



Opinion

THE NORTON
TELEGRAM

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PAGE 4

Television, Internet dividing families

We all question the behavior of a lot of our teenagers these days. Babies having babies. Disrupting the home front. Dressing like their attitude dictates. Questioning their parents. Not giving a hoot about being law abiding. Where did we go wrong?

Well, I think it all started when you bought that innocent-looking, much wanted first television set. At the outset it served its purpose. It entertained the family as a *unit*.

Then, some years down the road, television program producers started pushing the envelope. Too much family-oriented programming. It's gets in the way of what will draw much larger audiences. So, little by little the envelope got pushed even more and more and eventually fell off the table. The contents that started coming into our living rooms and family rooms on the small screen were enough to make an old Army veteran blush.

Then all (you-know-what) broke loose. Nudity. Sex. The vocabulary included just about every dirty word you could imagine, and some were new to your ears. All coming into our homes. And we sat there.

During this transition from sanity to sinity, our youngsters convinced us they needed television sets in their bedrooms. Of course we wanted to be the best of friends to our kids, so we caved in. We then saw less and less of them as they buckled down to watch the trash on the small screen in the *privacy* of *their* bedrooms. They relied on the tube to fill in the gaps of growing up that we as parents failed to fill in, or didn't have the guts to sit down and talk about. Sadly, some of today's young folks claim they were raised by people on television.

Of course there are a lot of good things going on in the world of television, but teenagers, in large numbers, don't look for that. They like those *other* channels that entertain in a far different fashion, but unfortunately a fashion many kids adopt as a pattern for their own lifestyle. Yes, television has influence and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Then something new entered their young lives. The Internet! Not only are they exposed to many more forms of sexual entertainment, but they can become a big part of that world. They can make contact and exchange pictures of themselves with people they don't even know. Too offer their innocence allows them to be lured into traps that turn out to be nightmares for many families. And all of this is taking part in the *privacy* of *their* own bedrooms, right under our noses.

But hats off to the parents who know what their youngsters are watching on television and doing on the Internet. I'm sure they battle, but it's worth the war.

They say you can't judge a book by its cover. I think that can be rephrased to sound something like, "You can't judge a television set or computer by its looks."

I remember as a young person how we used to sneak those dirty magazines into the house. Next to what's on television today, those magazines — many which are still being published — pale in comparison.

No, don't get rid of that tv or computer. Just be aware of how your kids are using them. That cannot be stressed enough.

Now, I'll leave the pulpit and turn it back over to the many people of the cloth who so kindly and compassionately serve our community.

-td-

Well, if you haven't been to the fairgrounds here in Norton, time is running out. Tonight and Saturday will be the final two days. Take the kids and take it in. Once it's over it won't be seen again until this time in 2009. You know by the time the '09 fair begins, we will have a new president, we will have changes in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House. And it'll be interesting to see how many promises made in the '08 campaign fell by the wayside.

-td-

I'm still on the wagon, still not talking politics in this column. Watching far fewer politically-driven television programs. Happy with the decision. Try it, you might like it, too. Next time someone asks, "How do you view the presidential campaign?" You can simply reply, "Oh, is that still going on?"

-td-

Have a good evening! And while attending the church of your choice this weekend, you'll be happy with that decision. And like the guy on the television commercial says, "I guarantee it."

Thumbs Up

To... Larry, LeeAnn and AI for great music during the fair. (*called in*)

To... Steve Schrum and the **Recreation Commission**, for a wonderful girls softball field! Thank you for all the hard work on the Bluejay field. (e-mail from appreciative coach and parent)

To.... the good folks, who put the carnival rides back together for another smashing success we call the Norton County Fair! (*e-mail*)

To... The Telegram, for the informative articles on the two candidates for county sheriff. Nice touch. (*e-mail*)

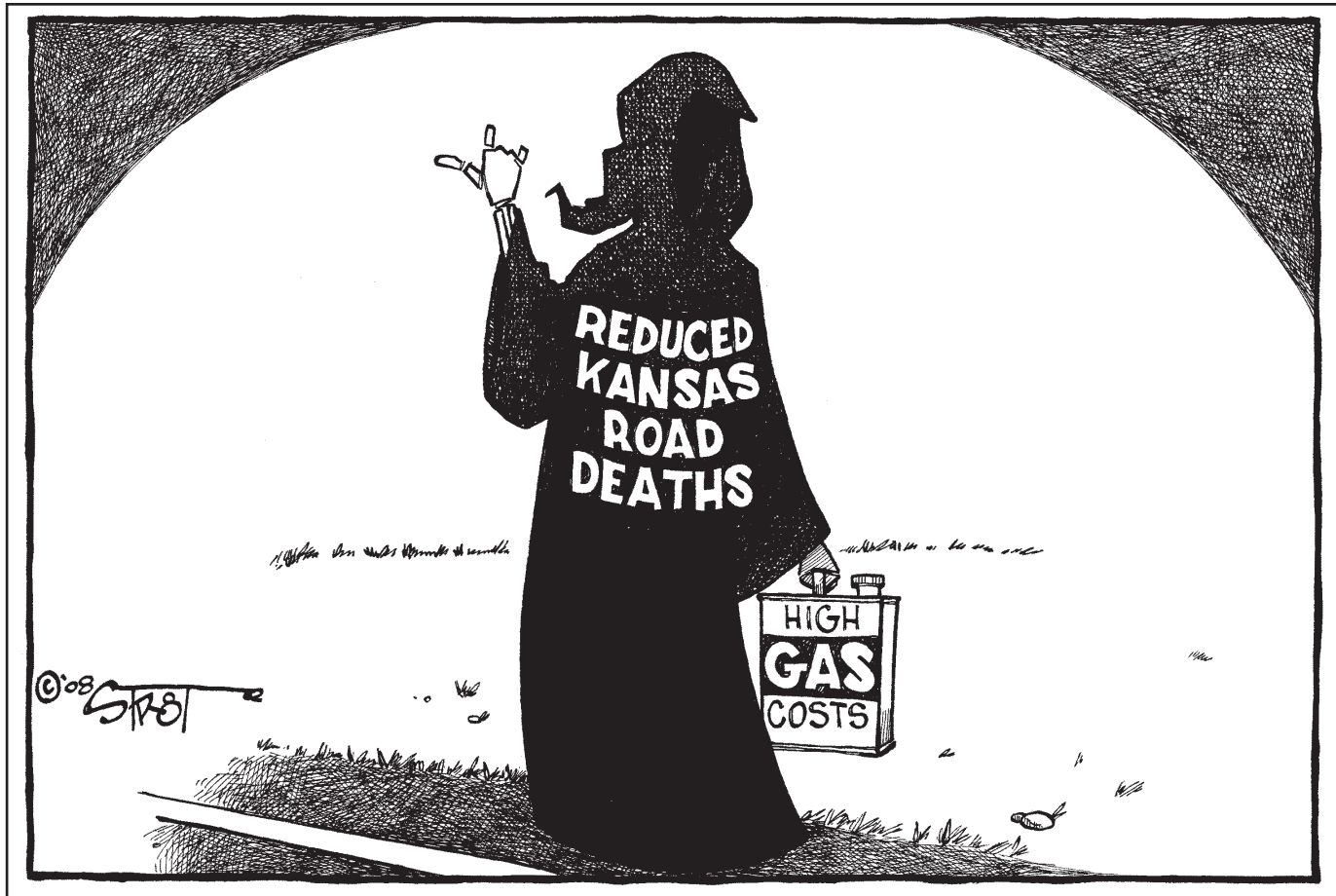
To... Our mail carrier, when was the last time you thanked him, or her? (*e-mail*)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call either 877-6908 or 877-3361, fax 877-3732, write to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654, or drop by the office. No charge, no signature required. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

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Article gave us a good look at candidates

Choice is critical to the success of democracy. The recent article highlighting the candidates for the Republican primary for Norton County Sheriff gives voters an insight into each candidate's vision for our community. There is no doubt each one brings experience, albeit different, to the position.

Both candidates are 'home grown', which in and of itself says a great deal. One has returned and one never left. One has experienced the changing profile of our community for almost a decade, the other has viewed the world through military action.

How do these experiences translate into a successful law enforcement agency for Norton County. First one has to identify some of the problems facing our community. Probably key to all aspects is the budget. Without money, the department

Phase II

Mary Kay
Woodyard



can't run and in addition is the public's desire for an appreciation of their own hard work translated into their tax money.

All threats now seem to be clothed in terrorist robes and fear will often win out over common sense. Although we are not immune to terrorist activities by any means, neither does that consume the greatest amount of time and energy for this department. In the game of life, experience often trumps education.

Although we elect an individual on

their qualifications, we seem to also focus on their personality traits. This interview exposed some of that with questions about funniest work related story, "pet" issues and proudest moments.

Humor plays an important role in all aspects of our lives and frequently exposes what an individual views as funny and at whose expense. The choice with issues may come down to prevention versus enforcement. For each, their proudest moments reflected their commitment to their position, at the time.

No surprise here, I'm a registered Democrat so I can't vote in this upcoming primary and no democrat filed for the position of sheriff, so basically this is the election.

On Aug. 5 cast your vote and mine too for the candidate you feel will best serve our county as sheriff.

No Child Left Behind handcuffs teachers

Guest
Commentary
John Richard Schrock

that neither values nor supports academics.

Just as the best of doctors lose patients, the best of teachers lose students.

When I lecture in China to Chinese students preparing to be teachers, their jaws drop when I explain that all blame for a student's failure is placed on the teacher. I ask "Whose fault is it when you fail to pass the college entrance exams?" In unison, Chinese students reply: "Our fault."

What is most disturbing when you listen to Board of Education discussions in America is that you never hear of the responsibilities of students and parents. Students are responsible for studying, completing assignments and homework, being honest and doing their own work, working with the class learning activities rather than against the teacher, and placing other non-academic activities including video games and work and sports second.

Parents are responsible for providing an atmosphere that supports and values academics, coaching their child to work hard, keeping their children healthy and

able to hear and see well, and supporting the teacher and school.

Just as a doctor is not responsible when a patient does not take their prescription, a teacher is not to blame for the consequences when a student fails to complete their homework.

Sadly, neither presidential candidate recognizes this deprofessionalization of teaching. Both will continue some form of No Child Left Behind and the culture of "blaming the teacher."

However, Americans with children know No Child Left Behind is a disaster. According to an AP-Yahoo.com poll conducted Dec. 14-20, 2007 with 1821 adults, 46 percent responded that we should get out of NCLB, 27 percent defended No Child Left Behind and 30 percent were neutral. Polls by some Kansas regional papers show even higher rates of disapproval.

The problem with No Child Left Behind is not "more local control" or "fund the unfunded mandate." The problem is that it blames teachers for problems they do not control. And many of our best veteran teachers and rookies are leaving the profession. If we want them back, we must stop the blame and kill No Child Left Behind.

John Richard Schrock trains biology teachers and lives in Emporia.

Always plan with the children in mind

Plain
Sense
Karen Schueler

Dear Plain Sense: I am recently divorced and my children will be spending part of the summer with their father, in another town. I hear about other families who have a lot of conflict over this. What can I do to make this a good situation for all of us?

Your concern is well-founded, as custody and visitation issues are often a primary source of conflict when parents are divorced, and too often, the children feel caught in the middle. Planning ahead is important. Often the anxiety involved comes from not knowing what is going to happen, so parents need to be sharing summer plans as early as possible. Good communication between all adults involved is vital, and a willingness to work together for the sake of their children.

Children's feeling about visitations vary depending on their relationship with the non-custodial parent, as well as their

own personal interests in how they want to spend their time. Younger children tend to eagerly anticipate the visit, and should be sent off with encouragement and a smile.

As children get older, they may resent having to leave their friends during the summer and other activities such as sports, in which they are involved in their community. It is very important for parents to recognize this change in attitude as their children get older, and to be flexible in regards to visitation time. When the young visitor arrives, the non-custodial parent and family should allow some time

for adjustment to the new surroundings, household rules and expectations. Parents should also encourage their child to keep regular contact with the other parent through phone calls, letters and emails.

Summer visitations don't have to be a time of dread if parents maintain a working relationship with each other in regards to the child. And children can relax and enjoy their time with both parents when they are included in the communication regarding plans, and feel encouraged and accepted.

Contributed by Karen Schueler, MS, LCPC, Manager PEO - Prevention, Education and Outreach Department of High Plains Mental Health Center. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.