

'Hurrah' to them for working together

Yeah, hurrah! Clap, clap, clap. Yippee! The noise you are reading is the citizens of Norton County. They're happy and proud of their leaders. The City of Norton and the county have come together to save the airport, a facility, both need and both support as best they can. For many months, it seemed the airport would be a pawn in a battle for control between the city, county and airport board. Then the three put their differences away and worked for the good of the community. Now the city doesn't necessarily agree with the county and neither is sure they exactly trust the airport board, but all have joined forces to get things done. That, friends, is how democracy works. The city must look after the interests of its citizens and make sure their tax money is used to the best advantage for those who live in the city. The county commissioners have a broader scope. They are looking at serving those living inside Norton and those living in the country and in the smaller towns. They have to make sure that there is enough money to go around, and there are many calls upon their purse.

The airport board just wants to get things done. The members of the board want to have the best, safest and nicest airport in Northwest Kansas. But they have no way to get money except to go to the city and the county.

There are ways to get money from the city and the county, but certain protocols are followed. Sometimes people don't know exactly what they're supposed to do. When things don't go as planned, feathers get ruffled.

Here at *The Telegram*, we have been preaching, "Get together. Get things done. Forget the trivia."

Well, things are getting done. But, like all good preachers, we know it isn't us that's made the difference.

People have made the difference. Citizens telling their leaders what they want and leaders looking at ways to get around obstacles and difficulties and getting things done.

So today we say, "Hallelujah" and tomorrow we'll be back in the pulpit, preaching another sermon about dispatch services, tennis courts or tax problems.

But today, we see something we hope will take root in the people and the institutions of our community. — Cynthia Haynes

Beautiful things make memories

Years ago a very gracious lady taught school with my mother.

She and her husband had lost an 8-year-old son as well as two sons in their late teens, only her pre-maturely born daughter survived, but this woman was the reflection of serenity.

Her peacefulness and faith penetrated every room she entered.

Mrs. W. had hosted a meeting one evening, and as they were drying her china, a plate broke. The guilty party was devastated and said she would try to find a replacement piece.

"Oh, no, please don't," Mrs. W. said in her soft voice. "Whenever I look at this china I remember the last time we used it was the Christmas before our little boy died."

"We broke a plate that night. Whenever I take it out I think of that Christmas dinner and what a wonderful time we had. Now when I see another missing piece I'll think of this evening spent with my good friends and be grateful for you all."

She had a wonderful attitude about using priceless things.

In this day of disposable everything it is a temptation to store Grandma's china or Aunt Millie's crystal. So many of the

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



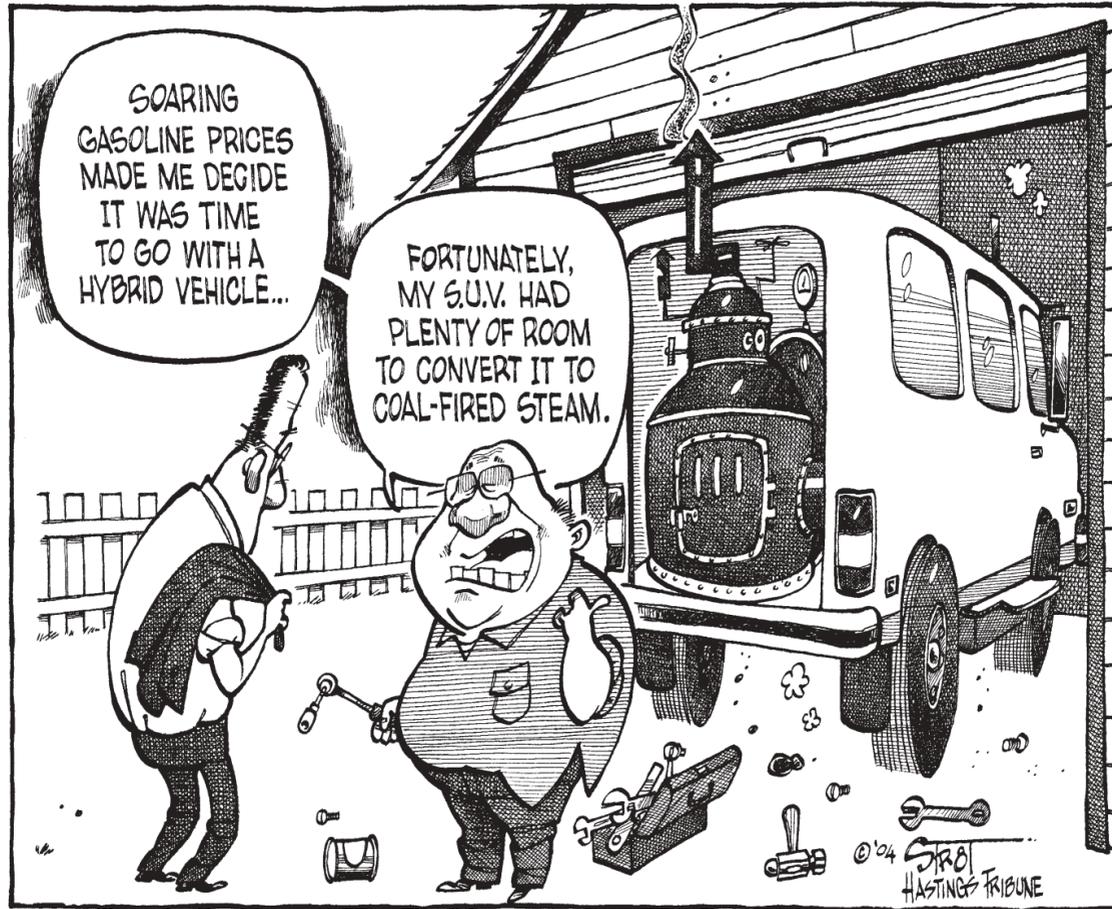
things we value today were everyday items of long ago.

They survived moves across the prairie, fires, Indian raids and severe storms only to find their place now perched on a shelf to prevent breakage. Sometimes, though, it is fun to take them down, share their beauty and practicality with others and then put them up for display again.

We can't collect all the beautiful things we enjoy in life, but we can collect the memories of the times spent with good friends and family.

Making memories is a collection of its own, one to be treasured and cherished throughout our lifetime. Using valuable things helps us to remember those who went before and their treasures find a place in our mind's scrapbook.

It truly isn't so much what we have as the memories we store.



We've forgotten how to be happy

Payday doesn't come routinely on the farm. For us it came Thursday when we sold the second bunch of calves. Some of them were raised and some of them were purchased at about 400 pounds. We fed them until they were ready to go to a feedlot to be finished.

I was gone the first part of the week and was surprised when I returned home Wednesday night and learned that J.R. was selling the calves the next day; not the next week as he had planned.

He explained his rationale for moving up the sale date and told me what he wanted, price-wise, for the calves. Then he told me all the reasons he would not get it. He was depressed. He made me depressed.

I worried all day. I went to the sale barn and picked up the check. He got what he wanted. How exciting.

When I got home and told him he didn't even know how to be happy about this."

It is very troubling to think about what is happening to farmers today. The most recent copy of *Newsweek* said in 1950, Americans spent one-fifth of their disposable incomes on food. Now they spend one-tenth.

Twenty-five years ago we sold wheat for \$5 per bushel. Last year the highest we sold any wheat was \$4. Can you think of anything else that has gone down 20 percent in the past 25 years?

Thirty years ago we could buy a half-gallon of ice cream for 69 cents. Today,

Back Home Nancy Hagman



if you are lucky, you can get it for \$2.50 on sale. We aren't dairy farmers but I can guarantee you they are not making almost four times what they did 30 years ago.

I always hated to complain too much because, after all, we chose this. The problem is, after awhile, it becomes less a choice and more a web you can't get out of.

Could we sell out?

J.R., who no longer knows how to be happy, thinks no one else would want his old junk machinery. Probably no one could keep it running. In fact, a guy who buys older stuff and sells it to the Mexicans commented that they wouldn't consider buying a lot of the stuff we have anymore.

Here's something to be happy about; we don't have sons. Because heaven forbid, they might want to farm.

No wonder there aren't any people here anymore. Why would anyone want to farm? Why would you encourage anyone to?

You get advice like "find a niche market" That means give fall tours, corn

mazes, apple cider, dude ranches or hunting lodges. Grind your own wheat into flour. Sell at a farmer's market. Have a pick-it-yourself strawberry patch. That only works where there are people, like Johnson County, maybe.

The girls always complained that their friends thought we were divorced.

I don't know what we are doing wrong but it seems like J.R. just works 24/7. Part of the problem is our operation is very spread out. He drives 100 miles every day to feed those previously mentioned cows.

So we are giving up the home we love, where our girls grew up, this spring so he won't have that drive any more. I think it will help a lot. It's probably the right thing to do. But we feel a loss, we are second-guessing decisions made 22 years ago.

Like it or not this country is changing. I like to think I am a person who looks to the future.

Like the kids say, "Cry me a river, build me a bridge, and get over it."

Still there is a pretty thin line between accepting your situation and being resigned to it. At some point we have to start thinking about what we are going to do when the worst has happened.

And I gotta tell you — I hope for the sake of our farmers it has.

I hope it rains, I hope the prices go up. I hope we have to close every Farm Service Agency office there is and we never get another government payment. I hope we learn how to be happy again.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Possibility of tennis courts closing distresses tennis player

To the Editor:

The end of another school year is drawing near at Norton Community High School. With this comes the end of my junior year and brings me that much closer to my senior year. As a senior I look forward to the opportunity to participate in the girl's tennis program. Saying this, you can see my obvious disappointment in the possibility that there may not be tennis next year.

I have been participating in tennis since my freshman year. During my three years on the tennis team, I have seen the courts deteriorate more and more every year. Although the condition of the courts is getting worse each year, I still enjoy the opportunity to participate in this life-long sport. I, along with many other members of the tennis team, enjoy going out with my friends and fellow classmates to hit some balls for fun.

So you can understand my dismay when I heard that there is not going to be tennis next year. Instead, they are looking to start girl's golf in the spring to replace tennis. After hearing this, I didn't know what to do and even thought about giving up and not trying to get tennis reinstated.

Then, Jay Holste took the initiative and organized a meeting to discuss possible solutions. Of course, I went to the meeting and was surprised at the cost of replacing or even possibly rebuilding the courts. It was much more money than I had ever

thought.

On March 8, Mr. Holste talked to the school board members about a temporary fix he had found that would only cost about \$13,500 and lasts for three to five years. I, along with many other members from the community, attended this meeting to try and find a way to keep girl's tennis.

Mr. Holste wanted a joint effort with the school paying half, possibly receiving grant money, having the city pay about \$3,375 (after all, these are public courts for everyone in the city). This leaves us to raise about \$2,500.

Much to my dismay, the board voted to wait till its next meeting to decide what to do. Thinking this was the end of tennis, I left the meeting disappointed. Later, the board decided that it would agree to put up the money if the city also did. After hearing this I was very excited.

Then recently, the city decided it would not put the money up and this left me with even more disappointment. Hearing this,

I started to wonder if anyone even cares about what happens to the tennis courts.

Though many people have shown up to these meetings voicing their concerns, much of the community is oblivious to the possibility of having tennis canceled. A lot of the people I have talked to don't even care what happens as long as the football and volleyball programs remain in the spring.

I am not saying that these programs are bad. In fact, I go to a lot of the games to support the teams along with much of the community. I am just saying that if football was canceled, there would be a huge group of concerned citizens. I think it is sad that there is not more community concern towards tennis.

I am just writing this in hopes of informing a few more people about the tennis concerns. I believe with more community concern, we could possibly get the money together to help fix the tennis courts.

Jessi Duscher
Norton

WRITE:

We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Wednesday 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, 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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