

## Key word simply put is 'illegal'

Television filled a lot of air time Monday showing pictures of immigration rallies in at least two dozen American cities. This time the strategy changed: American flags replaced Mexican flags that were waved so boldly during rallies last week. We don't know if that soothed anybody's nerves.

Reports are that there are in the neighborhood of 11 million illegal immigrants roaming the streets and filling opened employment slots all over the place. They come here, so supporters say, to get their piece of the American pie. Doubtless anyone would deny them that piece if they came with status other than illegal.

The United States Senate, supposedly, had agreed on some kind of compromise legislation that would ease the nerves and steady the waters as the immigration battle grows. But in the end, the end being last Friday prior to the start of their two week Easter recess, everything caved in and they went home armed with nothing to calm the waters.

It would be interesting to know how you, our readers, feel about this hot potato. It is strange because of the strange bedfellows it is making. Usually, the political lines are drawn on most issues. This one, however, has Republicans contesting Republicans, and ditto Democrats.

Eleven million illegal immigrants didn't come across the border overnight. Or in one year. Or two. This has been going on for years. We are of the opinion that the fingers of guilt need to be pointed at those who didn't take the bull by the horn back then.

In the eyes of the rest of the world, as they watched the million or more rally on Monday, we came off as something less than hypocritical. Mean maybe?

What do you say?

— Tom Dreiling

## Nothing like a high school prom

At the little newspaper where I work, the other reporter and I kind of "divvy up" weekend photo assignments. The criteria for who gets what is determined by prior commitments, interests and who gets the short straw.

From now until the end of the school year, life at the paper will be a blur. There is going to be some kind of activity every day. Double that on weekends.

It was prom this weekend and Veronica, who went to a big city school, announced, "I didn't go to my own prom. I'm not going to this one."

I looked around, and as far as I could tell, I was the only other candidate for the job. Which, really, was okay with me. I loved both of my prom parties and thought the assignment would be fun. Jim wasn't going to be home until late, so what else was I going to do on a Saturday night?

No one knows where school traditions come from — they just are. At this school, the prom goes promenade in the high school gymnasium. Some couples tried to make their entrance unique. Some boys would twirl their partner as they were introduced. Two apparently dateless boys got the biggest laugh of the evening. They donned sunglasses and carried canes, entering the gym tap-tap-tapping like two blind men.

After the official and ceremonial walk-through, the master of ceremonies announced the end of the promenade. Parents and friends swarmed the floor to take pictures. It was a melee. Chiffon, taffeta and tuxes in a swirl. But it was fun, too.

Girls so beautiful they took your breath away. Boys so handsome they made your palms sweaty. Were these the same kids I saw the day before in baggy T-shirts and torn jeans?

## Out Back Carolyn Plotts



—ob—

It's tax time. And I feel really proud. We actually have it done with a few days to spare, unlike other years when we've been up the night of April 14 still posting and adding columns of deductions.

Like everyone else, I'm not crazy about paying taxes. However, I do like driving on nice roads, sending my kids to a good school, and having a modern hospital at my service. It's that old "render unto Caesar" syndrome. If we want it, we have to pay for it.

—ob—

I have always said that God gives us our children while we're young for a reason. An e-mail I received over the weekend explained why:

With medical advances, fertility is now possible for many more years. It seems a 65-year-old woman recently gave birth. After she brought the baby home, friends came to call. When asked if they could see the baby, the mother replied, "No, not yet."

This happened several times, until finally a friend pushed her to answer when could they see the baby.

Her answer confused her friends. "You can't see him until he cries," she said.

"Why can't we see him until he cries?" they asked.

"Because, I can't remember where I put him."



## Can't blame the airline for this 'loss'

So how did I wind up greeting a couple of diplomats in Iowa wearing slacks and a long-sleeved T-shirt?

It was just one of those weeks, I think. My friends all made fun of me, but the kids thought it was actually kind of cool.

"Gee, Dad, you sound kind of trendy," our eldest daughter said.

Yeah, maybe, if I'd have had a sports coat, I replied. It was a designer T-shirt, after all.

Polo. We had driven all the way to northwest Iowa to greet two officials of the Tunisian government, including Oussama Romdhani, director general of the Office of External Communications, my host on a tour of his country two years ago.

We packed clothes for three days, including suits for the reception, my tie, my dress shirt. Cynthia said she was going to wear nice slacks and a necklace Friday because she knew we'd be touring the newspaper plant.

I said I was wearing jeans and a T-shirt because I wanted to be comfortable on the

## On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



drive. We started out Thursday, driving to Concordia where Cynthia wanted to visit her mother. We had dinner and drove on to Norfolk, Neb., where we got a room for the night.

Next day, we packed up and hit the road. I thought things were going well, even if I did spill coffee on my T-shirt. I had a spare.

We found our way through Sioux City just fine and hit the road for Sheldon. We made good progress despite a fierce northwest wind that made it hard to drive.

We got to the newspaper tour and made it out to the publisher's house, where I went to the back of the truck to retrieve the suit bag ... only to find it ... not there.

I knew right where it was, of course; in the closet back at the hotel.

There was no use getting upset. You can't change what you can't change.

Maybe I can borrow a sport coat from Peter, our host, I suggested. Maybe even a shirt and tie.

We tried that. Only Peter is well over six feet. I tried one of his coats on, but when I came out of the closet, his wife Connie just laughed. So did Cynthia, though I shot her a nasty glance.

I resigned myself to being the only one there from the newspaper delegation not in business attire.

"Lots of people will be there in open-neck shirts," Connie said.

And it was true.

Of course, all my friends made fun of me, but I'm used to that.

And the evening came off without a hitch. Oussama's talk was quite the success.

Except I did spill shrimp sauce on my T-shirt.

Not to worry; it came out way easier than the coffee the day before.

## Looking for a fresh loaf of bread?

We'll all do it. We squeeze the loaf of bread at the grocery store before we buy it. Got to be sure it's fresh. It's soft. If it has the feel I'm looking for, I then look for the pull date on the wrapper which, at times, I can't find. Sometimes when I do it is stamped over the bread's brand name. Then there are times it is easy to find. I'm one of those "pull date" freaks. If it says "best if used by (date)," then I use by that date.

Well, a frequent e-mailer to this column gave me a new take on how to determine bread's freshness. I don't know if all places that carry bread do this, but this is how it was explained in the e-mail:

When you go to buy bread did you know that it is delivered fresh to the stores five days a week? Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Each day has a different color twist tie. They are: Monday = blue, Tuesday = green, Thursday = red, Friday = white and Saturday = yellow.

So, the e-mail says, "if today is Thursday, you would want a red twist tie; not white which is Fridays (almost a week old). The colors go alphabetically — blue, green, red, white, yellow, Monday through Saturday. Very easy to remember. Even bread that uses the plastic clips has different colors."

Now, that's just what I need, something else to program in my head — color twists or clips. I think I'll stick to the squeeze test. It has served me well all these years.

—td—

Read the following words and then try

## Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



to figure out what they are describing: Impulsive, lazy, forgetful, swervers, ostriches, followers, dare devils. Give up? They are describing motorists and why they don't use their turn signals. Another regular reader of "Good Evening Norton," told me that Response Insurance conducted a survey and this is what resulted: 42 percent said they don't have enough time; 23 percent said they are just plain lazy; 17 percent don't signal because when they do they forget to turn it off; 12 percent said they are changing lanes too frequently to bother; 11 percent said it's not important; 8 percent said they don't use them because other drivers don't; and this excuse will blow your mind — 7 percent said forgetting the signal adds excitement to driving.

And incidentally, men are more guilty of not using turn signals than women by a 62 percent-53 percent margin. Additionally, 71 percent of younger drivers, 18-24 years of age, don't use turn signals, and 49 percent of older drivers, 55-64, don't either.

—td—

We are now in the week leading up to Easter Sunday. Did you follow the controversy that erupted at a place back east a few weeks ago where the receptionist was forced to take down an Easter display consisting of bunnies and colored eggs and candy and the like because it offended some people at the company? I guess recognizing Easter joins Christmas in the endangered holiday category. Christmas anymore is called anything but Christmas. It'll be interesting to see what names they come up with for Easter!

—td—

Here are some headlines that might cause a smile:

- Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
- New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
- High School Dropouts Cut in Half
- Hospitals Being Sued by 7 Foot Doctors

—td—

An elderly gentleman, very well dressed, hair well groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel smelling slightly of a good after shave, presenting a well looked-after image, walks into an upscale cocktail lounge. Seated at the bar is an elderly looking lady.

The gentleman walks over, sits alongside of her, orders a drink, takes a sip, turns to her and says, "So tell me, do I come here often?"

—td—

Have a good evening!

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



## Next 'Thumbs Up to...' will appear on Friday