

One vote really can make a difference

You thought your vote didn't count. That's why you didn't bother to go to the polls. It was too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, too early, too late. You were busy. The Norton County canvassing board was busy, too. On Monday it looked over all those votes from those who bothered. Those who cared. Those who took the time to vote. It took less than two hours but in the end they declared that John Miller had received 239 and George Gassmann, 238. That's one vote. That's the ballot you either cast or didn't cast. Lots of people went to the polls but it was still less than half of those who could. The state, we are told, is happy with slightly less than 50 percent. That's a good turnout, they say. In Norton County 49 percent of the eligible voters had their say. The rest didn't bother, didn't remember, didn't care. After all the regular ballots were counted and checked, Mr. Miller had 238 and Mr. Gassmann 234 votes to become the Republican candidate for county commissioner in the Third District in the November election. Then they looked at the provisional ballots. Provisional ballots are those cast by people that may or may not be eligible. They let everyone who's 18 years old and lives in Norton County vote. If they have any qualms about the ballot, they put it in a special envelope. After everything else is counted the county clerk looks at the reasons that the provisional ballots were put aside and decides if they are valid or not. Then the envelopes are opened, the names destroyed and the ballots piled on the table. This year there were 30 provisional ballots. Of those, 19 were declared valid. Of those 19, three were Democrats; three were voting in district two, where there was also a race; seven either didn't vote for a commission candidate or were in District 1, where there was no race and one left the entire ballot blank. Then there were the votes that counted in District 3 — four of them for Mr. Gassmann and one for Mr. Miller. There may be a recount. Mr. Gassmann has the right to ask that every one of the votes be recounted. One isn't a very large margin when you've put in all that time, trouble and money. But, whether there is a recount or not, every vote counts. Every person willing to go to the polls, every person willing to fill out an absentee ballot, every person who tried, you have a voice. You care. Thank you. Now where were the other 51 percent? — Cynthia Haynes

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.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

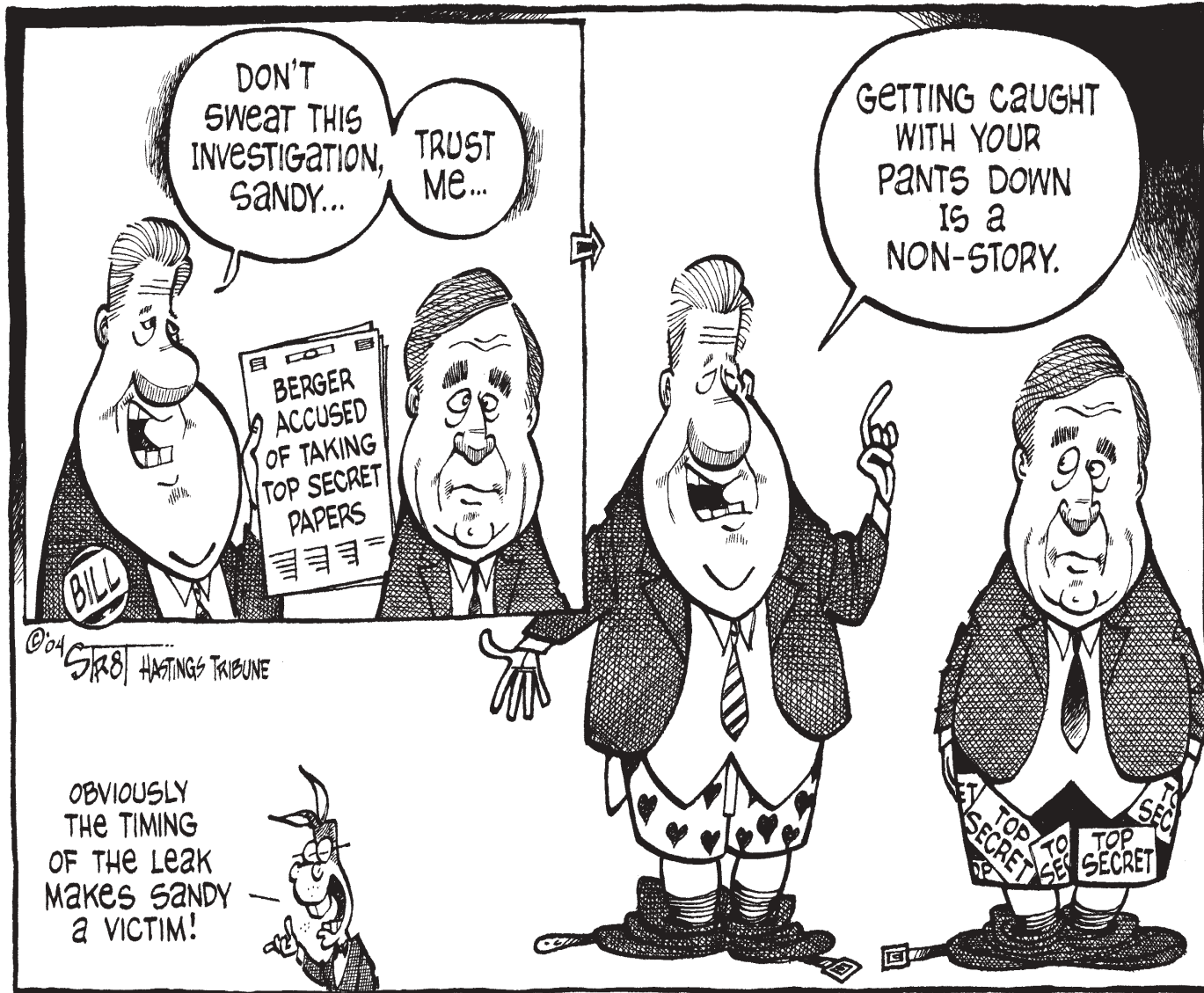
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Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
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Is the 'senior' discount worth it?

I can't decide if I want to be considered a senior citizen or not. A few years ago, if a teen-aged checker asked me if I qualified for the senior discount, I would get indignant, puff up and reply, "I'd rather pay the full price than admit I was that old."

Now, I scan the advertisements to see if I qualify for the discounts or if I have to send Jim in, since he just crossed the bar to the higher age range some stores require.

I've noticed, too, that store clerks don't often ask anymore if I qualify. They just assume.

If they were smart, though, they would ask everyone if they qualified. Think of the goodwill they would create for their store. Every little 90-year-old lady for miles around would shop there just to be flattered.

—ob—

How many car accidents are caused at this time of year, do you think, when a passenger yells, "Look at those naked ladies!"

Naked ladies are, of course, a long-

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



stemmed, pale-pink flower that blooms around the first of August every year. I apologize for not knowing the botanical name of these unusual flowers, which derive their name from the fact that there are no leaves on the long slender stalk.

I probably couldn't pronounce it anyway.

We have several clusters of the beauties, and I cut a large bouquet for my desk at work. I wouldn't be home enough to enjoy them there, and they are very short-lived, so everyone at the office got to enjoy them with me. At least I think they enjoyed them. No one complained of allergies.

—ob—

A phone call last Wednesday afternoon made my day. A little voice on the other end said, "Hi Grandma. I knew you would want to know everything about my first day at school."

It was Taylor, and she had just finished her first day of kindergarten.

I asked the usual questions: Did she have fun? What did she wear? Did she make any new friends? Is her teacher nice? Did she learn anything?

When Taylor talks, you need to "listen fast" because she runs at a rapid-fire rate punctuated with "Guess what?" That is actually a rhetorical question, because she often does not wait for you to answer, "What?"

Without hesitation, she informed me that she did have fun, that she wore a pink dress with flowers on it, that she made two new friends but she couldn't remember their names, and that her teacher was nice. But there was a hesitation when I asked if she had learned anything, followed by a long, drawn-out, "We-I-I-I-I."

That's what I thought. Just forget about school. She already knows it all.

Road work isn't such a bad thing

We are such creatures of habit. They opened the newly rebuilt two miles of K-9 and U.S. 283, yet I found myself stopping at the stop sign (which is no longer there) when I turned to go to Norton this morning.

It's like Claudell, near where we are going to be moving. I tell people you turn and go north at Claudell. Yep, turn where the elevator used to be.

I got to travel the new road Sunday. I don't think I stopped then but it was foggy so I wasn't going very fast anyway. It was dark when I came home so the full impact of the new road did not register.

They do such a good job of blending the new in with the old that one has to really think to remember what it was once like. Before long we won't even remember how things used to be, and we'll forget to be grateful for the improvements.

Like longing for the good old days. Sure life was simpler but do we really want to have to use the outhouse in the dead of winter?

It is interesting to me to watch the road construction. By traveling the bypass road at 40 mph we got a first-hand view of the new road as it was being built. Well, some of us traveled 40 mph, some of us got tickets.

The bypass caused a lot of confusion for motorists unfamiliar with the area. Many times I have seen cars coming from Norton and miss it.

They went to the corner and turned around. Or just slammed on the brakes and backed up. Some turned and came west very slowly.

They would get a few yards, a mile or maybe clear to Lenora before knowing something was not right but unsure what to do about it.

It has been amusing to watch. What are tourists for except to amuse the locals? (Or is that loco?)

They are already tearing the bypass

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



road out. That is an interesting process also. I like watching the big machines just eat up the asphalt and augur it into the trucks.

You are probably thinking not only am

I loco but I am very easily entertained.

Okay, maybe I do need to get off the farm more often. It's going to be easier to do come November when the road opens to Hill City again.

Can you imagine that trip without all those little roller coaster hills? That will really be great. It looks like there is going to be some major renovation of U.S. 36 west of Norton, the railroad overpass on the east end of town is vastly improved.

It is good to see these projects in the works or done.

Now if I can just remember not to stop where the stop sign used to be.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Mother-in-law proud of candidate

To the Editor:
(An open letter to Doug Sebelius)

Dear Doug,
I am packing to go to Denver so I won't see you until I return. Before leaving, however, I wanted to tell you I am proud of you for being honest and running a clean campaign.

It is much better to be honest and lose a political job than to lie about your opponent's beliefs and win. Since your opponent received money to back him

from lobbyists in Topeka (according to a flashy card sent through the mail where he quoted you incorrectly) he will now be indebted to them.

Will that be helpful to constituents in northwestern Kansas?

I'm very proud of you for being honest, Doug.

Love,
Your mother-in-law,
Francine Gruver
Norton

Oregon man isn't pleased with the paper

To the Editor:
This is just to let you know how I feel about what has been a good home town paper up until the last two years.

The price has went up about double, has cut down to two papers a week and very little news. Also all other newspapers in the vicinity help out the senior citizens.

I have enclosed my check for one more year. From all my friends in Kansas (Norton) I hear nothing but negative remarks about what used to be a good home town paper.

Frank Horesky
Forest Grove, Ore.