

Handwriting is becoming a lost art

In today's world, there are computers in practically every home and in all schools.

Kids can go almost anywhere and do almost anything on a computer — and, most are much better on the computer than their parents.

One of the nice things about computers is being able to read what is being written. Unfortunately, much of the handwriting skills have slipped to the side — some have slipped to the bottom and are completely illegible.

In a recent article, the writer was saying that brain research indicates good old fashioned penmanship could be a contributing factor in the "dumbing down of America" and to rising illiteracy.

Handwriting evidently has a physiological/psychological link in the brain, and the writing process has a powerful impact on the young brain.

The repetitive manipulating of the thumb and fingers is supposed to have an impact on the brain. By using the left brain-right hand connection, there is a stimulation that not only taps the left brain where the language capacities are located but it helps the student to focus and learn to read.

The article suggested that handwriting exercises be used with therapeutic music which further stimulated the brain.

In a Denver school, students had improved on basic skills tests when the teacher used the writing exercises with music. It was even supposed to help students with attention deficit disabilities.

Today's teachers are already bogged down with more record keeping and testing along with the teaching duties. The writing exercises are just one more thing to do (and this writer is not saying that writing skills are not practiced daily in the local schools).

What is the answer?

Letter writing, especially the handwritten letter, has almost become a lost art. Now, the person sits down to the computer, hooks up to e-mail and writes a short message or a note. The receiver answers back in a short note.

Whatever happened to the letter that was kept for weeks and read and re-read?

But, then, what happened to those who read books? Those books took the readers to places they had never been to, experience things they had never done — the imagination had no limits.

Today, kids don't have to read. Many can't read and, besides, they don't have to read because they have the television which is in full color and takes them everywhere.

Technology is extremely important, but are our children getting everything they need?

It is important to remember all "learning" doesn't necessarily have to be done in school. Parents can take 10 minutes a day and, with a little music and a pencil and paper, give their children the opportunity to use their "left brain and right hand" and, maybe get a jump start in learning.

— Karen Krien



A funny thing happened on the way...

Bill Ingvall, a cowboy comedian, says if you want to feel better about yourself go to a state fair. Last weekend I watched almost 350 head of market lambs go through the show ring and a lot of people.

Bill has it right. You see a lot of absurd things. And I did end up feeling a lot better about myself. But these are two different stories.

The most absurd thing we saw was on the way home. We saw a woman jogger, about eight months pregnant, in a sports bra with her shorts below her belly and her tummy completely exposed. She was very tan and also very fit. But you know, I don't like seeing anyone's tummy, even flat ones (ask my daughters, I'm on them all the time). Another thought — could the baby be born with skin cancer?

I'm kidding of course. Last spring a teacher at Norton High told me she thought the bare belly trend was on it's way out. The problem is the people who look the worst are the last ones to get the memo.

I saw some pretty chubby people trying to carry it off.

And then there is the "plumber's pants" problem. We do have a "crack" problem in this state.

We go to the fair every year. We enjoy checking out commercial booths for new products. We have our favorite food vendors.

Food tends to be very expensive. After lunch on Friday Jr. decided he wanted ice

Back Home Nancy Hagman



cream. He paid \$3.50 for a single dip waffle cone.

Being a good wife I did not comment on the price.

Later in the afternoon he decided we should get a drink. We didn't want to go too far from the sheep barn. The first lemonade place we came to was high priced but I decided I would go for it. Jr. balked. I bought. It was fresh squeezed. It was delicious. Okay, it was \$5.

We headed back to the sheep barn. "Do you want a sip?" I asked (he never offered me a lick of ice cream).

We went through the rabbit building on the way back. They have a place called the "Hoof and Horn" in there. Their drinks were considerably cheaper.

Jr. got a lemonade. It was made from a powdered drink mix.

He said when he was in line one of the workers in the stand said "they are selling drinks this size for \$4 on the Midway." I hope he didn't correct them. "No, it's \$5 and see that woman over there — she just bought one."

My poor children, when they read my

will they will be thinking "if only mom had restrained herself at the 2004 state fair."

Still I am pretty sure that was the best lemonade I have ever tasted, certainly the most expensive.

On Saturday I marked classes with kids. I wanted to be sure and watch at the market lamb show. The Norton County kids, some others I knew and Colby Hagans from Lane. His mom, Debbie, was in 4-H with me.

Now we come to the part about feeling better about myself.

Debbie told me how much she loved my column. In fact she told me she had started subscribing to the paper just to read it. I have to say I was pretty flattered.

Hey Cynthia, how about a raise? The price of lemonade is outrageous these days.

Debbie asked how often I wrote and I answered "I only work when the spirit moves me."

Of course my sister-in-law, Gail, took the wind right out of my sails, "That runs in the family!" she pointed out.

Fairs, sporting events, home tours, we attend these events because we want to see what is new or who won or to just get out of the house. But anytime you meet friends you make a good time to recall in the future. And you will feel better, I promise.

FYI — Friday evening we ate at the "Hoof and Horn" and they have excellent burgers at a low price.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Claims shouldn't be made without proof

To the Editor:
In my mail, I got a letter for "Norton County Environmentalists". In the letter was a computer diagram, which "showed" weeds and manure. Even with a healthy imagination, a person could not see weeds or manure. Also, it made claims against two of our commissioners, but failed to produce proof.

Freedom of speech is one of our privileges, which carries with it a responsibility

that everyone should obey. No one can yell "fire" in a crowd, and no one should try to discredit a person without proof.

I looked for a name, or names, of those who sent the letter, but of course, there was none. If you can't sign your name, if you can't stand behind your words, that says it all.

Judy Wyatt
Norton

Prescription benefit not the best plan

Last November, I voted against legislation that created a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. This \$500 billion plan was a significant part of the Republican agenda. During my eight years as a state senator in Topeka, and in the eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have never been under such pressure to vote contrary to what I thought was right. The way I was being pressured to vote was not in the best interest of the folks back in Kansas, nor was it good for our country.

I do believe Medicare should provide a prescription drug benefit for seniors, especially for those that could not otherwise afford their medicines. This is an important issue to me; I believe that the cost of health care and prescription drugs remains the top issue facing our country.

However, the bill that Congress approved fell short. My greatest concern is that it does nothing to reduce the price of prescription drugs, instead forcing taxpayers to pick up the tab. The prescription drug plan may bankrupt the Medicare trust fund and reduce the chances that hospitals, doctors, nursing homes and home health care services will remain viable, especially in rural communities.

I believe that seniors will find the drug card difficult to use because it is confusing. Furthermore, seniors will not truly benefit from the prescription drug benefit because the wholesale prices of drugs will continue to increase at a rate equal to the "savings" under the drug card. The in-

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



creased co-payments will still leave seniors struggling to pay for their prescriptions and may, over time, force our local pharmacists out of business.

In addition, the true cost of this legislation remains unknown but will certainly add trillions of dollars to the national debt.

Never were these concerns addressed.

I met with House leadership, including the Speaker, prior to the vote and informed them of my intention to vote "no". This vote put me at odds with my party's legislative agenda, but my duty is to represent the people of the First District, and that comes before partisan politics.

The First Congressional District of Kansas is considered a "safe Republican" district. Therefore, the expectation is that its representative will always vote the position of Republican leadership.

However, I have never considered my Congressional seat "safe", and I work hard every day to earn the right to represent the folks back home. I am a Republican, but I represent all Kansans — Republican and Democrat Kansans and Kansans who don't vote.

Casting votes is a responsibility that I take seriously. I educate myself, study the issues, ask for advice, listen to Kansans, and then decide how to vote.

I have never ducked tough issues, and I make decisions every day on what I think is in the best interests of the citizens of Kansas who elected me to work on their behalf. Sometimes that is in line with Republican leadership, other times it is not.

The fact is, when it comes to choosing between what I am being told to do in Washington and what I believe is in the best interest of Kansans, I will choose Kansans every time.

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.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654
Published each Wednesday 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, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

STAFF
Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Kristen Brands reporter
Carol Erlenbusch advertising rep.
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

Nor' West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

