

Reader gives some advice to Rep. Moran

LETTER

To the Telegram Editor,
M.C. Moran, be about your business! Legislation! "Listen" but also learn.

Do not become a subtle leader in the theft of our community identity by post office renaming.

It is Norton Mr. Congressman, it has been Norton for generations, and it is my proud hope it will remain Norton.

Leave us alone on this one Jerry! Go on down to Plainville and name your own post office, but quit using ours as a poten-

tial precedent for such foolery. Please go do something important (and report back meaningful activities of substance).

Jay Ryan
Norton

Blame it on state legislature

LETTER

To the Telegram Editor,

When the young intern enters the ER, he sees a woman lying on a gurney. Blood drains down her arm in rivulets, pooling on the floor. Should he: a) call housekeeping to clean up the mess?, or b) stop the bleeding? Should he be a no-brainer, right?

Kansas is hemorrhaging — squirting out dollars, pumping away lives. We're so used to it we barely notice. We routinely hang more transfusions, soak more mops, and then move on to other concerns.

I'm talking about tobacco addiction, the single greatest cause of preventable death in the state. Right now, 3,900 Kansans die every year from tobacco use, and as many more are disabled from it. And, 54,000 kids under age 18 now living in Kansas will die prematurely because of tobacco. Tobacco doesn't kill gently, either. We all have to die, but it shouldn't have to be that way.

Tobacco use or exposure can damage nearly every tissue in the body. Few diseases aren't either caused or worsened by tobacco. It's an equal opportunity killer.

Direct healthcare costs due to tobacco disease amount to more than \$900 million annually, of which we spend \$196 million on direct Medicaid services. In 2004, health and lost productivity costs from tobacco use in Kansas reached \$1.79 billion. In effect, tobacco causes a tax burden of \$487 for every Kansas household, every year. That's just mopping up the floor.

Surprisingly, we already know what we could do to reverse this. We don't have to reinvent the wheel — the solutions, in the form of comprehensive prevention and cessation programs, have already been identified and tested. That's stopping the bleeding.

That would cost some money, but the money's there. As a percentage of Kansas tobacco revenues, we spend only 0.4 percent on tobacco use prevention, or 4.1 percent of the bare minimum CDC says would be required to seriously impact the tobacco problem.

In 1998, 46 states settled a class action lawsuit with major tobacco companies — the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). In exchange for release from liability over current or future lawsuits to

recoup the states' tobacco-related health costs, the companies agreed to pay the states \$206 billion for the first 25 years. The clear intent of the settlement was to stop the bleeding — reverse and reduce the ongoing tobacco-induced public health crisis. We rank near the bottom of all states, based on the amount we spend on prevention from the MSA (\$1 million) and other funds — \$2.2 million total.

The tobacco industry spends \$126 million in Kansas every year to promote their lethal products. We expect to have received \$1.6 billion over the MSA's 25 years; if we don't use that to stop the bleeding, the tobacco problems will still go on as before. Forever mopping.

In April of 2008, a "bonus" MSA check for \$15.5 million will begin arriving each year. Until now, the legislature has put the regular MSA money into the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Trust. Very little has escaped to work on the cause of the problem that generated this income. The Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund committee makes recommendations to the legislature on using the money, but this committee is focused on other worthwhile projects including early child care and other children's health needs and prevention programs; keeping kids away from this widespread and deadly addiction has been granted no priority at all.

Time we changed this. Write and call your legislators now. Tell them to place the bonus \$15.5 million into the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Chronic Disease Prevention Program to fund a comprehensive tobacco use prevention effort. Tell them to make the appropriation a continuing one — to ensure continued reductions in tobacco use.

Tell them it's up to them to stop the bleeding.

Jon Hauxwell, MD
1335 Central
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 623-4230
hauxwell@ruraltel.net

YOUR CONNECTION:

★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday 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, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

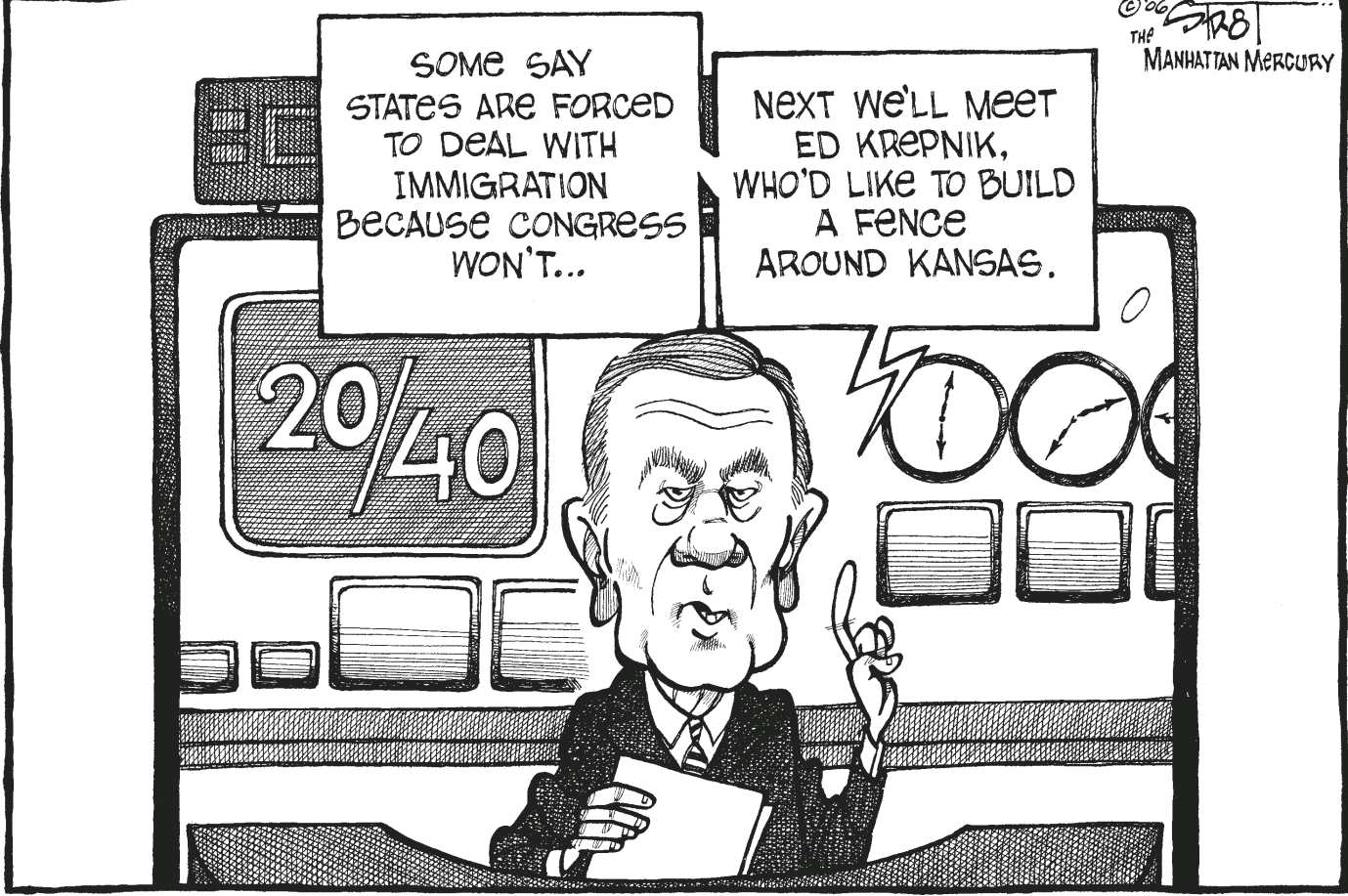
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



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
Lisa Marie Henderson advertising
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production



Why would we change the name?

I have somewhat of a problem with renaming our post office. I didn't realize the name — Norton Post Office — was a negative. But if we MUST rename it (and we don't have to as far as I know), then let's call it what it is, Citizens Post Office. We would probably be the only town in the whole U.S.A. with a post office named after its citizens. After all, it is the citizens as a whole who keep the thing afloat, not some one citizen.

I would be interested in learning what set in motion this renaming thing. It sure is causing a lot of buzz in town. If renamed it would carry the name of our late Congressman Keith Sebelius, a nice guy in all respects.

Maybe there is a silent movement underfoot by people who are serving in public office, to rename post offices all over the country after people who served in public office. That way they could assure themselves some notoriety after they have cashed in their ticket to wherever it is public officials go when the final bell rings.

Maybe somebody got Mr. Moran's ear on one of his "listening tours" and suggested the renaming of post offices. I don't know. Maybe Jerry (as we call our congressman) could further enlighten us on the topic.

-td-

I was watching C-Span a while back (truth is I watch it a lot), and one of the guests on the particular morning I tuned in was David Walker, U.S. Comptroller General, in charge of the General Accountability Office. During the segment he was on, among one caller's questions was the war in Iraq.

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



Mr. Walker said that what we are engaged in is not a war, it is a conflict. That got my attention because No. 1 (President Bush) calls it a war, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called it a war, Gen. Peter Pence, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff calls it a war, and I think everyone in the country calls it a war.

Mr. Walker said Congress is the only body that can declare war, the president can't and that Congress has not done so in Iraq. Therefore it is a conflict. If memory serves me correctly, the Korean "war" brought the word "conflict" into play because Congress had not declared war in that Far East country either.

I guess that's all correct, but I have a hard time making myself believe that when young men and women are being killed, and wounded beyond description in many cases, that the word "war" should not come into play. They say war is hell, is a conflict any better?

-td-

Now this story takes the cake, although it's just more of this trashy lifestyle we seem to embrace in a society that has pretty much lost track of its values. Aaron Carter (never heard of him) has broken off his engagement to Kari Ann Peniche,

former Playboy playmate, a week after he proposed to her on stage in Las Vegas. Why? Because 19-year-old Carter is now in love with 18-year-old singer Kaci Brown, who he met just a week ago. Carter is quoted as saying, "Now I'm in a great relationship. I've only known her (Kaci) for, like, seven days, but I have a connection with her that's like nothing else I've ever experienced. It's amazing."

Let's track this great 7-day relationship and see how long it lasts. Gee, it may go on for one or two weeks!

-td-

And finally...

The spirit of Christmas
may it forever be,
The cry of the season
for you and for me.

It's message is clear
as the sky up above,
The season of goodwill,
forgiveness and love.

"Merry Christmas"
we shout from here to there,
In hopes that the greeting
befalls those who care.

So it's time once again
to sing softly but clear,
"Away in a manger"
to a baby so dear. —td '06

Have a good evening. Let's set a record of church goers this weekend.

-td-

Merry Christmas to you all.

Regardless, I love this time of year

Back Home Nancy Hagman



Just when I thought I had heard it all along comes a news flash like this. The Toys for Tots program will not accept items that have Christian symbolism like nativities with a baby Jesus because these gifts might be offensive to non-Christians.

Excuse me?

Do a lot of non-Christians line up for free "CHRIST"mas presents?

How do we sort out who is to blame for this? In some respects I see it as a problem Christians have brought on themselves. We badger greeters at Wal-Mart into saying "Merry Christmas" instead of "Happy Holidays."

As if the crass consumerism that goes on in a superstore has anything to do with the birth of Christ.

It would be impossible to have a litmus test to see if everyone who benefits from the "Christmas Holy Day" is deserving of such benefits based on their status as a Christian.

But I've said it before, why does everyone get to participate in this over-commercialized orgy and why have we Christians allowed and even embraced it?

I don't want to see Christmas become just another day. I am glad it is a holiday when government offices are closed and allowances are made so nonessential workers can be together with family and friends. But, many people work on Christmas: those who work in hospitals, nursing homes, hotels and restaurants, those in law enforcement and fire fighters. Airports are open. Someone is on duty at the television and radio stations. Many people are on call. If it storms the state has to clear the roads. If the power goes off the

linemen go out. The farmer still has to feed the animals and milk the cows.

Does it bother anyone else that Hobby Lobby (who must have some Christian leanings because they are the only major retailer I know of that closes on Sunday) had Christmas décor out the first of August? That the mall is playing Christmas music before Veteran's Day?

On the other hand, who can blame the poor retailers: if they don't get Christmas sold by Thanksgiving their year's profits are probably sunk.

Just when I am really fed up with the

Thumbs Up to . . .

✓Larissa Rice, for giving assistance to hurricane victims in Louisiana. (e-mail)

✓June Kline, on your many years of banking, most of them at First Security Bank and Trust. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. (called in)

✓Annette Becker, good luck in the Coca-Cola scholarship program competition. (e-mail)

✓The thoughtful woman who took time to find the driver of a car that was parked too close to hers and she feared she may hit it with her door. (called in)

✓All of you who take time to e-mail, telephone, bring in or regularly mail names to us for this column. Keep it up, we appreciate it.