

Here's an easy-to-make cherry pie

“Can she make a cherry pie, Billy Boy, Billy Boy.” Yep, but she cheats just a little. When the woman from the church called, I surprised her by answering the phone. She was so used to leaving messages, she couldn't believe it was me, not the answering machine.

“Can you provide two pies for the church supper on Saturday,” she stammered.

“Sure,” I said.

It was a rare week. I was going to be in town all seven days. And besides that, I like to cook.

Really, I enjoy cooking. I take two cooking magazines and have about a thousand cookbooks. Still, I had been gone a lot, and there were lots of things to catch up on. There were just more projects than time.

Now there was a time, back when my children were young, that I made apple pies all the time. Well, not all the time, but more often than just Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We'd go out and buy a bushel of apples in the fall and I would sit around at night, peeling and dicing them. When I had six cups

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



ready, I would mix the apples with the sugar and spices, put the pie filling in a plastic bag, which I put in a loaf pan, and freeze the whole mess. By winter, I'd have a stack of apple pie bricks just waiting for crusts.

Then when I got the urge or we had company, I'd get out “The Joy of Cooking” and make a double crust recipe. One crust was for the bottom and I'd slice the second into a lattice for the top. The excess dough got sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon for the kids to eat as pie-crust cookies. The shapes were funny, but they didn't seem to mind.

You'd think I would have more time now that the kids are grown but, it just doesn't seem to work that way. That's why I sneaked into the grocery Friday and picked up some pre-made pie dough and

four cans of cherry-pie filling.

The best way to make a pie look homemade is to make sure there are imperfections. It can't be a perfect balance of fruit and crust. It can't be perfectly browned on all sides. The rim of the crust can't have evenly spaced little indentations.

And my two pies looked homemade. The lattices were crooked and I had to piece parts of the rims together. As they baked, the edges started getting done too soon, so I had to haul them out of the oven and wrap them in foil. (That was a fun trick at 425 degrees.)

Still, my almost homemade pies came out pretty well and they were a hit at the church supper. I noticed that the pieces didn't exit the pie pans well, so they looked even more homemade than ever after they were placed on little paper plates in heaps of crust and cherries. Maybe I should have made them a little sooner and let them cool instead of moving them from oven to car to church basement in the span of 15 minutes.

Oh well, the neighbors have a cherry tree. Maybe next time... Nah. It's not gonna happen.

Tuesday's story provides answers

As was noted in Tuesday's Telegram, 17 inmates from the Norton Correctional Facility received their diplomas. The program provided some with General Equivalency Diplomas (GED) and others with diplomas in house building construction. Now some may be asking what does this have to do with me? Everything. The corrections system affects us all, both from a safety standpoint and from a financial one.

Kansas, in recent years, has actually reversed the national trend and has a declining prison population.

In the last few years, the number of inmates has decreased by over 500 individuals, according to Scott Rothchild, a reporter for the Journal World.*

This is in contrast to a rising trend nationally. At a cost annually of \$21,381 per inmate (2001)*, it has saved the state in the cost of incarceration, to say nothing of

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



not having to build new facilities. A new facility is about \$80 million dollars.

Our suspicious nature questions if fewer inmates means fewer convictions and easier sentences, but the answer seems to be “no”. Lawmakers have actually been “beefing up sentences”.**

So why the change? One reason is exactly what we saw in Tuesday's paper, offering the educational opportunities to inmates. The seventeen inmates receiving their GED have improved their chances of a productive life.

Kansas Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz said, “There is nothing magic about what Kan-

sas has accomplished, but it takes a lot of work and training to direct intense supervision, education opportunities and substance abuse treatment to the right people.”

The success of the program is evident in the numbers and in the hope it gives to inmates.

Once we begin to view the prison population as rehabilitation rather than punishment we have a chance to improve society. I tend to believe we can learn much about all relationships from child development studies, and we know from such research children respond better to positives than negatives.

Promoting an inmate's potential seems to me to be the best investment in time and money we can make.

*http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2008/mar/10/population_states_prisons_decline/?print

**<http://www.nicic.org/Features/StateStats/?State=KS#6> (mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net)

You might have a check waiting

Someone in your family just may be overlooking an opportunity to pocket a few hundred dollars.

That's the message the IRS is trying to get to those potential recipients.

The Internal Revenue Service this week announced a new summer campaign to reach retirees and disabled veterans who qualify for the economic stimulus payment but have not filed to claim it.

New statistics released indicate about 74 percent in this group are accounted for in the stimulus payments currently being sent, leaving about 5.2 million potential recipients remaining to receive a stimulus check.

For all taxpayers, the IRS has issued 76.5 million payments worth \$63.8 billion based on 2007 tax returns processed so far.

The agency expects to issue 124 million payments to Americans by year's end.

Eligible individuals are receiving up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples filing joint returns) plus \$300 for eligible children younger than 17.

“The IRS has delivered. Only 70 days after the legislation became law, the IRS started putting

IRS Alert

the money in the hands of tens of millions of Americans.

“This summer, we will go the extra mile to help the remaining retirees and disabled veterans get their payments,” said Doug Shulman, IRS Commissioner.

A special stimulus category includes recipients of certain benefits from Social Security and Veterans Affairs who do not normally have a requirement to file a tax return.

However, these individuals must file a tax return before Oct. 15 this year to receive their economic stimulus payments.

The IRS has accounted for 74 percent of Social Security and Veterans Affairs beneficiaries out of about 20 million initially identified as being potential stimulus recipients.

All but 5.2 million of those have been accounted for as either having filed a return, having filed a joint return, or as not being eligible for a stimulus payment (for example, they were claimed as a

dependent on another's return).

Most people only need to file a tax return as they normally do. The IRS will calculate eligibility and the payment amount.

However, many retirees and veterans do not normally file a tax return because their benefits are not taxable.

This year, they must file in order to receive an economic stimulus payment.

Shulman also stressed to retirees that receiving the stimulus payment should have no impact on other federal benefits currently being received.

The stimulus payment is not taxable. Absent any other filing requirements, filing a tax return to receive a stimulus payment does not mean that retirees will have to start filing tax returns again.

The IRS has identified 5.2 million retirees and veterans' beneficiaries who potentially are eligible for the stimulus payments.

Later this summer, the agency will send them a special letter that explains stimulus payment eligibility and how to claim it.

The letter will include a sample tax form and an actual tax form that people can complete and mail to the IRS.

Leadership: This is the sixth class

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The new class will be the 6th to have gone through the program. Information provided The Telegram says the driving force behind Leadership Norton County has been the Economic Development Program Development Committee of the Norton County Extension Council.

Keith VanSkiel, Norton County Extension Director, is high in praise of the program and the benefits it offers participants and their

communities. “Our rural areas are facing many challenges — population decline, tax base erosion, school financing issues, and medical care funding — among others,” he said.

“Leadership Norton County can play a vital role in identifying, training and motivating potential community leaders from throughout Norton County.”

Anyone seeking more information about Leadership Norton County may contact Mr. VanSkiel

at 877-5755. For the public's convenience, Leadership Norton County brochures and nomination forms are available at the following locations: Norton County Extension Office, Norton Area Chamber of Commerce, Almena State Bank, Almena and Norton, The Bank, Norton and Norcatur, First State Bank, Norton, First Security Bank, Lenora and Norton, Lenora City Office, Norton City Office, Rural Telephone, Lenora, and Nex-Tech, Norton.

Bill: qualifications questioned

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anything for writing a grant, County Clerk Robert Wyatt said, only for administering it.

“You were doing a CDBG grant without being qualified.” Mr. Miller said

Ms. Brown disagreed. “We were qualified to write it, to put all those papers in there,” she said, adding that she and her associates had worked day and night for three months on the project.

“We were told that all the work that had gone in up to that period was for naught because Blue Sky wasn't certified to do this; that Northwest Kansas Planning was the only ones certified to submit it.” Mr. Miller said.

The commissioners said that they didn't feel they should pay both Blue Sky and Northwest Planning for the grant. That would be paying twice for the same thing they said and referred Ms. Brown to County Councilor Doug Sebelius.

Ms. Brown said that Blue Sky has written grants for lots of counties and has never had a problem with any of the others. She thought that the county's only question

was the \$500 bill from Northwest Planning.

Mr. Sebelius noted that the county's contract with Blue Sky states that the grant writing firm will write the proposal and submit it.

“How do you feel?” Mr. Sebelius asked Ms. Brown. “Did you do everything your responsibilities call for in this situation?”

“I feel you hired us for our services and we provided the grant,” Ms. Brown replied.

The commissioners disagreed with her.

“We as a board didn't understand that you couldn't administer,” Mr. Miller said. “That you couldn't submit it.”

“I don't think you fulfilled the contract,” Mr. Lang said.

Ms. Brown disagreed.

“You could have gone to Northwest Kansas Planning and they could have done everything for you but you came to us,” Ms. Brown replied.

Mr. Sebelius again questioned Ms. Brown.

“Did you fulfill your contract?”

“I think we did,” she replied, noting that the commissioners

approved the grant process. “I feel we completed our responsibility.”

Yes, we do this in a bunch of ways — the price is the same \$1,000 and 4 percent. I can't control the administration.

“You know that Northwest Kansas Planning doesn't charge us to write the grant only to administer it,” Mr. Sebelius countered “You couldn't complete what you originally agreed to do. You couldn't submit it. It's obvious to me that you didn't do everything you said you would.”

Ms. Brown again disagreed. “\$11,000 is not much to pay for all our hours and talent and planning,” she said. “You got the grant. That's not much to pay for getting a fire truck and an EMS building. You people chose not to use Northwest Kansas Planning.”

Mr. Sebelius noted that the county would not be willing to pay the full amount of Blue Sky's bill but would negotiate.

“Everybody's going to have to give something up to get it settled,” he said. “If you're not willing to do that this is going to be a very long, hard road.”

Blossom: 'cruising' was a puzzle

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required courses, so she was only able to add band and Spanish to her schedule. She already spoke French, English, Dutch and German, so now she can add one more language.

An American custom Blossom never came to understand was “cruising.” She said, “In Belgium, we use a car to get from Point A to Point B. It seemed kind of pointless to just drive around with no destination, but I loved it. I had such a good time.”

Another social difference is the attitude toward alcohol. In Belgium children have wine with meals at a very young age. She said, drinking is one thing, but getting drunk is socially unacceptable.

Food differences were apparent to Blossom. She said here, it's pretty much “meat and potatoes.” In Belgium there would be lots more vegetables, more fish and not such big portions.

She said she is really going to miss Norton. She loved living on a farm in the country with her host

parents, Dave and Charla Sprigg. “They're like my Mom and Dad,” she said. She said she loved waking up and thinking, “I don't hear my neighbors. Awesome!”

She fears she may feel “crowded” when she returns to Belgium. She said this is a great community and it was a great feeling to be known — to be a person that mattered and not just another face in the crowd.

She said, “It's amazing how many wonderful people there are in this town. Everybody knows everybody and everybody is willing to help you. That's what I will miss.” She added that she will also miss mocha freezes from White Fields Coffee House.

Scrapbooking is a real American pastime. Even though Blossom doesn't think it is a hobby she will continue, she thought it would be a good way to record her year in Kansas. She has diligently worked on dozens of pages, using pictures, letters and cut-outs to decorate each page.

Miss Jacobus wants to return to the United States some day.

She said, “There are plenty of opportunities in Belgium, but I'm a restless person.” College is affordable in Belgium. Before she came to America, she wanted to be a mortician.

Now, she is torn between that and being a language teacher. She said, “I have this talent for language, I should use it.”

Blossom said, “It's so hard to say good-bye. I want to thank all the people who helped me while I was here. And, a big thank you to everyone who gave me rides. It is against American Field Service rules for the student to drive while in this country, so sometimes she had to depend on others for transportation.

By July 2, Blossom, an only child, will be back in Belgium with her mother who works for an insurance company and her father, who works for a private safety inspection company. She invites anyone who wants to write to e-mail her at: blosbloempje@hotmail.com.

Good-bye, Blossom. We'll see 'ya later.

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