

Let's hear it for our schools' cooks

I would be remiss if I didn't tip the hat today to the people who man the kitchens in our school districts. Here in Norton, specifically, more than 140,000 meals will have been prepared and served by the cooks by the time the 2007-08 school year ends this month. Daily menus and meals must meet strict federal and state nutritional guidelines, and the kitchens must meet exacting standards and cleanliness. The week of May 5-9 is Kansas School Food Service Employee Week.

Let's give a round of applause to the following cooks:

Eisenhower Elementary School
Ruby Cook, Marilyn Dicks, Jack McLallen, Kathy Richard, Barbara Smith
Norton Jr./Sr. High Schools
Mary Byler, Christine Corbin, Noah Hansen, Priscilla Kendall

I have been watching with fascination the work of the people putting together the park at the corner of South State and East Washington. I am anxious to see it when the final touchup takes place. I think you will like what you see. The debate that followed a fire that demolished the buildings on which the park is now taking shape, seemed to include the word "park" more than any other. I suppose all of you have driven by to watch the progress, and if you haven't, please do. And as we move further into spring and the color green begins to show through more and more, I have a hunch the group spearheading the park project would welcome some of the other green (\$). If you have some extra, it will be appreciated and will go to a worthy community wide cause.

A man decided to write a book about churches around the country. He started by flying to San Francisco and started working east from there. In San Francisco, he visited a very large church and after looking around began taking photographs and making notes.

He spotted a golden telephone on the vestibule wall and was intrigued with a sign that read, 'Calls: \$10,000 a minute.' Seeking out the pastor he asked about the phone and the sign. The pastor said the golden phone is, in fact, a direct line to heaven and if someone pays the price he or she can talk directly to God.

The man thanked the pastor and continued on his way. He visited churches in Seattle, Denver, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Memphis, Atlanta, Dallas, Oklahoma City, and everywhere he found more phones, with the same sign, and the same answer from each pastor.

Finally, he arrived in Kansas. Upon entering a church in the northwest part of the state, he saw the usual golden telephone. But this time the sign read, 'Calls: 35 cents.' Fascinated, he asked to talk to the pastor. "Reverend," he said, "I have been in cities all across the country and in each church I have found this golden telephone and have been told it is a direct line to Heaven and that I could talk to God, but in the other churches the cost was \$10,000 a minute. Your sign reads only 35 cents a call. Why so low?"

The pastor, smiling benignly, replied, "'Son, you're in Kansas now, home of the NCAA basketball Champion Jayhawks! You're in God's Country, so it's a local call.'"

Here's how I think things will unfold if (and that's a big if) Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton wins the nomination and ultimately the election in November. When she takes the oath of office as President of the United States, her U.S. Senate seat in New York goes vacant. But being president instead of a senator, she will have much more clout and she will twist arms until husband Bill is appointed to fill the seat she once held. Then the new Sen. Bill Clinton will twist all the arms he can, with the help of President Wife and he suddenly becomes Senate Majority Leader. Those two will control the White House and the U.S. Senate. Then in 2010, they will run daughter Chelsea for the U.S. House of Representatives. See where I'm going with this?

However, I think Hillary's dreams will remain only dreams. I really think we need to put the Bush and Clinton families on the shelf after 20 consecutive years in the White House — George H.W. Bush (4), Bill Clinton (8) and George W. Bush (8).

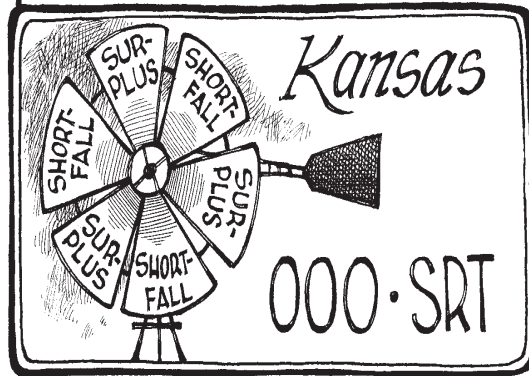
The church bulletin notes: "Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones."

Have a good evening! And at the place of worship of your choice this weekend, study your choir closely.

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



Rejected License Plate Designs



GOVERNOR SEBELIUS DESIGN



SUBMITTED BY A STATE REVENUE FORECASTING GROUP



PLANNED PARENTHOOD SUBMISSION

Questions cloud tax rebate checks

Dear Congress: I wanted this to be a thank you letter for the tax rebate check you approved earlier this year and will start sending out in May.

But I don't know anymore. I know the objective of the checks is to get people to spend money to supposedly get our economy back on track — whatever that means these days. I've already spent mine.

At the end of May, my family and I are flying to Georgia for a good friend's wedding. When he called last summer and asked me to be in his wedding, I was flattered. After I hung up I was also flattened after adding up how much it will cost to go to Georgia. As you probably guessed, I spent that entire rebate check in one place. Anyway, I did what you wanted to be done with those checks — spent.

I didn't want to call my friend and back out of the offer because of how much it will cost to go. Friendships shouldn't be founded on finances. That doesn't happen in D.C., does it?

Flying was the best option. We considered driving, but you know how gasoline prices have been.

Some have said the best way to jumpstart the economy is to force gasoline companies to sell their product at \$2 a gallon. That means more people will drive and spend money on other things. T. Boone Pickens said this country spends more per year on gasoline than the Iraq War, but you never hear about it. If the Middle East oil-producing countries get smart and start building oil refineries too, that means gasoline will go even higher and we're in bigger trouble. Can you do anything about that?

Why don't we force health-care providers and facilities to lower their prices so people are not spending money on those services? Make grocery store chains



John Van Nostrand

Line in the Dust

lower the price of food too. That will help. Where would those suggestions stop?

The best economic-engine I've heard is to lower taxes. What do you think?

I'm not convinced these checks will be the cure all. Some people will be able to pay on their mortgage, but depending upon where they live and the cost of their home, that check, like mine, will also be spent at one place at one time. The people who are still struggling with their sub-prime mortgage will still be in a world of hurt.

Then there are people who will continue their suspicious spending habits with the money. Gamblers, who already are in financial trouble, will have more to gamble. Las Vegas is already hurting because of the woes. Substance abusers will be able to buy and use more substance. I know you can't help what people will do with their checks.

I'll respect the people who do wonderful things with their rebate checks; save, invest wisely or help a worthy charity.

Some people have told me our current situation reminds them of Revelation in the Bible. The world gets into money trouble. A loaf of bread is worth a bag of gold. Those people have wondered if we are now taking proverbial baby steps to the end of the world.

And it's an election year. When we find the leader everybody likes, then the Revelation-reference will make even more sense. Remember, not everyone likes Obama, Clinton or McCain and so

on. Others laugh at the notion. I'm not laughing.

What prevents me from making this a thank you letter for the rebate, is what is behind it all. Kansas Rep. Jerry Moran said the funds for the checks came from China. That's not a big surprise since most of America is made in China and you don't seem to care. Over the years stockholders of American companies have forced the relocation of American jobs to low-pay China so they can get a bigger return on their investment. That is at the expense of American people who need the job to buy whatever product they make. Do those stockholders' profits fund your campaigns?

China's economy is much better than ours because we are driving their economic development. The Communist reign to determine the flow of money helps too.

Now, it seems like America is supporting slave-labor again. Yes, you read that right. We have just polished it compared to how it was done in the States in the 1800s. Back then, slaves were only given food and housing. In China, many factory workers are paid enough only to afford food and paltry housing. What's the difference?

Not every landowner then could afford slaves (it was a costly practice). But now, more companies are finding ways to have their product made and imported from China and create more slave-labor.

I know it sounds like I should decline that rebate check, but you wanted me to have it for the benefit of the country. I can respect that, I think.

But friendships shouldn't be founded on finances. That doesn't happen in D.C., does it?

— John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

Prayer in school against the law, so...

Bob Strevey's column in Tuesday's paper focused on the need to obey the laws including but not limited to traffic or giving alcohol to a minor. I agree with Bob, children are very impressionable and the example we set is critical. I would take the issue even further.

We live in a democracy so if a person disagrees with the law they have the right, and the responsibility, to work to repeal it. One case in point is prayer in school. It is against the law, plain and simple. When we lived in Alabama our children's school openly prayed Christian prayers at the beginning of each day and before every meal.

I have two problems with this. First and foremost, it is against the law, so what you are saying to children when you openly disobey existing laws is this: if you don't

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



like a law, you don't have to follow it. It doesn't apply to us.

The other issue is this. If you give the "freedom" to a school/teacher/etc. to pray you are opening the door for all types of beliefs to be promoted. Is this really what we want to do? As a for instance, would you want Warren Jeffs, the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints' leader, or one of his followers, to lead your child in a school prayer? He professes to be Christian so if

you are of the mindset Christianity is the only religion recognized in the U.S., he would fall within the realm of "reason." Be careful what you wish for.

We live in a country where there are other options to offering prayer in education, including parochial school and home schooling. Another alternative to this is a period of quiet time offered each morning.

Each child would have the option of prayer or whatever they might call it, but it would be available, accessible, cheap to implement and not subject to further scrutiny. The community has the option to do this already. No legislation is required, no expensive Supreme Court battles, just do it. Perhaps that's the problem. It doesn't require enough upset.

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Comments? Thumbs Up? Send to: tom.d@nwkansas.com, or 877-6908

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