

Tuesday's Snippets

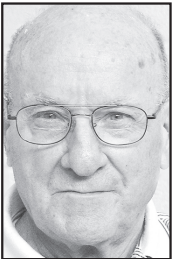
As expected, the cheerleading controversy at Norton Community High School received most attention for today's column. The school board voted 4-2 to dispense with cheerleaders for the 2009-2010 school year.

- Here's what YOU said:
- "Cheerleaders? Either way, no big deal."
  - "12 cheerleaders? Why not 6. We're a pretty small school."
  - "Let the athletes themselves decide the importance of cheerleading squads."
  - "I don't know if this is a poll, but if it is I vote YES to cheerleaders!"
  - "Would we dismiss football or basketball or wrestling at the snap of the finger like we did cheerleading?"
  - "Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! We need them!"
  - "Cheerleading is nothing but a beauty contest."
  - "I am glad we didn't shoot down the N. Korean missile, but I am glad we were able to free Phillips. It is probably the only way to deter the pirates although it will take more than one instance, I am sure."
  - "The crew is free, the captain is free and two-thirds of the bad guys are dead. I see a movie deal in the making."
  - "(Gov.) Sebelius hate crowd is now rolling out her campaign link to the nation's top abortionist Dr. Tiller in a derail bid for the HHS secretary's post. She'll be confirmed easily."

Things to chew on for next week's effort:

- √ I see where Goodland held one of the TEA parties last week. It brought out a crowd of 75, not bad for a town of less than 5,000. I thought we'd have something like that here in Norton, but all was quiet. Why?
- √ President Barack Obama shook

Stop Look Listen  
Tom Dreiling



hands with Chavez. Big deal? No big deal?

- √ Should airlines install bigger seats, instead of charging heavy passengers more to board?
- √ Did the incident involving an American ship and pirates at sea bring the shipping companies closer to arming their crews?
- √ Who, in the Republican ranks, in your estimation, is the biggest threat to Congressman Jerry Moran as he stumps the state in quest of the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Sam Brownback?
- √ If Gov. Sebelius is confirmed this week to be Health & Human Services secretary, automatically elevating Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson to the governorship, do you think he might have a change of heart and run for the office next year?

√ Reports seem to indicate, with the economy as it is, that many parents of students graduating from high schools this spring will enroll their kids in colleges where costs aren't as great, and bypass the bigger, more prestigious institutions their child prefers. One education specialist the other evening said there are "mini-wars" erupting between the big and little (colleges) in some areas of the country. He likened them to new car dealers and the deals they are making to attract buyers.

(To join the conversation, simply e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. No signatures necessary. - td)

Road to good mental health

According to Parlay International "Live Better, Work Better", people who are mentally healthy and able to be successful in their own lives tend to share the following traits:

- Good Self-Esteem:** they value themselves including their own unique skills and talents, beliefs and feelings. They appreciate praise, but don't always rely on others to tell them they are worthwhile.
- Life's Challenges:** successful people are able to handle challenges at each stage of life, and work through temporary set-backs.
- Flexibility:** they do not always have to be right. They are able to make mistakes, and accept those as mistakes and not moral failings, and to make adjustments for change.
- Realistic Expectations:** they are realistic about what they can accomplish and willing to redefine their goals.
- Acknowledge Feelings:** successful people are aware of their feelings, even when irrational, and are able to acknowledge those feelings and move on.
- Accept Responsibility:** they are able to accept responsibility for their actions rather than blaming others.
- Ask for Help:** successful people are willing to admit when they cannot solve

Plain Sense  
Karen D. Schueler

a problem, and will ask for and get help. They see this as part of the struggle to learn more and succeed.

In addition, people with good mental health have a positive attitude towards life. They accept that no one is perfect, and try not to criticize themselves or others. They are tolerant and treat others with respect. They spend time with family and friends who reflect those same values, and who value their friendship. They practice good stress management by eating nutritiously, exercising regularly, and getting a proper amount of rest.

(Contributed by Karen D. Schueler, M S, LCPC, Director, PEO - Prevention, Education and Outreach Dept. 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, PEO-Prevention, Education and Outreach Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, KS 67601.)

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Anniversary of destructive storm near

A Bit of History

Larry Donahey

June 24, 2009, will be the 100th anniversary of a very destructive day in Norton County. As many as seven tornadoes may have formed in the northern part of the county. The Norton Courier (one of the local newspapers) reported that soon after the noon hour, there could be seen a dark line along the north and northeast horizon.

This rose higher and higher and by two o'clock presented a most ominous appearance in its inky blue-blackness. By this time it had attracted the serious attention of many of our citizens who sought places of vantage to watch its movements, while many others placed themselves within caves or in close proximity, ready at any moment to drop into security.

Many farm homes were damaged or destroyed by these storms. One of the places mentioned was the Brunswig Ranch, which lost 59 big steers. At the

Lew Searles' place everything was destroyed except for the house. In the house were five children alone. Fortunately, the children were not harmed. Gan Sheley lost 8 head of milk cows. Nothing was left standing at the Oren Gentry place. The Frank Chase place was hit hard. A barn built the previous fall was lifted up and crushed. Three horses in the barn were carried away nearly half a mile and dropped in a draw. Hundreds of chickens were lost. The Chase family survived by taking shelter in their cave. At the Browne place due north of Norton six or seven

miles, everything went except the house. Many others who suffered damage are mentioned in the local newspaper articles.

The storms, destruction was also recorded in several photographs. The most famous was taken by C. E. Reed from the roof of the ice plant when the tornado was in its incipency. This may be one of the earliest photographs ever taken of a tornado. Reed also photographed much of the destruction that occurred from the tornadoes.

More detailed information on the historic day can be found at the Norton County Museum.

(The museum will hold a ribbon cutting on May 2 from 1-5 p.m., to which everyone reading this is welcome and warmly invited to attend. Refreshments will be served. This is the first of many monthly museum columns. Also, volunteers are always appreciated.)

Capturing funds for Norton County

One's political or moral convictions may vary when it comes to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, yet most unite at the opportunity to bring much-needed revenue to their community. Norton County is certainly an example of this collaboration to attract investment into our communities through the Act.

Elected officials and department heads at both the city and county level have prepared projects and eagerly monitor the release of money into each program hoping to capture a portion for one of their projects.

For example, the Road and Bridge Department worked with the Norton County Commission to submit a bridge project for consideration and Economic Development worked with the Norton County Commission, railroad and a private business to submit an application for a short line rail siding.

Competition is stiff, however, and these two projects were not funded. Some programs received applications

Something's Developing  
Diane Becker



amounting to six times the total money available. Nevertheless, rest assured that your local government officials and employees will keep trying.

Beyond the large infrastructure projects, local businesses and individuals may benefit from other programs such as the appliance replacement program or the weatherization program.

The 30 percent tax credit for renewable energy projects or the \$8,000 first time home buyers tax credits may help others.

From an economic development perspective, one of the most important programs is through the Small Business Administration. That loan program

raised their guarantee to 90 percent of the total project. In addition to the greater guarantee, they have also waived the guarantee and packaging fees, which amount to a significant cost savings for the entrepreneur. If you are considering expanding your business or starting a new business, it may be a good time for you to take advantage of these extra incentives.

As we continue to monitor funding available from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we will make the information available to the public through the local media, local meetings with department officials and through our website, www.discovernorton.com. In general, if you are interested in applying for a program, submit your application immediately because the money will not last long.

I greatly appreciate the support of The Norton Telegram and KQNK who have helped notify the citizens of Norton County of available programs.

There's something legislature forgot to do



The Kansas Legislature adjourned from its first session two weeks ago and some would consider it a success based upon the current economic situation. From the perspective of persons with disabilities, their families and the employees who work with them, the session accomplished nothing positive. The only decision made was to cut state funding. The state government, according to the Kansas Constitution and the Developmental Disabilities Reform Act of 1995, is responsible for funding agencies appropriately for the services they provide, yet the past four SRS Rate Studies have shown that community agencies are underfunded by large amounts.

The most disappointing aspect of the past session was that the legislature had the opportunity to finally address the problem by utilizing money from the Federal Government's Stimulus package to support HB 2094. This would have injected over \$15.2 million in economic impact and new jobs for northwest Kansas over the next few years, but the bill did not pass in committee. Money was given to state hospitals for raises, which is rightly deserved, but nothing was given to the employees who provide the same services in the community. The legislators' approach to funding persons with disabilities is similar to using a band aid to cover a massive wound. Community organizations are hemorrhaging from the

state's neglect. For example in the last year and a half Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas has eliminated 26 staff positions, reduced programs and services as well as closed one of its service locations. Those positions eliminated no longer spend money in our communities and they no longer pay taxes. In addition, there are nearly 4,000 people on a waiting list statewide waiting for services, but not a dime was spent to reduce the waiting list. It is frustrating for parents of persons with developmental disabilities to see the progress their children made in special education and once they graduate deteriorate because there are no services available because the funding is simply not there.

There is strong support from some legislators, but others keep telling us there is no new money. We hear this every year, yet hundreds of other programs and/or projects receive new money each year. Why does this occur? Some argue it is

because people with developmental disabilities are not a loud enough voice and do not turn out to vote in large numbers, so why would legislators listen or take heed? There is a misperception of some that we receive enough funding, yet their own studies indicate that this is not the case.

Our legislators in both the House and the Senate need to make this the number one priority in the Omnibus session when they return to Topeka on April 29. Their responsibility, as well as the leaders of the Senate and House, is to ensure the people — who in many instances are not able to take care of themselves — are cared for. In 1995, the state made a promise to take care of its citizens with developmental disabilities, but so far it has not lived up to its promise. It's time to quit playing politics with people's lives and to do the right thing.

Please help the thousands of persons on the waiting list, their families and the persons who provide services, by contacting your legislators and urging each to support increased funding for persons with developmental disabilities.

Those with disabilities are real people and should never be overlooked as if they are invisible. Legislative contact information can be found at www.kslegislature.org.

Gerald (Jerry) L. Michaud  
President, Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas