

Being in debt and meeting our financial obligations

I have been thinking about not paying any of my bills....for those people that I owe, don't be concerned, your check is in the mail, I didn't think about that idea very long.

I have received several telephone calls saying "they can help me with my unpaid IRS bill". I didn't know I owed anything extra, but it did remind me to pay my quarterly estimated tax. I would not mind paying taxes if the government would use restraint and common sense on how to spend it. It appears to be very easy to spend money when it is money that someone else earned.

The items I am mentioning, I know are a small amount that the government spends foolishly, but when the debt is 15 trillion...do you know how much a trillion is??? None of us can imagine, except we know it's a lot of money.

An acquaintance I know left a house a few years ago and left their mortgage unpaid, this last year they purchased another home and received \$8,000. Now if it would have paid the principal down, I might not have had as much problem with it, but nooo, our government gave them the money to do whatever they wanted to spend it on. Then there are the programs that as I understand it are asking banks to lower the principal, so people can make their payments. I don't remember anyone, including the government doing either of these things for me when I was paying a mortgage payment and probably not for a lot of you out there reading this, and I really did not want them to since I feel it's not fair to those paying their taxes, their own expenses to ask someone else to pay these for you.

I hear commercials on radio and television, if I have a large enough bill to credit card companies, they will help lower the bill and then someone comes in to say how much they "saved" or in other words are not paying what they at one time agreed to pay. I think people need to pay attention to what they place on those credit cards and keep track so you know you can pay it off at the end of the month.

We all make decisions, that it used to be, we had to figure out how to pay for those decisions, whether a mortgage, credit card or the local grocer.

Now, the government is thinking about making a new department that will help people learn about budgets and financial matters....WOW. the "government" is going to tell US how to live within our budget? How about parents teaching their children how to balance a check book. Someone told me one time that just because you have the available money, does not mean you can afford to purchase something you want. What happened to the idea of working and saving until you can afford what you want.

Now, lest I sound like Scrooge, I don't mind helping those who really need help, but I sometimes wonder how much is of their own decisions, then I think they need to figure out how to get out of that problem on their own.

Memories Sonya Montgomery



A very sad good bye to a great canine friend

We all knew it was coming. We lost Smiley.

Our dog, my dog!

What more is there to say?

Smiley was a dog someone did not want. She had a limp. She had a cough. The whole time we had her (11 years) she was probably not "whole". That may be why her previous owner discarded her.

That person did not realize what they gave up! But I'm glad because we would not have known her if they had. Smiley came to us from Mirla Coleman. Mirla didn't know where she came from and they had a dog. So she gave her to us! How lucky!

Mark Twain said, "If you pick up a stray dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man."

Mary Focklam said, "We give dogs love we can spare, time we can spare and room we can spare. In return dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made."

It's true! Smiley loved anyone who would take time to scratch her belly!

Ann Landers said, "Don't accept

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful."

Monday morning we could not find Smiley. We weren't surprised. She was old and sick, she quit eating. But we had thought, or hoped, she wasn't in pain.

There are a couple of schools of thought about why dogs go off to die. One is they are animals that travel in packs. An old dog will remove itself from the pack because it realizes that by staying it slows everyone down, putting the whole group at risk. The other is dogs want to spare their owners the pain of watching them die. Both theories are based on the selflessness of dogs!

Monday night I informed the girls. The next afternoon I heard a dog barking. There was Smiley.

But she was not young. She could

not walk. She would not eat. I carried her back to the dog house. Maybe she wasn't in pain, but she was suffering.

We waited one more day, and decided to have her put to sleep.

John Holmes said, "A dog is not 'almost human' and I know of no greater insult to the canine race than to describe it as such."

The greatest thing about dogs is they don't talk! In our lives we find lots of people to love. But they talk. They say the wrong thing. They say the right thing but it's not what we want to hear. Helpful hints are interpreted as criticism.

Sometimes we just want to vent. Our loved ones mistakenly offer advice and try to fix our problems. Sometimes all we want is someone to listen. A dog listens. He might even lick away your tears. How can you cry if a dog is there, tongue hanging out, wagging his tail?

There is a book, a blog, an employee development program and a bumper sticker out there all based on a very simple concept. Today it is my mantra, "Lord, help me be the person my dog thinks I am!"

Voting is a privilege that is becoming harder to do

My mother always voted. It was a high priority not only because she believed strongly in the right, but also because it was the only thing her father requested that she never forget to do. This gave it a high priority. I wonder how she would respond now. Those of you who knew my mother, Alice Foley, know she was sharp as a tack to the end. Interest in politics, although hating conflict, was intact as well, and now the state she lived in all her life, paid taxes to, educated its children for over three decades, would require her to obtain a photo id in order to cast her vote.

As actively as the Republicans have been pursuing these changes in the voting rights one would perceive voter fraud to be a major issue. When delved into however, it is found most is anecdotal evidence and when investigated found the problem not to be with the voter, but rather with election official errors.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



The problem for the Republicans is Obama won by rallying the unnoticed, otherwise known as young, elderly, or minority vote. By changing the profile of who can vote, the Republicans hope to insure a victory in the 2012 election. Eight states including Kansas have created strict requirements to, in their words, prevent voter fraud. (Kansas requirement for photo id will go into effect January, 2012.)

So back to my mother, she made informed decisions when it came to voting, she lived on her own until her death, but would she have wanted to

venture down to the courthouse to have a photo id card made? I don't know, but I do know the answer for many would be "no". Not because they don't want to vote, but because it involves a change in the practice, something that becomes more difficult as people get older.

So what do we gain by imposing these more stringent rules? Do we strengthen our country? Do we encourage all eligible voters to take part in this cornerstone of democracy? Or do we merely complicate the process? These laws are founded on fear and greed, not on truth and courage. Nor are they based on a love of freedom.

Voter fraud has not been found to be rampant in the state of Kansas or for that matter not a major problem in the country. When either party uses voter's rights as a pawn in the game of freedom we are placing our very democracy at risk. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Your gifts are urgently needed this year

It's the time of year when all across the community you hear The Salvation Army bell ringers out and about in the community, and see our donation envelopes in your local newspaper. But this year the need is even greater and it is our hope that you might consider dropping some change into one of the red kettles while you are out shopping, or using one of the envelopes to mail in a donation. It is a sad reality that we are seeing more need among our neighbors this year.

Being able to provide the assistance that is needed to help people in crisis throughout the year comes from your generosity during this holiday season. Giving to your local Salvation Army makes an impact directly in your community. 88% of the funds raised during the Christmas Season stays to assist families and individuals who live right here with things like rent/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, prescription medication, and many other critical needs.

We are so thankful to all those who have volunteered and those who have donated. We cannot thank you enough for everything that you do and for your support. Please consider giving again so that we can meet needs right here.

God Bless you all and Merry Christmas,
Randall Summit
Director of Service Extension

Call Dana for your next ad. 877-3361!

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

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STAFF
Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Carleen Bell..... Managing Editor
cbell@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
Michael Stephens.... Reporter/Society Editor
mstephens@nwkansas.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager

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Thumbs up to Marla and Tim for scooping my sidewalk. Thanks a lot. Called in.

Thumbs up to the people who work "behind the scenes" to help prepare the cemeteries for funerals during times of inclement weather. Your hard work is appreciated! Brought in.

Thumbs up to the carolers who sang at the hospital Wednesday night. Called in.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave. Norton, KS. 67654

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.