

Your turn

Chair urges caucus attendance

To the Editor,

All First District Republicans are invited to participate in the statewide Republican Presidential Caucus at the Norton County Presidential Caucus site, the Norton American Legion Building, 1120 North Norton, on Saturday, Feb. 9.

Let your voice be heard and your vote counted in selecting the Republican Presidential nominee. This is your chance to participate. Check-in, credentialing, will start at 8:30 a.m.

To participate, at the Norton location, you must be a resident of the First Congressional District of Kansas, you must be a registered Republican on or before Jan. 25, you must be 18 years of age by Feb. 9, you must present a state issued photo ID matching current Secretary of State voter registration rolls or a state issued photo ID and a current voter registration card with a matching address. Check your voter registration at the county clerk's office prior to Jan. 25. A Kansas driver's license is a state issued photo ID. If you have no driver's license or state issue photo ID, the county clerk's office will help you obtain a state issued photo ID.

The caucus will be called to order at 10 a.m. Voting will be by secret ballot. This will be a fun event with refreshments and lots of civil interaction.

I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Berry
Chair, Norton County
Central Committee

Move to self-reliance a good start

In May of 1862, Congress passed and President Lincoln signed into law the Homestead Act. This law provided that any head of household or person 21 years of age and who is a U.S. citizen or declares their intention to become such, may acquire a tract of public land of 160 acres on condition of settlement, cultivation and occupancy as a home for a period of five years.

In addition, they were required to pay certain minimal fees and if they had served in the U.S. Army or Navy such time could be deducted from the five years. The law also allowed people to buy land at \$1.25 an acre. Thousands of newcomers, many from foreign nations, others from the eastern states flooded into Kansas and Nebraska. The population of Kansas grew rapidly and many counties in our area were organized in the 1870's and 1880's.

The lives of our pioneer predecessors were a hard one. Many people had little more than courage and the hope for a better life. Drought swept the state in the early years and was made more severe by the grasshopper invasion of 1874. Thankfully, thousands of dollars and carloads of supplies from the East arrived in time to help those in greatest need.

Tough times like the Depression years of the 1930's taught people to prepare for

Citizen Duties

Bob Streyve



hard times and to seek ways to be self-sufficient. In the early 1900's, farmers raised their own heating fuel — corncobs. They raised and prepared all their own food and made most of their own clothing.

Now we have become so dependent on foreign oil our entire economy requires it. Where we once grew our own food, we now depend on most of it to be shipped to us. Without imported oil, our transportation system would fail.

We, as citizens, need to work toward a more sustainable lifestyle. Development of our energy resources, both wind and ethanol, will help. Local food networks are starting to market locally grown products. I know several people who grind their own flour and others who slaughter their own beef and hogs. The instinct toward being self-reliant is good. We need to support those who are working to make our region self-reliant once again.

(Mr. Streyve's e-mail is: bkstreyve@hotmail.com)

Your political connection

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

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

★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

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

★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

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

Don't forget to salute someone in *The Telegram's* 'Thumbs Up...' column!

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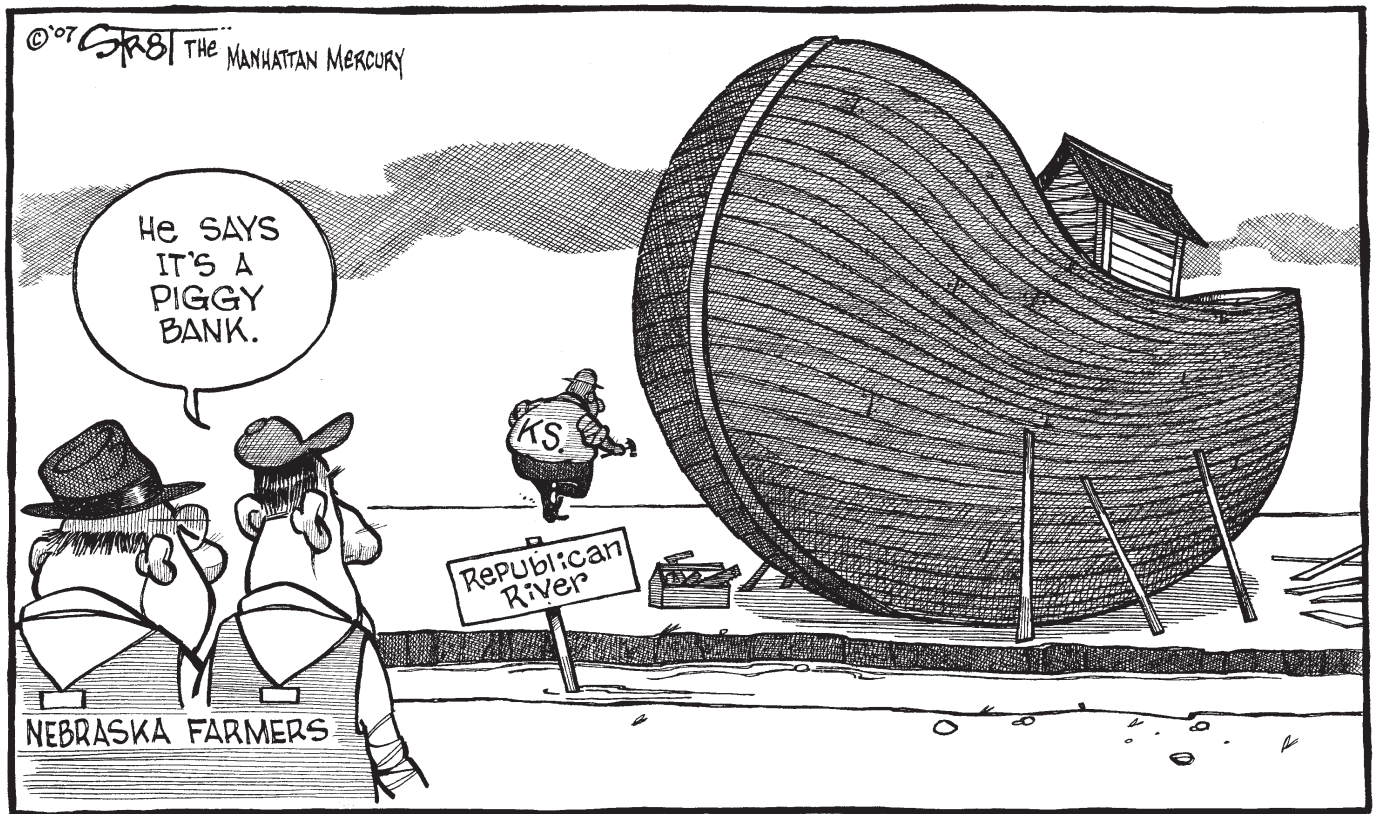
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Impressive turnout for community member

I'm not easily impressed. But, what always manages to impress me is the kindness and generosity of people. This weekend hundreds of folks turned out to help one of our own. About six weeks ago, a young man in this little farming community lost his right hand in a power-takeoff accident. His life changed, dramatically, in the blink of an eye. Ron is not a man to wallow in self-pity and was immediately grateful that he was born left-handed.

Even though he's recovering and already back to work and figuring out new ways to do old jobs, his friends wanted to do something tangible to help. The word went out and it was decided to have a hog roast benefit.

The hog and all the trimmings were donated; Carl, Scott and Doug fired up the cooker; and local ladies fixed cakes, pies and salads.

I've been to lots of benefits, but I have never seen so many people show up for one in my life. The lunchroom at the old school building was packed. You couldn't have fallen down, it was so full. Almost 500 people came to show Ron their support. His sister asked him if he knew everybody there. He looked around the room and surmised, "Well, yes, I think I know just about everybody."

Don't forget the safety pins for the drapes

Before we all become buried in the new year, let's look at this new beginning with a bit of humor. Plenty of people trot out their lists of resolutions. Often, such lists are as long as their arms and last as long as their pinky.

I've all but given up on New Year resolutions. Seems I can't keep them either. But this year I've decided to do something different. I've compiled a list of "lesser" resolutions — some things I believe I can accomplish in 2008:

- Remember that no time spent with your children is ever wasted.
- Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
- Never laugh at anyone's dream.
- Don't wash a car, mow a yard or select a Christmas tree after dark.
- **When traveling, take two big safety pins so you can pin the motel drapes shut.**
- Accept (always) a breath mint if some-

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Ron is one of those guys who has never met a stranger. And, he was always one of the first in line to help someone else. So you might say he had "paid it forward."

As hard as it is to accept help, sometimes we just have to let people help us and do nothing more than say, "Thank You." Remember, a gift can't be a gift, unless there is someone to accept it.

My old car has been giving me trouble lately. One of my friends said, "If you ever get stuck you can just call Triple A."

"No way," I said. "If I ever get stuck I call Jim."

One night last week I had to make that call. The car totally "died" on the way home. I tried to coast off the roadway but lost momentum and was stuck, still half way on the road. Thank goodness I was at the crest of a hill and could get a cell phone signal. Jim said he would be right there.

Insight

John Schlageck

one offers you one.

- Keep the porch light on until the family is in for the night.
- Rehearse a joke before you tell it.
- Always try the house dressing.
- Believe in love at first sight.
- Send your mother-in-law flowers on your spouse's birthday.
- Buy ladders, extension cords and garden hoses longer than you think you'll need.
- Steer clear of any place with a "Ladies Welcome" sign in the window.
- Once in a while invite the person in line behind you to go ahead.
- Be patient when behind the wheel of your vehicle — hand gestures are out of the question.

It was pitch black and I could see approaching headlights. I still had enough battery left to run brake and signal lights (the hazard switch had broken off years ago). So when a vehicle was coming from either the front or behind, I would push the brakes and operate the signals. It was still scary, hoping they could tell I was at a stand-still on the road.

But, I couldn't abandon the vehicle, either. Without hazards someone would have surely hit it — and that could have been disastrous.

In just a few minutes my knight in shining armor arrived. Okay, so it was Jim in overalls — but I couldn't have been more glad to see him if he had been Sir Lancelot, himself.

A mother went in to her son's room saying, "Time to wake up and get ready for church."

Her son said, "I'm not going to church today."

Mom said, "Give me two good reasons why you don't want to go to church."

Her son quickly replied, "One, they don't like me and two, I don't like them."

His mother answered him, "Well, I've got two good reasons why you have to go. One, you're 59 years old and two, you're the preacher."

- Own a hammock and use it.
- Never be photographed holding a cocktail glass.
- Give people more than they expect and do so cheerfully.
- Be as friendly to the janitor as you are to the board chairman.
- Overestimate travel time by 15 percent.

- Never wear a white bathing suit.
- Don't miss a good idea simply because you don't like the source.
- When you say, "I'm sorry," look the person in the eye.
- Trust in God, but always lock your car.

Have a wonderful 2008.
John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Something to be said for night's strangers

It seems sometimes the people who have impacted our lives or perhaps even saved them are strangers, or maybe become faceless with the passing of time. Last weekend's storm in the Sierra Nevada Mountains was a reminder to me of two truck drivers nearly forty years ago on the same mountain range.

We were living in Reno at the time. Sacramento, I always said, was 130 miles away in the summer and might as well be 1300 miles in the winter. My mother, Chip and John (five and three respectively) and I left Reno on a sunny, mild November morning in 1973 to go to John's doctor appointment in Sacramento. Normally, we would have stayed with my brother's family for a couple of days, but they were out of town so we decided to go down and come back on the same day.

When we left the doctor's office it was raining, not a good sign. We knew rain in Sacramento meant snow on the Donner Pass. We got as far as Emigrant Gap and although it was the middle of the afternoon it was dark and I couldn't see beyond the front end of the car. Led by a

Phase II

Mary Kay
Woodyard



stronger power than my own, I found an exit and we were fortunate enough to get the last motel room. The blizzard raged through the night and we found out in the morning we were the last car they let through on Interstate 80 before closing the road and that more than 100 cars were stuck on the pass. The service station at the exit had let us leave our car in their lot and they ferried us up to the motel. Morning came but the service station did not have anyone who could get away to come get us and so with nearly 3 1/2 feet of snow having fallen overnight we remained stuck.

Enter two truck drivers who said they would take me back to our car. They are nameless and now faceless, but this is

where I hope God lets people know how appreciated their actions are. With two little boys and their grandmother waiting in a motel room, their action was a lifesaver. Not only did they take me to my car, but they dug it out as well. The small Datsun (imagine the readers who don't even know that is a car) was literally buried and they dug me out and by then the road up to the motel was cleared and I could go get the others.

The trip home was anything but swift. Weekend gamblers do not give up easily and by the time we were on the road it had been opened a few hours, so we had ice, snow, jack-knifed trucks and oh, yes, bumper to bumper traffic. The last forty miles took six hours. We were a weary group, but a safe and warm one and in large part, because of the kindness of two truck drivers, whose names I've never known and who would not take anything in thanks.

And so last weekend was a time of renewed thanks and reviewed memories. Thank you God for strangers in the night and in snow storms.