

### As gas price climbs, driving habits change

So finally, when gasoline approaches \$4 a gallon, Americans are starting to change their habits. About time, some might say. Way too late, others will chorus. The truth is, people will do what people need to do. Driving is an economic decision.

Most Americans drive too much, but that's partly because fuel has been so cheap for so long.

Cheap, you say? At \$3 per gallon?

Well, yeah, gas might have been 21 cents a gallon in the 1960s, but by the mid-1970s it had jumped to \$1 or more. And still people kept on driving.

Oh, there was a gas crisis or two, and we had to wait in line for fuel.

People sought houses closer to town. People talked about saving energy.

But life was good. Times were easy. And we began to think of \$2 gas as affordable.

Then the world got smaller, China got bigger and gas hit \$3. Americans bought more big trucks, more huge "sports utility vehicles."

But as oil topped \$125 per barrel and fuel shot past \$4, Americans began paying attention. Something happened that all the Al Gore harangues, all the government programs, all the talk could not force: people started to look for ways to drive less and spend less.

The free market works like that. Guilt and knowledge will only drive us so far. But at some point, fuel becomes so expensive that people actually take note.

And we may be at that point, if the dealers' lots and manufacturers' yards full of big trucks are any sign, the time to size down and save has finally come upon us.

There is only so much oil in the world, after all. The more we use, the less that will be left.

It isn't American excess that's driving this market, though. It's a growing world at our doorstep that finally has the money and the economic muscle to use a lot more of the resources we've taken for granted: oil, coal, food, water, you name it.

China, India, the rest of Asia, are all clamoring for the things we in the West have.

And finally having the cash to buy them.

The price of oil isn't going down, not any time soon. It may dip and fluctuate, but the trend is going to be ever upward from here. The Third World has arrived, and it's hungry for what we have.

What does that mean for Americans?

We're going to have to think in terms of sustainable living. Smaller cars. New fuel sources.

The government won't have to make us do that. The cost of fuel will drive us.

Eventually, we'll have to stop burning oil. It'll be too valuable as a feed stock for chemicals, plastics and the like to just burn up, and like they say, they're not making any more.

We'll have to find ways to use wind, sun, hydrogen from the ocean and, yes, even dirty old coal and dangerous nuclear to fuel our daily lives. The good news is whatever we turn to will be cleaner and safer than any energy source we know today.

The bad news is all of it will cost more. We really do need to learn to live a simple life, with less excess and more purpose.

Ah, but that's preaching.

The reality of the market will enforce our decisions. Some days the choices won't be so pleasant, but life will go on.

And who knows, we might just like the results, once we get used to them.

— Steve Haynes

### Thumbs Up

To... **Joan Hale, Cherean, Ashley, Jared, Aaron, Josh and Bethany**, for the skits at the Staff Appreciation Dinner that made us laugh till our cheeks hurt. (brought in)

To... **the girls track team**, for placing first at the State Track Meet. We're very proud of you! (called in)

To... **Wilmer and Juan Severns**, on your 60th wedding anniversary. (by regular mail)

To... **John Burton Schrum**, on your 90th birthday! (e-mail)

To... **Henry J. Lohmeyer**, on your 95th birthday. (by regular mail)

To... **Kenneth and Flora Sanders**, on your 60th wedding anniversary. (called in)

(To submit a name or names, e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call either 877-6908 or 877-3361, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your input. - td)

## 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



#### Office hours:

8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Phone: (785) 877-3361

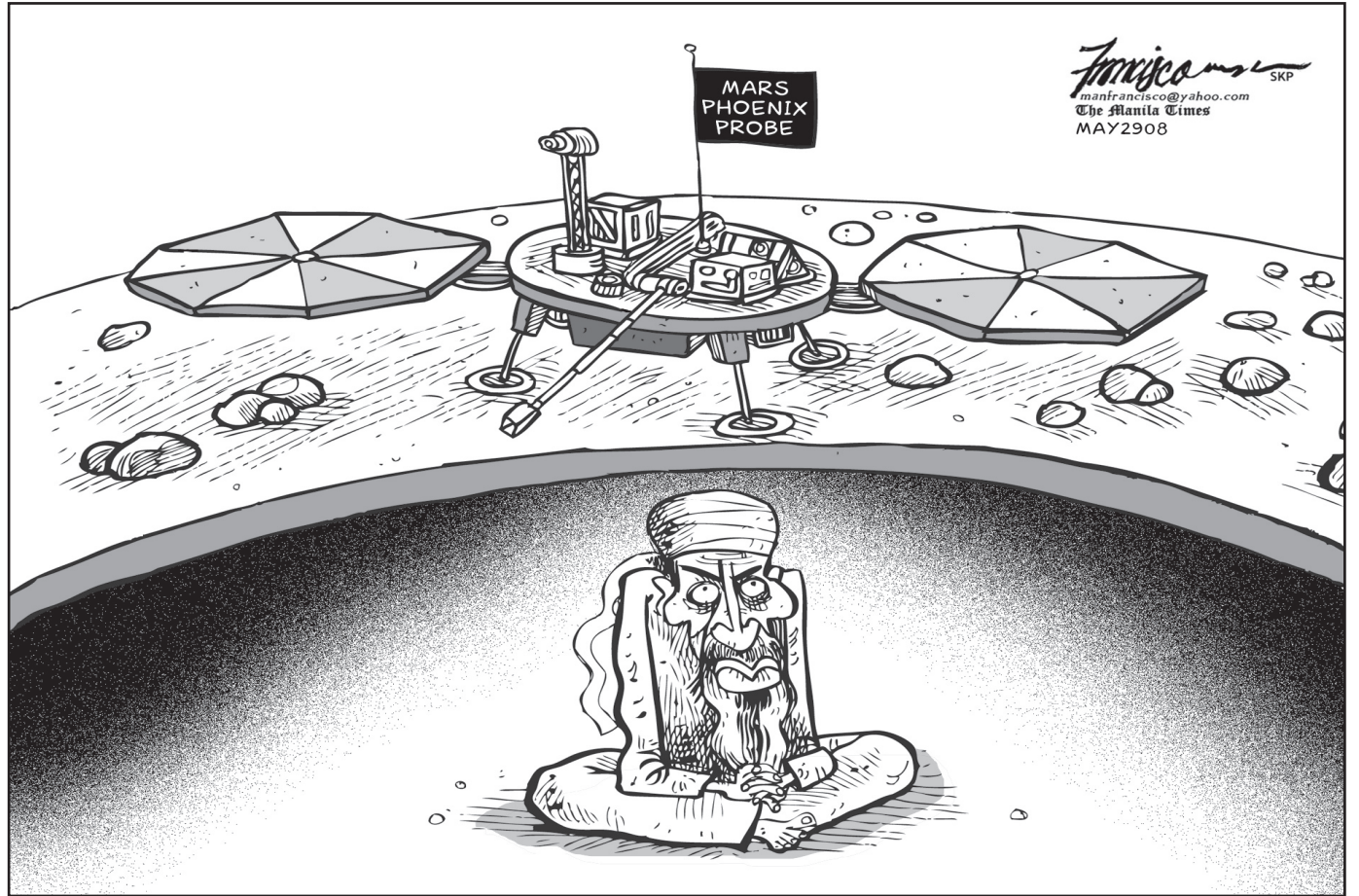
Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail:

nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

#### STAFF

Tom Dreiling ..... editor and publisher  
Christie Anderson ..... advertising director  
Dick Boyd ..... Blue Jay sports  
Carolyn Plotts ..... society editor  
Sherry Hickman ..... bookkeeping/circulation  
Vicki Henderson ..... computer production



### Unsigned note gives me chance to rant

It's rare I pay attention to anything unsigned, but something that arrived at my desk via the U.S. Postal Service on Wednesday caught my attention. Clipped to a typed note was the front-page teaser of the May 23 issue of *The Telegram*, introducing the new way we are presenting the Keith Sebelius Reservoir News. Granted, the teaser — something that promotes something else in the newspaper — didn't come out as good as I had hoped, but so be it. Apparently the person who didn't want us to know who she/he is, picked out the most negative thing he/she could find on page 1 and then used that to offer criticism. I wonder if she/he noticed the two large colored photographs on the front page also. They came out exceptionally well and were cause for some very nice comments. But naturally the ghost writer wouldn't have mentioned that because those were positives.

Anyhow, the attached note to the teaser reads: "This color printing is not worth bragging about. Subscribers would rather be able to read the print and have local Norton stories, not filler from all your other papers. Spend the money on reporters, not color!!!"

Well, unsigned note writer, you fumbled the ball on your first carry because the first name of the person you addressed the note to doesn't exist at this newspaper or any of our newspapers. You must first familiarize yourself with the personnel and then get it right when you address your correspondence.

Secondly, we try very hard to get the stories of Norton in the hands of Norton

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



people. Apparently you missed reading Mary Kay Woodyard's column (May 2 edition), headlined, "What does our paper say about our town?" You need to read it and then read it again. If you don't have that issue, I will be more than happy to send you a complimentary copy.

And third, about those stories from other towns in our area, you might be surprised at the number of people who live in Norton came from some of those other towns in our area. They tell us they enjoy reading about what's going on in their "old home town." They call it a "bonus."

So you see, person hiding behind a tree — hrm, that rhymes — you picked out one thing that disturbed you and managed to turn it into a general criticism of this newspaper. You have that right and I support you in that cause. But you certainly don't have any credibility. You see, at some point in our lives, we all grow up, we mature, we take responsibility. We don't hide and toss darts in the dark. I pray that someday you, too, get to enjoy that kind of life.

Thanks for your note.

-td-

Bob Barr. You remember him. He

served as a Republican United States Congressman from Georgia's 7th District from 1995-2003. He has resurfaced. Last weekend he was nominated as the presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party. The party held its annual convention in Denver. It was carried live on C-SPAN so I watched as much as my time would allow. There were some delegates that were harshly opposed to his nomination. They said he hadn't been a libertarian long enough to know what it's all about. He's been a libertarian since 2006. But for the most part, the party needed someone with name recognition. Barr fits the bill nicely.

He attained national prominence in the U.S. House or Representatives as one of the leaders of the impeachment of former President William Jefferson Clinton. He was regarded as one of the most conservative members of Congress. Redistricting killed his re-election bid.

His running mate is Wayne Allyn Root, an outspoken critic of everyone not a libertarian.

The pundits — ah yes, they pounced on this thing quickly — seem to think Barr will siphon votes away from Sen. John McCain, because, they say, some conservatives still aren't sold on the Arizona Senator. I certainly don't see that happening. Of course I am blind to a lot of stuff, especially politics, so my 2 cents worth isn't worth 2 cents.

-td-

Have a good evening! And when you arrive at the church of your choice this weekend, rejoice and be glad pundits

### Really, will this matter in five years?

Internet wisdom for the day, "Before giving into panic in any given situation, ask yourself: "Will this matter in five years?" No sense dwelling on that too much. If I did, my career as your columnist would be over.

I realize most of what I write about could be construed as petty complaining! My husband seems to think everything I write about him falls into that category.

So I'm not going to tell you about the bad stuff that happened Memorial Day weekend. About how the basement flooded, or the window that leaked, or the hay bales floating in a lake of water, or the bat in the guest room (bet that guest doesn't come back for awhile!)

I'll put a smile on my face and tell you how wonderful the rains we have been having are. How nice it was we had a guest (my sister Sue). How grateful we are that the sun did shine on Saturday. That Elizabeth came over and mowed!

Let's see what else.

My sister and I decorated graves. She brought peonies from Wichita. Usually they are all bloomed out long before Memorial Day. Spring has been slow everywhere, it seems. She brought me some trees and flowers, she even felt sorry enough for me and my poor crippled knees that she offered to plant them for me.

### Back Home Nancy Hagman



We made homemade ice cream on Monday.

I had a long phone visit with my friend in Lawrence!

Daughter Kate celebrated another birthday, just not with us. She hosted a party in her backyard and on her screen porch. The one with the new roof her Daddy put on last fall. The one which is now full of holes from a hail storm. (I'm not complaining, just reporting what happened!) She will be coming up soon to help with some of the summer work. That really puts a smile on my face, less tractor time for Nancy!

Patricia made it safely to Iowa for her summer internship. She did spend a few hours in a storm shelter Sunday night (rotten weather is sort of becoming a theme here isn't it!) We went to the hubby's 40 year class reunion. One of his classmates looked over the assembled gathering and observed that she recognized a lot of people, she just couldn't figure out why

all her classmates' parents came!

We also attended the Kensington Alumni banquet. Best line at the banquet came from Pat Clark, class of '74. I think. Since no one else in her class was there, she decided to clear something up, no matter what the yearbook might have reported she was both Homecoming Queen and Valedictorian her senior year.

This is the last year there will be a Gold-bug graduating class. Next year it will be Thunder Ridge Longhorns because of the consolidation of West Smith County and Eastern Heights.

One of my favorite clients at the Wellness Center muses that it is no wonder we can't have world peace, we almost had blood over a school consolidation!

If a lot of what people have worried about during this process needs to be given the five year test. And if they are thinking it will still matter, they don't have much of a life! Life always changes. You can't go back. And there is no sense borrowing trouble from yesterday or tomorrow.

There's your internet wisdom and wisdom from Nancy for the week. And just for the record, here are a couple of things they got wrong in my yearbook: I too was Valedictorian and Prom Queen! Okay, maybe not but I was Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow!

## OpinionLines: (785) 877-6908, 3361