

Here's your chance to serve your community

We have a rather interesting development on our city council here in Norton. With the recent resignation of Councilman Ron Briery, a vacancy on the council exists and someone will need to sit in that chair for a month or two.

And while doing so, that person — if he or she wants to continue serving in that capacity — will need to file for the April city election.

As of this writing, two people have taken steps to gain appointment to the vacant seat. They are Tim Bashford and Joe Leroux. Anyone else interested in the council vacancy will need to move quickly to be considered. Mayor David Corns will announce his appointee at the next council meeting (Jan. 21). The council will then vote on the mayor's recommendation.

Serving one's community is a privilege and an honor. Sure it can be testy at times, but that's part of serving the public. As an employee of a business, you are beholden to the person who hired you; as a city council man, or woman, you are beholden to nearly 3,000 people who call Norton home. And pleasing everybody isn't in the cards.

We are always in awe of those men and women sitting around the conference tables making decisions that affect each of us. It's not an easy job, but it is a necessary job.

So, if you have always wanted to serve your community, well, here's your opportunity. Call the city office and see what you need to do to be considered for the vacant seat. Then, if your service to the city will go beyond serving out the remainder of Mr. Briery's term, make sure you file to be on the ballot for the April 7 election. That deadline is noon Tuesday, Jan. 27.

Good luck — and thanks for your interest and desire to serve the City of Norton in this all important capacity.

— Tom Dreiling

Time Kansas gets on board

I can remember as a very young child sitting on my dad's lap and driving the car on the country roads. I was certain when it came time to get my driver's license there was nothing more for me to learn...I knew it all. By the grace of God, I avoided any crashes or tickets, but I recall many near misses. We crammed as many of our friends in our cars as possible and although we didn't have cell phones there certainly was no shortage of conversation.

Not all young people are as fortunate. In the state of Kansas each year there are approximately 7,000 injuries and 80 deaths from accidents involving a teen driver. Many of those injuries and all of those deaths create a lifelong nightmare for the survivors and their families.

Forty-four other states have decided it is time for change and have implemented a program called Graduated Driver's License or GDL. Kansas is proposing similar legislation. Such legislation will not only reduce the number of accidents (about 20 percent fewer in GDL states), but also create better adult drivers.

Teens are only 6 percent of the drivers in Kansas, but they account for 20 percent of the crashes. The risk of death doubles with two passengers and more than triples with three passengers in a car driven by a teen. In addition the risk is far greater for teen drivers in the late night hours.

So what change would await Kansas teen drivers? There are three phases to the proposed GDL*.

- Learner's Permit — A teen must be a minimum of 15 years of age (currently in Kansas the age is 14). An adult must be in the car at all times and the teen must have the permit for 12 months before moving on to the second phase,
- Intermediate Permit — This permit

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



requires the presence of an adult during certain times and under certain conditions. A teen holds this permit for six months before becoming eligible at the earliest age of 16 1/2.

- Full Licensure — A teen is eligible for this at 16 1/2 after demonstrating they have completed the previous requirements and have not received any moving violations, seatbelt infractions or wireless violations for six months prior to request. In addition to those requirements there is also mandatory driver's education.

- Farm permits are still available with the same requirements.

I am sure I would have argued heatedly against this proposal when I was young, but as a parent and grandparent I strongly support GDL. Some adults will say this places a hardship on the family. They rely on their teen to help with errands, take younger siblings, etc.

Being a parent is never easy, but it is our responsibility to find ways to make our children safe and to teach them to be the best drivers possible.

This does not come simply or easily, but Kansas has waited long enough and on this we do not want to be the last state to "get on board".

Too much is at stake.
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* <http://www.kac.org/kac.aspx?pgID=912>

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

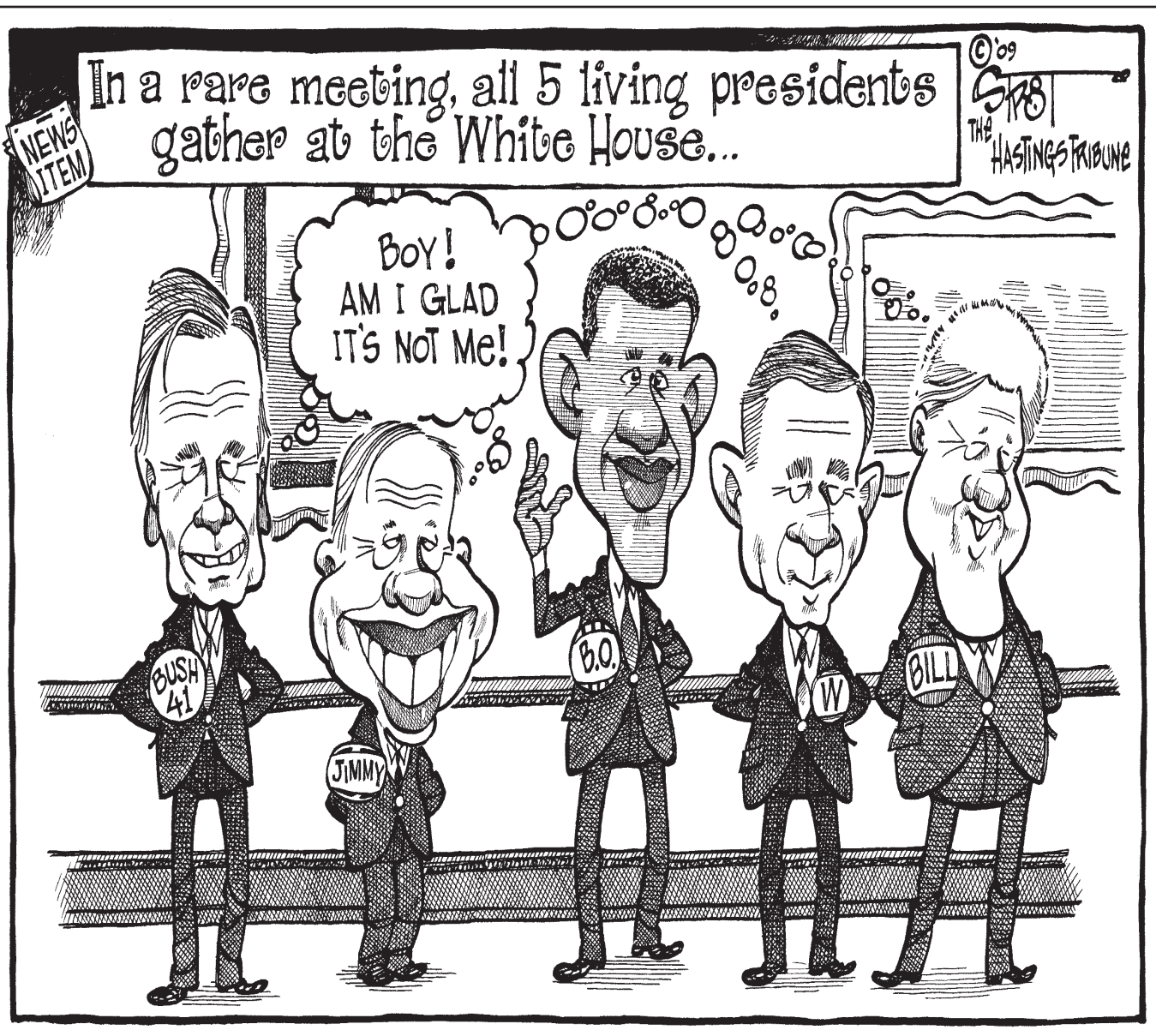
Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



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Here's a solution to bail out mess

Television news shows have been covering the release of the additional 350 billion dollars of bail out money. That's billion with a "B".

Right now, I don't even remember if it's car manufacturers, banks or mortgage companies that it's bailing out. But, a thought crossed my mind: why not "bail out" every man, woman and child in America by splitting the money up between them.

I did an on-line inquiry and found out there are 303,824,650 people in the United States. Divide \$350,000,000,000 by the number of people and everyone would receive more than \$1,151.98.

Not a huge stimulus package but it would help.

Car manufacturers would benefit; mortgage companies would benefit; and

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



banks would benefit because some people might even have a little left to save. Why doesn't George call and ask me these things? It's so simple.

-ob-

As per last week's column, I have been working on our first annual newsletter. It is completed and, with a minimal amount of editing, all on one page. The big push, now, will be to get the letters all addressed

and mailed. Keep your fingers crossed that I don't lose them in the chaos of tax preparation. It's income tax time again and bank statements, receipts and ledger books have taken over the table. We still do our bookkeeping the old fashioned way: by hand.

-ob-

Jim is working on a new house and has recruited me to do clean up and hang insulation. It's been "itchy", but the insulation is almost done. Clean up, however, is never ending. As soon as I get floors swept, somebody cuts a piece of lumber or sheet rock and dust goes everywhere.

At least, it's job security. So, until that check comes in the mail, I guess we better keep our jobs.

(carolynp38@hotmail.com)

Addiction: Recovery requires commitment

I have been struggling with what to write this week. As I read over the past few articles, my mind was overwhelmed by the destruction that addiction brings on families and the huge commitment to recovery that needs to be made if things are to be set right. I can tell you from 19 years of personal experience in active addiction to alcohol, methamphetamine and other drugs that the guilt, remorse and shame are beyond words.

I can also share from the personal experience of being the wife of an addict and mother of an addict that there is again guilt, remorse and shame beyond words. Recovery from this state requires commitment to complete lifestyle change that will take a lifetime. Allow me to share some of the gifts recovery has given me — especially over the past few weeks.

My father passed away a week before Christmas. He was a proud man. He took the job of parenthood seriously and worked hard throughout his life to provide my sister and me with all the opportunities to succeed and achieve. He did not drink, use drugs and was married to the same woman for 65 years prior to his death.

My journey into active addiction hurt him on many different levels. I'm sure there was doubt — what could he have done differently? What had he done

Where There's Hope Carla Moore

wrong? Also anger — how could I have taken all he had given and throw it away? Probably embarrassment — how many family get-togethers did I show up to under the influence? So needless to say, when I finally entered recovery there was a lot of emotional baggage that needed to be cleared up.

That was 13 years ago. Since that time I have had the chance to make "living amends". In other words, I began to make the next right choice and move forward in my life. I made it to family gatherings sober and over the years actually stayed longer than just for dinner like I did when I was using. I had the chance to make verbal amends to my father for my past behavior. I moved through the guilt, shame and remorse with the help of a sponsor, working the 12-steps, and attending meetings. Most of all I developed a relationship with my Higher Power.

Most recently I have had the chance to be involved with my family through the process of my father dying. I had the abil-

ity to speak with my father openly about his dying, how much he had given me throughout my life and my gratitude for being given a chance to be his daughter. I was given the opportunity to see him the day before he died, be with my mother and daughter through the funeral planning and actual rite and be open to my own feelings — something my using would never have allowed me to do. I can say that I have no regrets, things that I wished I would have done or said and that his dying was a spiritual/healing process.

None of this would have been possible without recovery. I did not have to go through it alone and I did not have to drink or use through the pain. I was surrounded by wonderful friends in recovery, a strong sense of connection to the Universe and my family without being weighed down by the past.

What a gift! Do I miss my father? Of course — but it's not tinged with what should have been. Recovery taught me to walk through difficulties rather than run from them so I can walk with others through their pain.

Isn't that what life is about?
(Enjoy the New Year and if you have any questions or comments, you can contact me at cmoore@valleyhope.com. Namaste - Carla)

Sound Off

Oberlin business owners set record straight

According to rumors around town, we have sold our business, Hansen Plbg. Inc., in Oberlin and Atwood. No, we have not sold to anyone. We have no agreement or contract and worst of all, no money!

We have also heard that we are asking \$500,000. Whew! We only wish. We are asking \$150,000, which includes a full inventory in the Atwood and Oberlin stores, back hoe-back hoe trailer and truck, en-

closed sheet metal trailer, two trenchers, one trench trailer, four pick-ups, sewer machines, tools, etc., and the building at 118 E. Commercial in Oberlin.

Yes, we have bought a house in North Platte, to be close to our family. We do have plans to move there sometime soon. For anyone wanting to stop by, we are at 210 Cherokee Road, if you can ever catch us at home.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please stop by our store at 118 E. Commercial and I will be happy to visit with you.

Again, we have not sold our business!
Marvin and Bee Hansen
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