

It's hard to sell sitting behind a desk

Norton is home of the national headquarters for Valley Hope. Norton is home of the Sebelius Reservoir. Norton is home of the "They Also Ran" gallery of presidential candidates who didn't make the grade. Norton is home of the best BB Gun Shooters in the world. Norton is home of Station 15.

And the list goes on... and on. We are aware of these things. But the question begs, "Are we promoting this stuff outside Norton and Norton County? Beyond the counties north and east and west and south of us? Our neighboring counties pretty much know what Norton and Norton County are all about. So, why keep it a secret?"

Because, some will say, it takes the kind of money we don't have to promote what we've got. Of course they're right. But if these things had been adequately funded in the past the money would be here now.

The old saying is right, "It takes money to make money."

So, what do we do. Stay the course? Of course not.

Maybe, just maybe, we've got to realize we are larger than most towns and counties in our territory. I sometimes get the feeling we are perhaps too territorial *within* our own confines.

Why is it we can't put the chamber, economic development and tourism under one giant umbrella? Hire two or three full time people, stock the office with ample paid folks. Then charge the full timers with the responsibility of selling Norton and Norton County. But not with the nickel, dime and quarter budget we try to do these things on.

We need to shed the past and move forward. We don't want to be left in the dust when the herd suddenly gets up and moves.

Selling Norton and Norton County should be the responsibility of everyone of us. We are all sales people, including our cities, our county and our school districts. After all, everyone will benefit from a healthy, upgraded approach to growth and prosperity. We need to entice people — not the neighbors — but people from other areas to come see what we have, to shop our stores, to perhaps notice something of a business nature that we lack and maybe they would be interested in providing.

Chamber, economic development and tourism are three of our most important offices. We need to treat them as such. And while this single umbrella approach might have been tried in the past, maybe we should try it again but with an added ingredient — \$\$\$\$! We should be present at all gatherings around the state that draw large numbers of people. Ditto neighboring states. We need to get the name NORTON spread far and wide.

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



I feel sorry for those who man these offices today. They do what they can with what they've got. But unfortunately they are subject to some criticism for not doing more. If you're going to bake a cake, you better have the proper ingredients and the means to do it, otherwise the end result won't be quite what you had hoped.

Let's make sure our cake looks great, tastes yummy and causes people from other areas to request the recipe — in this case a hand-out that invites them to our community, our county, personally delivered by the people at the chamber, economic development and tourism.

You can't sell sitting behind a desk!

Well, I started my fourth year in Norton. And as I look back I think I made a really good decision to move here, to oversee the publication of the community's newspaper. It's been fun for the most part. I've met a lot of people, struck up some friendships. And I'm always in awe when I return from a trip out of town and approach Norton from the south and look down in the valley and see this sprawling community. It feels like home.

I didn't know what to expect when I moved here on Dec. 30, 2005. I had occasion to visit here a few times in years past when my sister-in-law Wanda, and her late husband, John Pilkington were residents of Norton. Their two sons, John and Don, were wrestling and basketball standouts and we always looked forward to their competition when they played at Goodland where I and Jean (my late wife, Wanda's sister) lived. So Norton wasn't unfamiliar to me. And most of all, I thank you all for making me feel at home.

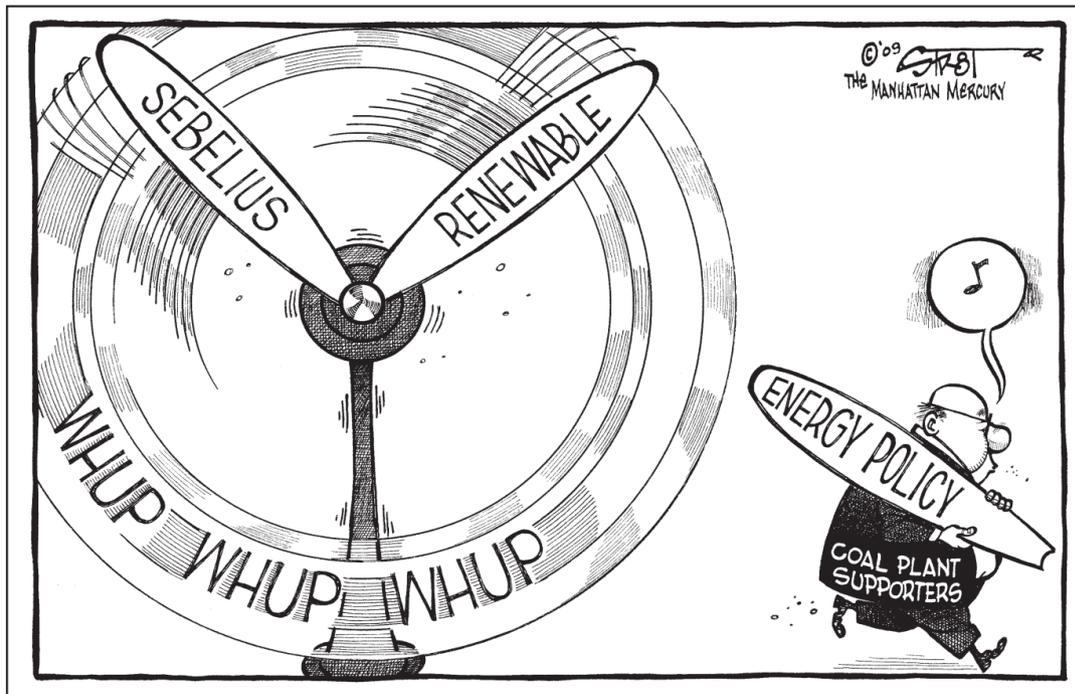
Comments overheard at a table manned by senior citizens:

"I was at the beauty shop yesterday for nearly two hours. That was only for the estimate."

"I'm so old, that whenever I eat out, they ask me for money up front!"

"When I was younger, all I wanted was a nice BMW. Now, I don't care about the W."

Have a good evening! And while at the church of your choice this weekend, keep our senior citizens in your thoughts and prayers.



Kansas

by Larry Henderson

I'm from Kansas, where the wheat grows tall,
And it waves proud above them all.
The grains of gold symbolize the land,
Of this great state for which we stand.
Now we don't have any mountains high,
And we're so flat the red clay dirt just blows on by.
A show-me-state is certainly not our style,
And we don't have corn-stocks laying round in a pile.
So whether you want to be a fighting Wildcat fan
Or a Jayhawk perched up high,
If you're looking for peace of mind,
Give this land of ahhs a try.
For our clear blue skies will light up your life,
And the tranquility will free your soul.
For Kansas is — I'm sure you'll find —
The gold at the end of the rainbow.

Inasmuch as Thursday was Kansas' Birthday, The Telegram decided to print the words so eloquently crafted by resident Larry Henderson that best describe our state. Mr. Henderson, well known musician throughout northwest Kansas, can be seen and heard with his singing partner LeeAnn Shearer, all over the territory. Larry and LeeAnn can best be described as "Norton's Unofficial Ambassadors."

—Tom Dreiling

Change will come about only through the power of the people

I realize I have brought this up before, but it is of so much concern to me I have no choice but to bring it up again. I continue to be amazed at the number of people who would rather see Obama fail than have our country recover, obviously not the majority or he wouldn't be President.

Set aside on whose shoulders the current economic crisis rests and look at the faces of the individuals who are unemployed, the children without health care and the families facing the loss of their homes. We, and it is all of us, have a responsibility in this, both in the creation of it and definitely in the solution.

A new day is dawning. I watched in admiration as Obama gave his first interview to a Middle Eastern journalist and I realized a new era has definitely emerged... and it is about time. There is an eagerness to improve our national image, embrace those of other cultures and ethnicities and yes, religions, and work to make the world a better place.

The focus isn't just on becoming the strongest nation or the richest, but rather to become the nation who strengthens others while enriching our own country. We are keepers of the planet, in the true sense of the words, working to find sustainable

energy solutions, curb greenhouse gases and save wildlife areas to be enjoyed by all.

Many are scared of the changes. Fear is often born from lack of knowledge, from a bad experience, or taught to us as children. Sometimes it is a justifiable fear and other times it is merely a "left over" belief because it is easier to keep it than to change. Sometimes we will fail in our endeavors, other times we will succeed, but hopefully we can work together to make positive changes in our country.

I applaud Obama's efforts to unite the country. His journey to the Hill to talk and listen to both parties was a positive step.

Change won't come fast and it won't come easy, but I believe not in the power of Obama, but in the power of the people. We will emerge from this a stronger nation and a better community.

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Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



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Sound Off!

What are they thinking?

The Norton Department of Corrections has a duty to carry out what the State of Kansas mandates and they have complied. Now the state says we may not need you anymore because you don't fit into our new budget.

Since the state says you can't work for us anymore, these hard working prideful people, that believe in their government, are to sit back and say, "It's OK. Just put the screws to us."

I moved here about a year ago from 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, Pa. (Latrobe, Pennsylvania). The steel mill closed over 20 years ago and all the buildings were left to decay because there were no buyers. This will happen here because we are a wasteful society.

I was living in Yuma, Colo., over 20 years ago and attended meetings about building a prison in the area. We were told that the prisons were over-crowded and we needed more prisons to be built. We all believed our government and so the different states (taxpayers) coughed up the money. How many facilities were built and at what cost? Money down the drain!

When you get over-crowded you also get chaos, riots and a more dangerous environment. So here we are again and it isn't because we as a people have done everything wrong.

These employees have worked hard to provide a stable home for their families and now with the stroke of a pen it can all be taken away.

I am 73 years old and I have seen what our government has done to the middle- and lower-middle class over the years. We have been lied to, over taxed and I for one would like to hear the truth and not feel the need to question everything our leaders say.

To close these prisons could turn out to be a huge mistake. We still have an obligation to house and feed each and everyone losing their jobs. Where is the money coming from for them? They could still be working as opposed to becoming idle and on assistance.

When all is said and done, I really doubt that what we have to say means anything. The people all over the U.S. without jobs will suffer as usual and the wealthy will still have money to play.

God Bless America and the jobless!!

Doris Williams
Norton



To... Jacob VanSike and Melinda Becker, on your selection to the state band. (e-mail)

To... all volunteers and donors for the Girls Rock event. (brought in)

To... the Norton School District's school bus drivers, who are so often our unsung heroes. (e-mail)

(To render a salute, e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361 or mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654.)