

### Voter turnout key for mid-term elections

Campaign season is in high gear with several candidates making stops through the state to discuss state and federal concerns with residents. A common theme has been health care, immigration, oil and the economy.

An issue brought up at a recent event was voter turnout at elections. Most people aren't registered to vote, or refuse to vote, because they believe their vote doesn't count. This perception causes a situation where major issues go unresolved or resolved poorly because people don't make their votes heard.

National elections typically see more voters than mid-term elections get. Even though this year is a mid-term election, several major elections are taking place across the country. In Kansas, a new governor will be elected along with state representatives, senators and various other public offices.

Kansas has seen significant problems in the last year. The Legislature built a budget, using a 1 cent sales tax increase and federal money. Next year more issues will arise with state funding for education, the department of corrections and other state services.

Several candidates have made campaign stops in Norton. In the "Big First" race, Sue Boldra, Hays; Tracey Mann, Salina; Rob Wasinger, Hays; Tim Huelskamp, Fowler; and Alan Jilka, Salina, have made appearances here. Jim Barnett, Emporia, and Marck Cobb, Galva, have not participated in events.

In the 120th district race, Ward Cassidy has made a stop to meet with various people in the community. John Faber is running for re-election after holding the seat for 14 years.

Each candidate represents something different. It is up to the voters to decide who and what they support. Hopefully people decide to stand up and voice their concern instead of refusing to vote and complaining about the way the election turned out.

-Erica Bradley



### Rambunctious pre-teens are growing

Our four calves, April, May, Junior and Julio, are rambunctious pre-teens. They are growing like weeds and don't know their own strength. The other day I had given them their morning bottles and was moving them to their daytime enclosure we call The North Compound. I was leading them with a bucket of sweet feed and was more intent on staying ahead of the "thundering herd" than I was in watching where I was walking.

Boom! I walked right into a sheet of siding Jim had extended over the back of a trailer to provide the feed pan some protection in case it rained. All I could say was, "Owee, owee, owee." It really hurt and I was sure I had been scarred for life. Fortunately, it only left a little scratch and a bump. Both of which have almost totally disappeared.

-ob-

I'll soon be finding out who my real friends are. Friday will mark baking day

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



for my third batch of Amish Friendship Bread. I've already given away six "starters" and am looking for the next three beneficiaries.

Jenn, a young friend from Colorado, gave me my starter and the accompanying instructions to "mush" the bag of liquid starter every day. On the sixth day you "feed" the starter flour, sugar and milk. On the tenth day you add more flour sugar and milk, measure out four, one-cup batches of starter: three to give away and one to keep for yourself and start the process all over again. Other ingredients like eggs, baking powder,

soda, cinnamon, salt and more sugar and flour are added to the remaining starter and you have enough batter to bake two nice loaves.

The bread itself is very moist and tasty with a sugar and cinnamon crustiness. Actually, it's more like a coffee cake than bread. It's very easy to make and if you want to be my friend, I'll put you on the list.

-ob-

What do you say to a 47-year-old woman who tells you she is pregnant? Congratulations!

I have a friend who is that woman. The baby girl is due in less than a month and the mother has only known for two months. Finances are an issue for my friend so I am "in the market" for a baby bed, baby clothes and one of those wind-up swings.

My friend has survived cancer, serious operations and personal tragedies. She will survive this, too.

### Vaccinations are key

Vaccinations are an important key to proper animal health and herd health management. Proper vaccine handling and administration is very important to ensure that vaccination is as effective as possible. Follow these tips for better herd health management.

Always consult your veterinarian to develop a protocol that fits the health needs and goals of your operation.

Select quality products recommended by your veterinarian. Always purchase only federally licensed vaccines from a reliable source.

Carefully read the label directions to maximize the value and effectiveness of product. It is important to know precautions, where the product is given, dosage and if another dose needs to be given and when.

Always read label directions in order to store vaccines appropriately. Always transport cold items in a cooler with an ice pack and out of direct sunlight.

Always use a sterile transfer needle or disposable syringe to rehydrate vaccines.

### Vet tips Dr. Aaron White



Only mix one bottle at a time, just prior to administration.

Follow beef quality assurance guidelines when vaccinating, always giving vaccinations in the neck. Give subcutaneous injections whenever label directions allow.

Use new, sharp needles and the correct gauge size for the animal and vaccine. Change needles every 10-15 animals. Never re-enter a bottle with a used needle.

And last, but not least, always appropriately clean equipment after use. The best recommendations for your cattle herd come from the one who knows your herd the best, your veterinarian!



To... the Lenora Jubilee Committee for another good time. (Called in)

To... Steve Schrum and the Norton Rec Commission for all of their work, worry and time in putting together the summer baseball, softball and t-ball programs. You are a treasure. Thank you. (E-mailed)

To... the city workers who worked tirelessly to clean up damage from Sunday's storm. (E-mailed)

To... the Learning Center graduates for a job well-done. (Called in)

## THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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I am on vacation this week so I have chosen to run a column I wrote in May of '95. It has always been one of my favorites. Hope you enjoy it also.

Perched atop the weathered wooden posts, the western boots stretched nearly 1 mile into the horizon. Brown, black, green, gray and blue were the colors. Torn and frayed was their condition.

All the boot heels pointed toward the blue, spring sky. Some of the toes still held their shape jutting out from the fence post. Others dropped toward the grass like the tongues of cutting ponies after a full morning of sorting cattle.

This boot fence can be found on John Smith's Boot Hill Ranch. Located on K-25 about a mile and a half north of Russell Springs, nearly 500 boots dot the top of the five-strand, barbed wire fence that runs north and south.

"The number depends on how many have been stolen on any particular day," Smith said with a glint in his eye. "Those boots don't just jump off the posts and walk away."

Locals will tell you a boot fence is one method a rancher uses to signify he is just that - a rancher and not a farmer. A few will tell you it's just a "crazy" hobby and nothing to take too seriously.

Smith fitted his first pair of boots on the fence line 20 years ago. The boots were 1948 vintage and hand-made by Charles P. Shipley Saddlery & Mercantile, Co. of Kansas City, Mo.

"They were located down by the stockyards and they made boots for ole' Jesse James," Smith said, proud to have owned

### Silent sentinels on the Plains

#### Insight

John Schlageck

a pair of boots made by the same company that had fitted the famous outlaw. "I got married in mine back in '51."

After Smith put the first pair of boots on his fencerow, it seemed only natural to add more. Before long, friends and neighbors were helping him stock the line. They'd throw worn out pairs in the back of his pickup at auctions and cattle sales. Some dumped the boots next to the fence.

Smith never turned down a pair of boots and it didn't matter what condition they were in. At one time, he figured there were close to 700 boots on the fence. He'd been known to wear a pair that may have a little life left in them.

"Boots keep the water off and the fence posts last longer," Smith told me. "The boots shelter the post top so the moisture can't get into the post and expand it and break it up."

Yep, thanks to Smith, each post has its own leather garage. But not all the boots have stayed on the posts.

A few years back the Logan County rancher lost a pair of women's boots that laced up the front.

"I guess they were old and somewhat of a collectible," Smith said.

After this incident, he never fitted a pair of boots next to one another on the posts. Instead he'd put one boot in the corner of his land and stick the other in some

random spot down the line.

To hear Smith talk about his fence and why he added boots to the post tops, it all goes back to western folklore.

"Cowboys that wear boots have a special attachment to them," he said. "That way when a cowboy died they'd bury him and put his boots upside down on a stick by his grave. People knew each other by the boots they wore, and it was only natural to put a cowboy's boots near his grave so those that happened by would know who was buried there."

And there will be no doubt whose fence is capped with boots on the highway a couple miles north of Russell Springs. Tumbleweeds will continue to roll up next to the wire, stay for a while and keep the old leather boots company. Prairie dogs will peek out of their mound towns and scan the horizon and see the familiar landmark.

Oh, in case you're wondering, I took a hard look at all the boots on John Smith's fence, but I didn't rob any off the posts. I did see a couple pairs that would have made a fine addition and could have been worn for a Saturday night of dancing.

Nope, I wouldn't dare touch 'em. It wouldn't have been right. Those boots were located just where they belonged, on top of the fence posts - silent sentinels on the great High Plains.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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