

Bad things happen to good people

Dear Editor,
"Turning the Mess into the Message"

There are times when life is completely unfair. Everyone I know has had at least one trying time they thought they weren't emotionally strong enough to endure. My family and I seem to be a magnet for these trying times.

The moment you realize you are doubting everyone and everything in life is frustrating. You wonder about the direction of your life, the meaning, and certainly question what possible good could come from your troubles. If you have faith in your life, you also experience some of those doubts, which only adds to the frustration! Who hasn't been at that point in their life when you throw your hands in the air, and think, or if you are like me yell, "I give up!"

For me, the hardest circumstances to accept are those that I do not create! It is unfair that others have the power to make choices that adversely affect our lives. "They", whomever "they" are, say that "bad things happen to good people." I agree, and it is equally hard to watch "good things happen for bad people."

To grow in faith and accept these circumstances seems impossible! Especially without feelings of bitterness, or unforgiveness. It is hard to rise above the adversity. Perhaps, life isn't just about getting what we want even when we deserve to, and it is about turning our "mess into a message." The message is that negative influences or circumstances are not going to change our attitude, are going to increase our love, hope and faith. Also to accept, we won't always understand the trials we face.

It is no secret that people in the Valley are facing unfavorable circumstances, that most involved did not create. Admittedly, I have not been accepting this trial well. The worst part of it is that I get irritated with those who are and even those who are not involved. I think it is safe to say that everyone living there can relate to my feelings. We all wonder, when is enough, enough? The frustration we can all recognize in our daily lives while facing this is inevitable. Maybe however, we are to recognize the opportunity to turn our "mess into a message." To be content with being better for it, and by choosing to grow in our faith, regardless of the outcome.

Niki Kinderknecht
Almena, KS.

Taking caution in work zones

Dear Editor,

Orange barrels along Kansas highways are a positive sign – they show that improvements are being made to roadways, that jobs and economic development opportunities are increasing across the state and that motorists will be able to get where they are going more efficiently for years to come.

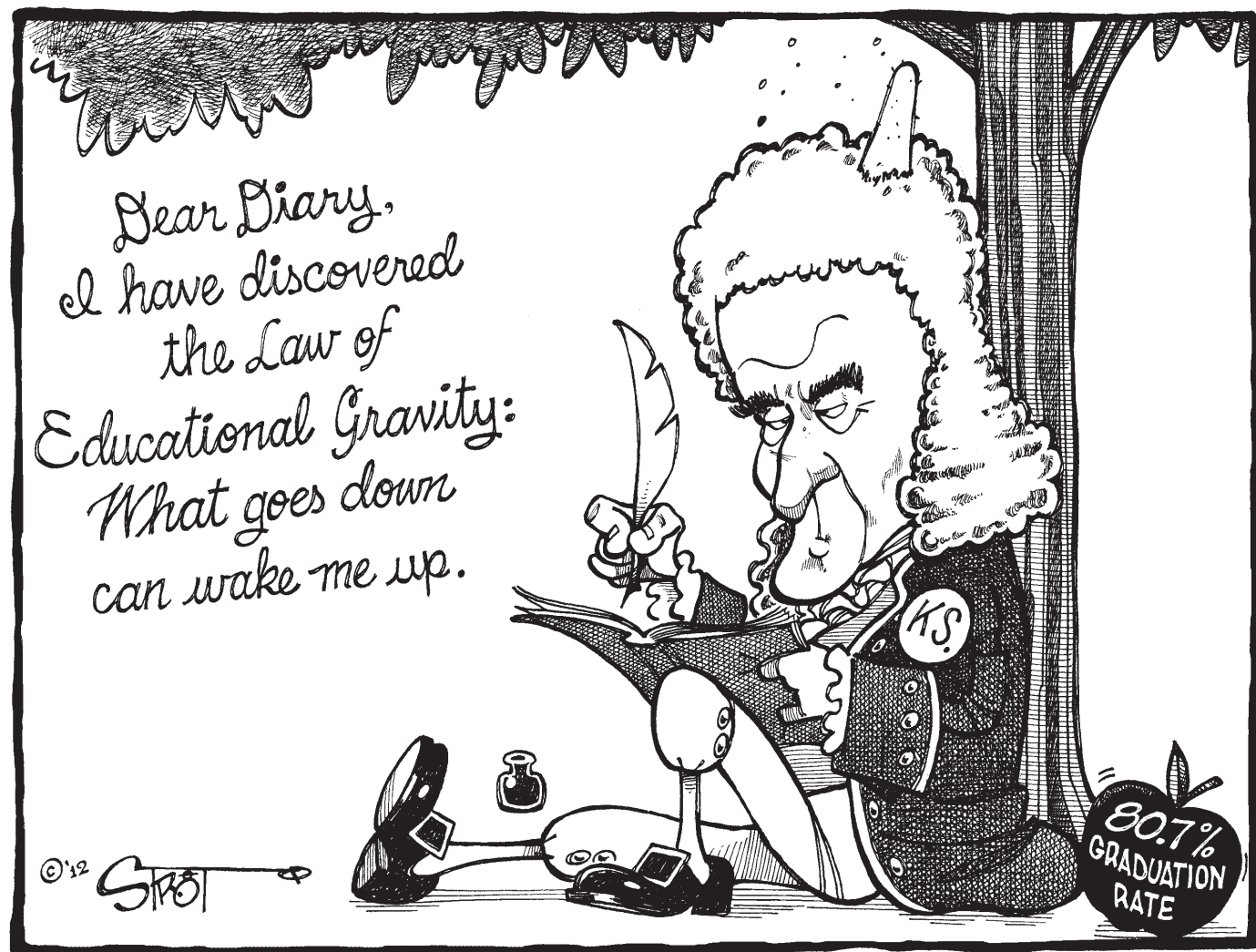
Behind those orange barrels are highway workers, and those workers deserve our respect and attention every time we enter a work zone. Having vehicles drive by within inches of you is scary and can be very dangerous.

What motorists don't realize is that work zone safety is for them as well. In fact, nearly 90 percent of the people injured or killed in work zone crashes are not highway workers – they're motorists. And the number one cause of crashes in work zones is inattention.

This is why we participate in National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is April 23-27. It's a time to highlight the need for work zone safety for both highway workers and motorists, and it's an important message that needs to be remembered all year long. You can learn more about this effort on our website at <http://www.ksdot.org>. Just click on the Go Orange logo on the main page.

We encourage motorists to slow down and pay extra attention every time they see these orange barrels along the highways. Lives are on the line in work zones, and the life you save could be your own.

Sincerely,
Mike King
Kansas Transportation Secretary



A gentle reminder to be grateful

I'm scooping out the best way to get to the area of the store I need to access; wondering if I even want to venture further because the checkout line is 15 deep.

A voice says, "I know you! We went to high school together! Nancy???"

I look around to see who is talking and what other Nancy might be in the store. Because no one there looks remotely familiar to me!

"You are Nancy Brandyberry?"

I located the voice and connected it to a face. But the face belongs to???"

"Yes, I'm Nancy but I'm sorry----- who are you?"

"Susan Linton"
And then she says, "You look exactly the same!"

WOW! Should I be flattered or insulted?

Either I looked a lot worse in high school than I realized or I'm looking much better now than the mirror reflects!

Aside from that issue we had a very pleasant visit right there in the middle of the Salina JoAnn's. She called her husband to come in. He was sleeping in the car as was mine but I didn't have a phone so I left him alone.

We covered all the bases: siblings, kids and in her case grandkids. Parents: Susan's father, Gene Linton, was in

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



his last year as the superintendent at Lenora when I graduated. Susan was a year ahead of me in school.

I have fond memories of the family. When my dad died, Gene and Martha came to the funeral. What a kind gesture. Now that I think of it I didn't recognize them either. Have you heard about that new condition they are diagnosing? Some people lack face recognition???

I think I have that! That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

Susan's husband recently retired. She is a nurse at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility. The inevitable question arises: "What do you do?"

This was at the height of the Ann Romney (never worked a day in her life) story. Yes, people I have a charmed life. Not only have I not aged since high school, I don't work!

I, of course, mentioned that I write for the paper, because I am exceedingly proud of that. Aside from that I don't know how to express what I do.

The encounter was enjoyable yet mildly disconcerting.

Every morning I stand in front of the mirror and ponder: Should I color the hair again? Why can't I remember to slather on the anti-wrinkle cream routinely? Should I weigh myself this morning? NO!!! I've never thought of myself as vain, but many, many days I don't like what I see.

I don't know much about Ann Romney. Her husband is running for President of the United States. They are Mormans. She has lots of money, five sons and MS. She has had a non-invasive form of breast cancer and is cancer free. I don't know what she looks like.

Perhaps she never had a paying job but five children represent work; even if you have money.

I'm not an envious person and certainly don't envy Ann Romney. She has MS, she had breast cancer. Her marriage to a politician causes her to endure mindless potshots from those who oppose her husband.

It might be nice to have her money but why would I trade places with her or anyone???

I don't work and I look exactly like I did when I was 17!!!

Thank you Susan; for reminding me how very lucky I am.

Questioning Mormonism and Christianity

When I was about ten or eleven, I spent the night with a good friend. After we put our Ginger Dolls away, (a precursor to Barbie, but NOTHING like her), we had 7-Up floats. As we fixed them, she told me they didn't drink Coke because it was against their religion and they didn't drink tea or coffee either.

"What church do you go to?" I asked incredulously. I come from a long line of coffee and Coke drinkers.

"We're Mormon," she said, "but there isn't a Mormon Church in town so we just practice on our own."

I had been to the Temple in Salt Lake City, but had never put a personal spin on it, that is until I discovered it was my friend, Dorothy's, church. She was a good representative of her faith, as were the other family members.

The soon to be GOP presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, a Mormon, has been asked to be the commencement speaker at Liberty University. Something which has raised the ire of some students at the Christian evangelical school. Why? Probably a

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



variety of reasons but at the top is the accusation he is not Christian, because he is Mormon.

For the life of me, I cannot comprehend why Christianity is a prerequisite for being president, but yes, Mormons consider themselves Christian. If my stating it isn't enough, Joel Osteen, the famed televangelist and pastor, says the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints while "not traditional Christianity," does believe they are a part of the Christian community.

He says, "Mormonism is a little different, but I still see them as brothers in Christ."

The young people at Liberty University who dispute Romney's

Christianity have much to learn and it is an important lesson for all. Fearing a commencement speech because we doubt the "Christian-ness" of the speaker is perhaps more a confession of fear of our own weaknesses. The things which we don't know about we fear and they become the roots of our prejudice. As a child, it never occurred to me to be upset about my friend's family's faith, but rather I was excited because I now knew someone who treasured that temple in Salt Lake City because of faith, not like it was for me as a tourist.

GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney is on the receiving end of prejudice as he carves his way to the nomination and President Obama has certainly borne his share of it as well. Hopefully as we expand our circle within our country, be it candidates or neighbors or friends, we will come to accept everyone, something which is truly Christian. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net.



Thumbs up to the Andbe Home Board for making sure the residents get to attend events around town like the Arts Council presentation of the tribute to Elvis. Called in.

Thumbs up to the Norton City Council and the Norton City workers for providing the spring and fall clean ups. That, along with the Norton Junior High Service Learning Day help to make Norton a more beautiful place to live. Called in.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:

e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654
785-877-3361

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

Call Dana for your next ad. 877-3361!

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

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

Kansas Press Association



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