

## Why don't we pray for our enemies?

"But, I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." — Matthew 6:44.

In church, we pray for those we love, those who are sick, our leaders, our families and ourselves.

Why don't we ever pray for people who hate us, or people we dislike?

There's nothing wrong with praying for your aunt who has cancer or for our parents and grandparents who have died.

It's not a bad thing to pray for the president, governor and mayor. They need all the help they can get. The same goes for ministers, priests and other clergy.

Petitions for health and prosperity for ourselves may be a little self-seeking, but we were told to ask.

And there's certainly nothing wrong with asking for help when we have a big test, when our marriage is in trouble, when we have a problem we don't know how to solve or when we're sick or lonely or desperate.

These are all good things.

But why don't we pray for Osama bin Laden? Now there's a guy who needs more help than you, me or the entire U.S. Army can provide.

The same goes for Kim Chong-il, the leader of North Korea. He has an inferiority complex that would scare anyone. He needs lots of help, and a little divine guidance wouldn't hurt.

These are the "bad guys." We don't like them because they have hurt and killed people. They hate us just because we exist. They're not "nice folks" and no one would want them to live in the neighborhood.

But that's not the point. We don't have to like them or what they do. Maybe we need to pray that they will change. We need to pray that they will stop hating and hurting both themselves and others.

The same thing goes for the little hurts, discomforts, annoyances and pains in life, too.

Next time you step on a piece of gum on the sidewalk, pray for the kid who spit it out.

Think nice thoughts, even if it kills you, about the people who mow their lawn at 6 a.m., allow their dog to do its job on your grass or steal your lawn ornaments.

Anger, hurt, resentment and hate don't seem to hurt anyone but the one who is angry, hurt, resentful or hateful.

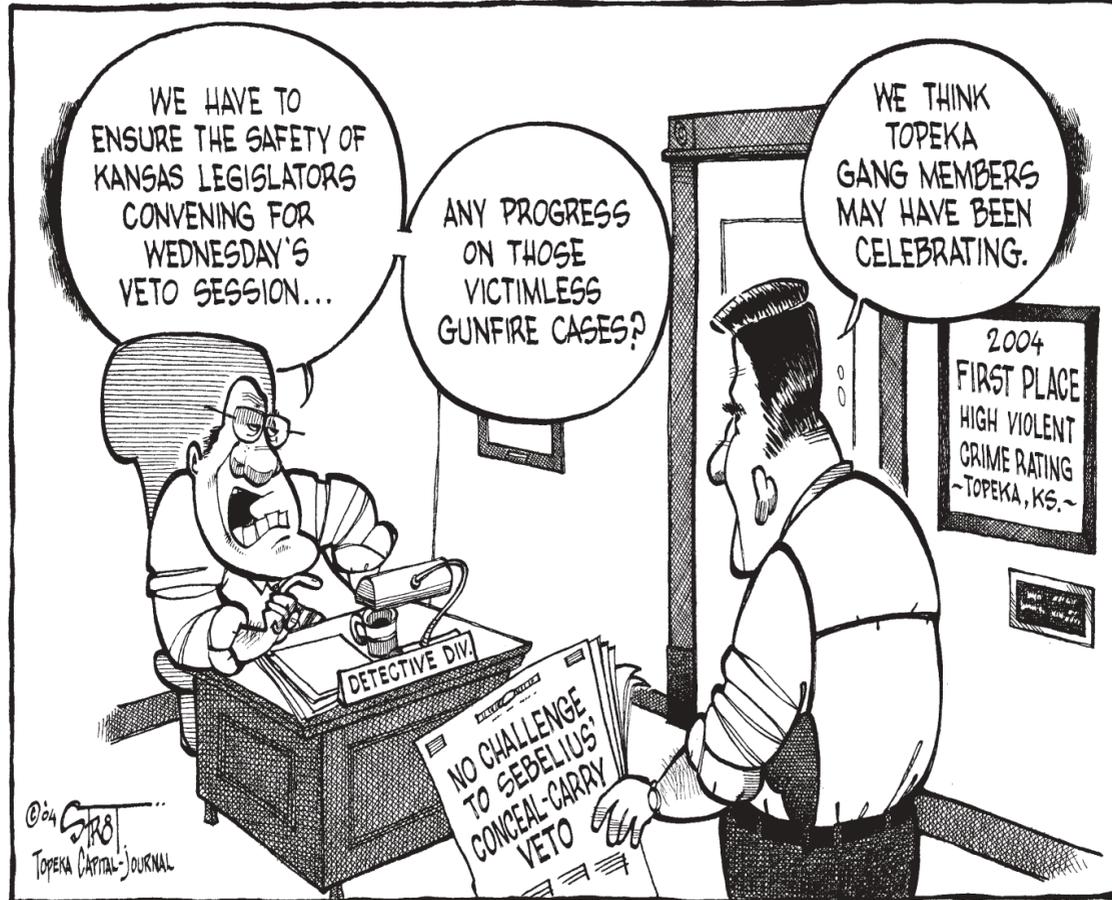
The person who mows his lawn early just wants his grass to look nice, and he's an early bird. The kid with the gum and the dog owner are thoughtless, not malicious. And maybe the person who stole those lawn ornaments has a really ugly place they need to brighten up.

Just let go. Say, "I wish they hadn't done that, but that's OK..." and get on with your life.

As for bin Laden and Kim Chong-il, give them a good, long prayer.

Boy, do they need it!

— Cynthia Haynes



## Good time, bad times, it's all worth it

Soccer came to Norton too late for me to be a "soccer mom" but I have been almost an everything else "mom". I have been a high school mom for 11 straight years.

It's been a lot of fun and it has gone fast.

I started making a list of all the activities the girls managed to try in high school.

After a bit I realized it would be easier to list the things they didn't try.

Obviously there is football and wrestling. We did have a wrestling manager one year in junior high and a boys basketball manager in high school (same child — she wasn't so interested in sports but she was interested in the guys who play them).

We never tried track (in high school) or cross country or golf. Outside of that I think we only missed FFA.

One of my favorite songs is by Simon and Garfunkel and it starts out "When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all."

That is pretty much how I view my own high school experience.

Thinking back on all the things I learned while my kids were in high school definitely brings to mind happier thoughts.

The mother of one of my classmates

### Back Home Nancy Hagman



once told me. "I tell my kids whenever they do something it feels just like I got to do it, too." (She had 11 children, two became doctors and three lawyers.)

My children were pretty young at the time and it made me laugh.

I thought, "Doesn't she know you aren't supposed to live through your children?" Still her candor was refreshing.

What she did not say is it's not just the good things that you live through them with; it's the bad things.

As we get older I think we are able to handle bad times with more ease, because we can see them in proportion to their importance. Having healthy children, job security, health, etc. are important.

A winning season, medals from activities, popularity, etc. are nice to have, fun to get and reasons to celebrate.

Poet Rod McKuen in his book "Listen to the Warm" has written, "You have to make the good times yourself"

Take the little times and make them into big times

And save the times that are all right For the ones that aren't so good."

Someone gave me that book when I graduated from high school. I knew it was true when I first read it, but now I really understand it.

Now that I am about through with my second high school experience I have come to think of pride and empathy as two sides of the same coin.

And personally I don't think there is anything wrong with taking pride in a great bunch of young people like the class of 2004.

It's almost time senior parents — the last state music festival, state forensics, journalism and track. Almost time for the last concerts, the final art show, senior farewells and graduation.

This is the time to live through your kids!

Celebrate — just don't think your job is over — they just may come Back Home!

## Apparently, people like to hunt rattlesnakes

Did you know that Kansas has a rattlesnake season? I always figured that it was open season on the little buzzers anytime you saw one.

Now, I really like snakes. I had a bull snake as a pet when I was younger. But, I've never been fond of critters that are meaner than me, with perhaps the exception of the cats. Cats, no matter how obnoxious, are not poisonous.

So I was surprised to see a brochure entitled "2004 Western Prairie Rattlesnake *Crotalus viridis* application and Season Information"

It wasn't a very fancy brochure. It was an 8 1/2-inch-by-11-inch piece of gold-end-colored note paper that had been tri-folded to give you six sides to look at.

### Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



It wasn't really printed, just badly copied.

The cover had the name of the brochure and a picture of a coiled snake I assume was a western prairie rattler.

Under the caption in small letters was the information that commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permits and commercial dealer permits expire on December 31, 2004. Below that was the usual equal

opportunity notice.

On the same side of the sheet, the next two folds had information for commercial harvest and commercial dealer.

Now, if you want to purchase rattlesnakes or their parts for resale or export out of the state, you have to have a dealer permit.

Dealers may not have snakes under 18 inches. It's nice to know they protect the children.

The other side of the brochure sheet has the commercial harvest permit application. To do this, you need a lot of nerve, a cool head and a little bit of stupidity to apply.

The next fold has information on the annual Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup and the last fold an application form for commercial dealers.

I was most interested in the Rattlesnake Roundup, which I have heard of but never attended. Apparently, Sharon Springs is the only town in the state that had the bright idea to capitalize on something you normally couldn't give away.

I wonder why no one else has thought of this? Oh yeah, see above.

Morbid curiosity kept me going.

The bag limit on western prairie rattlesnakes is 10 per day with a possession limit of 20. That's a lot of rattles.

Snakes may only be taken by hand, by noose, by snake hook, tong or fork or other methods approved by the Department of Wildlife and Parks.

I guess a shotgun isn't on the "other approved methods" list. Nor is garden hoe, my grandmother's favorite weapon against snakes. When she was done, they were all "parts."

While I'm making fun of this, my friends who have been to the roundup say it's really lots of fun.

Festival dates are Friday and Saturday, May 7-8 this year. Slither on down.

## What makes a class stay connected?

This year is my 40th class reunion from Norton Community High School. It seems like only yesterday and yet seems as if it was centuries ago.

It is interesting to contemplate on why some classes remain "connected" and others have little or no contact either as a class or as individuals.

In my class, many of us who graduated together had also started kindergarten together.

We were angels in the school pageant; we played at recess and attended birthday parties together. We knew where each other lived and in most cases could walk there after school.

Throughout the years we fell in and out of friendships and in and out of "love" and still we were connected.

Our senior class president has the daunting responsibility of finding the few lost individuals and sharing the information with all.

Fortunately our class has operated a bit like a bicycle tire. Our class president is at the hub; the spokes are individual people who reach out to the whole to stay in touch.

We graduated during turbulent times, no less so than now.

We were naive and yet political.

We believed in the good of people, the promise of our future, the country

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



and our leaders, all this in the midst of unbelievable prejudice, a purposeless war and the impending loss of our innocence.

But through it all, we maintained a link maybe only connecting with one or two, but those one or two connected with two or three others and thus the wheel becomes complete.

History gives us strength and purpose.

We each bring our bit of history to share during these reunions.

We marvel at the changes, the families, and the accomplishments of our lives, all this, as we re-negotiate our friendships and renew our belief in one another.

Another class will soon graduate and be on the road to finding its purpose. Some friendships will last, others will die out, but the one thing, which will link them all, is the history of today.

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Office hours:

8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Phone: (785) 877-3361

Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes ..... editor and publisher

Veronica Monier ..... staff reporter

Dick Boyd ..... Blue Jay sports

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