

Let's keep those 'Welcome' flags flying

Keep bringing them in! The more, the merrier. Let's make those "Welcome" flags waving from utility poles along our major streets, work overtime. After talking to some of the people who took part in, or who attended, the weekend car show in Norton, it was apparent that our attraction for the many events we stage reaches far out.

Another fine example are the races at Elmwood Park Speedway. Even our Farmer's Market will bring people in from around our area. Sometimes we take for granted the end result of anything that lures outsiders to our town. Big or small, these things don't just happen. Working behind the scenes are people dedicated to keeping Norton on the map and doing what they can to bring visitors in. They, themselves, seek no recognition. It's just part of what they do.

And we have a lot of people in that category. Our county fair showcases a community coming together for a common cause. There are other events coming up, and there are events that have been held. And again, attendance points to Norton as the place to be.

Don't sell our community, our county short. Become a part of the crowd that organizes events that brings crowds in. Those happenings are what keep our "Welcome" flags flying.

And there was something else that caught our eye in one of Toby Kuhn's columns in the Reservoir News, where he stated that 2007 traffic counts (at Prairie Dog State Park) gave an estimated visitation of 165,846. We may not always appreciate what we've got just a stone's throw away — again, we take it for granted — but with numbers like those you can bet a lot of the visitors left behind some money in our town.

Those flags aren't cheap, but for what it's worth we'd like to see them waving their message 24/7. In other words, you are ALWAYS "welcome" to Norton!

— Tom Dreiling

Extension merger plan could end county's role

Decatur County commissioners exhibited skepticism over a plan to merge the county's Extension program with the one in Norton County under an independent board.

As well they should.

While Extension-district plan may not be a bad thing, it would mean the end of local control for extension programs and likely represents the first step in what could be a regionalization of state programs to cover "super counties" clustered around Kansas.

The bureaucrats in Topeka and Manhattan know Kansans will cling to their counties as long as there are a few of us out here on the prairie. But they can't stand the supposed inefficiency of having 105 separate little units to deal with across the state.

So they look for regional solutions. Top officials in the K-State Research and Extension program must want this pretty bad; they're offering to double the amount of money Extension puts into county agents' pay to get it.

The merger idea appears to be short on advantages, though, and long on dangers.

Pressed for details how it would be better, one K-State official said agents in the two counties, working together, might send kids to camp in one van rather than two.

But couldn't they do that today? Both are part of the same statewide organization, after all.

The first impact of the merger will be a complete loss of county control — or influence — in what once was called "cooperative" extension, a program joining state, county and federal dollars and goals. Commissioners in both counties would appoint members to a joint board, with their replacements to be elected in a bi-county vote. After that, the board would make all decisions.

Commissioners would lose their say in setting extension tax rates and in appointing extension board members. Control would pass to the regional board and to regional officials working with K-State. The counties would provide office space, at least for a time, but have little or no say in the programs.

K-State promises to keep agents in each county, but draw on the "strengths" of each to form a stronger program in each.

The truth is, though, with declining population, and a declining budget, extension already has cut many services. It's not so long ago that every county had two agents; today it's one, with regional experts to cover some subjects.

Maybe regionalization is the wave of the future. We doubt it.

People like their county government and county services. We don't think Kansans will let these go easily.

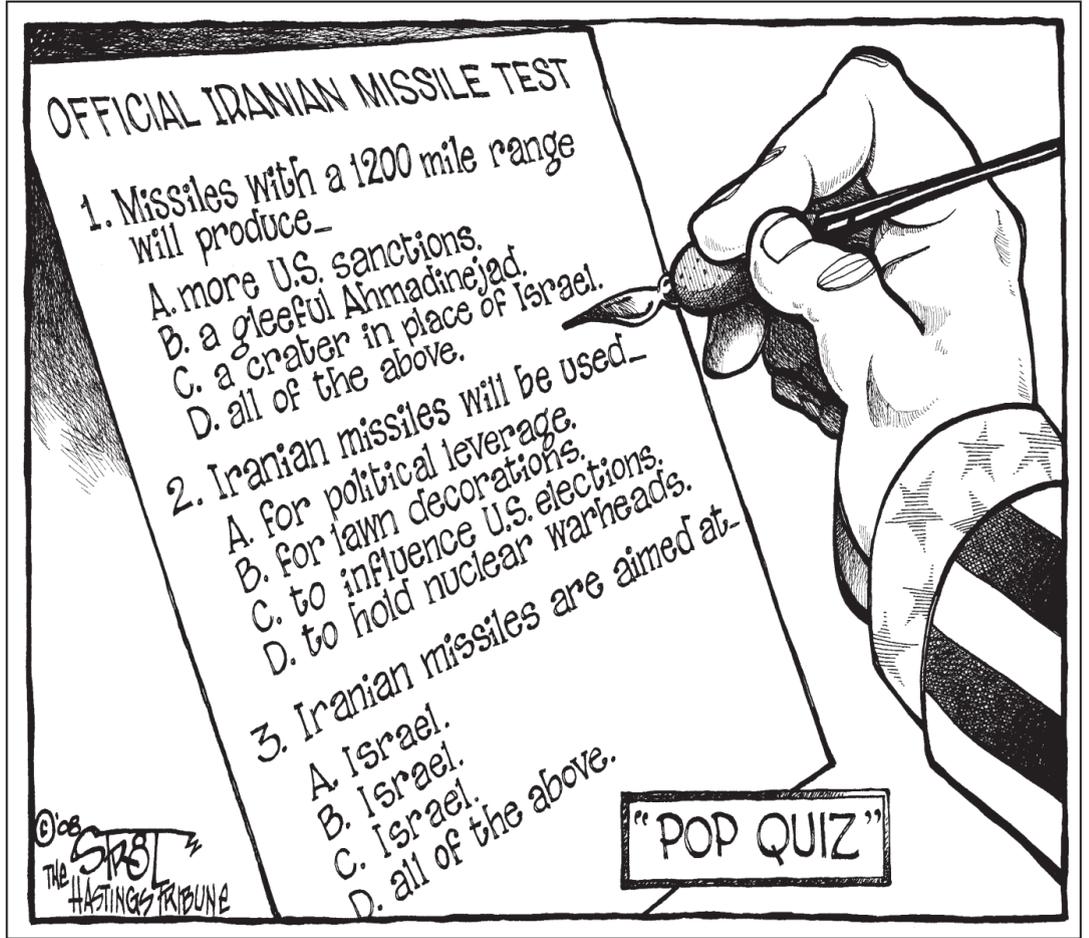
But state officials keep chipping away at the integrity of the county system.

The commissioners will have to decide if they want to give up their involvement in Extension. People will have to decide if they want local control or if they want to be part of increasingly larger regions providing what used to be county services.

Sure, today there would be an office in every courthouse. But tomorrow, or next year, when the budget pinches?

No one can say, but we can guess.

— Steve Haynes



Someone's receiving my sugar-free jam

A friend of ours has to watch his sugar intake. That's why I decided to make a batch of sugar-free jam. Yes, I'm still making jam and jelly. After following the directions to a "T" and setting the jam to cool, I wasn't totally convinced it tasted okay.

But, Jim gave it his seal of approval so a pint jar of cherry jam is on its way to a new home with a "Merry Christmas" tag on it.

-ob-

Writing today's column is turning out to be more of a challenge than usual. That first paragraph took about half an hour. And, honestly, I do think a little faster than that.

My keyboard is really messing up. Letters are not appearing when the keyboard is struck; numbers appear when the back space command is given; and sometimes letters come out "doubled". The proofreader better work overtime on

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



this one.

Here's what I mean. I will type this well-known phrase without correcting (or embellishing).

"Thee quick brown f04x jjimiped over the fence."2

See what I mean? What a mess. This could take all day.

-ob-

Some of you may have heard I'm getting a head-start on retirement. This will be my last week at my regular day job. Oh, I plan to keep writing this column (as long as someone will read it — I'll write

it) and I plan to do some feature stories; but I'm giving up the day-to-day.

My granddaughter, Taylor, is coming for a three-week stay and I want to enjoy her visit, not drag her to work with me or to a babysitter.

I have lots of things planned. 1. We are going to learn how to make cheese together. 2. I'm going to teach her to sew (something simple). 3. We're going to do a lot of cooking. 4. We're going to have a slumber party and a wiener roast for her and the girlfriends she's made out here over the years. 5. We're going to go to the pool a lot. 6. Attend two county fairs. 7. Go to Mary's, my sister-in-law, and ride horses. 8. Water flowers and garden every day. 9. Make a scrapbook of her stay. AND, 10. Take naps (me, not Taylor).

That's just for starters.

I can hardly wait.

Not just for Taylor, but the chance to stay home, too.

'I love you' doesn't always have to be words

Father's day passed, his birthday passed. I forgot to harass the hubby.

I know he's heaving a big old sigh of relief. He hasn't recovered from that thing about his shirt going to the Salvation Army.

We've been married a long time. It very sweet how some couples never part without a kiss or telling each other "I love you." That's not us! But I do write about him! It is one way I can say "I love you." I believe he understands that; no matter how much he protests.

Brad Paisley's new music video "Waiting on a Woman" has us both thinking about how we express our love without words. Paisley has had some really cute songs and videos but he's not really my favorite. This video, though, is the sweetest thing ever. It features Andy Griffin. Andy joins Brad on a bench at the mall and proceeds to tell him about how he has been waiting on a woman since 1952.

His gray hair, mannerisms and old farmer attire remind me so much of my dad. We've all seen those old and not so old men at the shopping malls. They sit down and strike up a conversation with a perfect stranger. If we ladies happen to

Back Home Nancy Hagman



be so lucky as to lay claim to one of those fellows; those amazing stories will be relayed to us on the trip home.

Preacher Dave does an online morning devotional thrice weekly. Recently he described shopping with his wife (my husband's sister.) Dave's take on shopping is the husband's job is to follow the wife around and carry her packages and purse. Not such a difficult task, but he observes that a lot of men appear to get it wrong. If a man gets it wrong he has to go to time out: the benches outside the stores.

I've pretty much noticed my husband puts himself in timeout! He will guard my packages, however.

I hope you have the chance to see the "Waiting on a Woman" video. It is hard to explain the Griffin's charm as he says the honeymoon was "worth it!" A gentleman

of that era would not say any more.

Patience with others can say "I love you" as loud as any words. During the whole song the word love is never spoken, but we can see it. We know just how much this man loves his wife.

Towards the end of the song the lyrics say, "I've read somewhere statistics show, the man's always the first to go and that makes sense cause I know she won't be ready."

The old man goes on to say he'll go ahead and find a bench (if they've got one). "Honey, take your time, cause I don't mind, waitin' on a woman."

Sometimes we see little inspirational snippets suggesting we use every opportunity we have to tell important people how much they mean to us. We are admonished as to how much we will regret it if we don't. I'm not disagreeing with this premise. Just keep in mind speaking the words may be easier than living them.

Our ways of expressing love are as individual as we are. If we don't hear our spouses say "I love you," we may need to listen harder. What we hear with our hearts is truer and lasts forever. And that's all I'm saying!

Resident says she echoes what Mr. Durham said

To the Editor;

Boy, do I agree 100 percent with Jake Durham's letter in Tuesday's (July 8) Telegram. Our local merchants, that we are very fortunate to have, can supply us with about anything we want. I have yet to come up with anything I want that I can't get locally. Not only that, you get much better service.

I can give several examples where local merchants have gone more than the extra mile to get me a product and deliver it to my door. Not only that, but they also took the time to assemble it (if needed) and set

Your Turn

it up for me. All without charging extra. Get that kind of service from Orschlen's or any other big outfit!

As Mr. Durham pointed out, our local merchants didn't go to the county commissioners demanding that they be supplied with land, buildings or tax cuts. They used their own resources and did it!

I, for one, am sick and tired of these big guys coming into a community to confer

on us the "privilege" of having their questionable businesses plopped onto us. We must remember that THE backbone of the American economy is the small, local business man, not the big corporate giants. Break that backbone and you have broken our economy.

I suggest we whistle up one of our lovely little 40-60 mph northwest Kansas breezes to blow these guys back where they came from. I rather imagine they have the hot air to be airborne.

June Prout
Another Norton Citizen

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