

Schools asked to join the digital revolution

Kansas school administrators are trampling over each other to be first to embrace "one-to-one" computing. They are going "paperless."

Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan calls for all schools to replace printed textbooks with digital devices. Tech companies call for schools to embrace the "digital revolution." They all declare that this is environmentally much better than using paper.

But the claim that electronic media are environmentally superior to paper is dead wrong.

In fact, trees are the environmentally friendly resource.

Electronic media have a much larger carbon footprint and pose a "hazmat" nightmare when it comes to disposing of electronic waste.

First, paper comes from a renewable resource: wood. Paper is now grown from cloned softwoods that grow fast to provide pulp in a short time. It is farmed. It does not cause deforestation. This is a renewable resource because it is constantly renewed by sunlight through photosynthesis.

And recycling of paper in the United States is now routine. Nearly sixty percent of our paper is from recycled post-consumer sources. Thus, most books, magazines, newspapers and cardboard go to produce more new books, magazines, newspapers and cardboard. —

And reading paper print uses no electrical energy at all. — —

But a person reading an eText is constantly drawing electrical power. Data compiled by the "Climate Group" shows that cell phones, computers, and all the equipment that drives the computers and social media being used for electronic reading are emitting over 830 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. That equals over two percent of the manmade carbon footprint worldwide. That exceeds the world's aviation-generated carbon dioxide. Digital media are now our fastest-growing carbon polluter.

About one-fourth of the energy consumed by digital devices is in their manufacture. About three-fourths is spent during their use. The average US citizen uses 440 pounds of paper a year, produced by 500 kilowatt-hours. But one computer can use 500 kilowatt-hours in just five months, over twice the energy consumption. And that figure does not include the printers, servers, cell phones and school e-reader media.

Electronics has a terrible lifespan compared to paper. Both hardware and software turns over rapidly. — Software programs and apps rapidly go obsolete, costing people and institutions dramatically in both money and time for retraining.

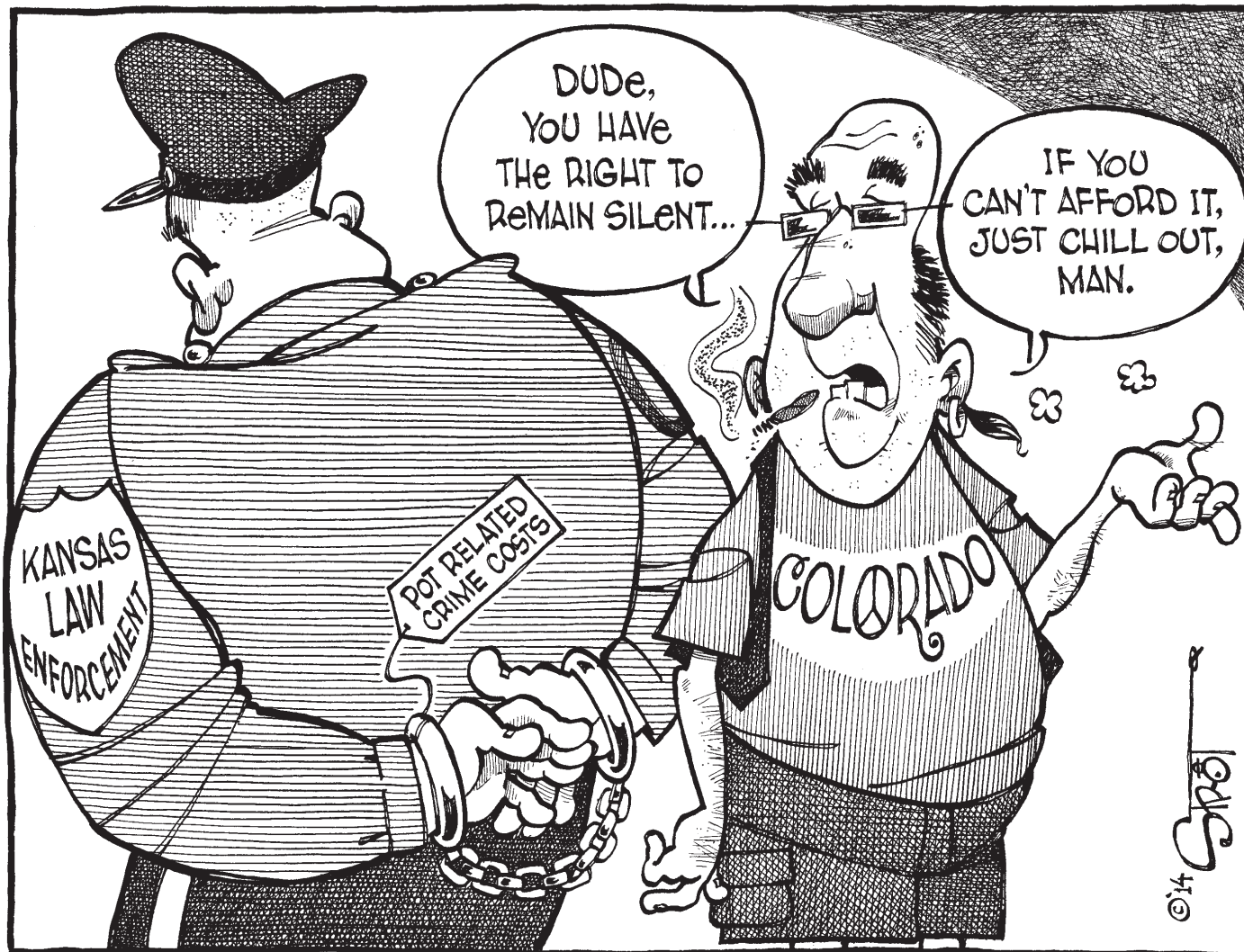
Some Kansas principals proclaim that electronic media will be so much cheaper than textbooks. They obviously live on another planet.

According to BBC Research: "Every year we buy new, updated equipment to support our needs and wishes—in 2012, global sales of new equipment included...444.4 million computers and tablets, and 1.75 billion mobile phones. All of these electronics become obsolete or unwanted, often within one to three years of purchase. This global mountain of waste is expected to continue growing 8% per year, indefinitely."

Electronic media generate a huge amount of hazardous waste that contains very toxic substances: cadmium, mercury, lead, arsenic, beryllium and brominated flame retardants. When burned at low temperatures we usually ship this waste to poor third world countries and it creates some of the most toxic substances known.

The next time a techno-crazy brags they are "saving a tree" by going paperless, point to your printed books. In classrooms and libraries, our safe, clean, mostly re-cycled paper books are the sequestered carbon helping offset their larger, more costly and toxic electronic carbon footprint.

John Richard Schrock
Emporia, Ks.



A home town is about the people

I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who turn out for events in Norton and last Saturday's Spring Fashion Fling was no exception. What a fun day and The Rock was the perfect place. We are so fortunate to have volunteers and the Chamber dedicated to promoting Norton businesses. It didn't matter whether they were employees or volunteers, their presence spoke volumes and bridged any age barriers with models from infancy to nonagenarian.

I have lived several places over the years and if I have learned one thing it is that a home town isn't about having places to shop or choices in restaurants or weather or landscape, but rather it is about people. The people are the color of the community. They give it texture and life and most of all vitality. Because of that vitality, things happen, projects are completed and the community thrives.

Within the last year, the community

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



of Norton has built a new (and might I add, amazing) swimming pool. We have seen new or restored restaurants, a new clothing store, a children's store plus other businesses. Although the school bond issue failed, I am confident with the input from the community via the survey at www.usd211.org, we will support the needed changes both for academic and safety reasons.

Recently, I heard of yet another young couple moving to Norton. One of them grew up here and together they plan on making Norton their home. First of all, what this says is Norton

was a great place to grow up. This individual has fond memories, sees the promise of a good education and health care for their children, and a continued hope and vitality in the community. They want to be a part of that.

However, it isn't just the young who move back or relocate, so do the retired. They are looking for lower housing costs, relative ease of living and low crime, good medical facilities and a thriving community. A community made up of multi-generations is enriched by experiences, wisdom and energy.

One of my favorite books is Norman Vincent Peale's Power of Positive Thinking. I am a firm believer in the Power that resides within us and our ability to tap into that Power to enhance our lives. It was once said, the phrase isn't seeing is believing, but rather it is believing is seeing. Once we believe in the impossible, we begin to see our full potential. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

What kind of person are you?

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



Weather Channel!

When it's impossible to get a true picture of what is going on in the world, I do things to distract myself. Thus I took a Facebook survey: What kind of person are you?

I'm Revolutionary! From friends' survey results I ascertained there were at least two other options: enlightened and dreamer.

As I answered the questions I thought I'd be deemed "apathetic". Several times I choose answers just because I could not expend the energy to care.

Apparently not caring what others think, do or say (as long as no one dies) is not callous; it is revolutionary. Who knew?

Revolutionaries challenge the status quo. So here's a question: Why do we care about Donald Sterling?

In his favor, he obviously paid black coaches and players well or why would they have worked for him? He gave money to the NAACP. His mixed race girlfriend happily accepted generous gifts.

Signs of problems: conviction of violating fair housing laws and court documents in a legal action by his wife.

CNN dug up dirt on the girlfriend. Yahoo reports she loves Donald. It devastated this conversation came out and claims she did not release it.

Is his punishment enough? Well, no matter what the NBA does he will still be rich and he seems to not mind looking foolish. So how can we punish him?

There is a lot of information out there! But does it shed light on race relations? Or merely confirm our obsession with fame, money and power.

In contrast where is information about the tornado victims? We can barely find any, even when we seek it out. How many died? What were their names?

When it comes to news: editors edit. There is not enough air time or ink for everything.

They used to say, "If it bleeds, it leads."

CNN definitely got that with their obsession of the missing Malaysian plane. But everyone dropped the ball on the death and destruction of the late April storms in North America.

So even though climate change can be bloody and is a "sexy" topic which we might think would carry over to a tornado outbreak, the Sterling story has the promise of actual sex. What kind of a person am I? I'm one who has almost given up hope. But then there was a picture of a sign painted on a piece of debris, in front of a roofless house: "We will praise You in this storm!"

IN THIS STORM! While it rages! In the face of death!

This thought, thousands of years old, seems revolutionary.

What a wasted opportunity. News: worthy of coverage and all we got was Donald Sterling.

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