

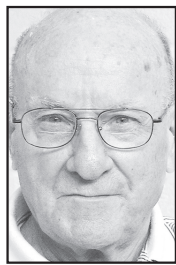
'The Brannan Factor' needs to be practiced

Thanks go out today to Tom Brannan, Road & Bridge Supervisor for Norton County, for the pictures he loaned us to use with the front page story in Tuesday's paper. This was a good example of people helping people do their job. We had no way of getting out in the open to photograph some of the terrible road damage inflicted by the storms of a week or so ago. Tom took care of that. And we are very appreciative of his deed.

Mr. Brannan didn't yell, "Hire more reporters!" He simply did his thing and remembered us, too. I think if more people practiced what I call "The Brannan Factor," we'd all be happier.

Give it a try.

Good Evening Norton
Tom Dreiling



-td-

Aren't you glad the Democratic Party's primary season has finally come to a close? I am. But you know who feels the impact more than the two candidates who battled it out for their party's nomination?

The cable television pundits, that's who! What are they going to 24/7 us with now? Oh, yes, they'll be telling us who the vice presidential candidates will be for Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain. And if their primary performance is used as a barometer, they'll be just as foolishly inaccurate with that, too.

I flipped back and forth from FOX, to CNN, to MSNBC Tuesday evening to learn how the South Dakota and Montana primaries were coming along. It was nothing but a bunch of ego-inflated commentary by a bunch of guys and gals who know no more than do you and me about what was taking place. The difference is, however, they are pampered by make-up people before going on camera — Lord forbid we see them as they actually are — dressed to kill, and then they spit out stupid talk.

They all fall back on their exit polling. Funny how each channel's exit polling differs. They talk about the "white working class," the "African-American" input, the "educated" vs. the "uneducated" class, the "women 60 and older," the "younger voters," the "Hispanic turnout," and the political salad continues to swell with more and more ingredients. Ingredients, in this case, classes of people.

It usually turns my stomach. Whatever happened to the good old fashioned "American people." Unfortunately, during election years we are turned upside down and in and out so analysts can step before the cameras and belch and burp and in the process further divide us.

Simply put, the Obama factor isn't going to be a factor. The Democrats are so hungry for the White House — it's been 8 years — that they will have forgotten by Nov. 4 that there was a rift during the primaries.

And the Republicans, who have enjoyed the luxury of having the White House to themselves these past 8 years, are going to put their differences aside and unite fully behind McCain.

So, who is going to win at the polls Nov. 4? Here's where technology kicks in: If you are a FOX fan, McCain wins. If you are an MSNBC fan, Obama wins. If you are a CNN fan, call it in the air, "heads McCain, tails Obama."

Wow, that was difficult, wasn't it?

-td-

Further more, I used to live in Kansas. But I don't anymore. You don't either. States are nameless. We now define ourselves by color. Kansas is red.

-td-

The little boy quizzed his mother as to why daddy's feet smell. Her explanations weren't catching on. After listening a while with a puzzled look, the kid said, "Maybe diapers would help."

Now there's an idea that would sell — feet diapers.

-td-

"The Republicans are coming! The Republicans are coming!" Certainly that would smack of some kind of political gathering. But it wasn't. It just meant the circus was in town. Thanks Rotary Club.

I hope your fund raising effort yielded enough for you to continue doing the good things you do for the community.

-td-

Have a good evening! And this weekend be good to the "fund raising basket" that is passed around at the church of your choice.

Your political connection

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- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
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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.

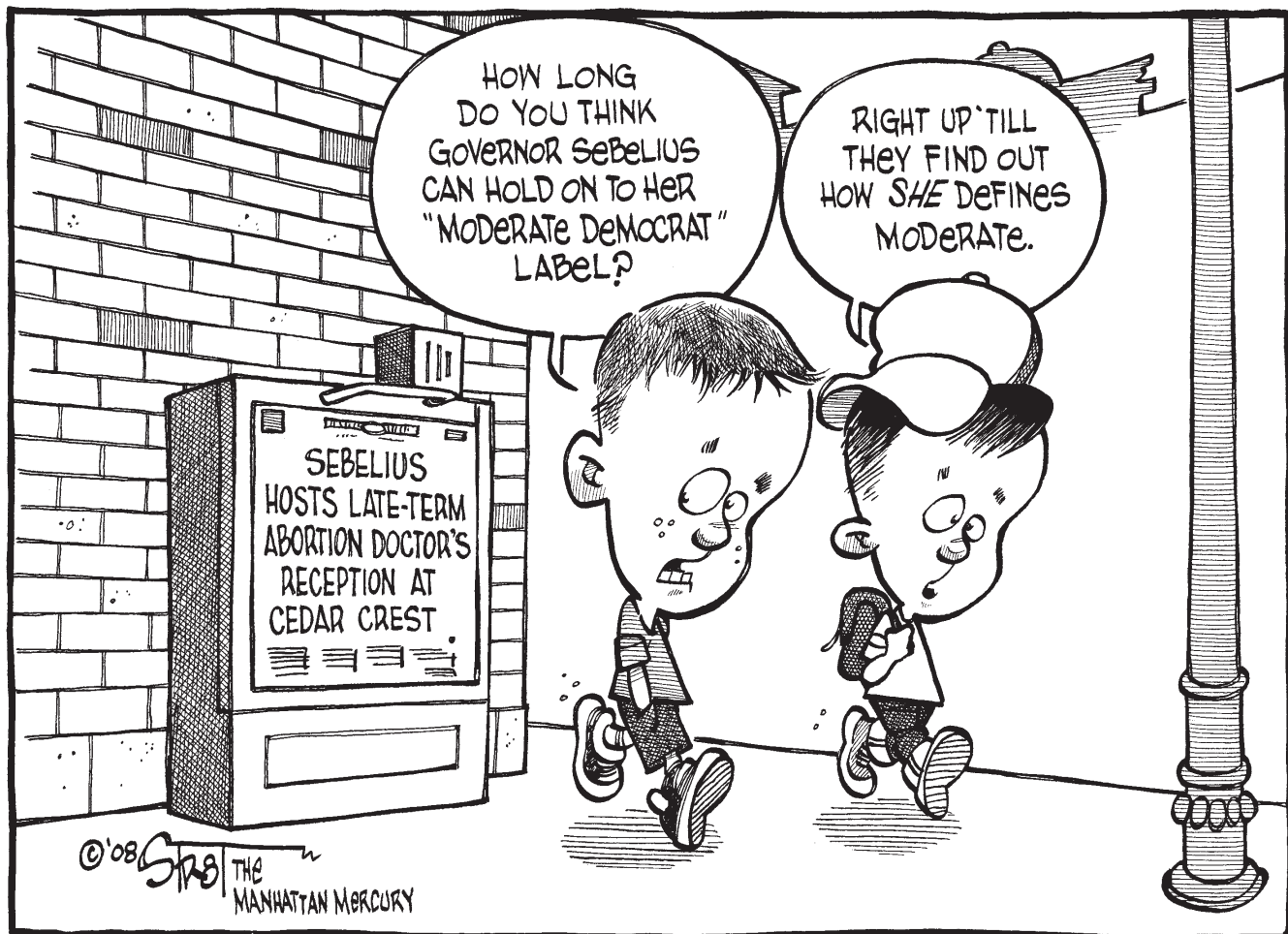
Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

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



Bet you didn't know this was in your purse

Someone once told me a pickup is a man's purse. If that's true, I sure can understand now how important that particular vehicle is to them. My purse goes with me everywhere. It has my planner, pens, important papers, and other miscellaneous items that I use on a daily basis.

What got me thinking about purses was an article a friend gave me some months ago.

Maybe it's silly, but I don't think I will ever look at my purse the same way again — and I even have a new favorite one.

Let me explain. While we may know what's inside our purses, the author asked if we have any idea what's on the outside?

A microbiologist decided to put purses to the test — for bacteria — with surprising results. The conclusion was that we women might want to rethink where we leave our purses in the future.

Like most women, I carry my purse everywhere — from the office, to public restrooms, to the floor of the car, etc.

In fact, there's not too many places that I am not carrying my purse around during the day.

In this particular article, one woman said she drives a school bus, so her purse has been on the floor of the bus a lot.

My purse also has a home in the grocery shopping carts and I have seen some women put their purses on bathroom floor stalls while changing a diaper.

Getting back to the point. The idea was to check for bacteria on purses and according to information from Microbiologist



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

gist Amy Karren of Nelson Laboratories in Salt Lake City, Utah, a test was done on the inside and outside of purses.

The outcome of her tests were that all of the purses were not only high in bacteria, but high in harmful kinds of bacteria.

In the study, Karren said most women told the laboratory they didn't stop to think about what was on the bottom of their purse. Most said they usually set their purses on top of kitchen tables and counters where food is prepared.

"Most of the ladies we talked to told us they wouldn't be surprised if their purses were at least a little bit dirty," Karren said. "It turns out purses are so surprisingly dirty, even the microbiologist who tested them was shocked."

Among the bacteria found, Pseudomonas can cause eye infections, staphylococcus aureus can cause serious skin infections, and salmonella and e-coli found on the purses could make people very sick. In one sampling, four of five purses tested positive for salmonella, and that's not the worst of it.

"There is fecal contamination on the purses," she said.

The good news was that leather or vinyl purses tended to be cleaner than cloth

purses, and lifestyle seemed to play a role. People with children tended to have dirtier purses than those without, with one exception. The purse of one single woman who frequented nightclubs had one of the worst contaminations of all.

"Some type of feces, or even possibly vomit or something like that," she said.

As a final thought, Karren said that a woman's purse won't kill us, but it does have the potential to make someone sick if kept on places where we eat.

As for suggestions, Karren said women should use hooks to hang a purse at home and in restrooms, and don't put it on your desk, on a restaurant table, or on your kitchen countertop.

Experts say you should think of your purse the same way you would a pair of shoes.

"If you think about putting a pair of shoes onto your countertops, that's the same thing you're doing when you put your purse on the countertops," Karren said.

Another suggestion was to wash cloth purses and use leather cleaner to clean the bottom of leather purses.

As a avid purse-carrier, I remembered reading this article and how I have made adjustments. For some reason, I haven't ever gotten in the habit of putting my purse on kitchen counters, but for those who do, maybe this might deter them in the future.

In fact, maybe it's time to buy another purse.

Patty Decker is editor of the Colby Free Press

After a hard day's work...

For some people, stress on the job often carries over into home, family and marriage. A recent report that appeared on-line in ScienceDaily describes the results of a study that compared marriage quality and satisfaction with cortisol levels, a key stress hormone produced by the body.

Cortisol is often called the "stress hormone" as it is involved in the body's physical response to stress, such as increasing blood pressure.

Long-term elevated levels of cortisol have been associated with a number of illnesses including depression, chronic fatigue, and burn out.

When a person is actively stressed or busy, their levels of cortisol go up. As a person's day slows down and they have a chance to relax, the levels go down.

This study tracked levels of cortisol in 30 couples where both partners were working full-time jobs and also raising children. Arriving home following a hard day at work, the expectation would be that their stress level, and thus their cortisol level, would lower due to no longer being on the job.

For the men in the study, their cortisol levels showed a significant decline, regardless of how they described the quality of their marriages.

It appears that just coming home from work results in a significant decrease in stress levels for men.

However, only the women who described their marriage as "happy" showed

Plain Sense
Ken Loos

a significant decline in their cortisol level once they returned home after a challenging day at work.

The implications of this study still require further analysis, but it is important to recognize the inherent benefits of having a strong relationship.

Women who are happily married identify how important it is to have a partner who will equally share the demands of raising children and running a household.

Past research has also found that men generally live healthier and longer when married as opposed to being single or divorced.

Therefore, if you want a "sure fire" way to decrease work related stress, having a satisfying marriage is a key factor.

(The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department (PEO), 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 6760. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality. Internet site: www.highplainsmentalhealth.com.)

Thumbs Up

To... **Dick Hahn**, on your retirement. Enjoy the carefree life, after your 24-year career with the city. (regular mail)

To... **Melissa Schoen**, Norton's newest attorney. (e-mail)

To... **Mr. Rossi and Mr. Melvin and parents**, for another successful trip to Washington, D.C. (This is the 15th consecutive trip!) Good work, travelers! (sent by a grateful parent)

To... **Gail Boller**, on your letter to the editor. (by telephone)

To... **Jessica Reeves**, on being selected to the State FFA Choir. Good job! (hand-delivered)

To... **the Rotary Club**, thanks for the circus! (by telephone)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call either 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

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