

### They just weren't on the same page

Old Buddy showed up at his church last Sunday and approached the preacher with a request. "What is it?" asked the preacher. Old Buddy said, "Would you pray for my hearing." The preacher was more than willing to fulfill the request.

So he placed one hand over old Buddy's ear, and he placed the other hand on top of old Buddy's head, lifted his eyes and head to the Heavens and prayed and prayed and prayed.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back, looked old Buddy in the eyes and asked, "How is your hearing now?"

Old Buddy said, "I don't know, Reverend, it ain't until next Wednesday."

It's currently all about the Summer Olympics, and not politics. But that's OK. The olympics are of short duration, while politics lasts forever...and ever. In just a matter of weeks the Democrats will converge on Denver for their national lovefest — convention — and that should grab the country's attention. The following week the Republicans will hold their version of unity in St. Paul, Minn., and again the country will be looking in.

As I see it, this presidential election year is a matter of young vs. old — young, not as in whippersnapper, and old, not as in creepy. Sen. Obama is 47 and Sen. McCain is 72. Is Obama too young to be president? Is McCain too old to be president? This age thing probably, down deep, is the #1 issue. You can talk about the economy, Iraq, health care, immigration and climate change all you want, but in the end you will ask yourself which of the two candidates can best address these issues.

If you add up the ages of our 43 presidents when they assumed the presidency, the average comes out to be 55. The youngest president was John F. Kennedy at age 43 when he was sworn into office, and the oldest was Ronald Reagan at 69 when he took the oath. Without question, John McCain would become the oldest president if favored by the voters. He is 17 years past the average age and Barack Obama is eight years younger than the average age.

Don't become distracted by the non-issues (and there is an abundance of that garbage out there); instead, educate yourself by listening to what Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama are saying, how they are saying it, and how they are dodging questions you yourself would ask if you had the opportunity. Don't be blinded sided by the 24/7 television so-called news channels because those yo-yos have their favorites and they make no bones about it. You learn nothing if you depend on them to guide you through the process. You are smarter than that.

I was very sure I knew who I was going to vote for on Nov. 4 some time ago. Then, as this campaign unfolded, I started listening closely, reading, researching, using my computer to fill in the blanks and surprised myself when I found one of these candidates was of the same line of thinking I was.

Enjoy the Olympics — go Michael Phelps!

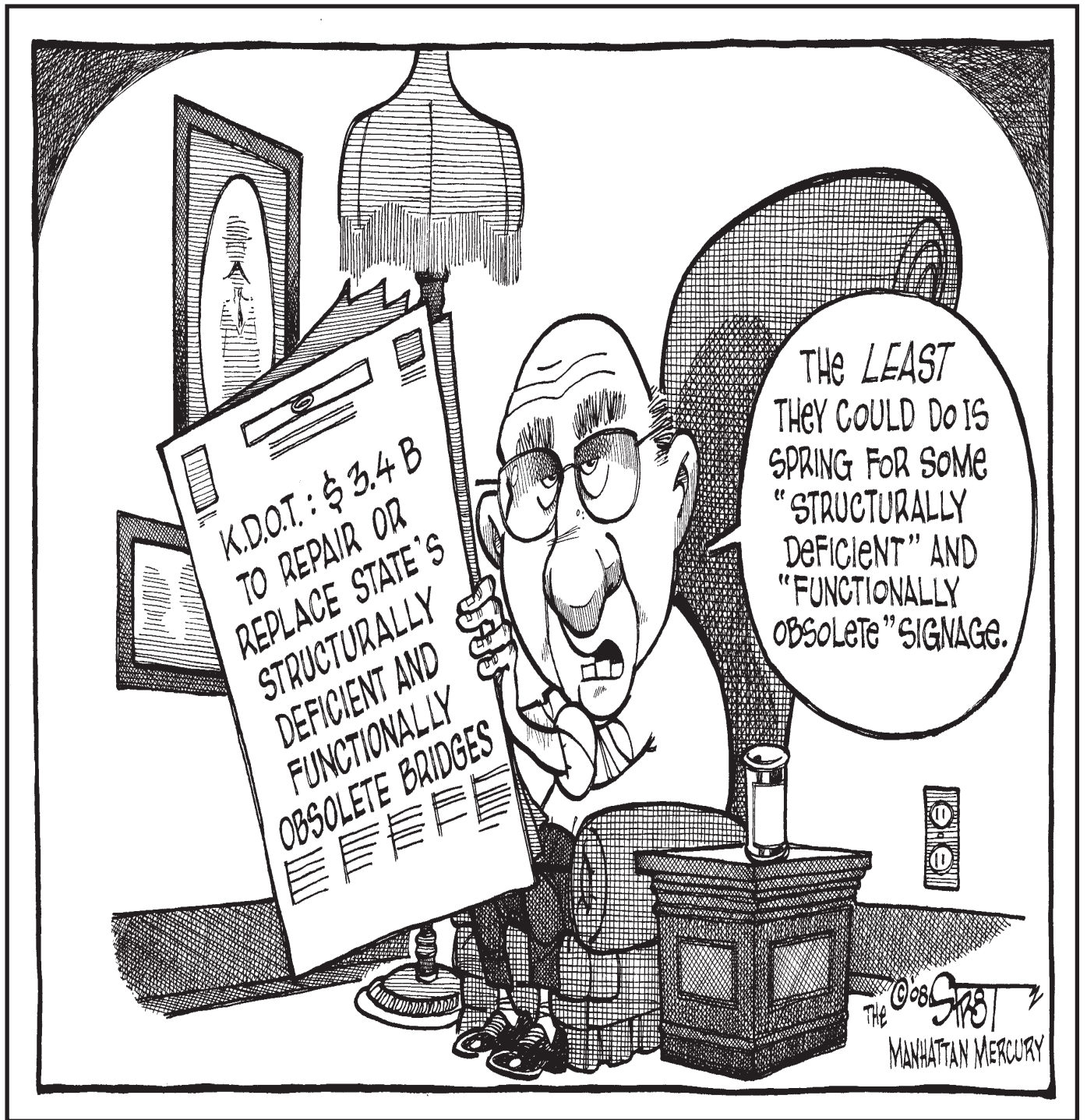
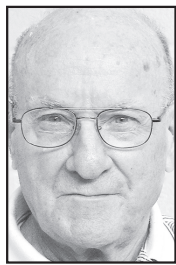
Take some of these thoughts into your weekend:

- (1) Always remember that you're unique, just like everyone else.
- (2) Some days you're the bug, some days you're the windshield.
- (3) There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.
- (4) And most importantly, never, under any circumstances, take a sleep-  
ing pill and a laxative on the same night.

Guess what the BIG thing in Norton's households today was? School! Yep, the first day of the new school year! It might only have been a half day, but that's the start. And Moms and Dads can now relax a little because during their working hours, the kids are in the hands of some of the finest people you'll find anywhere in those buildings we call schools!

Have a good evening! And this weekend, take your family to one of those buildings we call churches.

Good Evening Norton  
Tom Dreiling



### Snack mix is a way of life in our house

We all know people who say they don't like sweets; swear they never eat desserts or whatever. I think they are possibly aliens (and I'm not talking illegal, I mean from another planet or something!)

I, myself, am not a huge chocolate fan. A little goes a long ways. I always go for the salty stuff first.

When daughter Kate was home this summer, she complained a lot about the food I serve. She likes it, too much. She's claimed to not have put on extra weight though. Her jeans were fitting tighter but that was only because my dryer is too hot and shrinks them!

Early in the summer she went shopping and picked up some snack mix. It contained M&M's chocolate chips, raisins, nuts and peanut butter drops. I suggested the issue with the jeans might be the result of the snack mix, not a too hot dryer. She maintains her doctor said it was better for her to snack and eat small meals rather than eat only three times a day. If only we could develop snack cravings that involve celery stalk or carrot sticks or something! (Which is probably more in line with what her doctor had in mind!)

Back Home  
Nancy Hagman



Supposedly that jar of snack mix had 34 three tablespoon servings. Judging from how fast it went the snackers in this house have no idea much three tablespoons is; or we just snack too often. A third theory and my personal favorite is someone came in when we weren't home and chowed down.

Kate erred and actually picked up the wrong type of snack mix! Her usual choice has dried pineapple in it rather than raisins. She doesn't like raisins.

The hubby loved the snack mix! At least he loved the M&M's! And he loved the peanuts! By the time we got to the bottom of the jar, it was mostly raisins. I made the sacrifice and finished it off!

The experience inspired him to come up with his own recipe for snack mix: Get a jar. Get some M&M's. Get some

peanuts. Pour the M&M's and peanuts in the jar. Mix them up. Serve! We're in negotiations with a major food producer and trying to get a patent!

Here's the quick version of his recipe! Get some peanut M&M's. Open the bag. There you are! It's almost magical! Most of the family likes this very, very much. Except Patricia who has discovered that peanuts trigger her migraine headaches!

Despite the hubby's love of M&M's he's in great shape. Patricia says her intended is very impressed that he is in such great shape. She believes it is because he does hard physical work. I believe that too.

I also believe that Craig fervently hopes Patricia got her father's side of the gene pool: long and lean versus fat and dumpy!

Patricia says, "Oh, no, he just hopes I didn't get your knees! Whenever we walk somewhere with you, he's always after me to slow down!"

Now isn't that sweet! I do believe I like the boys! I should find out what kind of snacks he likes and send him some!

I sure hope he doesn't turn out to be an alien!

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### Let's take a close look at the way we live

Although our community is small, sometimes we don't see beyond our own circle. Perhaps the needs of a single mom without family support are overlooked. Or the behavior of a child who has never seen the interactions of a family is misunderstood. Tom Dreiling, editor and publisher, granted space in Tuesday's Telegram to tell people of the benefits of the one on one mentoring program Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). This is the time of year when I review the make-up of our county and how it impacts our program.

Most of the Northwest Kansas counties are losing population and Norton is no exception; however, our rate of loss from 2000 to 2006, at 6.2 percent, is less than the surrounding counties.

Those counties are hovering between nine to ten percent. We often think of ourselves as a county of retirees, however as of 2006, 19.9 percent were under 18, and only 17.7 percent were over 65.

So what is life like for the youth of Norton County? One of the indicators of interest to grant reviewers and researchers is the number of free and reduced lunches

Phase II  
Mary Kay Woodyard



a county reports.

During the 2007-08 school year, Graham, Norton and Phillips counties each reported between 44.6 percent-46.4 percent of the enrolled children receiving free or reduced lunches. There are others who qualify but don't use the program so the actual eligibility rate could be much higher.

Although poverty does not mean a child will have problems, we do know it puts that child at risk, as does family stability. Kansas Action for Children reports 37 percent of Kansas children live in low income homes. Some of these are the result of divorce forcing single moms, sometimes dads, into a lower socio-economic group.

In Norton County in 2005, 52 percent

of the divorces involved children in the home. Many families no longer have extended family support close by and this creates additional stress for a family.

Some children involved in BBBS come from families with very few risk factors, but we have some whose struggles are difficult for us to imagine. To me, mentoring programs offer hope to a child, an opportunity to view life from a different perspective.

I may have relayed the following story to you before and if I have I apologize now, however to me it indicates stresses some children in our area may encounter.

The Big Sister was returning her Little to the Little's home after a several hour family reunion held by the Big Sister's family. On the way home the Little said how much fun she had and how "she didn't know families could get together and not yell and scream at each other." This Big Sister has provided her Little with a focus for her own future, a chance to break a family cycle and the hope of a better life. Priceless.

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McCain? Obama? Call us at (785) 877-6908