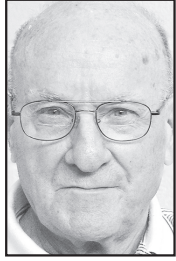


What a good way to start the day!

What makes my day? The litany is long. But I must say compliments about the newspaper score right up there at the top. In this business, probably more than any other, the reviews as to our impact are mixed. However, this week, accompanying a check for a subscription renewal from a reader in Hays, was this note:

Good Evening Norton
Tom Dreiling



The Norton Telegram
The Best in the West and elsewhere.
I sure do enjoy your newspaper. Keep up the good work.
Beats the Hays Daily!
Donna Hager
A sincere thanks for those kind words.

-td-

I haven't talked about politics in quite awhile. So, while I'm on a roll, I'll keep it up! The three channels I used to watch for politics — FOX, CNN and MSNBC — are still there, but I don't stop long enough to learn what they are spitting forth. I would assume there is still the fair and balanced, the balanced, the fair, the not-so-fair, the not-so-balanced, the ridiculous. Until the two parties hold their conventions in late August and early September, I will remain silent. After that, I will listen closely to what Sen. John McCain, Sen. Barack Obama, Ralph Nader and Bob Barr are babbling about. The latter two are with the (I think) Green Party and Libertarian Party, respectively. What impact they will have on the November election remains to be seen, but I doubt they will even be a blimp on the radar screen.

-td-

I was reading something the other day about a guy showing up in San Francisco to get a marriage license to marry himself. As you know the California Supreme Court ruled the state's ban on same sex marriage was unconstitutional and since then the flood gates opened. Back to the guy who showed up for a license to marry himself. When asked how he came up with that, he said, "My psychiatrist told me I had a dual personality and ever since I've been interested in the other guy."

-td-

Elsewhere on this page appears a letter from Karla Reed, the chamber of commerce's executive director. After you have read the letter, please dig into your pockets and toss the change, or folded money, into the fireworks display fund. When you do this, you then become directly involved in the program on July 4th at Prairie Dog State Park. Please donate so northwest Kansas' top fireworks show can continue to be a part of our lives. Thanks!

-td-

Unity, New Hampshire. That's the place where Sen. Hillary Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama were supposed to appear together yesterday as Mrs. Clinton began her campaign in support of Mr. Obama. Unity, New Hampshire. New Hampshire. Give that name some thought, New Hampshire. The reason I mention New Hampshire so often, is because the newscaster on one of the television networks the other evening reasoned there was no better place for Sen. Clinton to kick off her campaign in support of Sen. Obama than in the nation's heartland. New Hampshire, the nation's heartland? Where on the map does that then place Kansas? I sometimes think the people who do network news simply read from the teleprompter what flows across with little thought as to how stupid they sound. Pretty doesn't always spell intelligence.

-td-

Well, when Monday ends, we can toss June 2008 out the window. Look back over your years and see just how many Junes you've lived through. Astonishing, isn't it? Just think what you would have if your parents had bought a calendar on the day you were born and each year thereafter added another calendar. How many days would you have tallied so far? Mine would be somewhere in the mid 26,000 range. Seems like a lot, but where has the time gone? They say life is no longer than the snap of the finger. They're right!

-td-

Did Adam and Eve celebrate birthdays?

-td-

Have a good evening! And remember to take part in the weekly celebration at the house of worship of your choice.

Thumbs Up

To... Joan Bolt, for all of her time spent working with the kids for the rec center basketball clinic/camp this entire month of June. Thanks so much, you do such a wonderful job. (e-mail)

To... all those GED graduates at the Norton Correctional Facility. Nice. (e-mail)

To... Trevor Martin, the 'white coat' and you go together very well. Good luck the rest of the way. (by telephone)

To... Norton High's cheerleaders, good luck with your Kid's Cheer Camp. (e-mail)

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

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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

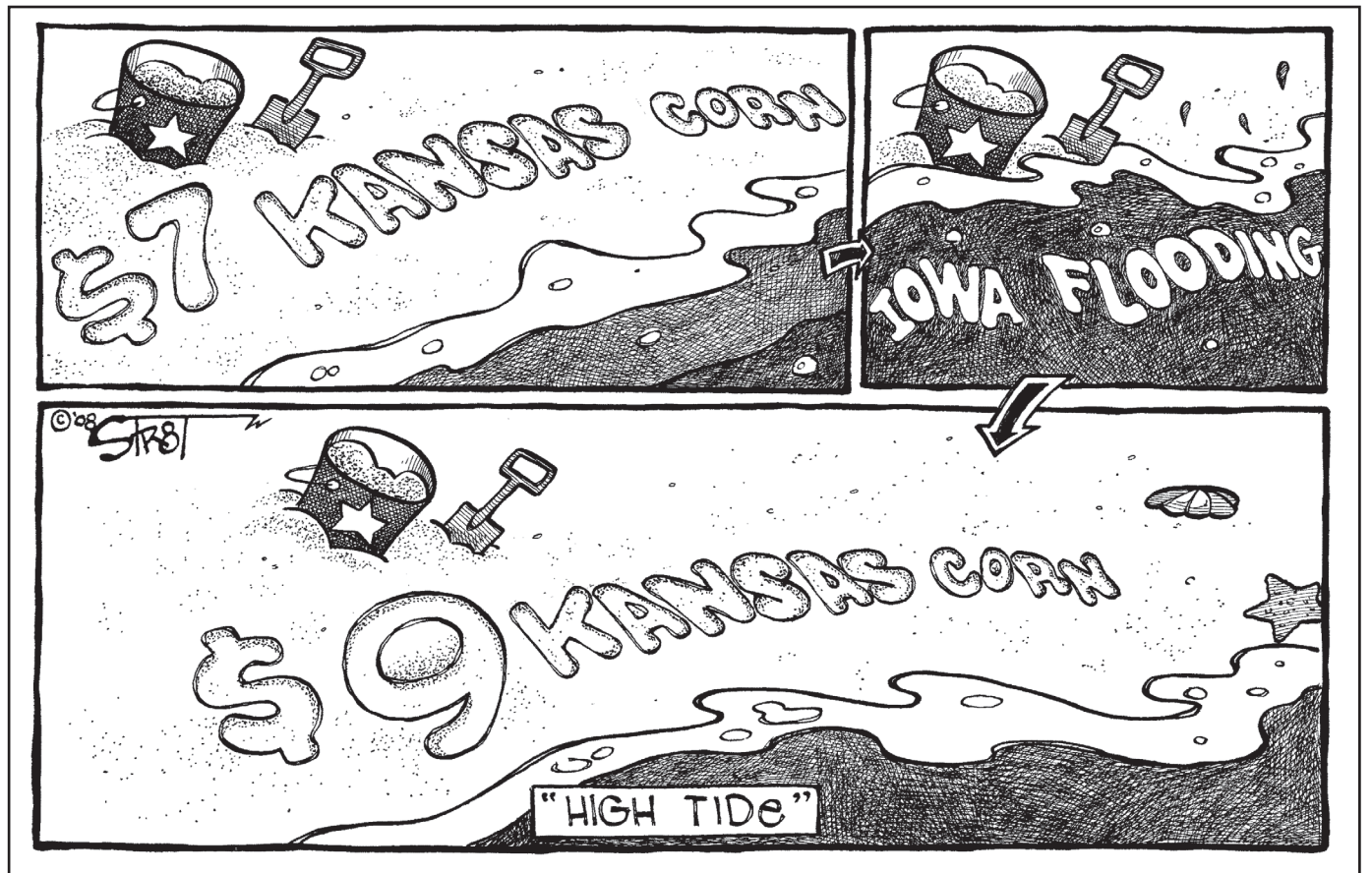
Christie Anderson advertising director

Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports

Carolyn Plotts society editor

Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation

Vicki Henderson computer production



Our founders knew value of free speech

Why should freedom of speech and of the press be allowed? Why should a government which is doing what it believes to be right allow itself to be criticized? It should not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal things than guns. Why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinion calculated to embarrass the government?

Practical reality, or antidemocratic thinking at its worst?

Government leaders sometimes think they know what is best for us. They think it would be easier to "get things done" if they could work behind closed doors.

To this way of thinking, allowing the public or its representatives, the press, to watch the government process is just a waste of time.

Behind closed doors, that's how government used to operate in America, despite our two-century pretension to democratic ideals.

Political parties chose candidates nominated in smoke-filled rooms. Party bosses made the decisions, sometimes voting uncommitted slates, making deals for ambassadorships, cabinet seats and pork-barrel projects.

City councils and state legislatures often went behind closed doors. Ward healers delivered the vote in city precincts, and candidates did as they were

On the Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



them what's going on. And it's hard to get a story right when decisions aren't made in the open.

The author of those words above?

V.I. Lenin, founder of the Soviet state.

Lenin did not start out to build a soulless government. He thought he was doing the right thing for "the people." He'd allow no one to get in his way.

One of our founders, Thomas Jefferson, had a different view. He believed a free press provided the only way for a large population to know the truth.

"If I had to choose between a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I would choose newspapers without a government," Jefferson wrote.

His pen helped shape the First Amendment, still the greatest statement of freedom in our history. Its spare language says more than many books. Its influence is mighty.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Today, no doubt, it would take a couple dozen pages to say all that.

Lucky we are to live in the shadow of Jefferson, and not of Lenin.

Your turn

Remember, the fireworks display doesn't just happen

To the Editor,

The Fourth of July is fast approaching, and the Chamber of Commerce's annual fireworks display, funded solely through donations, is in need of your help. I'm sure many of you will say, "I can't afford to give enough to make a difference." Any donation, large or small, is needed and is greatly appreciated.

Please look through your spare change or open your wallet for this great family fun night.

Donation cans are located at Jambo-

norton Shop & Save, Garden Gate Florals, Etc., Price Fireworks, Norton Archery Club fireworks stand, Pamida and Russ' Jewelry, or they can be mailed to or dropped off at the Chamber office, 104 South State, Norton.

With the lower price on a one-day park entrance permit at \$4.20 per vehicle, it will enable your family to enjoy the entire event. Each year the ground and water displays increase in number and pizzazz.

If you have not been to our fireworks

display, please consider doing so this year. It's really quite a spectacular fireworks extravaganza and the events before make it an evening to enjoy.

Come out to Prairie Dog State Park on Friday, July 4th and enjoy free watermelon, music and visit with neighbors and friends.

Don't let this family fun activity become a thing of the past.

Karla Reed

Executive Director

Norton Area Chamber of Commerce

Area Red Cross in need of your financial assistance

To the Editor,

Due to the recent severe storms and house fires occurring in May and June, the Phillips County Red Cross has assisted several families and individuals within our jurisdiction with their losses by providing them with assistance for shelter, food, clothing and other immediate needs.

This assistance is free and is provided only by the generous donations of time and money from the public. Although some nonprofit organizations do, the Phillips County Red Cross does not

and never has received reimbursements from FEMA, or any other government agency.

Only three branch offices exist in northwest Kansas to provide services for 13 counties. Phillips County Red Cross provides services for Phillips, Rooks, Graham, Norton and Decatur counties. The other branches have assigned counties as well.

To continue these services, Phillips County Red Cross is in need of your help. You can help with these and any future disaster needs by sending your tax deduct-

ible donation to the Phillips County Red Cross, PO Box 452, Phillipsburg, Kan. 67661. Please make your check out to the "Phillips County Red Cross" and note in the memo "local disaster fund."

Your donations will help assure that disaster services will be available immediately for everyone within the jurisdiction of the Phillips County Red Cross.

Thank you so much for your past and continuing support.

Diana Hanchett

Branch Manager

Phillips County Red Cross

Your political connection

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

★ 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

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