

## An amendment is just too much

The president and many in Congress are running around worrying that the sky is falling when the only thing falling on their heads are bad ideas.

The president has called for a Constitutional amendment to stop homosexuals — gays and lesbians — from marrying each other.

This is swinging a steam shovel to kill a fly.

A Constitutional amendment is a big deal. In more than 200 years, there have only been 27. They have been for such things as giving the vote to minorities and women, allowing citizens to disagree with the government and giving the states certain rights, though admittedly those seem to be getting fewer and fewer.

A Constitutional amendment is not needed to solve every problem in our society. The “problem” of some states allowing same-sex couples to “marry” is not that big a deal. It’s a point of view; a reason for easily excitable people to get all aflutter.

Excuse us, folks, but this is a non issue. Allow the states to do their thing. It doesn’t make any difference. It’s not skinning our nose at all.

There is no such thing as marriage between two same-sex people. Marriage is the union of a man and woman before God, period.

That said, there is no reason that two people who are committed to each other cannot join in a legal union. This isn’t marriage, but a legal contract similar to marriage, the purchase of a business or adoption.

As for insurance benefits and Social Security, it is up to those who administer these programs to decide if they will allow partners in “legal unions” to have benefits under the program.

Disney has long allowed partners of any sex to share in its benefit programs. That is a corporate decision made to attract talented people to the company with benefits they couldn’t get most other places. This is perfectly legal and probably a good decision for Disney.

Social Security does not allow benefits to “legal unions,” whether they be same-sex couples or those of opposite sex, for partners who have never married. This, too, is a legal decision, made to protect the program.

Neither Disney nor Social Security is wrong. They have different aims and both should be allowed to do what is best for itself.

If the federal government would just forget about gays and lesbians marrying, the whole issue would die down. Yes, some couples would still go to California to get “married,” but no one would care except them.

It’s time the federal government got its nose out of others’ business and went back to solving the problems that need a steam shovel — like health care, foreign policy and where will the next parking garage in Washington be.

— Cynthia Haynes



## Passion an experience unlike any other

What can I say about “The Passion” that hasn’t already been said?

Knowing that it was premiering in a neighboring town last Wednesday, I contacted the theater owner at his home to see if he was pre-selling tickets. He assured me that if someone showed up at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday night when the box office opened, they could buy tickets to the next evening’s performance. I made sure Jim was there. The first show was sold out, but he came home, proudly displaying two tickets for the 9:30 p.m. viewing.

I’m guessing there were about 100 people in the theater that Wednesday night. There was the usual laughing and buzz of conversation you would expect as the audience waited for the lights to go down.

I’m not going to critique the show or tell you what I think. I don’t want to spoil it for you or diminish it in any way, if you choose to experience “The Passion.” I say “experience,” because you don’t merely “see” this movie. But, I will say this: when that crowd left the theater after the lights came back up, after wiping away the tears and blowing their noses, it was in stunned silence that they walked to their cars.

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



It’s not a movie for children. Parents should see it first then decide if their child is mature enough, emotionally and spiritually, to see it. And even then, parents should watch it with their kids so they can answer questions.

This is not a time to just drop the kids off at the theater and tell them to call you when they need a ride home. If your kids are way too young to see it, buy the video when it comes out and save it for them. It will become a timeless tool.

—ob—

Finally! Rain! Jim’s rain gauge (a bucket in the back yard) looks like it contains about an inch and a half. It’s not exact, but close enough. Since we haven’t had any measurable moisture for so long, who cares if we’re off a hundredth or two.

It’s wet. It’s muddy. And we love it.

We just about got stuck right in front of the house as we were leaving for church Sunday morning, but some fancy steering and front-wheel drive pulled us through.

Makes me think of that old saying, “The success of a rain dance depends a lot on timing.”

—ob—

My friend Sonia wrote saying she loved my column on housekeeping. She said it made her look good and she was going to show it to her mother-in-law.

This week I get to prove what I said about being a good house cleaner. We are having a dinner party Saturday night and from the looks of this place, we ought to claim we’ve been burglarized. This morning Jim asked me what I’m making for dinner that night. I answered, “Reservations.” He almost didn’t laugh.

Oh, please. I hope you know it’s not that bad. And we love to have company. I might fuss around getting ready, but when friends arrive, I forget that I didn’t dust the knick-knacks or vacuum under the sofa. And I sure hope when someone invites me over to dinner they don’t worry about trying to impress me.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor:

I am in agreement with the county commissioners in asking Norton County Treasurer Cynthia Linner to wait on remodeling her office. With the economy the way it is, especially in rural areas like ours, we all have to watch expenses. Unless the county treasurer’s office has lines of people waiting for a long time to be served, then remodeling is something that should be put way low on any spending list.

If and when Mrs. Linner gets the green light to remodel, I would like to remind her that the money, no matter what fund it is coming from, is Norton County taxpayer’s money. That money should be spent with Norton County businesses to keep our economy strong. To take Norton County taxpayers money out of the county and state to spend it, weakens the local economy and does not encourage or

strengthen our business people and therefore is detrimental to us.

I have purchased my computer desk and office chair and other items from End Zone here in Norton and am quite satisfied with the quality and efficiency of the furniture. I believe that Mrs. Linner would find that office furniture and supplies purchased from local merchants will be more than satisfactory for her office to have.

Sincerely,  
A Norton County taxpayer,  
June Prout

*Editor’s Note:* All county officials must get at least two bids before purchasing large items. This is the law. Since End Zone is the only store in town, which carries the type of office furniture the treasurer’s office needed, it was necessary for her to get an out-of-town bid, whether she wanted to or not.

To the Editor,

This is an “S.O.S” call to the Norton School Board and the Community of Norton to “Save Our Sport”.

As concerned fans, we are upset about the recent decision to terminate the high school girls tennis program and would like to see it reinstated.

Tennis is a nationally recognized sport that offers not only physical health benefits, but psychological and social benefits as well. Tennis helps build both aerobic and anaerobic fitness by burning fat and increasing general body coordination and agility. Playing tennis helps keep players mentally sharp.

Once the basic skills are learned, tennis becomes 90 percent mental, forcing players to think constantly, to decide when and where to hit the ball, and to evaluate their opponents’ strengths and

weaknesses. It offers social interaction with new people and can be as competitive as the player desires, including local, regional and national tournaments at all skill levels. Tennis is a “lifetime” sport enjoyed by people of all ages.

As parents and fans, the safety of our children always comes first and we realize that the courts are no longer structurally safe to practice or compete on. The 2003 Norton Community High tennis team had 18 team members. As citizens, we are also concerned as to where these girls’ interests may lead if the program is terminated.

Several members of the community as well as students utilize the tennis facilities. We would like to have the Norton School District, City of Norton, and the Norton community’s support in getting new courts built and the tennis program reinstated for the 2004 season. We are

working with local contractors, trying to get a cost estimate on new tennis facilities. Our goal is to build four new courts in a more structurally conducive location in time for the fall season. Please show your love for tennis and help us save our sport by attending the Norton Board of Education meeting at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Alice Tweed Center.

Thank you for your support,  
Deanna Nelson, Jay and Kathy Holste, Jim Green, Jim Antrim, Karen L. Griffiths, Kris Fahrenbruch, Joel Duscher, Jamie Applegate, Lori Duscher, Denise Bailey, Gail Bailey, Deb Thiele, Rhonda Reusink, Lynn Thiele, Lisa Donovan, Connie Green, David Donovan, Craig Foley, Mike and Jan Volgamore, Tami and Kevin Black, Shelley Donovan, Ronnie and Vicki Fisher, Ward Foley, and Gary Lacy

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To the Editor:

March 1-7 has been designated as Agricultural Safety Awareness Program Week to remind us that in the rush of completing the work on farms and ranches, everyone needs to take time to act safely.

The theme for 2004 is “Tractor Safety is No Accident.” Tractor overturns with no rollover protection account for nearly half of farm fatalities. While tractors are an essential part of agriculture, there are safety issues to consider when operating them. During Agricultural Safety Awareness Program Week, we are asking everyone to remember these rules:

1. Know your tractor, its implements and how they work. Teach your family members and employees how to shut off equipment.
2. Use rollover protective structures and seat belts.
3. Be familiar with your terrain and drive safely. Use caution on slopes, slow down for all turns and stay off the high-

way whenever possible. Keep slow-moving-vehicle signs on your equipment.

4. Never start an engine in a closed shed or garage.
5. Always keep your power takeoff properly shielded.
6. Keep your hitches low and always on the drawbar.
7. Never jump off a moving tractor or leave one with the engine running.
8. Never refuel while the engine is run-

ning or hot.

9. Keep all children off of and away from your tractor and its implements at all times, and enforce a NORIDERS policy.

10. Never be in a hurry about anything to do with your tractor.

You are important to your family and your community. Be safe!

Dan Skrdlant, President  
Norton County Farm Bureau  
Association Board

## WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.