

Fixing the broken immigration system

Where would we even begin to fix the tattered, torn, broken, impossible U.S. immigration system?

It makes no sense, everyone calls for "reform," yet nothing ever changes.

We spend billions, then billions more, for tighter security, more walls, electronic surveillance, aircraft and more guards. The payoff: nothing but the worst economy in 70 years seems to slow the flood of immigrants.

People who want to come to our country are degraded, insulted and bullied. They have to pass into our fortress embassies, answer questions, wait in line, pay money, then wait years to come to the U.S. — if ever.

People who want to work here — unless they are doctors, chemists or computer geniuses, well, just forget it. Some days, it's hard for a town to get a foreign doctor through all the State Department's red tape.

How did the nation that earned the Statue of Liberty fall to this mean estate?

It wasn't easy.

Our immigration system, retooled after World War II mostly to keep people out, was built up over years and years. It won't change overnight.

Our economy simply won't run without foreign labor — nothing unusual there. It never has. Neither can the economies of the wealthy European or Middle Eastern countries.

But 30 or 40 years ago, we had a system for migrant laborers to come north and pick our crops. The border existed in peace, with a sort of easy-going back and forth that kept things fluid.

No more. Today the U.S.-Mexican border sports wire, guards, dogs, constant patrols, airborne surveillance, all kinds of unfriendly attitudes. And still, people come here to work.

Why?

Because they need jobs and we have them. They need them badly enough to risk their lives with smugglers, to spend their savings, to risk being caught and sent right back south.

It isn't the Mexicans who created this situation, wanting jobs and wanting to break the law to get them. It was our wealthy and vastly successful economy that produced jobs we cannot fill with Americans.

Another problem on the border that will have to be solved: drugs and smuggling.

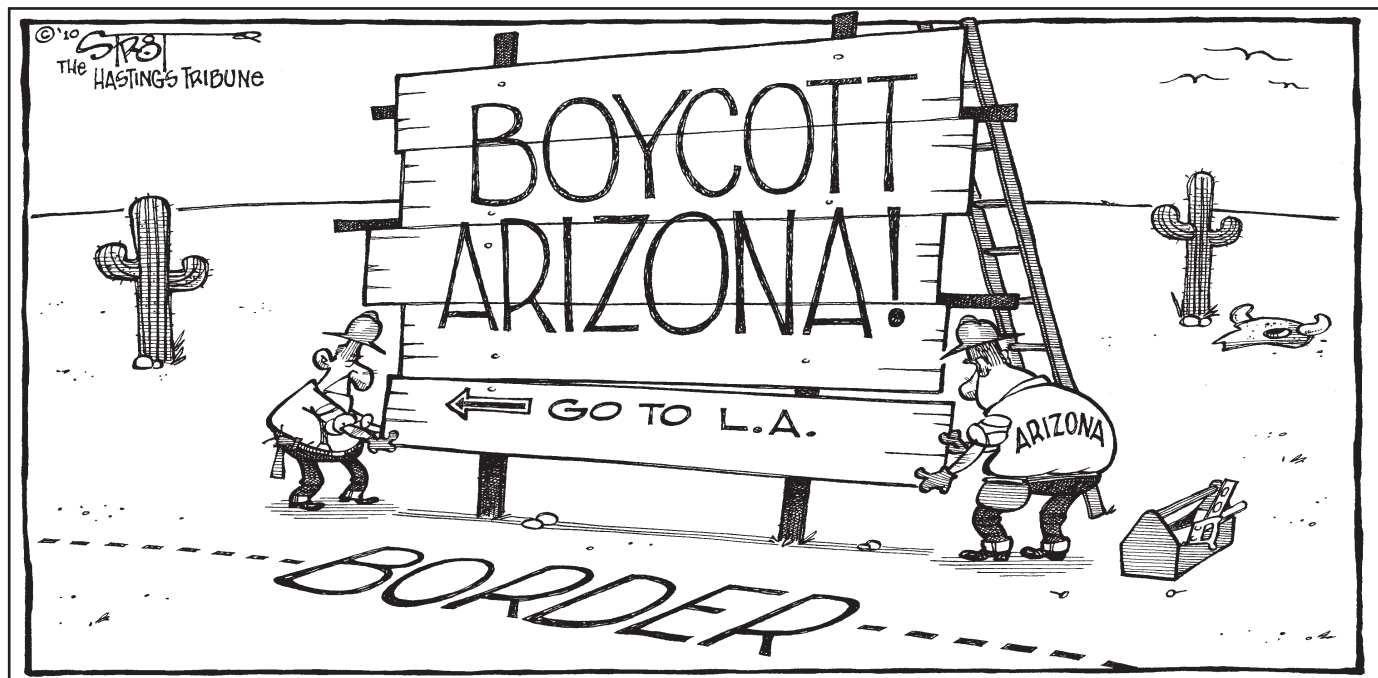
As long as we make drugs scarce and expensive here, and people want them, smugglers and gangsters will bring them into our country.

We're only fooling ourselves if we think spending more on enforcement will turn the tide. Demand it too strong, profits too large. And the corrupting influence of the smugglers is too great at the border.

But for the border, the trick will be to make legal immigration both possible and desirable. With a good immigration plan — one without too many restrictions or impossible rules — workers will be able to cross the border legally and we'll know who is in the country. The "coyote" human smugglers would be out of business, and the Border Patrol could concentrate on the bad guys.

That may be too sensible in a nation where most people seem to focus on more guards, more guns, more insults and more money. But we need to try, and soon. We should be ashamed of what's happening today.

— Steve Haynes



Our definition of gratitude

One definition of gratitude is "thankfulness or appreciation." I find that as long as I am grateful, my days go easily and in peace. When I lose the feeling of gratitude, I tend to become critical, judgmental and whiney. Then it doesn't take much for me to judge other people. That is a trait in myself I have been working on for a number of years. Sometimes it just jumps out of nowhere to trip me up. Usually when that happens, I have not focused on being grateful.

I had a 12-step friend some years ago who talked about the "attitude of gratitude." He said he could make a choice to be grateful, and when he made that choice he stayed sober. When I make the choice to be grateful, I remember that my Creator is in charge of the universe and not me.

I don't agree with everything that the people I encounter each day say, but when I am grateful I know I can still love them.

Life is Good
Rita Speer



Loving another includes accepting that person and caring about him without feeling I am responsible to change him.

A therapeutic tool one can use when someone is down or is filled with self pity is to write out a list of things for which she is grateful. Writing is much more effective than just thinking about the things for which we are grateful, for it is easy to slide back into the self pity or deny the things on the list. When a list of things for which we are grateful is written down, it is clear, it is specific and it is tangible.

Today I would share with you some of

the things on my Gratitude List.

1. I am one of the King's Kids. 2. My husband. 3. My kids. 4. My grandkids. 5. My health. 6. My friends. 7. The talents I have been given. 8. It is spring. 9. I am able to walk (although it's quicker to go by car). 10. I have a place to live. 11. I have food to eat. 12. I have clothes to wear. 13. My volunteer position. 14. The feedback I have received from others about some of my comments in this column. 15. Today life is good.

I invite you to write your own gratitude list today. You are welcome to use any of mine that apply to you, but make a goal of getting to 25. Sometimes just writing down the things for which we are grateful helps us realize how richly we have been blessed. It becomes more difficult for me to criticize others when I realize all that I have received. When I focus on gratitude, I am able to share more genuinely and honestly with others, and that makes my day very good.

Countless opportunities lost, few gained

When I was working for the Chamber of Commerce several years ago a business woman came in and told me she didn't want Norton to change. She liked it just the way it was. That's important, but it is also important to realize nothing stays the same, not Norton, not Kansas, not our families nor our country, and change is what it is all about. Norton, as with most communities, struggles with those wanting to move forward and those wanting only to maintain the status quo.

This isn't any different than times past. No growth advocates were successful in blocking the opportunity to have a community college, but founders of Valley Hope felt Norton was suitable for their treatment center. Throughout the years there have been countless opportunities lost and a few gained.

Without new businesses and new people, Norton will die, as surely as those small towns around us have, but does it have to be that way? I don't think so. Norton has much to offer businesses and families, but it will take considerable effort, time and expense. The effort

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



involved isn't just the City Council, the County Commissioners, Economic Development staff, etc. No, as important as those individuals are, it is each of us who must act on behalf of Norton and become ambassadors for promoting our community. Whether you are on a business trip, chatting with family members or attending a game you can campaign for Norton.

Go armed with facts about Norton County. You might be surprised to know that there are more individuals from 0-19 years of age than residents over 65. In 2002, 27 percent of Kansas firms were owned by women compared to 46 percent of Norton County's businesses. Nearly 85 percent of Norton County residents are high school graduates compared to

86 percent of Kansas residents. Unfortunately we don't fare so well with college degrees which is due in part I'm sure to the lack of jobs. Fifteen percent of the county residents have a bachelor's degree or higher whereas nearly 26 percent of the state residents have attained that level.

One of the most important factors for people interested in relocating to our area is education. In the 2008/09 school year, several elementary and secondary schools in our county received the Standard of Excellence award from the Kansas Department of Education and Eisenhower Elementary School received building wide awards in math, science, reading and writing.

I could go on and on, but instead I challenge you to look around our community and see the things impressive to you. Are they the same as they were 50 years ago or have they grown, evolved and become better? Norton will change due to the very nature of life and ultimately death. But because the county changes, we don't have to succumb to those effects but rather work together for "managed growth" as described by one official.



To... all the AYSO Soccer Coaches for a great season — safe, fair and fun. Thank you! (E-mailed)

To... Eisenhower Elementary School for giving our children a great foundation. (Called in)

To... those who want to start a community owned clothing store. It's badly needed! (E-mailed)

To render a Thumbs Up write:

- ebradley@nwkansas.com
- nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission

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Do you make your bed?

Do you make your bed every day?

Unless I'm really pressed for time, I do. And not because I'm a neat freak; it's because you see the bedroom when coming in the back door.

Although our front door is much more accessible than the back door people gravitate to the back! It's a farm thing!

The doorbell back there quit working so I removed it. Now because people usually do not knock loud enough, we do not know we have company until the person comes in the mudroom, opens the interior door and hollers!

So because I care what people think (even those who drop in without calling first or who just need to borrow a log chain) I make the bed!

The hubby assures me our house is very neat compared to some he has been in. Relax ladies; he's never divulged who the messy ones are!

Once, a neighbor told me he came into the house when no one was home because he needed to use the phone. I'm not sure how far he looked, but he related that he could not find it and felt foolish when,

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



on his way out, he discovered a wall mounted phone right by the door. I was happy he was able to make his call but my mind was racing---what was the house like that day? Was the bed made?

For a while I got up earlier than the hubby. It's hard to make a bed with someone still in it. But my job hours changed, and he is again the earlier riser.

Hard as it is to make a bed with someone else in it, I've discovered if I'm the person in the bed I can get a head start before rising! It's easy. Place the pillows where they belong, smooth the sheets, turn the covers back, slip out at the right angle and it is mostly done!

I didn't realize the hubby was on to this but some friends were sharing the difficulty of showing their house to potential buyers while living there. The wife said

the worst part was keeping the bed made. She hates to make the bed.

The hubby said, "Nancy makes the bed before she gets out of it!" From now on I guess I'll think twice before accusing him of not paying attention.

Sunday when he got up, it woke me up. I did not look at the clock but I knew by the lack of light it was early.

It's spring and there is a lot to do, I thought. So even though it is Sunday he must have decided to make the most of the day. I straightened his pillow, pulled the sheet and bedspread into place, turned over and snuggled down to go back to sleep.

A voice: "What happened here?"

The hubby had only gotten up to check the weather or something! Returning to bed he found hospital corners and a spread you could bounce a quarter off! (Okay, I'm exaggerating a little!) We had a good laugh!

In the grand scheme does it really matter if our beds are made or how tidy our houses are? I'd say no, just as long as you are clean enough to be healthy and messy enough to be welcoming!