

My youthful summer days far from boring

When you stop to think about all the possibilities today's youngsters have to keep themselves occupied over summer vacation, do you ever look back upon your youthful summer days as maybe being somewhat boring? I was giving that some thought a while back and as I recounted my days growing up, it really wasn't boring. We played baseball; went swimming; bummed around with buddies; fished in Big Creek that follows a path through Fort Hays State University, and occasionally sneaked a smoke because you could count on one of the gang bringing a cigarette from home and we would light it up and all take a puff and gag and throw up and say we'll never do that again (but we would); watched the semi-pro Hays Larks baseball team; spent time in the park in the south part of the town, where, incidentally, a band shell was used to hold summer concerts on a near weekly basis; slept out under the stars in our front yards; and visited the Heap 'Em Up ice cream parlor as often as Dad's change would allow. We never took a vacation as they do now because back then they didn't have vans like now and the family car wouldn't hold 9 kids and Mom and Dad. (With 9 kids who could afford a vacation?) And then, just like that, we were back in school — which always started after Labor Day.

Nothing boring about all of that!

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Yes, Wednesday evening was spooky. We were in the direct path of something that could have wrecked our community. When the sirens blew warning us of a possible tornado, and our phones were ringing to further emphasize that fact, Norton became a ghost town.

It was eerie.

The clouds continued their southeasterly path across the Nebraska-Kansas line, and a look at the radar on the computer left no question as to the destination. Fingers were crossed, and it's a sure bet prayers were offered. As the winds increased and the rains intensified, the grain elevators, always apparent on Norton's skyline, weren't visible.

The clouds became even bolder looking as they began moving across the city. "Please don't spin your anger now," was a thought going through the minds of many. Those minutes seemed like hours. Basements were the gathering places for those who have them, others huddled — as experts tell us — in the innermost closeted areas of their homes, their buildings, or wherever they were at the time. Just days earlier, this newspaper carried a page of tips for dealing .

It didn't materialize here.

But it should have scared us all enough to pay even closer attention when the guys and gals on television warn us of the danger.

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With all the rain we have been getting, the lawns are certainly looking healthy. So are the flower beds. And trees. And Bushes (not the White House variety). While walking the other evening, I couldn't help but notice the colorful flowers framing the parking area just across the street south of where the former Kowpoke Supply was located. It looks great!

There are other areas that also deserve applause, but I'll let you discover those as you take your daily walk, and then you can tell me about them so I can mention them in this space.

If you aren't a walker and are able to do so, I would strongly encourage you to make that part of your day. They say walking ranks right up there as one of the things that keeps you healthy. And it's free!

I continue to find the parking lot at the high school/junior high as the perfect place to walk after dark. It is well lit and you need not worry about traffic as you must do when you navigate the streets. A "Walking Norton is a Healthy Norton!"

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I keep marveling at what is transpiring at the corner of South State-East Washington. I'm talking about the downtown park. It is really taking shape and it will be one of the prime downtown attractions. I can see, when it is completed, as a place where local talent could entertain during the noon hour. In another community where I served as publisher, the newspaper there and the Chamber of Commerce joined forces to do just that at the city park each Tuesday noon during the summer months. It had grown to be one of the musts as townspeople brought their lunch, lawn chairs and enjoyed the various talents. Of course the options are endless for our little park.

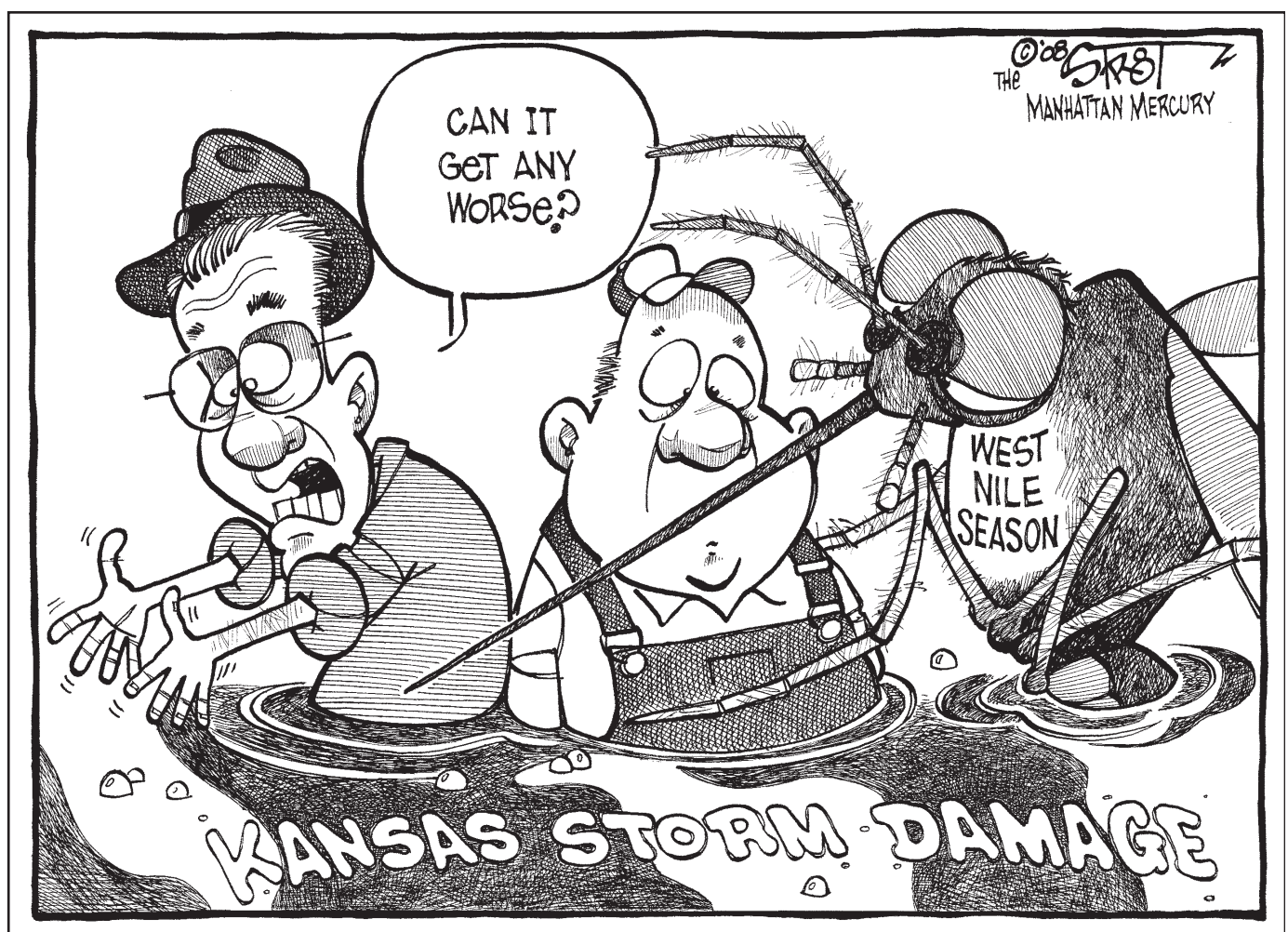
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I have found a way to add extra enjoyment to my summer. And I offer it as advice for you to perhaps try: Turn off the politics until after the Democrats and Republicans hold their conventions in late August and early September!! I have just about abandoned FOX, MSNBC and CNN. I have found many channels that offer much more in a satisfying way. Like the arts, movies, sports, game shows, ways to improve your homes, country concerts — the variety is endless. If you are television crazy, do this. You'll be glad you did. I am.

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Have a good evening! And even though it's summer, it's not a time to take a break from attending the church of your choice.

Good Evening Norton
Tom Dreiling



We have reason to feel optimistic

More frequently than not, conferences and trainings fulfill a requirement and allow for some time with friends from other agencies, but once in a while you are treated to a speaker who teaches and inspires you. Such was the case for me when attending the Kansas Mentors Conference in Wichita last week.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Norton County has received two grants from Kansas Mentors and thus we were required to attend this conference. All sessions were good, but one speaker reflected on the differences in the generations. He provided insight and words totally unknown, "millennials" was a new one to me. Danny Holland speaks across the nation and trains individuals who work with youth. His expertise is in youth culture, media influence, teen violence and drug use. He holds a position as instructor to law enforcement officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Millennials are those individuals who were born after 1985. Their influence is being felt now as they enter the job market

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



and begin their own families. They have been impacted by events such as 9/11 and other conflicts.

Northwestern Mutual Financial Network did a study to evaluate what is important to this group. They are the "we" generation as opposed to the X-ers "me" generation. Danny Holland stated they are interested in their friendships and relationships. They call upon friends to fulfill their needs, not just personally, but professionally as well. He gave an account of a young intern they hired for the summer. They gave him five projects with the expectation it would take him until the end of September to complete them. He turned them in last week. How? He called upon friends with knowledge

of the individual areas. Each completed their segment and then it was turned in as a whole. Millennials' emphasis rests not upon material wealth, but on relationships and the ability to make the world a better place.

Most millennials, according to Mr. Holland, put their emphasis on building these relationships, rather than building material wealth. This group of approximately 70 million is the second largest generation group. They view the world more globally than nationally.

The information I received at the conference provided another insight for me. The reason Barack Obama has the youth of America in his corner. He speaks their language, one of diplomacy and fairness. I don't know Mr. Holland's political views, but I know his speech revealed to me the promise of who we may become.

Perhaps it was best said in the following way by Erika Luckow, director of The Millennium Generation Studies, "They are a well balanced mixture of heart and mind." Perhaps we have reason to feel optimistic.

Sometimes we people do get it right

Weather events continue to make headlines as the 2008 year goes on. Daughter Patricia is in Des Moines. The flooding there has been very limited. Des Moines beefed up their levee system after the floods in 1993. The improvements are credited for saving the town from the devastating flooding seen elsewhere in Iowa this year.

There's some good news. For all the things we fail to anticipate and the tragedies that are preventable, here is at least one thing we poor humans did right.

I struggle with the "blame game" we play after things happen. An e-mail I got after a near miss of hail in the area baffled me. The writer praised God for sparing us. Instead of adding an "Amen," I found myself wondering; what are the prayers of those who were not so fortunate? It's good to be thankful but somehow this seems a little smug.

Kate's friend Kelly's parents lost their home in the Manhattan tornado June 11. Kelly (who lives in Florida) was in Kansas helping prepare for a reception celebrating her sister's wedding earlier in the spring. The reception was to be held at the parents' house, June 14.

Kate had been to Manhattan the day before to see Kelly and meet her baby daughter for the first time. She related to me the do-to lists on the counter, the busy mother rushing here and there. They were

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



baking cakes, mowing the yard.

What would your thoughts be when you walk out of a storm shelter and everything is gone?

Puts things in perspective doesn't it? How many times do we think: if I just have this or that, I'll be happy. We buy an insurance policy and think we are protected. We build a levee and believe we are safe. See someone else's life and say, "Thank God that's not me!"

Kate asked her friends, "What can we do?" The answer was nothing. There were lots of people there to help.

It's a sad commentary but if we had gone to Manhattan, we could not have gotten into the area anyway. There were looters already, you see. These things sometimes bring out the worst in people.

Elizabeth spent the week as a camp counselor at Koda'ly music camp for 9-14 year olds at Wichita State University.

I wish I could hear the concert, I told her. "Oh, you can," she replied. "WSUIR online radio will carry it live." So Fri-

day the 13th I listened. What beautiful music.

How do you choose a favorite? A poem by Emily Dickenson set to music spoke to me. The conductor explained that the choir discussed the meaning of this poem. Morning is a metaphor for hope, they decided.

Here it is, twelve lines of Emily Dickenson.

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like water-lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!
Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies!

How I admire the teachers, choir directors, firemen, police, rescue workers etc., of the world. How thankful I am for those who assist others in time of need, who help 9-14 year olds search for hope, the poets and the preachers who inspire us.

Sometimes we poor humans, with help from God, we do get it right!

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Thumbs Up

To... **First Security Bank**, for the big improvement to the corner of U.S. 36 and Second Street. (by telephone)

To... **Gail Boller**, for your recent letter to the editor. (by telephone)

To... **Lisa Henderson**, sorry you won't be back coaching tennis. It was fun. (from some former players/regular mail)

To... **local officials**, for staying on top of things during the tornado warning. (by telephone)

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