

Kansas is no exception when it comes to abuse

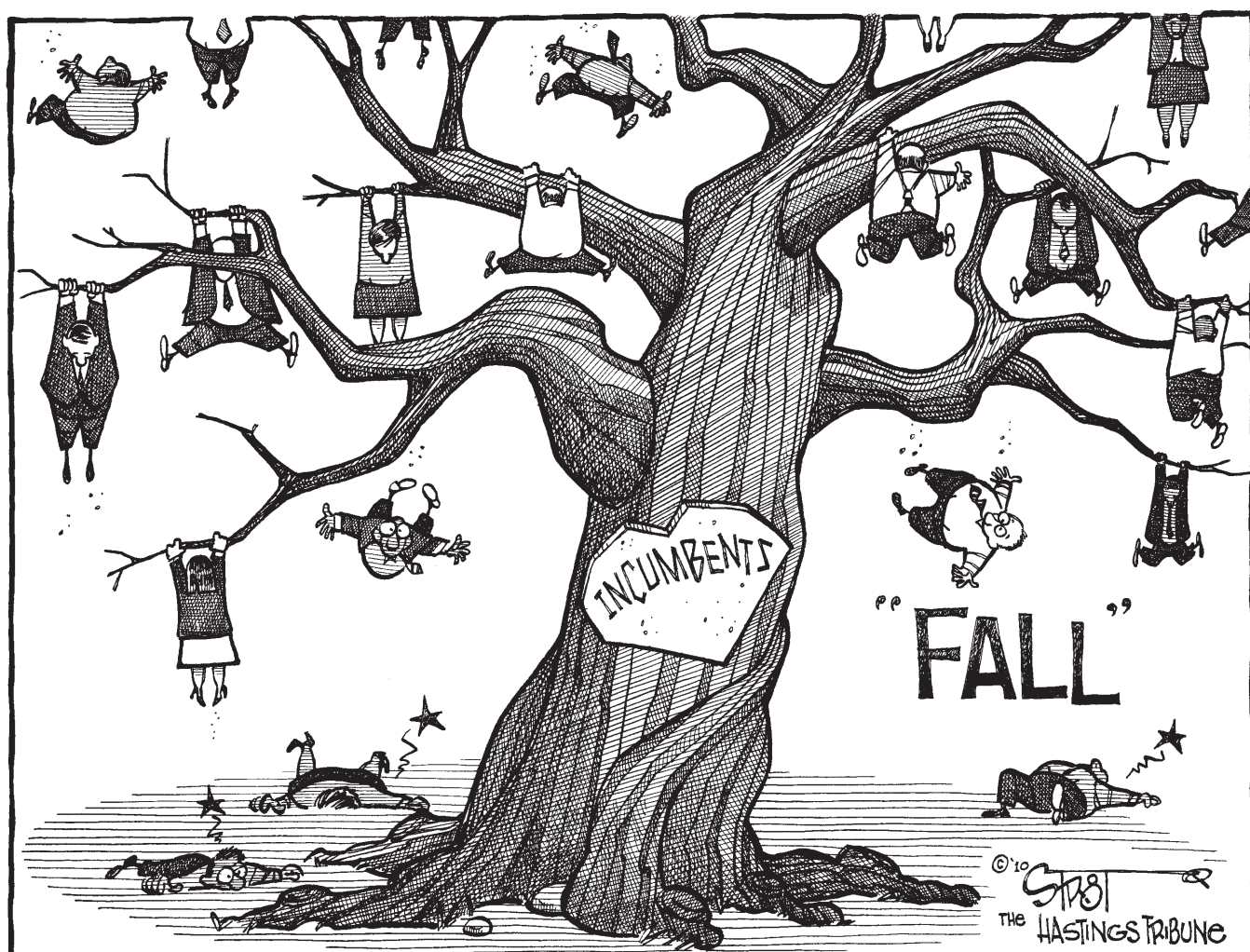
Every day there are countless national media reports about violence against women and children. These headline-making stories represent only the tip of the iceberg. Kansas is no exception to this violence. What we see happening in Kansas parallels what is happening nationally. Behind every headline there are infinite untold stories that significantly impact the public health and safety of all citizens.

One in ten adult women in Kansas report domestic violence victimization, which can include isolation, emotional, verbal, sexual and physical abuse, as well as financial abuse and control. Sexual and domestic violence enters our workplaces, churches and schools. It destroys families and devastates communities. Survivors fill our emergency rooms and safe shelters, and the cost of doing nothing is high.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation reports that 35 adults and 14 children lost their lives as a result of domestic violence in 2009. Unfortunately the 2010 statistics are just as staggering with preliminary numbers reflecting 20 adults and six children through the month of August.

All Kansans can do something to make a difference. Today simply knowing the Kansas Crisis Hotline number, 888-END-ABUSE (888-363-2287), ensures that everyone will be ready to assist when someone they know needs their help. In addition consider donating time or resources to your local sexual or domestic violence advocacy organization, teach the children and teens in your life how to recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship; and contact your state legislators and ask them to maintain funding for life saving services for victims and their children across the state.

During the month of October all Kansans are invited to join advocates and allies across the state as we remember those who have lost their lives as we offer support for those who have survived, and as we encourage all community leaders to assess what they can do to create safer communities for all Kansans. Visit the website kcsdv.org to find advocacy organizations and awareness events near you.



I want what I want and I want it now

Yes, Jim got "Chocoflaned" last Monday but, I was the one with "egg on my face".

One of my many faults is that I can become single-minded. When I get an idea in my head, nothing will satisfy me until I have achieved my goal. It might be the way I want my flower bed to look; it might be the exact shade of color I want in the dining room drapes; or, it might be making a certain recipe. RIGHT NOW!

That was my frame of mind when I decided to make Chocoflan. Never mind that I didn't have a bundt pan. I knew my friend, Jody, did. A quick phone call and I had a bundt pan in my hands, secured with a promise to share the finished product with the lender.

Oh, the cake, topped with a layer of flan, turned out beautifully. It looked perfect. The cake was a deep, rich color and the flan was set perfectly with the Mexican caramel "Tajeta" dripping down the sides. But, that is where reality takes over and the idealistic dream ends. It, simply, did not taste good. It wasn't bad, just not the chocolate delight I had imagined.

Jim, dutifully, ate a piece, as did I. Son, James, tried it and agreed with his dad: I shouldn't make it again.

Poor Jody, accepted a plate of four slices

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



along with the return of her bundt pan. I didn't wait around for her to sample it and now, she probably doesn't know how to tell me what her assessment was. It's okay, Jody. I didn't like it either.

Jim has lived with my single-mindedness for 16 years. He knows that I would rather do without something than settle for something I don't want.

Take our floor covering, for instance. Or rather, our lack of floor covering. I have it in my head that I want hard-wood floors in the library, office, dining room and kitchen. The rooms are contiguous and I want the uniformity. I don't want vinyl; I don't want indoor/outdoor carpeting; I want hard-wood.

I also don't want debt, so I'll live with painted floors and throw rugs until we can pay for the floors I want.

Speaking of debt: it's the one thing that can get a young family (or an old one,

for that matter) into trouble quicker than anything. I subscribe to the Dave Ramsey (a Christian financial counselor) school of thought. Get out of debt as fast as you can and then live within your means. It's a simple concept but, one most people have trouble adapting to their lives.

His plan is simple. Take "baby steps" to get out of debt. List your debts from smallest to largest. (Forget about which debt has the highest interest rate) Then, attack the smallest debt with every spare dime you can throw at it, while at the same time paying the minimum on all your other debts. As soon as the smallest bill is paid, roll what you had been paying on it into the next smallest debt and attack it. And so one, and so on. The logic behind this method is that you need small successes to continue. Most families could be debt-free in a couple of years with this method.

The bottom line is: we all waste money on some things and just plain spend it foolishly on others. I know it irks me to hear people complain about not having any money as they puff on a cigarette. I'm at the point where I would rather be a saver than a spender.

My mother thought the world's financial woes could be fixed if we all gave up soda pop. She may have been right.



Thumbs up to Tom Brannan for standing up for what he thinks is right. Called in.

Thumbs up to the Chamber for organizing the Moonlight Madness event and to everyone who participated Thursday night. Emailed in.

Thumbs up to Coach Melvin and the entire Norton Blue Jay football team for a game well played against Smith Center. You make us proud. Mailed in.

To render a Thumbs Up write:

- dpaxton@nwkansan.com
- nortontelegram@nwkansan.com

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

Thumbs Up is meant to honor good deeds or events around town. Thumbs Up are reviewed by Telegram staff prior to publication. Thumbs Up comments may be denied if they are not meant to honor a positive event or deed.

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Environmentalists have compromised effectiveness

Lack of understanding and critical thinking on the part of some in the environmental movement has compromised their effectiveness as self-appointed protector and guardian of our planet.

Whenever we improve our critical thinking skills it becomes easier to see through deception and exaggeration that has characterized the promotions of some environmental organizations and the mass media's coverage of their issues.

If we examine the issue of critical thinking, one of the first things we must realize is that correlation is not causation. I know I am wandering into a deep subject for such a shallow mind as mine, but bear with me.

Correlation means that two things tend to happen at the same time. Causation means that one thing is known to cause another.

Because two things happen at the same time doesn't mean one is causing the other. We need proof, including a reasonable theory showing the path by which one thing causes another to occur.

Global warming and pollution of the water supply with herbicides for example — common environmental concerns — have resulted when correlation of two things was mistaken for causation. To avoid future errors, radical environmentalists must be responsible for proving that one thing is actually causing another to happen.

They just can't say it. That doesn't make it so.

In today's world, much remains unexplained. Cancer is one disease that comes to mind.

This dreaded disease might be due to genetic conditions, nutrition, a health

Insight

John Schlageck

problem in childhood, prolonged stress or a combination of these factors. One day scientists may find a cure for this disease, but that day has not arrived.

Trends don't always predict the future. During the early '70s some scientists predicted the advent of another ice age. During the '80s temperatures increased and some experts said we'd experience catastrophic global warming. The cold winter of 1993-94 prompted a new wave of hysteria about another ice age.

Today's projected cataclysms are the continued fear of global warming and the melting of the polar ice caps. Predictions of resource depletion are another reason for concern. Most of these are based on projections of past trends. Trends only serve as a guideline of past events and cannot document exactly what will happen down the road.

Another element of critical thinking is reliance on fact rather than opinion. So often in our society, the "squeaky wheel gets the grease." The loudest or most controversial opinion receives the most attention.

This has definitely been true in the environmental movement where claims of upcoming calamities receive extensive media coverage. To make sure experts with a minority view don't mislead the public, seek relevant facts and make up your own mind.

One reason apocalyptic abusers thrive is the general public rarely relies on its long-term memory. People are unlikely

to remember a doomsayer's dire predictions of a few months ago, much less 10 or 20 years back. We must remember yesterday's false alarms and the people who sounded them if we are to respond to future calls to action.

While few people enjoy risk in their lives, we can't live without it. Everything we do has risk attached, even ordinary events like walking down the steps (falling and breaking bones) or crossing the street (being hit by a truck).

Remember the risk of drowning (16 in a million), or dying in a home accident (90 in a million), or being killed in an auto accident (192 in a million) greatly exceeds the alleged environmental risks being hawked by some organizations.

Throughout our lives we make choices. We must decide between the black pair of shoes or the brown. We must decide on catsup, pickles or mustard on our hot dog.

The same can be said about our environment. We have to choose our priorities. We can't do everything at once. To do so could produce unintended consequences that could harm the world in which we live.

Instead, we must apply the same prudence we apply to other significant aspects of our lives. The importance of environmental issues doesn't exempt them from this discipline. Their importance makes careful planning and efficiency all the more necessary.

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.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

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