

It's not quite the same situation

Dear Editor:
In the October 16, 2012, issue of The Norton Telegram, reporter Carleen Bell quoted Carolyn Applegate as citing Leroy Lang's successful campaign of eight years ago as a reason for her proceeding with her write-in campaign. I would like to take this opportunity to say that this election and the one 12 years ago (not eight years) are not comparable.

I did not run in or lose the primary election prior to the write-in campaign. Approximately one week before the general election, I was approached by several Norton County residents to run for Commissioner for District II. They believed that it was time for a change and assured me that they would work very hard to achieve this goal in the following week.

After carefully thinking this over, I decided that I should take my turn to help the community keep moving ahead. I am thankful and owe a debt of gratitude to these concerned citizens even today. Thank you again to each of them.

This November 6, it is again time for a change. I will vote for Dr. R. A. Peterson whose name is on the ballot.

Sincerely, Leroy Lang
District II Commissioner 2000-2008



Wildlife and Parks asks for your vote

Support Constitutional Amendment

Vote YES on the watercraft constitutional amendment November 6. The airwaves and our mail boxes are full of information about the candidates in the upcoming election. But also important is a constitutional amendment that - if passed - will allow for fairer taxation of watercraft (boats) and make Kansas watercraft taxation competitive with surrounding states. Some voters may ask, "Why should I care?"

Property taxes on watercraft in Kansas are so high that they impede boat ownership, limiting families' opportunity for wholesome water recreation. Compared to surrounding states, Kansas watercraft property taxes are so high that many Kansans register their boats in neighboring states, so Kansas counties lose property tax revenue. The high tax rates also reduce in-state boat sales, impacting our marinas,

boat dealers, and reducing state sales tax revenue.

The legislature showed bipartisan, overwhelming support - 121 to 2 in the House and 40 to 0 in the Senate - for placing this amendment on the ballot. The amendment may be difficult to understand because the ballot includes the entire article of the constitution that is affected, not just the change. The only change is the addition of the words "and watercraft." Adding just those two words will give the legislature the opportunity to create a fairer tax treatment of watercraft. You can give them that opportunity by voting YES.

This change is good for Kansas and Kansas families, and we encourage you to vote YES on the amendment.

Robin Jennison
Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife,
Parks and Tourism

Ministerial Alliance putting things on hold for now

Dear Editor,
The Norton County Ministerial Alliance has frozen both of our benevolence funds for the present time. Our reason for doing so is a lack of money in our general fund, which we have been using to supplement both the Resident Emergency Need Fund and the Transient Fund. Quite simply, the amount going out has been exceeding the amount coming in for quite some time.

I have worked with the Ministerial Alliance for the past 15 years and this is the first time we have had to say no to any and all applicants.

Please let me assure you that we do our best to operate these ministries efficiently. No one receives a salary. The primary expenses we have are

advertising or costs directly associated to the events we host (concerts, room rental, etc.). We thoroughly interview applicants in order to discern which needs are verifiable and legitimate.

We recognize that these difficult economic times affect not only those whom we assist, but those who donate to our ministry as well. Perhaps there are many who have donated in the past who find it more difficult at present. We understand that. We do ask that individuals as well as churches and community organizations please prayerfully consider making a financial contribution to the Norton Ministerial Alliance at this time. If you are led to do so, know that we are most appreciative.

Thank you for your support over the

years. If you would like to contribute you may send a check to our treasurer, Jerry Cummings, 16838 Eagles Road, Norton, KS 67654

Our next event will be the Thanksgiving Worship Service, Sunday, November 18 at the Norton United Methodist Church. Attendance in recent years has shown it to be our most popular event. To keep up to date on all of our events, "Like" our facebook page, "Norton County Ministerial Alliance".

With appreciation for your prayers and support.

Pastor Kirk Kasson,
Norton County Ministerial
Alliance President.

Keeping the new pool tax proposal a separate issue

Letter to the Editor,
Hello fellow Norton voters. I want to take this time to address our new swimming pool proposal in our Nov. 6th ballot. Everyone should beware that we are voting for a .75 percent increase in our sales tax, that is a ten percent increase from what we are paying now. This new tax is not only for the construction cost and operation of the new pool, BUT also, to finance general operating and capital improvement expenses of the city as permitted by law for the next 20 years. The swimming pool is in desperate

need of replacement, I agree. However we need, as a community, to get the financing right. The pool needs to stand on its own merit.

The way the city has the ballot issue worded, this is not just for a pool, but almost any other capital improvement or expense. When the pool is paid off, the sales tax will not sunset, unless, the council approves it. Right: when was the last time they ever decreased our taxes: If the pool sales tax proposal was for a new pool, it should be for exactly that--increase the sales tax .75 percent to build a new pool--and when it is paid

for in 20 years or less, the .75 percent sales tax sunsets: Period.

If the city has other financing concerns according to the ballot "and to finance general operating and capital improvements of the city," they need to present that as a separate issue. The city has paid for the operation and maintenance of the old pool, they can certainly budget for the operation of the new pool, not from this new tax.

This ballot proposal is a rotten apple dipped in carmel. It looks good at a glance, but the apple is still rotten, and if this ballot measure passes we will get to eat the whole apple.

Make the city get the pool funding issue right, that the new tax is for the new pool. It may take a little longer but it will be worth the wait. Then, we can all support and appreciate the new swimming pool!

Thank you,
David Holzapfel,
A concerned citizen



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Don't judge until you've got all your facts in hand

To The Voters of Norton County

This letter is about the other side, the commissioners' side. After serving 16 years as a Norton County Commissioner, I decided it was time for me to try something different, so I chose not to run in 2012. I debated about answering allegations addressed by some about the current board of county commissioners and whether it would do any good or just cause more conflict. An article in the October 10th issue of the Salina Journal convinced me I've been silent too long.

The article's headline read, "Give Us Specifics Or Keep Your Mouth Shut." This message came from Saline County Commissioner John Reynolds, as that board was seen as being corrupt. That same accusation has been put out at public meetings in Norton County. In my tenure as Commissioner, I have served with some great people and the current board is no exception. I cannot name names as that would be unfair in an election year. I will tell all of you that at no time did any Commissioner that I know ever do anything to gain political clout, and there was never any gifts or money offered for a vote. The people I have served with have always been honorable, ethical people and that has not changed.

Commissioners have all found that sometimes when constituents don't get their way, they are not happy. Commissioners make their decisions following state law; they have no choice. If they go outside the law the county attorney can file charges and have them removed from office. They can't make up laws as they go. The rules apply to all.

If you believe that being a commissioner is an easy job you would be wrong. I'm going to paraphrase what an ex-commissioner told me when I first started. He said, "I'll look forward to your mistakes," and I have always kept that in mind. He also told me to make sure to do my own fact-finding because you cannot depend on others.

I, along with others, have spent countless hours doing our own research to make decisions that we hope are in the best interest for everyone in the county, not just a few. As a commissioner, you have to put your personal biases aside, otherwise you do not belong in office. If anyone thinks that is easy, come talk to me. In my tenure I have tried to make people accountable. We are there to protect your tax dollar; sometimes that is not easy.

Also, a commissioner's responsibilities include being ready to listen to your constituents anytime or anywhere, because that's part of the job. People stop you on the street, call you at home, catch you at a social event, and you have to be willing to listen because that's your job. I truly appreciate voters, or anyone, who takes the time to study the issues and then comes to a meeting, or calls, or stops by my home to talk about those issues.

I do not appreciate the coffee shop hearsay and half truths that are spread around by people who fail to get the facts right without ever really trying to learn the facts. This is something commissioners and other elected officials deal with every day. In the future, Norton County will face many challenges. Make sure you don't throw rocks from inside that glass house.

I hope that everyone in this county will look around and see what a great place this is to live. The many assets we have were not created by sitting around and complaining. Our growth has come from hard work, communication, partnerships and tough decisions by all.

It has been a pleasure to serve Norton County, but has it always been pleasant? No. Many times we lose friends because of our decisions. Remember, this is America where you have the privilege to speak your piece. I've spoken mine for now.

Your Servant, John Miller.

P.S. If you really want to complain about what decisions elected officials do or don't make, have the courage to come to a meeting or call us. Don't talk behind our backs if you don't come get the facts. How can you really complain? Elected officials are subject to two state statutes, KORA and KOMA. We can't hide from them.

County clerk clarifies information

Dear Editor,

Recent campaign information printed in the newspaper states that the "financial figures" were obtained from the County Clerk's office. The only figures obtained from my office were the total budget for Sheriff, Eco Development, County Attorney and EMS. No other figures or information was obtained or asked for.

As always my office is happy to assist with information; how the information is used after being obtained is out of our control.

Respectfully,
Robert D. Wyatt
Norton County Clerk and Election Officer

Letters to the Edit can be sent by e-mail to dpaxton@nwkansans.com or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kansas 67654
All letters must be signed and will be run as space allows.