

Gambling should not be a part of the picture

As the pressure mounts in Topeka to scrape up more money for schools, the vultures are circling.

Gambling supporters, backed by big casino operators, want to open up state-owned operations in Kansas City and southeast Kansas. Slot machines would be allowed at dog tracks in Wyandotte, Sedgwick and Crawford counties, plus Dodge City if anyone wants to build at track there.

This is a bad idea and a poor way to finance schools, for a lot of reasons:

- Gambling turns out to be a tax on people who can least afford it. It's not rich folks pulling the levers at prairie casinos. The high rollers are in Las Vegas, where the glitz is.

- No, it'll be the poor, the needy and the addicted who finance Kansas gambling.

- Gambling sets a poor example for our kids. How can we tell them it's bad to gamble to excess, then — with a straight face — use gambling money to pay for their schools?

- Maybe we should tax drug sales to support schools. There's more money in drugs, and the dealers would like an "in" with the kids.

- Gambling would set our squeaky-clean state government up for major corruption.

Under the plan about to surface, a casino operator would pay \$35 million up front and at least \$200 million to develop the resort. A quarter of the state's take goes into a fund for property tax relief. The state's 75 percent — estimated at \$300 million — would go into the general fund for schools.

Tracks would pay the state \$15,000 per machine up front for 7,000 slots, but owners could deduct that from future taxes.

State officials would have to decide which companies get these lucrative contracts. If the casinos can afford this kind of taxation, there will be millions bet and millions lost.

And those millions make for a shaky situation when a few officials make the decisions. The potential for corruption is great; operators in this industry have a long history of corruption.

- Someone has to lose half a billion to a billion dollars a year to make this scheme work. It won't, for the most part, be tourists.

- It'll be us losing that money. Most likely, it'll be a disproportionate share of those Kansans who can least afford it who pay this tax.

This is, as one legislator described it, "a lose-lose" deal for our state. It benefits a few people owning the casinos, but not the bulk of the population.

Well, maybe we could give school kids free field trips to the casinos.

They could see where the money comes to pay their teachers, put a few nickels into the slots and pull the lever.

The results should be a lesson to them — but we doubt it.

Let's not gamble with our state's future. Legislators, vote no.

—Steve Haynes

Thumbs Up to...

- ✓ **Lois Dietz**, on your 92nd birthday, to be observed March 4.
- ✓ **Sharen Hempler and Adelia Wilnerd**, on your induction tomorrow into the Northern Valley Schools' "Wall of Fame."
- ✓ **Clay Madden**, on your four state wrestling tournament championships.
- ✓ **Vivian Jansonius**, on your 60+ years as Prairie View News correspondent.
- ✓ **Blue Jay wrestlers**, on your third straight state wrestling title.
- ✓ **Natoma Corporation**, on all the positive things going on at your location.

(If you know of someone, some group, or organization deserving a salute, please e-mail tom@dwnkansas.com, call 877-6908, stop by the office at 215 S. Kansas Ave., or fax us at 877-3732. If you are recognizing a birthday, it must be 70 or older and if it is an anniversary, it must be 50 years or more. Thanks for your help. - tom)

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

STAFF

Tom Dreiling editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
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Hypatia Day advertising

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



Now that, friends, was a real crash

I don't always know in what direction this column is going to go when I sit down to write it. I keep notes. I'm still a bit on the old fashioned side. I write stuff on paper. I don't stuff all the stuff into the computer. Computers sometime crash and then the notes becomes victims of this high-tech world in which we live.

I mention the word "crash" because I literally had a computer and monitor crash. Not in high-tech terms. I mean really crash. The noise could be heard throughout the house. Of course happening at 1:30 in the morning it would sound louder because of the silence within.

What happened shouldn't have. I was rearranging the location of the cabinet in which the computer and the monitor took up residency. I wanted it on the opposite side of the room. So, I unplugged the couple of plugs that pumped life into the thing and then slowly pushed the cabinet across the room. About three feet into the push, the phone rang (yep, at 1:30 in the morning). It was a few feet from where I was so I stretched to grab it and in the process my right leg got tangled up in the big, long, black encased wires. The phone continued ringing. I was short a foot of reaching it so I pushed the envelope a bit too far during the second stretch and down came the monitor and the computer, crashing onto the wooden floor, leaving a site of glass and plastic and things I never knew were inside a monitor. The computer itself wasn't damaged, but that other thing would never experience high-tech life again. It was a mess.

As I untangled myself from the wires and assessed the damage, I eventually slumped into an easy chair. Then it suddenly dawned on me, "The phone wasn't ringing anymore. I wonder who was call-

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



ing?" I'll never really know, but I'd bet anything it was a wrong number.

-td-

Soon, your *Norton Telegram* will be embarking on a new campaign. Sure, it's designed to attract new subscribers and retain the existing base. But that's what we are all about. The approach is going to be entirely different from anything we've ever done before. And **you** will be playing a major role. What we will be doing is asking subscribers to submit their favorite picture. Then when we get enough we will place them on a page and call it "Our Community Photo Album." The picture is yours to choose. And we will want you to submit a little information about your picture. We are hoping to get enough photos to keep this thing going for a long, long time. We'll let you know in plenty of time when the campaign is going to kick off. This could be a fun thing for all of us.

-td-

Here's a little story about the Republican fisherman and the Democrat balloonist, shared by an e-mailing reader:

A woman in a hot air balloon realized she was lost. She lowered her altitude and spotted a man in a boat below. She shouted to him, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man consulted his portable GPS and replied, "You're in a hot air balloon, approximately 30 feet above a ground elevation of 2,346 feet above sea level. You are at 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude."

She rolled her eyes and said, "You must be a Republican."

"I am," replied the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "Everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to do with your information, and I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help to me."

The man smiled and responded, "You must be a Democrat."

"I am," shouted the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," said the fisherman, "You don't know where you are or where you're going. You've risen to your current position due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. You're in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but somehow, now it's my fault!"

-td-

Hey, Blue Jay wrestlers, impress me!! Boy, that was quite a show you put on at Hays last weekend. You're good, guys, just plain good! And I'll pass this along for what it's worth, too. A friend told me while leaving Gross Memorial Coliseum that, "Norton really put on one heck of a wrestling seminar for this large crowd."

-td-

Have a good evening. And don't forget to share part of this weekend in the house of worship of your choice.

As Goldie says, 'Go to the movies'

My mother used to tell me how her mother loved plays and when the traveling troupe came to town, my grandfather would always make sure they made the trek from Edmond to Norton.

Box seats and murals adorned the one stage theater. It was the birth of a lifetime love of stories, whether through stage plays or books and it enriched her life.

When I was young our theater was the gathering place. In many ways it was the "equalizer," putting us on par with city kids who had seen all the latest movies. The Norton Theater was a part of my youth; its part of my history.

For a number of years it was an abandoned building left to deteriorate and lose its charm, but with the heroic efforts of concerned citizens it was brought back to life. Several years ago it reopened with the unveiling of not one, but two theaters and a renovated concession stand complete

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



with its mid-20th century charm.

Recently in an AARP interview Goldie Hawn was asked if there was anything she wanted to say to her fans. She replied, "The only thing I would say is, you've got to get your tushies out of the seat and go to the movie theater. Everybody has to do their part. It is a collaborative effort. You can't make a movie for nobody."*

A community implies working together; we are encouraged to support our local business and to shop locally. A business success or failure is the responsibility

of all as is the theater. "Use it or lose it" may pertain to our bodies, but it is equally true of our businesses. Our support is vital.

There are those who say, "There aren't any good movies," but movie rentals and purchases continue. Others say it is too costly, but traveling out of town to shop, go to a movie or sporting event is not free. I'm as guilty as the rest.

I think about going and then when I get home, I decide to go the next night.

Now is a good time to change my habits and make the movies a regular part of my schedule. I don't applaud all the movies, but we are fortunate to get many good ones here.

The joy of theater, live or film, enriches our lives in this small community. Let's take Goldie Hawn's advise and "go to the movies".

* AARP, March/April 2006, Goldie Sexy, Sixty, and Speaking Out, pp. 103.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

□ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 128-S, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

□ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612., call (785) 296-7500