

## Norton receives a pat on the back

You often wonder how others view our town. We always hope it is in a positive light. But for that to happen a number of things must come together.

Apparently those things did just that a week or so ago and it impressed some visitors. They saw Norton as a spirited community. Of course we know that, and it is pleasing when others also discover that trait.

Putting our best foot forward is always in our best interest. It is rare that we turn to a letter to the editor as the basis for an editorial. But after reading such a letter that was high in praise of the community of Norton, we felt it needed to be shared in this particular spot on this page.

So here goes:

To the Editor,  
I would like to thank the community of Norton for the hospitality that was shown to the Mill Valley wrestling team and fans during the annual J.R. Durham Invitational Wrestling Tournament. That weekend (Jan. 7) is truly one of the high points for our wrestling team during the season. Not only are we able to compete against some of the best wrestlers in the state, but our athletes are able to wrestle in front of the most knowledgeable and largest crowd we will see until the state tournament.

Our athletes and parents were very impressed with the spirit of the community. They were amazed at the crowds for the basketball games Friday night in addition to the crowd for the tournament on Saturday. They were even more impressed that the games and tournaments were broadcast on the radio, TV, and Internet. I am not certain if they read the tournament preview article in the newspaper, but if they had they would have been impressed yet again.

The tournament itself is expertly run, and the administration and staff at NCHS deserve a pat on the back for the high quality of the tournament. Details such as the hand calligraphy on the brackets and the fact that all wrestlers were able to wrestle at least two matches even if they lost pig-tail matches are details that are not common to most tournaments.

I would especially like to thank Coach Johnson for arranging a place for our athletes to stay, and all those who volunteered to board them. Without this generosity we would not be able to attend this tournament. I would also like to thank Dan Pfannenstiel and Pizza Hut for donating pizza for the long trip home. Our athletes were much happier with full stomachs on the ride home!

In conclusion I would like to thank Norton for being the wonderful community I have always known. Norton is truly a special place because of the support of the entire community. I know I speak for my head coach Travis Keal, as well as our entire program when I say we can't wait to come back next year!

Sincerely,  
Kale Mann  
for the wrestling team  
and fans from Mill Valley

No amount of money could ever buy that kind of publicity. It's just simply nice to know that Norton is what it is because of you.  
—Tom Dreiling, publisher

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## THE NORTON TELEGRAM

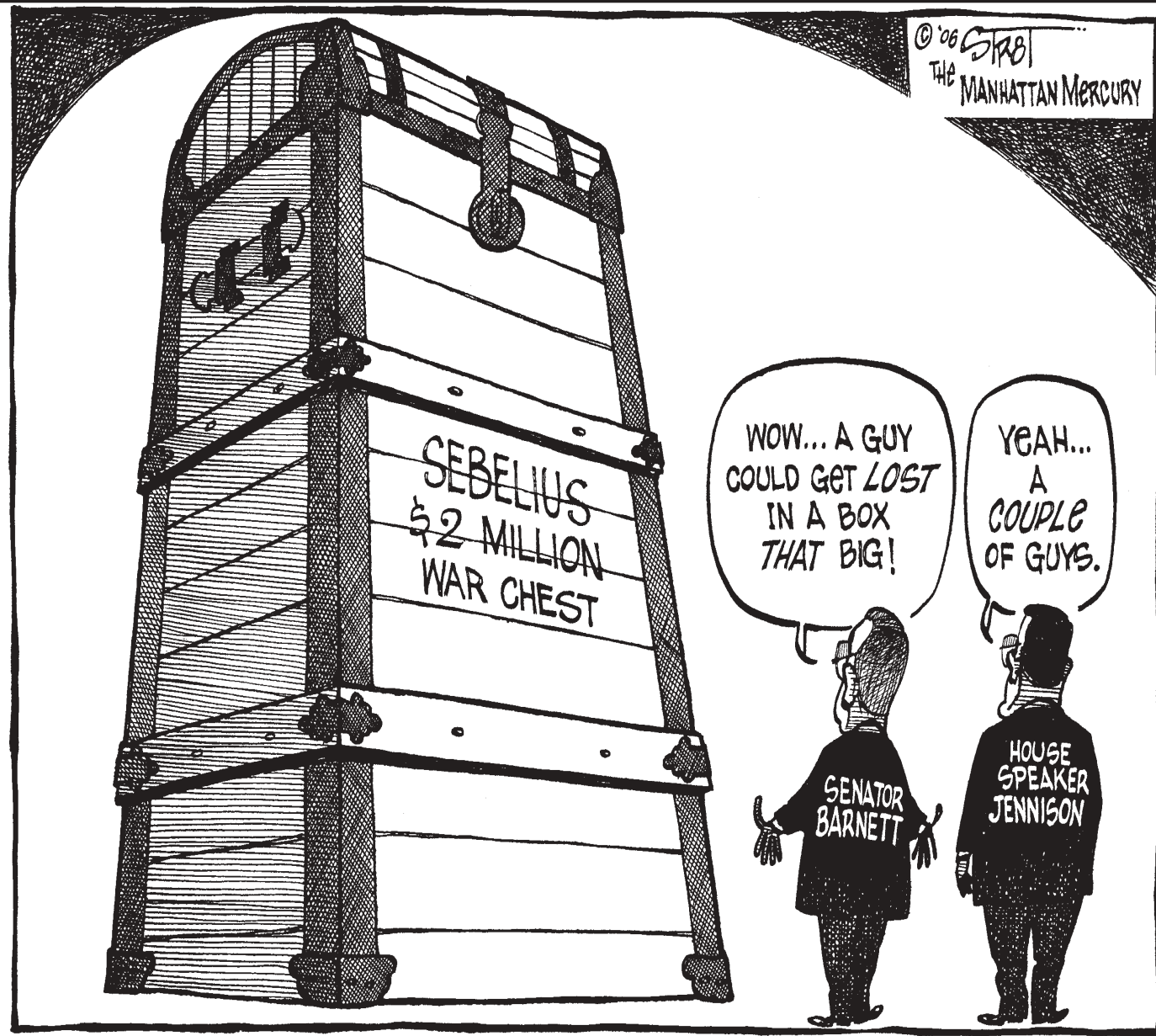
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## 'Our' team made our little group sad

It was a sad day at our house yesterday as Jim's beloved professional football team went down in defeat. We watched with friends who were equally passionate about "our" team. We were all disappointed with the outcome. But, the one benefit maturity has is to put things in perspective. A few years ago, Jim might have been devastated by the loss. Now, he philosophically says, "Oh, well. They played a good game. Maybe next year. What's for supper?"

—ob—

Yesterday marked the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that endorsed legalized abortion in the United States. A speaker at our church shared how many million babies have been aborted since then.

She is involved with an organization right here in western Kansas (www.rachelsvineyard.org) that helps post-abortive women, and men, deal with

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



the emotional damage they have suffered. No matter what side of the issue you stand on, you have to have compassion for the people affected.

—ob—

Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, hola, and adios are about the extent of my Spanish. However, that is about to change. Jim and I are finally doing what we have threatened to do for several years now.

We enrolled in a Spanish class last week and are busy drilling each other on how to say, "Where do you live, how old are you and what is your name?"

I still remember a few nouns from high school Spanish, but conjugating verbs was my bane then, and probably will be once again. That's not necessarily a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I didn't understand past perfect, pluperfect and predicates in 1961, and I sure don't understand them now. I am, however, trusting that our teacher can help me see the light.

We have two motivating factors that lead us to sign up for this class. First, we would like to be more conversant when we go to Mexico, and second, we want to be able to relate more to the Hispanic men we meet in our prison ministry.

Friday night during our class at the local correctional facility, I tried out a phrase on one of the bilingual men. I asked him his name, and he said, "Muy bueno," so I'm trusting it was all right. Otherwise, his parents had a weird sense of humor and named him Very Good.

## Working together builds our future

### Moving Ahead Marlene Henderson

What is "economic development"? That's a question I'm frequently asked as I travel about Norton County and visit with folks stopping by my office. I have to admit it's not an everyday term.

The American Economic Development Council defines "economic development" as the process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, financial, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services. Wow! Let's try a simpler definition. I say economic development is gaining new resources and maintaining and utilizing the ones we already have in our county.

You may wonder what resources? Primary resources for a county to be prosperous include good retail sales, manufacturing, plentiful, quality housing and great transportation, good healthcare and educational facilities. Norton County has all of the above and the potential to maximize it.

According to Kansas State University economic development researcher David Darling, in communities under 4,600 in population in 1998, only 14 had high trade pull factors. This means that their businesses were capturing all the available trade in their area and some from outside of their areas as well. Norton was the only northwest Kansas community cited among the 14 successful ones and Darling called it a "little giant."

However, Darling warns us that a "defender attitude" can slow change, keep out

new retail competition and end up hurting the competitive position of the entire business community. The retail environment depends on the dynamics of the local economy and community leadership.

We are currently looking at some programs that may be of benefit to Norton County businesses. We could certainly use some Community Development Block Grants for downtown facelifts, housing rehabilitation and demolition in most of our communities.

The feasibility of a Kansas Main Street program is being researched. In the Kansas Main Street program the Kansas Department of Commerce works with a community for a five year period donating \$25,000 in services, including a downtown work plan, funding strategies, year end assessments, community visioning, market analysis, business assistance workshops and programs focusing on all aspects of revitalization.

The training services are delivered through on-site technical visits. If accepted into this program Norton would also be eligible to apply for between

\$2,000 and \$15,000 in grants for downtown revitalization.

Streetscape is another program that I am researching for businesses. This is a Kansas Department of Transportation program in which reimbursements are paid to a city for new street lights, sidewalks, landscaping and other beautification projects. Applications are due in the summer and funds will be available in 2009 for new applicants approved for the program. There is also a 20 per cent match of funds required.

A great option for pulling in travelers and increasing trade on Highway 36 would be an "Attraction Development" grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce to fund the development of new tourist attractions or enhance existing attractions within Norton County. The purpose of this grant is to increase jobs and/or bring revenues back into the state while increasing quality attractions for tourism in the county.

I look forward to working with businesses in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce to increase our trade, improve housing options, and increase manufacturing and retail opportunities by maximizing our resources. It is imperative that we all work together to build the future of Norton County.

Any ideas? I look forward to hearing your suggestions.

Marlene Henderson, Norton County Economic Development Director, can be reached at 785.874.4816. The office is located at 116 N. First.

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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.