

LETTER

You probably have read this before but if not, do so now

Periodically, Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson sends a letter to all city water users pointing out a violation of drinking water standards. In his letter he states near the bottom, "Please share this information with all the people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand mail." Today, we are giving Mr. Lawson some help by posting the letter on the community's biggest bulletin board — The Norton Telegram. —td

His letter reads:
This letter is to notify you that our water system recently violated drinking water standards. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

When disinfection (such as the use of chlorine) is used in the treatment of drinking water, disinfectants combine with organic and inorganic matter present in water to form compounds called disinfection byproducts. The Environmental Protection Agency sets standards for controlling the levels of disinfection byproducts in drinking water, including total trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids. The standard for total trihalomethanes is 80 ug/L or parts per billion, and the standard for haloacetic acids is 60 ug/L. Compliance is based on a four-quarter running annual average. The second quarter 2007 testing results we received show that our system exceeded the standard, or maximum contaminant level for total trihalomethanes. The second quarter 2007 running annual average was 157.5 ug/L.

You do not need to use an alternative (e.g. bottled) water supply. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor. This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. However, some people who drink water containing total trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids in excess of the maximum contaminant level over many years, may experience a problem with liver, kidneys, central nervous system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

We are continuing to work with the Kansas Department of Health & Environment, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure your drinking water meets all standards. The renovation project to bring the water plant up to current Kansas Department of Health & Environment and Environmental Protection Agency standards is currently underway, and should be completed by the end of 2007.

For information regarding this notice, please contact City Administrator Rob Lawson at the city office.

Thumbs Up ...

Lucas Maddy, for getting on the cover of the "Kansas Living" magazine. (called in)

Verla Grysch, for taking the time to personally go through the newspapers and update the Employment/Job Opportunities link on the DiscoverNorton.com Web site. (e-mail)

Eddie and Joan Whitney, on your 60th wedding anniversary, this coming Saturday. (e-mail)

Norton cemetery maintenance crew, for making the cemetery look so great. (e-mail from Denton, Texas)

Gordon and Twila Ingram, on your 50th wedding anniversary to be celebrated on Saturday. (mailed in)

(To submit a name or names for this biweekly column, e-mail tomd@nwkans.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave, Norton, or drop by the office. Thanks for your input!)

Your political connection

- ★ **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- ★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- ★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

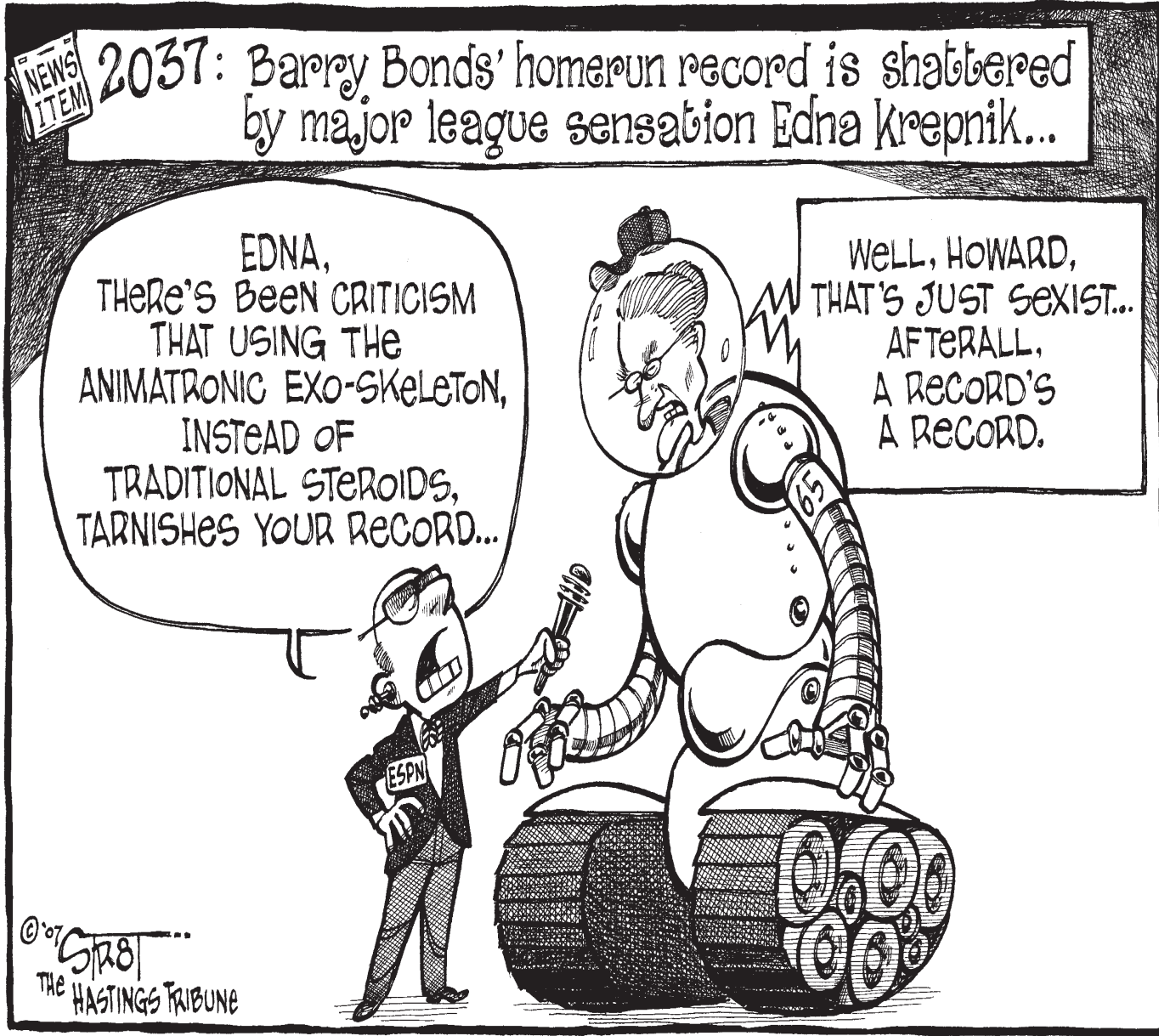
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My lawn wasn't only thing getting soaked

The epitome of foolishness is watering your lawn during a rain shower. But, that's exactly where I found myself Monday morning. I was out before seven watering trees and flowers. Suddenly, a crack of thunder shattered the quiet. But, I surmised it was merely an anomaly and nothing would come of it. The forecast didn't call for rain until Thursday.

I kept watering. Boy! Was I wrong. It didn't even bother to sprinkle as a warning. It just dumped water out of the skies and I got soaked before I could shut off the water.

The good news is everything got a thorough soaking and perhaps I won't bother watering tomorrow.

-ob-

Jim is working in a nearby town today. He left the house about 6:30 a.m. to get an early start before it got too hot. He's helping a friend build a small barn and they're both smart enough to know that they're too old to work outside during the heat of the day.

-ob-

We went to a church supper Sunday night. A group of high school kids from our congregation had gone on a mission trip this summer called "Destination Un-

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



known." They, quite literally, did not know where the trip would take them. The purpose was to see where God would lead them; to trust that God would take care of them; and to bring people into their path who needed help.

They borrowed hand tools, loaded the church van and trailer and packed work clothes for a week. Two containers held their destination. One held slips of paper with directions, north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest. The other container held drive times. One hour, two hours, three hours, 1.5 hours, 3.5 hours.

The morning of their departure a member of the team drew "South" from their direction container and "3.5 hours" from the drive time container. Every day they drew a new direction and drive time.

We followed the kids' progress through the blog written by our youth minister

who accompanied them on the trip. The mission trip took them south and west. Eventually, ending in New Mexico. But, hearing the kids tell, in their own words, how the experience changed their lives was really impressive.

They cleaned up a woman's yard who had no one to help her; they ministered to an alcoholic man and his mother; they shared themselves with residents of a nursing home and patients in a hospital; and finally cleaned up a woman's house and yard that was in a condition the kids had never seen. That woman wrote the group a thank you letter and called them "angels on earth." It was humbling for them and they are forever changed.

We don't have to leave town to find someone to help. There is plenty of need right here. But, is anyone, actually, doing anything? Perhaps you might be the one to organize a monthly "mission trip" in your hometown.

I heard one senior citizen say she sure wished someone would come help her get her house ready for winter. And, if there's one, there are bound to be dozens more.

It's my continuing challenge. If everyone would just do one little thing to help someone else we could accomplish great things. We could all be "angels on earth."

No-till farming has number of benefits

Insight John Schlageck

Not too many years ago, most farmers took great pride and pleasure in looking across their recently planted fields and seeing green seedlings emerging against a backdrop of black soil. That looked beautiful — still does. Today, some farmers look across their land and see residue cover. That looks beautiful too. However, the benefits of residue can far exceed the way the field looks.

Residue cover is developed by not tilling the ground across today's Kansas countryside.

"It's this build up of soil structure with residues that can be a farmer's best friend," says Paul Jasa, University of Nebraska, extension engineer. Jasa spoke to nearly 100 ag producers at the 6th annual No-till Workshop in Osage County July 31. Osage County Farm Bureau, Kansas Farm Bureau and No-till on the Plains, Inc. sponsored this one-day event.

Uniformity is the key to a successful no-till farming system, according to Jasa and Keith Thompson who hosted the tours on his family's farm in Osage County. Thompson farms with his father, brothers and son.

When producers think of uniformity, they should think of it every day of the year, Jasa says. When they look at their fields, they should see uniformly spread residue, uniform soil conditions and uniform soil moisture.

Jasa is quick to note that uniformity is something producers have to work at continually over the long haul.

Another important element of no-till farming involves using the moisture where it falls, Jasa says. So often producers worry about how much rain they receive. "They should be concerned about how much water they are storing in their soil for their crop to use," he says. "That's where residue is critical. It keeps the rain that falls in the fields."

Jasa told the producers at the conference about the many times he's heard farmers bemoaning their lack of yields on their upland crops.

"Producers say hillsides never yield because the water runs off and the bottom catches all this water and yields better," Jasa says. "With a long-term, uniform soil structure, no-till hillsides can yield just as well as the bottom land."

With moisture savings, yields increase, Jasa says. Three to five extra bushels of soybeans per inch of moisture, 12 extra bushels of corn and five extra bushels of wheat.

Tour host Thompson has been continuously no-tilling since 1991. Today he's

100 percent no till and says he'll never go back to conventional tillage.

"The most difficult time for those beginning no-till is during the first three to five years," Thompson says. "That's when anything and everything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Believe me. I know. We've experienced it."

Producers tend to blame these problems on no-till without realizing it is something in their system, Thompson says.

"That's why you need a friend or another producer who has been successful at no-till to share his experience with you," he says. "You can't afford to make all the mistakes all yourself."

While his soils don't hold as much moisture as some, the Osage County farmer believes he may benefit from up to five days extra moisture with his no-till program. It is the continuous no-till farming that makes the system work and causes build up of the soil structure.

Thompson labels no-till a win-win situation. In addition to the benefits he experiences on his farm, he believes it also benefits his neighbors in the city.

"Cleaner water and less dirt in the air is a plus for urban folks and for us in agriculture," Thompson says. "We use less chemicals. We have less cost in fuel and fertilizer and I have more time to spend with my family. That's what it's all about."

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwest Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.