

Seems like authors are as plentiful today as unwanted pennies

The author capital of the world. That's got to be us. It seems you can't watch television talk shows without someone showing up that just wrote a book — just like that. Matter of fact, the latest book wasn't his/hers first. Most of them had already written at least two or three. Truth be known, most of those authors had never written a book, someone else wrote it for them after picking their brains and sifting through notes. I once heard an author comment that he was surprised at what his book contained.

Congressmen write books and that surprises me. They are always telling us how busy they are. When do they find time? Maybe they're busy with books rather than business, as in the people's business. And then there are people you'd never guess could write a book showing up on television as authors. And most of them are on The New York Times best-seller list. There are so many on that list that maybe it isn't what it's cooked up to be.

I've often thought of writing a book, but time is always in the way. Maybe I need to subscribe to *Let the Other Guy be You* (there is no such book but maybe there should be). I have notes that go back the 44 years I've been in this profession. Some are just down to earth comments, some are humorous, some shocking, and some unbelievable. Like the guy who asked me to keep his name out of the paper and was so adamant about it that he gave me a check made out to me, signed it and told me to fill in the amount. He wouldn't talk about it. I invited him out of the office through the same door he entered, only much quicker. What an insult, thinking he could buy his request. A couple of days later while at the courthouse, I checked on him to see if he was picked up for anything. Well, as it turned out, yes ... he was hauled in for writing hot checks. Guess who he tried to pass another one onto?

I must admit I did 'author' one book some years ago. Red cover, gold type announcing the title, "Everything I Know About Women." It's 100 pages — and all are blank!

December 15 has come and gone. December 15, 2008 was the 33rd anniversary of wife Jean's death in St. Joseph Hospi-

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



tal, Denver. Cause: leukemia. She never knew she had it. Always healthy. Active. Mother of three. Musician. Studied organ/piano and vocal music. Member of Allegro and Goodland Federated music clubs, of which she also served as president. 37 years old. One of the organists at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, Goodland, where she also served as a lay reader.

The story leading up to her death still has me shaking my head. On April 15, 1975, she complained while we were in conversation of a pain running up and down her left arm. But not to worry, "it'll go away." It didn't. As the evening rolled along and the symptom of what we both believed could be heart related, continued. So I called to the hospital and they suggested I bring her in immediately. I did.

They ran the tests one would associate with a possible heart attack. Negative. They were hooked up to hospitals in Denver and Colorado Springs and they, too, ruled out anything that had to do with the heart.

It just so happened that a couple of visiting doctors from Denver would be in Goodland at the hospital the next day. They usually came to Goodland once a month as specialists in their respective fields. The Goodland doctors decided to keep Jean there overnight and see what the doctors from Denver could figure out. After a day long session of tests, they ruled she was suffering with leukemia.

That was the start of a tough and uncertain ride. Remember, she got ill on April 15, the doctors determined leukemia on the 16th. At Denver I asked one of the doctors what I was looking at. After all, she had three kids at home, the youngest was three. The doctor I visited with said he was reluctant to look down that road. But on insistence from me, he said, in essence,

"We can be wrong, Tom. You understand that." I told him they were probably right more times than wrong. He appreciated that. After some deliberation, he looked at me and said, "Maybe nine months." That was much closer than I had thought. But that was the timetable from which I operated from that day forward.

She was in St. Joseph's Hospital for several weeks, then home for a few months with trips to Denver every other weekend. Then she became very ill at home and was readmitted to the Goodland hospital and then transferred back to St. Joseph's in early November. She was in insolation for many weeks. Visitors, including me, were required to dress for that enclosed experience in gowns, face masks, rubber gloves, etc., issued by the hospital. Visits were brief, except for me.

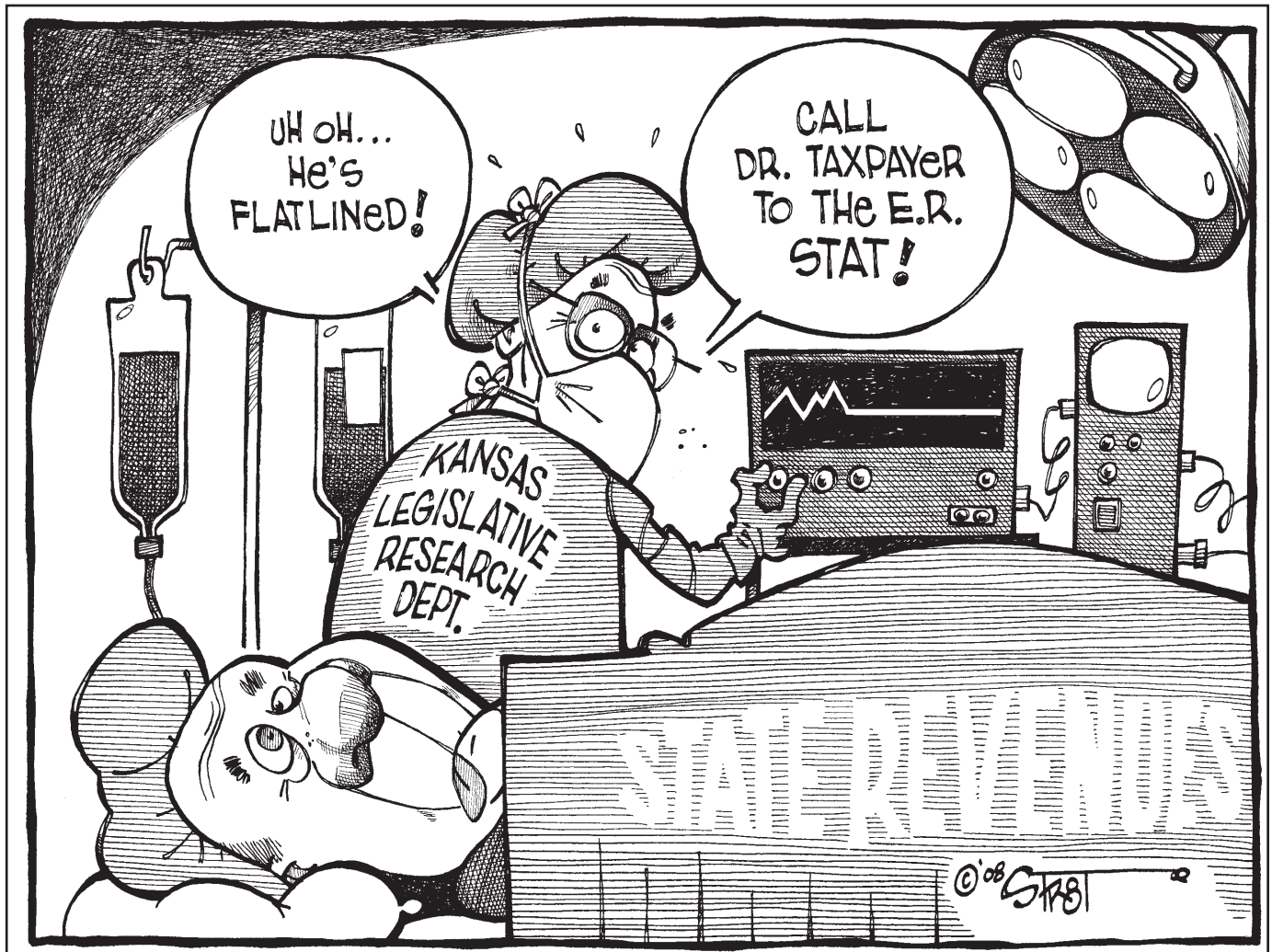
When she was returned to her private room, she asked that I have her parents discontinue bringing the kids to the hospital for visits. I knew what that message was all about. I'll never forget the evening things just didn't seem right. She was restless. Unable to sleep. Tossing and turning. I was in a recliner next to the bed, holding her hands and talking. I don't think she remembered a word. As the evening wore on and nighttime came, she became less restless. She was, finally, falling asleep — something she badly needed. I woke up from my sleep around midnight and she was still asleep. Around 2:30 in the morning I noticed she was breathing heavy and occasionally would wake up with a slight jolt. I fell back to sleep when she was again settled down. It was 3:45 a.m. when, for some reason, I suddenly woke up. She wasn't breathing.

I summoned a nurse. She came running, took her pulse and then summoned the head nurse. After she checked Jeannie over, she said, "She's gone, Tom. We are so sorry." Ironically, it was Dec. 15 — nine months after she became ill at our home in Goodland.

If she were alive, she would be so proud of her three children and five grandchildren. And our plan of eventually becoming doting old grandparents would be realized. But I try the best I can to compensate for the absence of a wonderful, beautiful, active, understanding and always loving wife and mother.

End. Chapter 33.

Have a good evening. And this weekend while you worship in the church of your choice, grab the hand of your spouse and squeeze it, and then thank God.



Thumbs Up . . .

To... the Norton Junior High Singers and Norton Community High School vocal choir, for an excellent performance at the Christmas Concert. It was awesome! Tamra Cochran is to be commended for all her hard work, as well as all of the vocal students. (e-mail)

To... Cedar Ridge 4-H Club, for the goodies. You helped us add a pound or two. But how sweet it was! (Telegram staff)

To... Brittany Otter, for the four year award in the High School KMEA District Honor Choir. Good job, we're proud of you! (e-mail)

To... everyone who participated in the Second Annual 'Cookie Contest' last Friday. Nice job! (Telegram staff)

(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)

Your political connection

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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



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A decision was made on baseball issue

After reading your Dec. 16 article, "Debate for High School Baseball Continues," a quick explanation of proper meeting procedure and conduct is necessary.

The article stated that no decision was made on the baseball issue. That is not true. No vote taken, but a decision was made.

The baseball issue was on the November Board of Education agenda at the request of patrons who support the adoption of baseball as a school sponsored activity. At that November meeting the supporting patrons were given an allotted time to speak and present their case. The proper actions that the board could take at that time were:

- 1) make a motion to approve,
- 2) table it for a later date, or
- 3) let the topic die for lack of a motion.

Sound Off!

As is known, the Board tabled the issue until their December meeting.

At the December Board of Education meeting, the tabled item was discussed properly and as there wasn't a motion, the topic died and the board proceeded with the meeting. The Telegram article states that the Board of Education did not make a decision. In fact, a decision WAS made by virtue of the fact that the topic died for lack of motion, (a negative motion is not proper meeting procedure).

Some of the patrons who were in attendance at the December meeting to support baseball as a school sport felt shorted by not being allowed to speak. However, appropriate meeting procedure was followed and the members of the Board of Education discussed the issue. If a board

member had so desired, they could have asked for information from the patrons or posed questions to them; as this was not done it can only be assumed that no member of the board felt as though any further information was needed. Please keep in mind this was the fifth time in four years the BOE has had baseball on its meeting agenda.

In summary, Boards of Education do not have to follow Robert's Rules of Order, but standard procedures and protocols are necessary in order that a meeting be run in a manner that allows the board adequate time to deal with all issues in an organized and expedient manner. We believe our patrons deserve this level of professional business conduct from all of their elected representatives. Thank you,

Elaine Lofgreen
USD 211 Board of

Christmas concert always a favorite

I had to miss the Eisenhower Elementary Christmas/holiday concert last Monday. People often joke about these things, but the Christmas concert is one of my favorites. It is the announcement, "Christmas is here."

As the daughter of a teacher, I know these do not happen without the dedication of both the music teacher and the classroom teacher, but I also know to a child they are at the center of childhood memories.

Things change and evolve over time which is as it should be. Incoming ethnic groups and cultures bring additional religions and because we are a melting pot we adjust things to be as accommodating as possible. But when I was young we were a Christian school, we didn't really realize until junior high that one of our favorite classmates was Jewish, but his parents' philosophy was, "We live in a predominantly Christian community and you will take part in their practices." ...

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



and he did.

We would quietly file into the darkened junior high gymnasium, sit down on the floor, which I'm sure was both cold and hard, but I don't think we ever noticed. From there the Christmas story was read with each passage highlighted by a carol. "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night, Angels We Have Heard on High, O Come All Ye Faithful, O Holy Night and not just one verse, but all the verses.

Of course, we had to sing the first verse of O Come All Ye Faithful in Latin. There were no surprises, it was the same each

year and the familiarity not only increased our confidence, but it also provided a memory. I doubt that many of us can hear any of the carols without singing along. And most of us seldom forget any of the words.

There is much to be said about diversity, but there is also much to be said about living within a community of similar teachings. Perhaps the memories of my many Christmas programs contributed to my desire for my children to be brought up in parochial schools; desire for them to also take part in Christmas programs and sing carols together. But maybe too the message of the centuries old Christmas story read each year became the foundation of the teachings of "peace on earth, goodwill to ALL men."

May God's peace be with you and your loved ones on this blessed Christmas Day and the days which follow.
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Letters to the editor serve a good purpose, try it