

New blood needs brought in to continue

If you want to create an event or program to serve your community, the first rule is that successful organizations thrive only when they constantly recruit new workers, members and volunteers.

It's true for an army, a business and most certainly for volunteer groups, from churches to civic organizations of all kinds.

If, however, you want to work real hard for a few years, do some good, then see your baby die, ignore this rule. Do everything yourselves. Don't worry about bringing in new people, because it'll take more time to teach them the jobs that it'll save.

A couple of examples from Oberlin come to mind. At the risk of hurting some feelings, because volunteers have worked well and hard on these tasks, we'll share them. It's because we've learned there is a way to avoid the situation where "everyone" involved is sick and tired of the job, and there's no one to take over.

The first came a few years ago, when the volunteers who had run the county Amusement Authority announced that they were tired and would all quit, leaving the Decatur County Home-owned Carnival without leadership or workers.

As it turned out, a couple of board members did stay on, and they helped guide new volunteers that winter and over the next summer. The first year was rough, since the people who know how to fix and run the rides had quit, but the new crew was tough and resilient. They learned, usually the hard way.

The county's carnival, the oldest in northwest Kansas, has survived and grown, but this crisis could have been averted by making sure to bring in a new person or two each year.

Today, the 10-year-old, highly successful High Plains ArtFest faces a similar crisis. The organizers, members of the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission, say they are tired after 10 years of putting on the show and sale.

If another group will step forward, they say they'll share their knowledge, but otherwise, the ArtFest has seen its last exhibition.

That would be a shame. The founding volunteers, nearly all past retirement age now, have done an outstanding job. The event has grown and prospered, creating a market for area artists that didn't exist before and generating a little excitement at The Gateway each spring.

Perhaps others will step forward. Maybe the City Council can find some new members for the commission who will take the lead. That remains to be seen.

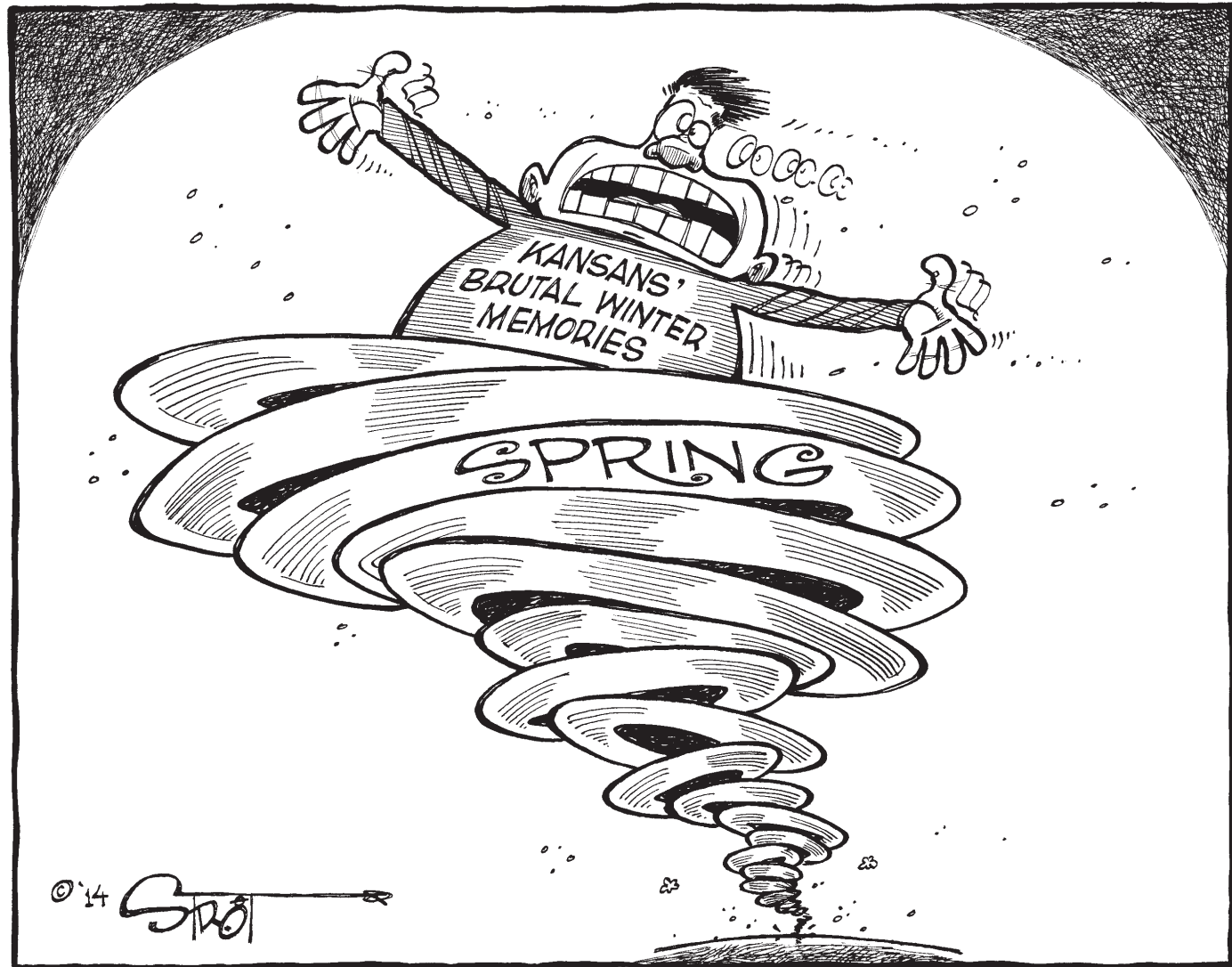
But one thing is for sure. It would have been easier to have a few new people coming on each year, teaching them the ropes a little at a time, so succession would not have to be painful.

Enduring organizations — churches, the Rotary and Lions clubs, many lodges, other successful civic groups, even city and county government boards — share one trait that less formally organized groups often lack. They rotate their leadership each year, building a cadre of experienced members without burning a few people out. They constantly recruit new members, at least the ones that make it, and they expect to replace a few now and then.

Most of these groups learned their lesson the same way everyone else has to: the hard way. But they did learn.

It's easy to say it can't be done, but if you create something and want it to be around after you're gone, it must be done. Let's hope it's not too late for the ArtFest, a wonderful program that fills a real need.

— Steve Haynes



Driving is a responsibility not a privilege

As my grandson stepped off the bus, the family dog, Bella, met him on the porch...like always. My grandson went into the house to put his things away and then he heard it. The sound of a racing pickup and Bella's yelp. The green pickup slowed, momentarily, and then sped off. My grandson ran to Bella's side, but knew immediately, she was seriously hurt. Bella didn't chase vehicles. She sat on the edge of the road, sometimes, but didn't run after them. The momentary slowing of the truck indicates to me, he or she felt something was amiss.

As drivers, we are all aware accidents happen. When I was learning to drive, we were frequently reminded that driving is not a privilege, it is a responsibility. The responsibility is not just one's actions while driving, but in our subsequent reactions, such as stopping when there is an accident.

Only 23 percent of our country's

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



population lives in rural communities, and yet the fatality rate on these country roads is twice that of urban areas. In 2008, over 56 percent of all fatal vehicle accidents took place on rural roads. In 2007, that accounted for over 23,000 lives lost on these roadways. These roads are particularly dangerous for our young people, as 57 percent of all fatalities involving young drivers occurred on rural roads.

One in three of these fatal accidents is directly related to excessive speed. When I was a child, I lived on the same

country road as my grandson. Not many cars passed by our home then and few traveled at high speeds, in part because the road to the east was poorly maintained. Now that road is more like a thorough fare. I don't remember posted speeds on county roads when I was a child, but what I do remember is my dad drilling into me that 25 mph was ample speed when you had graveled or rutted roads. Imagine my surprise when I returned nearly four decades later and saw 50 mph speed limit signs posted. Gravel roads, school buses and 50 mph? Sounds like a recipe for disaster to me.

Bella died surrounded by those who loved her most. The awful memory of her being hit and her shattered body will fade in all their hearts, but it will never go away. The one thing they are thankful for, and I am sure Bella would agree, is that the pickup did not hit a child. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Praying for a better day and rain for a change

Every now and then a person has an epiphany. Mine came at the Northwest Kansas Farm Management summery meeting.

It has to do with BIG issues like drought, Obamacare, the 2014 Farm Program, farm income, and why the Norton School Bond failed.

NW Kansas Farm Management members did very well in 2011, not quite as well in 2012.

Like anyone, if farmers have extra cash they tend to spend it, maybe even splurge. So in 2011 or 2012 mama got a new kitchen, daddy got new equipment and new building to store it in. Times were good. We had a good time.

We anticipated 2013 would be a down year. Neither prices nor yields were good, we are in an extreme to severe drought. Expenses are way up.

Landowners raised rents. Property taxes took a hike. Land prices are way, way up.

In Norton County the average income for Farm Management members was MINUS \$71,367, down from 78,522 in 2012. That is a shift in income of nearly \$150,000 (the wrong way) in one year.

2014? It has not rained. Land is being reappraised. Input costs continue to rise. Wheat prices are up, but are we going to raise any? Cattle prices are up, is there any pasture?

On this page the opinion was put forth owners should share the wealth and support the school bond. What gets over looked is while a house worth \$50,000 15 years ago may now appraise at \$100,000; the only way you have more money in your pocket is if you sell the house.

For farmers, net worth is much higher; the lender may let us borrow more

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



money. (Be very careful.) However they generally prefer the enterprise they are lending for generates enough income to repay principal and interest. Borrowing money to pay taxes does not fall into this category.

On paper farmers are much better off than they were five years ago; however money on a balance sheet and money in the pocket are not the same.

Obamacare? My whole adult life I have believed this country should have a system of National Health Care. I still believe it (sort of).

Personally, and in the case of a lot of farm families, we worked through a lot to self-insure, only to have that policy cancelled.

Our insurance was plenty high but we had a very low deductible. Eventually President Obama did say we could keep that policy for one more year. However we panicked and got another policy before he issued that order.

So while we are grateful we could get a policy that would cover pre-existing conditions, the costs are astounding. Between the premiums and the health saving account, we now need to budget nearly \$2000 per month for health insurance. \$2000! Per month! Even in 2011 and 2012 that would have hurt!

Previously I felt it was a matter of respect to refer to Obamacare as the Affordable Care Act. I've lost my re-

spect for the program and since it is not affordable, Obamacare is the best name I can summon and expect it to be printed!

Moving on to the 2014 "Farm Program" (also misnamed)! 80 percent of the "Farm Program" goes to nutrition programs. There are no direct payments to farmers. I have no problem with that. It just needs to be noted! And the United States Department of AGRICULTURE needs a new name.

As a farm wife I have a farm mindset. I have been accused of being paranoid. When I see anger expressed at farmers because of the USDA's budget, the use of gas guzzling engines, water use practices, chemical and fertilizer use and then my health insurance is cancelled by a law I supported, it is easy to feel beleaguered.

Despite all this farmers at the Farm Management Summery Meeting managed to laugh. Maybe to cover up suicidal thoughts?

Maybe because we know people with worse lives! We choose this. Many never have the opportunity to do exactly what they want to do. We are lucky, even blessed!

Timing is everything. In 2011 or 2012 I'm betting the school bond would have passed. But in 2014 it is one thing a struggling farm family can say no to. It does not mean we do not want good schools or do not understand the problems. It means times are hard.

I wish the Norton Schools the very best, I am thrilled with the education they provided my children. I hope somehow there will be the money to do the things that are absolutely necessary. For all of us I pray for a better day. And a good rain!



Thumbs up to Gary and Carol Erlenbusch for the upkeep of the Veterans's Memorial on Highway 36. Called in.

A big thumbs up to our Norton Junior High Student Volunteers for your help at the Museum. We really appreciate you! Emailed in.

Thumbs up to all the people who stopped their cars at the downtown intersection so that I could retrieve a check that blew out of my hands. I thought it was very nice. Called in.

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.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

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

STAFF
Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director
dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
Michael Stephens..... Reporter
Managing Editor
mstephens@nwkansas.com
Shylo Paxton..... Society Editor
spaxton@nwkansas.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager



Call Dana for your next ad. 785 - 877 - 3361!