

Why let teens die on roads?

The headline was sad, the story sadder. A 15-year-old girl was killed, her passenger, also 15, hurt, when their pickup rolled on a rural highway. The girls were thrown from the truck as it rolled. Neither was wearing a seatbelt, and it's a wonder both weren't killed. These girls were 15. The driver, who was killed, had only a restricted license good for driving to and from school and on farm errands. The wreck occurred when the inexperienced driver lost control, drifted off the pavement, then "overcorrected" — jerked the wheel — and rolled the truck. Police said she was driving illegally, joy riding with a friend. Teens under 16 are not supposed to have anyone with them except an adult or a relative. None of that matters much now to a grieving family or a grieving town. A child has been lost, and nothing will bring her back. We can save others. Kansas needs to change its driver licensing laws. Kids 14 and 15 don't need to drive. It isn't safe. Too many of them are killed every year. They don't need to drive to school. Kansas districts have plenty of buses. They don't need to drive on farm errands. That can wait until they are 16. They sure don't need to be out cruising with their friends. They'll have plenty of time for that later — if they live. Most surrounding states no longer allow 14- and 15-year-olds to drive. All are farm states, but most have seen the light. We should, too. The law needs to be changed, and until it does, Kansas police officers need to enforce the laws we have. No more kids driving to school in violation of the law. No more kids driving around without a license. The cops should stop them, give them a ticket and send these kids home. Before it is too late. Before another one is killed. Sure, the kids won't like it. Yeah, some parents will be angry. It won't be the most popular bill this session. But it will save lives and end this senseless loss of our children. Kids 14 and 15 don't need to drive. We shouldn't let them go out and kill themselves. We need to change this law, this year, before one more child dies.

— Steve Haynes

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Organizers praise reporter's efforts

To the Editor:
(For Brandon Gay, reporter)
Thank you so much for the wonderful article you wrote about the runners in Run Across America 2004. On August 21 six runners ran under the finish banner in Central Park, New York, thus completing their 3,100 mile trek across the country. We were all VERY tired and VERY happy to be there.

Thank you also for sending copies of the paper. We have sent each finisher a copy. It was very thoughtful of you to send enough for all of them. Once again, it was really nice meeting you when we were in Norton and we thank you for your interest in Run Across America.

Sincerely,
Alan Firth and Mary Stewart
organizers

Man against proposed ambulance barn

To the Editor,
Why they don't take the empty lot south of the ambulance barn now (for expansion of the facility).
It would be cheaper to expand an existing building than to buy a new one.
When did Norton County vote for a new barn? Have not seen it on any ballot. Why not put it on a ballot and see if they want it before wasting money.
By having someone else come in it does not stay in Norton County. Use your head for something other than a hat rack. I think I am not the only one that thinks this way!

August H. Muehe
Norton

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

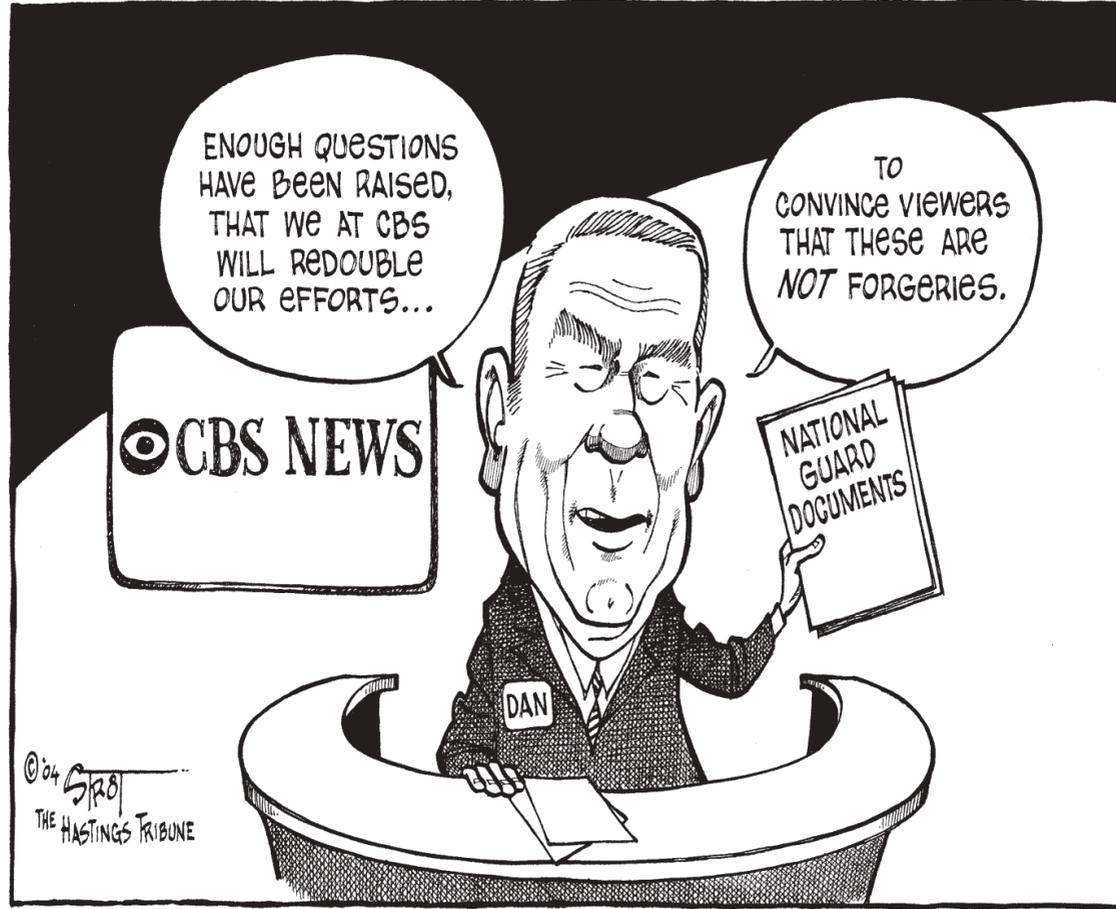
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Blood drive was success; more donors than expected

To the Editor:
I want to express my heartfelt thank you and appreciation to all those who helped to make the Norton Red Cross Blood Drive such a success. There were 24 volunteers giving of their time and talents, totaling approximately 120 hours. It has been such a privilege to have been asked to be the coordinator for the past three blood drives, but I wouldn't be able to accomplish this project if it weren't for the loyal volunteers to this cause. Each blood drive, the Norton FFA provides students to help unload the truck at 7 a.m. and help to reload the truck at 3:15 p.m.. Cookie donations are made by two of the local 4-H clubs, Busy Jayhawkers and Busy Beavers and the North Dividers FCE. Your help and contributions are truly appreciated. I want to give a sincere thanks to those who had appointments and were "walk-ins". Of the 164 area residents that came to donate their blood, 17 were deferred and 20 were first-time donors. The Red Cross has promised more screening stations and blood donor stations. They were not able to provide us with more than what we have had in the past because of the number of actual production. Thanks to all of you, we have significantly gone over that. This means that your time spent in donating will be decreased by approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

We gave free tee shirts to donors but, ran out. We had planned for 144 people and were pleasantly surprised by the number. So, if you did not get a shirt, please contact me in about two weeks, as I put in a request for more shirts.

The original site of the National Guard Armory is under remodeling until next April. Thank you to the American Legion for allowing us the use of their building and for permission to hold the next Red Cross Blood Drive on March 17 in their facility. If you would like to be a part of the life saving volunteer group, please give me a call at 877-3665.

Laura N. Gilhousen,
blood drive coordinator

Norton man thinks candidate would be good choice

To the editor:
On November 2, the people of the United States of America will have the opportunity to exercise one of the most important rights we have in a democracy: the right to vote. Norton County citizens will of course also have that opportunity, and as a resident of Norton County, I hope all registered voters will exercise their right to vote. Norton County has faced many challenges in the past, and we will face many more in the future. Our present agriculture situation is one of dire straights. After 4 to 5 years of drought, many farmers are in tough financial situations. This of course affects all of us, especially our retail businesses. I am concerned that our present commissioners are not aggressively addressing economic development here in Norton County. I believe that Robert Clydesdale would, if elected, search for ways to bring more economic growth right here to Norton County. Having been born and raised in Norton County, Robert understands the conditions presently facing us. He is willing to put in the extra time to solve problems and explore alternate plans that will benefit Norton and make sure it continues to be a viable community. Without new and expanded industries, our population base will continue to decline. We have already seen the school numbers drop and we need to address it now. With economic development being his number one concern, I believe Robert, and we as a county, can help turn that trend around. Robert believes that a role of a county commissioner is not to dwell on the smallest details of every department in the county. Rather, he believes in hiring good people who can be in control of the different aspects of county government. If they perform their jobs well, he believes in rewarding them for jobs well done. If they do not, he believes in looking for new managers and employees. He believes that a commissioner should not be involved with the day-to-day operation of our county. He believes that micromanaging is disrespectful to the county employees and will have trust in them, as he hopes they will have for him. Robert also believes that as a county, we should all work together for the good of our county. Bickering between the county, city, and other boards and organizations only has a totally negative affect on our county's viability. If elected, Robert would work towards a unified effort in addressing those problems that we face. So on November 2nd, I would encourage you to vote. For those of you in the 3rd Commissioner District, I would encourage you to vote for Robert Clydesdale. He is the right choice for Norton County.

Thank you very much.
Henry J. Austerman
Norton

Reader appreciates cartoons' insight

To the Editor:
Thanks for your political cartoons. You should send some of them to the *Salina Journal*. They don't seem to have any that aren't Bush bashers. I don't understand why so many people don't seem to remember that the radical Muslims have been building up hate and arms against the Christian world for decades. While we have been interested in our own pleasures and sports, they were busy infiltrating our country. Even 9/11 hasn't awakened very many to (the fact) that their only intent is to destroy the Christian world as we know it. If we don't fight them in Iraq or somewhere else, our granddaughters and great-nieces will be wearing long black dresses, veils and getting kicked if their ankles show. Frankly, I don't think any of mine would like living that way, nor is that my wish for them. One reason we had for having a surplus under Clinton was the savings from closing lots of military installations. That is the main reason for the National Guard being on the front in Iraq. Our military had to be re-built and arms manufactured. Also, lots of security measures have been put in place. The Christian countries who refused to support the fighting (France, Germany and Russia) will have "9/11s" in their countries sooner or later and we will, too. We still aren't safe, but we are safer than we were before Bush took office.

Fleta Hanlon
Almena

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author. 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.

(from Wilsonville News)
by Velma Holtze
Laurie Laws
Wilsonville

Women dislike paying for school

To the Editor:
It is quite interesting that the new Southwest School District, comprised of former Wilsonville, Lebanon, Danbury, Bartley, Indianola and Red Willow school, which is contemplating building a great new high school building in Bartley had two students who have transferred from the Bartley district crowned homecoming king and queen at Cambridge on Friday evening. Is it any wonder that Wilsonville people who have no students in this Southwest school HATE to pay taxes to build a new high school in Bartley when we not only have no students going there but students from their own original district are not going there either?