

## Torture simply not the U.S. way

Congress debates, the administration whines, the CIA wants this or that, but there ought to be a clear answer when it comes to torture.

No. Sen. John McCain, tortured brutally during his years as a prisoner in Vietnam, knows the score. He's led the fight to get the U.S. away from any kind of prisoner abuse.

The war on terror is vital, yes, and the military and intelligence agencies need to interrogate captured terrorists. That should never involve torture, and hopefully the bill set to come out of Congress will set some clear guidelines.

Torture is not part of our heritage, though it once was common enough in what we like to call Western Civilization. Our constitution bans "cruel and unusual" punishment and gives criminals the right to refuse to answer questions.

The standard we uphold at home is good enough for us to uphold abroad.

One problem is defining torture.

Some of the excesses of Abu Ghrabi amounted to nothing more than sophomoric pranks, while others approached and some passed the limit. There's no excuse for mistreating prisoners, but ours is one of the few armies in this world that actually punishes soldiers for stepping over the line.

That's one thing. Torturing prisoners, using pain to elicit answers, is wrong whenever and wherever it's done.

The United States should have no part in it. For one thing, prisoners will say about anything to stop torture, and the answers they give often are not accurate.

There are gray areas, too. Tactics aimed at disorienting prisoners and breaking down their will, such as leaving the lights on day and night or keeping a cell warm or cold, sometimes are lumped in with torture.

The CIA has kept key prisoners in secret lockups in eastern Europe, some inherited from the old Soviet regime. Abu Ghrabi itself, a notorious Baghdad prison, came to us from Saddam Hussein.

Stalin, Lenin, Saddam.

Are those names we want to be associated with?

The Bush administration has tried to make its own rules as the war on terror evolved. That's no way for a nation to do business.

Torture is not part of our agenda. It can never be part of our agenda.

When, as happens in any war, soldiers get out of hand, the U.S. should do what it's always done: prosecute the violators and teach the rest a lesson.

When agencies want to go beyond what's acceptable, we the people need to make our will clear.

And that will does not include torture in any form.

Are you listening, Washington?

— Steve Haynes

## Thumbs Up to . . .

√**Hank and Sally Austerman**, on your 60th wedding anniversary Oct. 8. (called in)

√**Lola Brack**, who will be 100 years old on Oct. 12. (e-mail)

√**Jessica Reeves**, go get 'em, girl! (e-mail)

√**Jill Edgett**, of Jill's Helping Hands, on being honored as "Woman-Owned Business of the Year as a Service Industry Firm." (e-mail)

√**Wayne Rupke, Carla Hawks and Jim Kauten**, on the recognition received for your years of service to the Norton Correctional Facility. (e-mail)

√**The Lyle Community**, for your successful and entertaining potluck benefit!

√**The Norton and Northern Valley FFA**, on your land judging results. (e-mail)

√**The Winston Family** of Goodland, for wanting to save the trees in Elmwood Park! (called in)

√**The American Legion Auxiliary** and the public, for making the auxiliary bake sale a success at Moonlight Madness in Norton. (called in)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom@nwkans.com, call 877-6908 or 877-3361, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your assistance!)

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## There are some polls that are just stupid

There are polls, and then there are stupid polls. Today I will focus on the most recent stupid poll. It seems we take polls for everything. Makes no difference. Nothing escapes the claws of the pollster. That said, while watching KAKE television from Wichita Tuesday night, they presented the results of a poll they took, asking — in light of the latest school shooting — whether you think there is enough security in Kansas schools. The poll showed that 27 percent said YES there was and 73 percent said NO there wasn't.

I have no problem with the findings; however, my problem centers around how much anyone who responded to the poll really knows about their particular school's security. Probably nothing. Do you know what kind of security measures we have in our schools in Norton County? Probably not. I know I don't.

Nationally, a poll that seemed a total waste, was taken after a plot to blow up planes flying from Europe to this country was foiled some months ago. The pollsters asked, "Do you feel safer flying now than before?" Were we supposed to be surprised when the majority of people said they don't feel safer?

The obvious shouldn't be poll food, should it?

But gauging the temperament of the voter as it relates to candidates, can serve a purpose. It projects trends, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, things we all like to know as we ponder who will get our vote on election day.

And remember election day is a month away — Nov. 7.

-td-

These school shootings are again upsetting the country. You wonder who these gunslingers are, their reason. You begin to wonder that maybe these are homegrown terrorists. Terrorists kill, you know.

The spinach recall of a few weeks ago. Maybe that had something to do with agriterrorism. Experts warn that our food supply is vulnerable to attack. And who says this might not have been a "test" at-

tack carried out by terrorists who made their way into the U.S. across the Mexican border.

The forest fires that spread over millions of acres in various parts of the west could easily have been the work of terrorists.

A bullet, a chemical, a match. That's all it takes to stake your claim to terrorism. You go about your dirty work unnoticed. And the school shooters who committed suicide did what the terrorists who flew planes into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, as well as into the ground in a field in rural Pennsylvania, did.

Granted, nothing links any of these incidents to terrorism — terrorism as we perceive it. But sometimes you can't help but wonder.

We are trained, sort of, to believe terrorist attacks will be something of magnitude, much like the Twin Towers. Terrorists wouldn't waste their time plotting school killings. Or spraying our crops with something that could, and did, kill. But there are other kinds of terrorists, like the homegrown kind. And their acts also result in death.

And when President Bush says the war on terror is tough because we don't always recognize the enemy, isn't the maybe also including the acts of those among us?

Something to think about.

-td-

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats, and pigs, the husband asked

I lived for years in cities of 80,000 to 150,000 residents and because of those

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



sarcastically, "Relatives of yours?"

"Yep," the wife replied, "in-laws."

-td-

Was that summer? The temperatures just a few short days ago would stake its claim. Air conditioners were running on the heels of furnaces that moved onto center stage. How do you explain that sudden blast of hot air — hot enough to set October records? Six letters will do it: KANSAS!

-td-

I can pretty well foresee what our weather will be a few days in advance. My Air Force son, Lance and his family, live at Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Wash., and when he calls or I call him, we usually touch on weather at some point in the conversation. When he tells me what it is doing up there, I know that within two or three days that'll be our weather event. It plays out pretty true.

-td-

Again, I want to thank you people for taking the interest in "Thumbs Up" you have been displaying. To make something like that work, reader input is so critical. And so far you haven't let me down. Please keep it up. It's probably the most anticipated column in each Friday's issue. Who gets the "Thumbs Up" today?

You are on the right page to find the answer.

-td-

Time for a political chuckle. A young child had four baby pups he wanted to sell for \$1 each. So he put them in a box on the front lawn and his dad placed a sign on the box that said, "Democrat Puppies for Sale. \$1 Each."

Well, days went by and there were no buyers. In fact after four weeks and no bites, the dad went out and put up another sign. This one read, "Republican Puppies for Sale. \$1 Each." A man came by and asked the little boy why the dogs are now Republicans.

He said, "My daddy told me because they finally got their eyes open."

-td-

Have a good weekend. Enjoy your visit to the church of your choice.

## Norton is at the top when need arises

In my job as affiliate director for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Norton County, I see many things. As a child growing up in a two-parent home, with food on the table and a roof over my head, I believed this to be the norm for everyone.

But after becoming an adult and then taking this position, I realized there are many situations in life which make the norm less accessible for some and certainly almost unattainable for others.

In my job I also have the opportunity to see how government operates and to better understand the workings of judges, attorneys and other agencies. At a time when elections are looming and political ads do not always portray the best of an individual, it is refreshing to see the cooperation of different entities to create the best possible outcome from an ugly situation.

I lived for years in cities of 80,000 to 150,000 residents and because of those

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



experiences I can look at what we have here and know we truly are unique. We have churches who gather money to provide school supplies for our neediest youngsters. Other groups provide food at Christmas and still others watch for ongoing needs and gather people around to fill in the blanks.

When a need arises, we have numerous individuals who work to correct a problem, from lack of a coat to lack of a home.

We have a school system who genuinely cares for our youngsters, not just

To the Editor,  
The TV ad is asking me to vote for "Jerry Moran, Kansan."

I am almost 60 years old, and I have never before heard of a candidate for U.

academically but they want each child to have the opportunity to learn, whether it is warmth at night, food in their tummies or supplies which help teach the needed skills.

Big Brothers Big Sisters matches children with mentors. Some mentors will help a child with homework, others will bake cookies and still others will go to games or wash the car. Each of these events in the company of someone who has chosen to spend time with 'just you' is a memory trophy.

Not all homes look alike and families vary in their make-up, but a child's needs are constant. We cannot satisfy each physical need, but we do have the ability to put a face on poverty, loneliness or lack of ability. And those problems with a face no longer are a problem, but rather become a person.

We are blessed to live in a community who works together to strengthen a child and build the bonds of citizenship.

S. Congress that was ashamed to declare his political party.

Arthur Loyd Shelton Oberlin

### MAILBOX:

## Now, here's a first