

Postal service scheme hurts area retailers

Small-town retailers face yet another competitive hurdle, thanks to a new deal penned by the United States Postal Service.

No, not the good folks at our post office; this threat comes straight out of Washington.

The Postal Regulatory Commission recently approved a multimillion-dollar deal granting deep discounts to Valassis, one of the nation's largest direct-mail marketers.

This deal will allow national advertisers to force-mail their advertising flyers at steep discounts that no other postal customer can get.

Nationally, this deal will hurt many big-city newspapers across the country at a time when these newspapers are already under extreme economic pressure.

And, in the interest of full disclosure, it could also have a slight negative impact on this newspaper, as national chain-store advertising makes up a small percentage of our annual sales. The fact that our prices for inserting advertising flyers are lower than the discount rates given to Valassis will also limit any negative impact from this deal.

However, the impact on independent Main Street retailers that cannot qualify for these discounts is far more chilling. National chains will have a distinct advertising advantage over Main Street retailers and that just isn't fair.

Don't think this will affect us? Think again.

Stores like the Raye's Grocery, Stanley Hardware and Dale's Fish 'n' Fun work hard to compete against national chains like Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Cabela's. They already provide better customer service, pay city and county taxes and donate to our charities in an effort to distinguish themselves from their national chain competitors.

Now, in an attempt to reconcile its staggering losses, the Postal Service is going to help national chains compete against our downtown merchants.

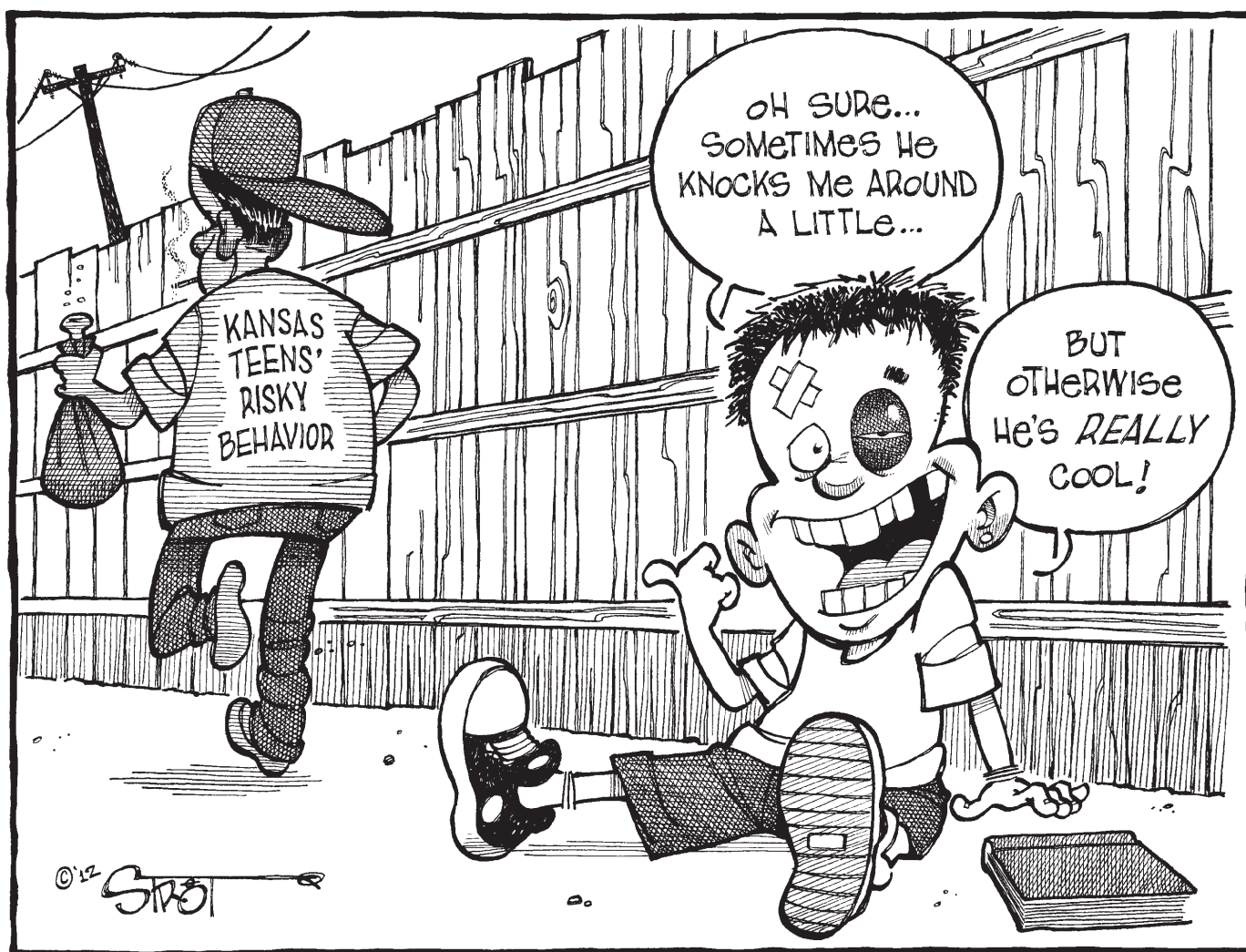
And that, quite honestly, just isn't fair.

We certainly understand the dilemma that the Postal Service faces. It has run up losses of over \$11 billion in the first three quarters of the current fiscal year. But under the best-case scenario, this new scheme with Valassis is only expected to bring in a paltry \$15.6 million in profits during a three-year contract.

At what cost? No one knows, exactly. But the damage to local economies could be far more than the benefit to the Postal Service under these bargain rates.

Bottom line:

It is not the Postal Service's job to choose winners and losers in an already tough economic environment. — Rob Hicks



A community brought together

By the time you read this, an informational meeting will have been held to field questions regarding an increased sales tax to build a new swimming pool. On Wednesday, Community Advocate Colette Miller and Councilwoman Roberta Ryan spoke on the local radio show, Coffee Table, to inform the public about the pool project.

I have told the story before, but it is worth repeating. When our friend from Nevada attended a Norton City Council meeting, he returned saying, "No different than Reno. Just fewer zeros." How true this is. The structure for each community within this great country is basically the same, only the scale differs.

We are a people proud of our way of life and our type of government. We believe we are the greatest country on earth, even if others question that.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



man brought up by a single mom and grandparents or an accomplished businessman with a family history of government service. All possible, not because, of a monarchy or a cache of guns, but rather because of dedication and desire.

The same holds true for those dedicated to the growth and success of this community. When I look around at the many signs promoting the pool, I am aware that many of these people also supported the building of our existing pool many years ago. They believed in Norton then and they still do.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Furthermore we feel entitled to our way of life.

Even children share this pride. Tuesday night the third and fourth grade students from Eisenhower Elementary School, under the direction of Jennifer Ruder, presented a concert. These youngsters delivered a fact filled and emotional tribute to this country, all politics aside.

As we go into the final weeks of the pool campaign, and oh yes the presidential one, we can take pride in the accomplishments of a young black

A calling to all Christians about untruths

Untruths are like toothpaste. Once it's out of the tube it is nigh on to impossible to get it back in!

I have a conservative friend who sends out a lot of misinformation! Entitled "Calling all Christians" a recent offering claimed: "Snopes says this is true!"

It is odd that she would cite Snopes because I'm pretty certain I've also gotten an e-mail from her painting Snopes as a tool of the left wing.

"Calling all Christians" was about a policy banning religious artifacts and publications (including the Bible) at Walter Reed.

Snopes said the policy was enacted, but later rescinded. I was satisfied but I didn't attempt to put the toothpaste back. I'm tired of being the internet police.

One of the 68 people who got the e-mail did correct the poster. "Snopes says this is not true!" To her credit, she forwarded it to all of us!

Later she sent a response from Master Sergeant Shane Saddler, USAF.

An explanation of the policy and why it was originally deemed necessary is lengthy. I will send all the information to anyone who is interested mail to: gneph@yahoo.com.

Shane's strongest statements are about what we should consider before

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



calling others to action in God's name.

"The issue is that 'I am calling all Christians' and not taking the time to read the book myself. I think there is some verbiage in those wonderful Verses of ours about thrown stones and even a little bit about using words out of context. When I call on all Christians, it almost sounds like I am saying God demands this. Who am I to say what God demands when over and over again in His Word, He says I cannot. I won't go so far as to say what that makes the person, but they can read and interpret it for themselves and I would hope they find their way to a bended knee and ask the Almighty Himself not the internet if He would agree. Good news with this is we are all sailing on that same ship and if God has already forgiven them then my grudge should not see the sun set. As for me, I prefer to follow the Voice of the Lord and be the Blessing of Compassion when the Christian radicals use His name in vain."

Further he says, "Father I Pray that any true Christian that receives these emails would not simply forward in Your Name but truly Call On All Christians to say we will not stand by and be observers to the game. We will instead provide an overwhelming compassion and love for our fellow man and we will make sure that it is Your message that goes out."

Micah 6:8 says: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." I love this verse but the temptation is great to use it as a zinger for people I judge are not living up to the charge. Not exactly an attitude of humility! I'm working on it!

I make lots of mistakes, for sure. Almost weekly when I read my column in print, I see errors: a misused word, a spelling or punctuation error. (I cope by blaming whoever is responsible for editing.)

But those are little things. When I am wrong on the facts I hope it will be called to my attention so I can correct it.

When it comes to opinions Shane has expressed it better than I ever could, "Tell people if they want to make a political statement to make one, but do it in their name not God's."



Thumbs up and a big Thank You to the drivers for Norton CARES. There are so few to do so much for so many with so little, that Thank You doesn't seem to cover our appreciation. We need more drivers like you. Emailed in.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in regards to the upcoming vote on November 6th concerning the Norton City Pool. I would first of all like to say that I am in support of a new pool for reasons I will detail below. But, I would also like to acknowledge that I understand and sympathize with both sides of the argument.



In tough economic times, it is very hard to ask a community to fork over more money to fund these types of projects. At a time when every one is watching their dollar closely, asking then to sacrifice some of it seems to be a tough task.

My husband and I grew up in Smith Center, Kansas and always wanted to move back to the area to raise our kids. Finding the right community and right opportunity was at the forefront of our thoughts before graduation from college. We began researching communities around the area, looking at school systems, community involvement, various activities, etc. to see which town suited our needs best. Needless to say, we settled on Norton and haven't looked back.

Norton is a unique town. I feel a sense of community and willingness to help others here more than any town I have lived in. I think Norton continues to be progressive in its ideals, and that allows for ever expanding opportunities to keep this town alive and keep people wanting to come back and live.

Voting yes for the pool is another step in the progressive ladder for Norton. We as a community need these improvements to attract young business owners and people looking for a place to call home. Having high quality housing, amenities, etc. definitely factors in to people's decisions to move to a community, and the opportunity to add an attraction like the pool is too good to pass up.

I ask that Norton be the progressive, forward moving town that my family had come to know and love. Please consider voting "Yes" for the Norton Pool.

Abby Rice
Norton

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