

This is an open letter to the Editor:

On Friday, May 24, The Norton Telegram printed an article on the front page with the headline of "Concerns of council member addressed." On May 15, at the regular meeting of the Norton City Council, I discussed the article that was printed in the Telegram on May 10. There was no reporter from the Telegram at the May 15 meeting of the Norton City Council. Although the Telegram seems to have made this a personal issue, no attempt has been made to speak with me.



The May 24 article stated that the Norton Telegram had re-examined the facts of the story that was printed on May 10, and found that all information that was reported was correct. This advisement was followed by the word, "however."

There was incorrect information in the story on May 10 and the follow-up that was printed on May 24.

The Norton City Council approved the change of licensing dogs with the approval of Ordinance Number 1638 with a third reading and adoption of April 16, this changed the yearly license fee from \$5 for all dogs to \$5 for neutered or spayed animals and \$25 for animals that are not spayed or neutered. The article on May 10 stated that the fee was still \$5. The Telegram referred to this as an omission.

The definition of an animal kennel was changed with the approval of Ordinance Number 1635. The prior definition of a kennel in City Code 2-201 was any residence or establishment, commercial or otherwise maintained for breeding, rearing, grooming, boarding, or otherwise harboring in an enclosure in one location only, three or more dogs over the age of six months. This was a simple code, if you had three dogs, you were classified as a kennel. By interpretation of this definition, the number of dogs allowed per household was two. With the exception of veterinary clinics, no kennels are allowed within Norton City limits. This was understood by the public and the animal control officers.

Ordinance Number 1635 had a third and final reading and approval on April 17. This ordinance changed the City Code for kennels to the one for the State of Kansas. City Code 2-201, now reads, a kennel shall mean any residence or establishment, commercial or otherwise, where four or more dogs or cats, or both, are maintained in any one week for boarding, training or similar purposes for a fee or compensation. The difference between the two codes were the number of animals and the words fee or compensation.

Ordinance Number 1637, which would have limited the number of dogs per household to two, failed to pass in the regular City Council meeting on March 6. There is no three dog per household ordinance.

I do not recall questioning the definition of feeding feral cats, if it came up it was only to clarify the question for my own mind. I do think that the broad statement of 3,000 to 4,000 feral cats living in Norton remains to be proven.

In regard to the underground fences, the article on May 10, did not state Mr. Urban said it was his opinion. The article stated that underground fences are unacceptable. Ordinance Number 1636, declaring underground fences to be unlawful failed to pass in the March 6 regular meeting of the City Council. The City of Norton has no law stating that underground fences are not allowed. Electronic fences are addressed in City Code 2-202, which states that dogs may be confined to the premises of the residential property of their owner, keeper or harbinger by an electronic fence and/or electronic collar. The code goes on to explain the responsibilities of the dog owner for the use of an electronic fence.

Sincerely,
Harriett Gill
Councilwoman for Ward One



A weekend to end all weekends

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



I said, "Paula?" Then it was old home week, talking about the good old days. We had both worked at the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation in Dallas at the same time. I left to return to Kansas. She stayed and, is now part of upper management for the entire organization. She is too modest to have mentioned it, but my friend, Sonia (mother of the bride) is Paula's assistant, so I think I have it right.

cheering section. She received a very generous scholarship to a highly reputable university in San Antonio and is anxious to get started on the rest of her life. So are we. With her brains and beauty, there's no telling what she might accomplish.

It was the weekend for exciting beginnings. A wedding is always a beginning. The setting was perfect; a glass-walled chapel in the woods; a beautiful bride and handsome groom; friends and family gathered to celebrate two young people starting their lives together.

Every detail was attended to. Even the seating arrangements. Jim and I plus our granddaughter, Taylor, were seated at Table No. 7. As we were locating our places, I picked up the sound of a familiar voice, also checking out Table No. 7 with her husband. I had been talking to Jim when she looked at me and we both said, "Don't I know you?" Then recognition kicked in and she said, "Carolyn?"

Paula's husband Bill was a great table mate, too. Along with Patty, who had been the bride's daycare provider, Patty's sister, Alice from Mississippi, who came along for the fun of it, Norma, another M.O.D. employee and her husband, Larry. We talked about how we knew the bride, Alice's goats, going fishing, ObamaCare, my chickens, the weather, and a myriad of other topics. A fun bunch, indeed.

During the evening, I found Sonia and said, "Guess what. Paula is at my table."

"Carolyn," Sonia said, "The seating arrangements were no accident."

Well, of course, they weren't. It was a weekend to end all weekends. And, even though, I wouldn't give a nickel to do it over again, I wouldn't take a million dollars for the memories we made. Priceless.



Thumbs up to the 3 Norton City Council members and the mayor for doing their homework, studying the information given to them in a timely manner, and moving forward with the pool Norton voted for, in order to give Norton our new pool on time and within budget! E-mailed in.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
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Childhood memories and the seeds of hope

For Kansans June, July and August are months when some of us return to our roots and visit family in rural communities across the state. Some go back to help with wheat harvest, others go home to spend time visiting with friends they have grown up with. For all it's a time to reflect and remember.

Many of us are one or even two generations removed from the farm but we still remember fondly our early years. A friend once told me, remembering our early life on the farm is an important part of saying goodbye.

For me summertime meant harvest. It still does.

I accompanied my dad and Uncle Bernie to the harvest fields when I was eight years old. I couldn't wait to see those monster machines chew through the golden waves of grain.

By the time I was a teenager, I was a regular member of the harvest crew. My responsibility was to level off the load in the back of one of our IHC trucks. In between unloading, a big handful of wheat - thoroughly chewed without swallowing - made a pretty big wad of gum. Not much flavor but one heck'eva chew.

Mom brought meals to the field in the family car and we had the chance to eat her wonderful home cooking while sitting on the tailgate of our pick-up truck. What a treat.

Insight

John Schlageck



The summer after I finished the fifth grade, I started helping dad one-way plow our summer fallow ground. It took me another couple years before I could pull this heavy cultivating tool out of the ground. This was before hydraulic cylinders.

Dad always watched the weather from our picture window on the west side of our house. You could easily see the Menlo elevator nine miles to the west across the pancake-flat, High Plains prairie. I'd help him watch, hope and pray that parched land would receive rain and crop-crushing storms would somehow skip our land.

Without question the greatest lesson we can learn from the land is hope. Crops and a bountiful harvest are never guaranteed. Drought always threatened my dad's crops. Too much rain meant harvest delays or crop-choking weeds. Thunderstorms - the likes seen nowhere else in the world - often carried with them damaging winds and hail that could level a field of wheat in minutes.

The summer of my junior year at

Sheridan Community High School, such a storm wiped out our wheat crop. Dad rode in the combine cab with me as we entered one of our fields a few days later. One round later we both looked back in the bin and saw less than a fourth of it filled with wheat. It should have been full half way through the field.

After we completed the first round, Dad told me to let him off and he left the field. As he walked away, I saw him dry his eyes. He couldn't stand to see the crop he'd work so hard to grow hailed into the ground.

Two and a half months later on September 15 - he always started wheat seeding then - we were out in our fields planting for the next year. He always had hope.

I learned at an early age that hope is not wishful thinking of harvest success. Rather, hope is the action of planning and planting seeds. For some, harvest may not occur every year, but the seeds of hope must be planted if there is even the thought of a next year's harvest.

As I continue to work with farmers, I am reminded that they continue to love and learn from their land. Those of us who could not stay on the land, cherish the time we spent there. We have benefited from this experience - the lessons learned on the land will nourish us wherever we are planted.

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