

### Your turn News coverage needs to expand

To the Editor,

Many of the articles that are printed in *The Norton Telegram* are very good. I also realize that Norton is fortunate to have a newspaper that is printed and distributed more than once a week. How about at least one or two short stories in the Monday paper as well. (Ed note: Monday's paper — *The Telegram Extra* — does not fit the category of a NEWS paper, it is a total market coverage free distributed shopper, and postal regulations prohibit news content.)

It was good that the recent annual meeting of the United Northwest Federal Credit Union was covered because it is an important part of the area; however, the "huge" photo of the back of someone's head on the front page of the newspaper of January 22 with the caption that she was looking at a ballot, which was not even a "ballot," prompted me to express some opinions.

I feel the "local" newspaper, schools and churches as well as businesses, each have an important role in holding a community together; and, there is much news of the community that is never covered. Dick Boyd's sports articles are a very good thing; however, there are many activities of the school, which would include music, forensics, organizations in the school and many other things that I feel should be covered.

Concerts should be covered several days ahead and possibly more than once. I know some are listed in the "school calendar" which you print, but I feel that many of these activities deserve front page news or at least somewhere in the newspaper. They should be covered prior to the activity since many people would like to be aware of the activities happening and then coverage of the events themselves. This might even encourage businesses to advertise their products more in the newspaper if more activities of the community were included in the news of the paper, and not just "sponsor" photos of sports and other "special" tabloids.

I like sports and think they play an important part in many ways, but there are many students involved in many other activities that also need recognition.

Recently read in the *Phillipsburg Review* newspaper that people were getting on the editor for not covering a story in the community and the editor agreed that it should be the responsibility of the newspaper reporters and or editor to find the news not "people" or "teachers" having to remember to get the news to the newspaper, and I agree with that premise.

Many of the articles recently that I see in *The Norton Telegram* have headlines of other towns which are probably obtained on the internet and may have some interest to some people; however, "the community" stories, which I feel should include all of Norton County, should come first, then if there is "empty space" in the newspaper, maybe you could include those.

Too many of the articles in the newspaper are opinions and not news of local activities. Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion.

Sonya Montgomery,  
Norton and Almena

### Our Republic depends on loyalty

The early history of the Roman Republic was filled with the struggles between the wealthy patricians and the working plebeians. By controlling the Senate and the Counsels, the patricians were able to use the Roman government to their advantage. By excluding plebeians from office, by controlling the distribution of farmland, by enforcing severe laws against debtors, they kept plebeians in a state of class servitude.

Over a period of many years and after many bitter disputes, the plebeians gradually gained their rights. They often gained rights by refusing to work or to fight for Rome until their rights were recognized.

After a struggle, the plebeians were allowed to elect tribunes. Over time the tribunes acquired the power to veto laws that were unfair. Plebeians gained the right to appeal their cases to a public assembly. They also gained the right of plebiscite that allowed them to adopt laws by a vote of the people. The patricians had prevented the reduction of laws into writing so all matters would be subject to the interpretation of their magistrates. Finally, in 454 B.C., the patricians allowed the laws to be written down. These were written in the form of the Twelve Tables of Laws becoming the basis of all future laws, in effect the Constitution of the Roman Republic. Gradually, the divisions between the patrician and plebeian

### Citizen Duties Bob Strevey



disappeared.

As citizens, we should not allow allegiance to class, or party, or ethnic group, or religion to supercede our loyalty to the country. As the struggle between rich and poor grows more important, the gap between income groups widens. Democracy relies on a strong middle class to mitigate the struggle between extremes of wealth.

Citizens should be aware of those who advocate policies that create division. America should be open to people of different creeds, races and religions, but it should also expect all people to put a commitment to democracy and freedom first.

Just as the Roman plebeians went through a long struggle to achieve their rights, so Americans have gradually extended citizenship to many groups. Our great Republic still depends on the loyalty of its people and on their belief in this form of government.

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### Texas trip to see the kids went by too fast

Our whirlwind trip to Texas is about to come to an end. Hopefully, it won't be the end of us. We are at Adam and Kara's house and everyone is sick. It sounds like a terminal ward. Both my daughters, Halley and Kara, are coughing, sneezing, wheezing, blowing and sleeping. Kara's husband, Adam, and her daughter, Taylor, have avoided the plague, so far. And, I hope we do, too. We will start popping echinacea as soon as we get home.

-ob-

Our girls and their families in San Antonio were all fine. It took little Ani, the 18 month old granddaughter, about two seconds to warm up to us. She had not seen us for about nine months and

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



cast and rainy, until, of course, the day we left, when it was beautiful. It was so warm, we had to turn on the van's air conditioner. The weather in Dallas has been perfect, too.

-ob-

After church today (Sunday), we brought home Chinese carry-out for lunch. Had left-overs for supper, too. Played a game of 'Clue' with granddaughter Taylor and took a nap. Life is good.

-ob-

I could live 'on vacation.' However, the real world demands jobs, deadlines, and responsibilities.

So, today we make the trip home and resume our hectic lives. It's back to business as usual.

we were worried she might be frightened of us. But, as soon as we walked into the house, she was in her PaPa's arms. She is happy all the time and a real joy. The older granddaughters are young women now; the oldest will be a senior in high school next fall.

-ob-

The weather in San Antonio was over-

### Transportation issue a big challenge

This country became a global power because of its infrastructure and its ability to transport crops, livestock, automobiles and other goods fast and efficiently. Exporting our crops to other parts of the world will do us no good if this nation can't get the grain off the farm, out of the field and ultimately onto the barges and planes for shipment around the globe.

Today, the United States finds itself with major transportation challenges in the trucking industry. Some of these challenges have resulted from increasing emphasis on safety and regulation. Now, a state regulatory agency has over interpreted the law believing it has increasing and new power over farm transportation.

In Topeka, New Orleans and Washington, D.C., there is action underway aimed at maintaining the status quo when it comes to a farmer hauling his grain in Kansas. The goal is clarification of trucking laws and regulations while defining a clear distinction between a farmer and an over-the-road trucker.

At the heart of this issue is the definition of the initial leg of the transportation of a commodity from farm to market. When a farmer hauls his wheat, corn or milo from the harvest field to his county elevator or a terminal facility.

The standard operating procedure for years has been an exemption for agriculture from government regulations during this first leg of the journey. This initial

### Insight John Schlageck

step has been defined as intrastate commerce (within a state) and agricultural transportation has been free from most regulation.

Recently, the Kansas Corporation Commission announced its intention to regulate that first leg as interstate (between states) commerce under the theory that the grain on its way to the elevator will one day wind up in Missouri, New Jersey or China.

This interstate designation makes farmers subject to most federal trucking regulations — including U.S. Department of Transportation registration and a host of safety and record-keeping requirements. In addition to one more government regulatory burden, it will also mean additional out-of-pocket expenses farmers will incur in meeting the new regulation. It's an apples and oranges comparison.

"There's a huge difference between a farmer hauling his own grain down the road to his country elevator, as he's done for decades, and a trucking outfit hauling refrigerators across several states," Steve Baccus, a grain farmer from Ottawa County, who serves as president of Kansas Farm Bureau said. "For-profit trucking companies have the manpower to handle these chores. For the farmer, it's

more unnecessary paperwork and more headaches."

For the most part, Congress has agreed with that statement and written laws that separated farmers from over-the-road trucking outfits. In Topeka, Kansas Farm Bureau lobbyists have opened a dialogue with Sen. Les Donovan (Wichita) and Rep. Gary Hayzlett (Lakin) respective chairs of the Senate and House Transportation Committees. The goal is an eventual statutory solution.

"We need an overall strategy aimed at reviewing, clarifying and reforming the federal rules and regs that apply to farmers and the trucks we use to transport our own commodities," Baccus said.

There is nationwide support for keeping the status quo and ensuring this first leg as intrastate commerce and exempting agricultural transportation from most regulation. At its recent annual meeting in New Orleans, the Kansas delegation succeeded in moving this issue to the top of their national farm organization's priority list. Kansas agriculture, and agriculture across this nation, has its work cut out for it on this transportation issue. Farmers will rapidly lose their competitive edge if they are subjected to overzealous regulation.

(John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a farm in northwest Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

### Your political connection

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

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

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

### Wanted: Letters, names for 'Thumbs Up' column