

How much are we willing to pay

Letter to the Editor:

Let me begin by stating that Norton does need a swimming pool of some kind. But after reading the Norton City Council news in the June 12 edition of the Norton Telegram, I was appalled that the council voted down a motion to get a second opinion of the current condition and potential options for the city pool. To think the majority of our council voted to proceed with a \$3.5 million dollar pool proposal without requesting quotes or even opinions from other sources is irresponsible. (Request for quote, a very common practice with government entities, would allow the city to obtain prices for planning purposes without awarding a contract.) Now, according to the June 22 Norton Telegram, the majority of the council has proposed a sales tax increase to fund a new pool of which the final design, specifications, and details are yet to be decided. Does the council expect us to give them a signed blank check? And need I mention that the estimate is now up to \$4.535 million. Have we been given an estimate for the cost of operation and maintenance of this multimillion dollar facility? Councilman Jones made a very good point when he expressed concern about our curb and gutter program. I would rather see major repairs completed on the existing pool, and then millions spent on replacing the old water and sewer mains in the city. I commend Councilmen Jones and Moritz for their vote on getting a second opinion, and their opposition, along with Councilman Briery, to asking the public to pass a sales tax increase. There is a lot of work to do and questions to answer before a vote should be taken on any tax increase, and that work has not been completed. I retired after 33 years at the Prairie Dog State Park, 23 years as manager. I was involved with the replacement of nearly every facility in the park, and I can assure you the state does not go about business in this fashion. I want Norton to have a pool, but not in this manner.

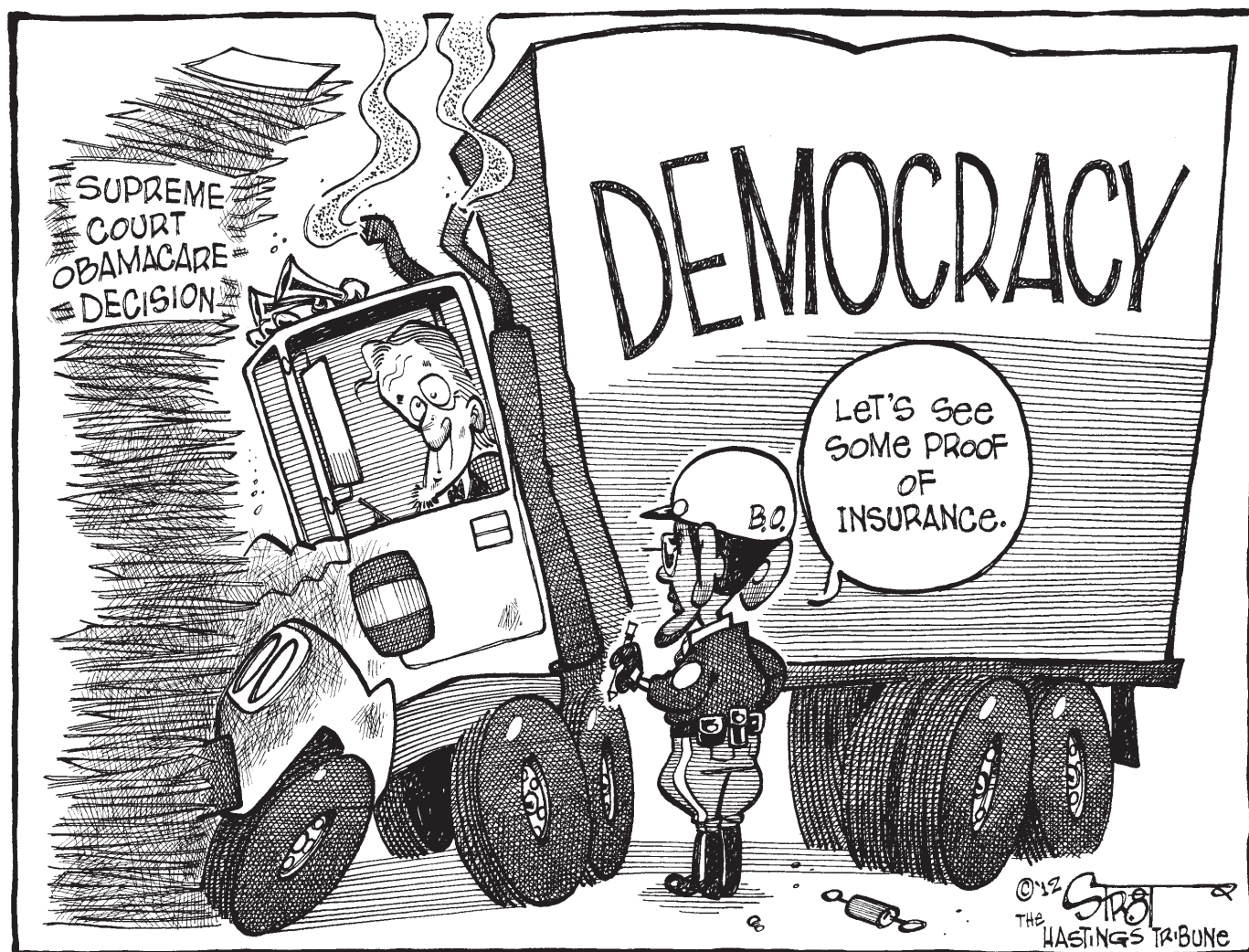


Steve Mathes,
Norton, KS

P.S. Our daughter and her family live in the Kansas City area and her community has a multimillion dollar swimming pool. It costs \$7 per day per person over 'three' years of age to use the pool. How many people in Norton will be willing to pay even \$4 per day for the maintenance and upkeep of a multimillion dollar pool?

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- ★ **U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building Room C-4, Washington, D.C. 20002. moran.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-6521
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 300 SW 10th St., Room 262-EA., Topeka, Kan. 66612. ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us (785) 296-7399
- ★ **Congressman Tim Huelkamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. huelkamp.house.gov (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124
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A pitiful offering given out of love

My husband came in "bearing gifts." It was a pretty pitiful offering, though.

It was terribly quiet in the house this morning and I wondered where he was. That's when he came in holding a small, plastic bucket with about one cup of semi-ripe mulberries. Our mulberry tree is a big producer, but if you don't get sheets on the ground at exactly the right time, the fruit is lost to the wind or to birds.

I even have sheets to use for only that purpose. They are laundered each year and stored in a box marked, "sheets for mulberries." Of course, they look like I've tie-dyed them with a box of purple coloring." But I'm not about to waste a new set of sheets on an occasion that only happens once a year.

This year, the wind was our enemy. Ripe berries would be blown off the branches before we had a chance.

Which explains Jim's desperation attempt to pick them. He loves his cherry-mulberry pie and is determined I will bake one this year. So, I will take his sad, little drab of mulberries and bake him a pie.

-ob-

Yes, I still bake, even in this heat. But I do it early in the morning or late at night. I hope everyone is doing what they can to conserve. But in this kind

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



of oppressive heat it's enough to just stay comfortable. Let alone, cool.

I'm going to start hanging clothes out to dry. With this heat and wind, the ones hung first will be dry before the last ones even get on the line. Like a dryer on steroids.

A report from some national weather data service said this part of Kansas was the hottest spot in the United States last week. It said we hit 118 degrees one day and 115 degrees the next. It's the kind of heat that takes your breath away. When you open a door to the outside, it's like walking into a wall of heat. Miserable.

At least it's a dry heat. I'll still take Kansas heat over Texas heat any day.

-ob-

My friend, Norma, sent me a cute e-mail. Perhaps some truth in it, though.

The message, supposedly written by an elderly person, said that instead of

going to a nursing home they would just check into the local motel.

It quoted nursing homes as charging about \$188 a day as compared to a motel where with your senior discount based on double occupancy, you could get a room for \$59.65 a day. Included with that is cable TV, Wifi, a mint on your pillow, a continental breakfast, shampoo and conditioner, room service and employees that treat you like a guest and not a patient.

Think of it. No household chores. Call room service to change a light bulb or change the sheets. Maybe you want a change of scenery. With all the money you've saved you can call a shuttle bus to take you to the airport and catch a flight to Hawaii. They have motels there, too.

Your kids are guaranteed to come see you because now you have a spa and a pool.

It's really not such a far-fetched idea for those who don't want a big house to care for, but don't need nursing care, either.

-ob-

Norma's e-mail had this little blurb at the end: "Life is like a hot bath. The longer you stay in it, the more wrinkled you get."

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Spending some time with some old friends

Several weeks ago my husband Bob and I went to Iowa to see our precious granddaughters, Annabella and Lillyanne, and just incidentally their parents. We planned the trip so we would drive about half-way the first day and then arrive at their home the second day. We have some friends in the city where we planned to stay overnight. We have not seen them for years, but we have kept in touch via e-mail. Several times they have invited us to visit them when we were in their city, but it had not worked out.

This time it became apparent we would be able to see them. So I e-mailed them and told them when we would be there. I said we wanted to see them and then take them out to eat. The next day we received a phone call, confirming our plans and getting directions to their home.

Upon arrival, we checked into our motel, and then called to let them know we were in town. They gave more specific directions to their home. Their residence was on the opposite side of town from our motel, so the drive took longer than I anticipated. We found the right streets and turns; our only "miss"

Life is Good

Rita Speer



was driving past their driveway.

We had a wonderful visit, catching up with one another. Like us, they have had some health problems. We talked about family and mutual friends. We visited about retirement and what it meant to each of us. Later we went out to eat and shared a wonderful experience of "breaking bread together" both literally and figuratively.

After leaving them, I reflected on what it means to have "old" friends. These are not necessarily people who have gained many years; rather these are folks we have known for a number of years. We may have lost touch and re-connected or we may have stayed in touch over the years, even though we are separated by many miles. When these people are truly friends, it is as though we pick up where we left off when we

were last together. Oh, yes, we had updates about kids, grandkids and in their case a new great-grandchild. But the affection and respect were there, and conversation flowed smoothly.

In the near future, Bob and I will see another set of "old" friends. The wife and I were classmates in nursing school, and she, her husband and Bob all went to high school together. We have a lot of history together. We keep in touch via e-mail, but that's not the same as being together. We look forward to sharing about our families, what retirement is like, mutual friends. And with them we will simply pick up conversation as though it were only last week we were together.

It takes a while to build a friendship; often when a need is met, the friendship dies. But sometimes we are fortunate I would say blessed to have friendships that are sustained regardless of career choices, status in life or family ties. There is mutual respect, a history and great affection. We need these in our lives as well as new, growing friendships. I am grateful to have the opportunity to encounter two such friendships in a relatively short time.



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