of wind generators and solar power. Perhaps these units would cost more initially, but there are a number of factors in favor of using them.

- Energy from wind and sun are constantly there and is FREE. (A substantial savings over purchasing fuel from other sources.)
- There would be no carbon dioxide or other emissions to affect the environment.
- No one would be able to tax, reduce or shut off this energy source.
- New jobs would be created.
- Sunflower Electric would have more revenue to use in refining and improving their services.
- Electrical costs for customers would be drastically reduced and more money would be available to keep our community strong economically.

And on and on and on. Personally, I like this spiral better than the other one.

I realize that I have probably over simplified a complex area, however, I would welcome hearing from anyone who has fact-based information with which to enlighten me.

June Prout  
Norton

## Talking to yourself has its benefits

Most people carry on a silent conversation with themselves at some point during the day for various reasons. Some of these quiet conversations are designed to help us remember a specific task or errand, such as "Don't forget to pick up some milk on the way home." There are also personal conversations referred to as "self-talk" that can have a more important effect on our thoughts and behavior.

For example, many people make resolutions for the New Year in the hopes of improving their life, and continually remind themselves through self-talk, like, "I am going to lose weight, exercise more, and quit smoking," which applies to one's health and well-being.

"I am going to save more money for retirement," refers to financial goals. "I am going to meet more people who share my interests and values," has to do with personal issues.

Along with this self-talk a person needs a specific plan to implement these changes and a positive "I can do it" attitude, or their resolutions will most likely fail. Think about it this way: Negative self-talk means giving up on yourself and not even giving yourself the chance to succeed. If people say to themselves, "Nothing I do matters," or "No one cares so why do I bother," they are not going to be successful with any goal or plan.

## High Plains Mental Health

Ken Loos

Positive self-talk improves the chances for success and provides an opportunity to deal with unexpected challenges along the way. Statements, such as, "Exercise hurts but it will get easier as I get in better shape," or "Meeting new people is awkward but if I do not try I have no chance of making new friends," provides hope that the effort will pay off. Telling ourselves that we are up for the challenge, able to handle difficult situations, or learn new skills is one of the best conversations we can have.

(Contributed by Ken Loos, MS, LMLP, LCP Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, KS 67601. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality. Internet site: [www.highplainsmentalhealth.com](http://www.highplainsmentalhealth.com))

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# 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



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## Pesky sink leak stalls work on fun projects

By now the enthusiasm of New Year's Resolutions has worn off. The leftover Christmas candy proved too much of a temptation. Or, the clean-up-the-(garage, closet, attic, shed) was just too daunting. At our house, plans to work on more fun projects were thwarted by a pesky leak under the kitchen sink.

Jim will be the first to tell you he hates plumbing projects. Especially when the solution is evasive. It seemed no matter what he did the leak kept returning.

Meanwhile, all the usual "stuff" that lives under your sink, was packed into a cardboard box. No matter where I put it, it always managed to be in the way.

We are hopeful a new valve has finally solved the leak problem. But, I'm not putting stuff away until I'm convinced the

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



leak is no more. If the pan under the sink is still dry tonight, I'll "move back in."

-ob-

Sammy/Missy Update: It's been almost two weeks since our new kitty-cat, Missy, moved in. It's safe to say she and our other cat, Sammy, have reached a new plateau in their relationship; they don't want to kill each other. In fact, it's much better than that. They have actually sniffed noses.

Once, I caught them chasing each other through the house. They have even shared a food bowl. I think it's just a matter of time until they are real friends.

-ob-

My brother, Bill, sends me the funniest e-mails. Did you hear about the family that invited the preacher over for Sunday dinner?

While Mom and Dad were in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches on the meal, their son and the preacher were talking in the front room.

"What are we having for dinner?" asked the preacher. "Goat," said the little boy.

"Goat? Are you sure?" asked the preacher.

"Yes," answered the boy. "I heard Daddy say, 'This was as good a day as any to have the old goat for dinner.'"

## Important you fill out this ag report form

### Insight John Schlageck

Beginning in early January, the Census report forms will arrive in mailboxes throughout rural America. If you are involved in farming or ranching in Kansas, chances are you will soon receive a 2007 Census of Agriculture report form.

Accurately completing your census form is important, says Eldon Thiessen, state director of the Kansas Field Office for the National Ag Statistics Service. Return your form by Feb. 4. You can mail it back or, for the first time, you have the option of responding online via a secure web site, saving both time and return postage costs.

Data collected in the Census affects your future, Thiessen says. Census information is used extensively by state and federal legislators, local officials, farm organizations, commodity groups, input suppliers, commodity handlers, processors, retailers, exporters, foreign customers, universities and scientific organizations, domestic consumers, food assistance advocates, and rural communities.

"They make decisions and take actions every day that directly affect you as a producer," Thiessen says. Those decisions and actions affect farm program dollars, public and private grant monies, land-use planning decisions, disaster

declarations and payments, crop insurance, conservation efforts, placement of stores, processing facilities, and specific local, state and national initiatives to assist producers."

Such decisions should be based on facts from the agricultural producers, not someone's opinion or statistics that have been provided by someone with an agenda to advance.

Thiessen says it is crucial for those on farms and ranches to provide the most accurate, up-to-date information they have about their farm and ranch operations. New Kansas ag producers, "Remember this is your voice, your future and your responsibility," Thiessen says. "You should complete your census form because you know the results are valuable to you and all of agriculture. So make sure your segment of the industry is represented and return your form by Feb. 4."

All census and survey information provided to NASS remains confidential. Respondents are guaranteed by law their individual information will be kept confidential. NASS uses the information only for statistical purposes and publishes

data only in tabulated totals.

"Your census response cannot and will not be used for purposes of taxation, investigation or regulation," Thiessen notes. "The privacy of individual Census records is also protected from disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act."

NASS offices will spend next year collecting, analyzing, and summarizing data from over 3 million census forms. Release of the results is scheduled for February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, major watersheds, congressional districts, states and the nation.

"I don't expect to convince you to rip open the census envelope with the same warm sentiments and gusto you reserve for holiday cards," Thiessen says. "Remember, accurately completing your census form is important."

Responding to the Census of Agriculture is also mandatory by law. Find more information about the census online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov), by calling (888) 424-7828 or by contacting Thiessen's office in Topeka at (800) 258-4564.

(John Schlageck was born and raised on a diversified farm in northwest Kansas. His writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

### Addresses

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★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

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★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

### Thumbs Up...

To... Tim & Crystal Hayes, parents of Myleigh Nevaeh, Norton County's First Baby of the New Year.

To... Shelbi McKenna, for doing a great deed in donating her hair for Locks of Love.

To... Greg & Brenda Mann, on your 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

(Send your name or names to [tomd@nwkansas.com](mailto:tomd@nwkansas.com), call 877-6908, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input.-td)