

Norfolk City Outlook

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Mayor Sue Fuchtman

By Diane Becker
City of Norfolk Staff Writer

Sue Fuchtman ran her campaign with the theme “Bringing People Together” and she is well on the way to doing that as the newest mayor of the City of Norfolk.

Since being sworn in on December 1, 2008, Fuchtman has been intent on learning the workings of the city and more about the staff that keeps it running. She has made it her goal to get input from the citizens of Norfolk. Fuchtman also wants to become better acquainted with business owners and managers in the city.

“I’m excited about the opportunity to gather with citizens that are willing to work together and partner with our city government to see all that Norfolk can be,” Fuchtman said.

Fuchtman is a lifelong resident of Norfolk. She graduated from Norfolk Catholic High School and then worked for Northwestern Bell for twelve years. After its closing, she interviewed with John and Connie Day for a part time position they had at that time in their computer store. Instead, Fuchtman was hired to work for The Day Companies and has been there for 27 years. Currently, she serves as president and partner of the company.

Why did she run for mayor?



Mayor Sue Fuchtman

“The timing was perfect. I realized that in the last thirty years the community has given so much to my family and the company. It’s a great place to live and raise kids and I want to help keep it that way,” Fuchtman said.

As past chairman of the Norfolk Planning Commission, Fuchtman is familiar with making decisions that impact individuals, businesses, and communities. She also realizes that there is a learning curve in her new position.

“I plan on dedicating thirty hours a week to learning the ins and outs of the City of Norfolk. The advantage is that there is a

new city administrator who is learning right along with me,” Fuchtman said.

Al Roder was hired as the new city administrator in Norfolk in July, 2008. He replaced Mike Nolan who had been in the position for the last 28 years.

Fuchtman said she has already met the department heads within the city and had tours of some city facilities including the city wastewater treatment plant.

“I don’t like getting information secondhand. I like to be at the table hearing it for myself. The

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information heard secondhand can sometimes get a bit mixed up,” Fuchtman said.

Fuchtman said she is pleased that Norfolk has a “strong city council that stays focused on their responsibilities.” She said she shares their concerns for improving the city infrastructure, recreational facilities and improved office space for the city offices.

She added that the current economic times will be a challenge for Norfolk this year.

“It’s all the more important that we make wise decisions for the City of Norfolk. Fortunately we have a very diverse economy in Norfolk. When we make those decisions, we have to keep the entire community in mind because they will affect everyone,” Fuchtman said.

Fuchtman said she would like the city to help the existing businesses in Norfolk grow.

“We have to support the businesses we have. We have a community of people here who are some of the greatest assets of doing business. We have a superior quality of customer service and a strong work ethic in Norfolk. That is a big piece of economic development,” Fuchtman said.

Fuchtman’s parents, Lou and Wayne “Smokey” Stover, worked for many years at Prenger’s Restaurant, started by her uncle, Ed Prenger.

“Prenger’s Restaurant, like The Day Companies, started as a very small enterprise and became

successful because of friendly, hardworking people. We sometimes take that way of life for granted in Norfolk. It’s not that way everywhere else,” Fuchtman said.

Her plans are to start a city advisory group to provide for more citizen involvement. Concerns from the different wards would then be communicated to the city council for study and resolution.

Fuchtman also said she wants the youth to have more involvement in city government.

“Nobody knows better than I about how important the youth are in our community. We need young people involved in the plans for our city. Growing our youth and involving them gives them ownership. They take more interest and then may want to stay in the area or come back after college,” Fuchtman said.

Fuchtman and her husband, Glen, have four children: Jenny and her husband, Jeff Heimes, have three children; Katie and her husband, Mike Bamsey, have two children. Their families both live in Norfolk. Fuchtman’s son, Cody, works out of Omaha. Their daughter, Ali, is a junior at Wayne State College majoring in sports management and broadcasting.

“I’ve been given a responsibility that I’ve asked for. I’m doing this for a community of people that I believe are my neighbors. This is not a one man show. I need to hear what the citizens of Norfolk want and I’m accepting the responsibility for everybody to be involved,” Fuchtman said.

Fire Hydrants in the Snow

By Diane Becker
City of Norfolk Staff Writer

A six and a half foot tall fire hydrant sits on a corner of a lot in a Japanese city. It was designed to be that tall so that it would be easier for fire personnel to find in deep snow. Most fire hydrants, including all 920 of them in the city of Norfolk, are more of an average height so deep snow can be a problem when trying to find them. Still, access is essential to the safety of Norfolk

citizens and the protection of their homes and businesses. Residents need to help city officials make sure there is clear access to those hydrants.

In warm weather, this may mean that vehicles and equipment be kept away from hydrants. The winter season may provide more of a challenge as snow gets moved off of the streets and sidewalks and thrown to adjacent areas. Many of

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those areas are where the fire hydrants are located. A snow plow clearing the street of snow might completely bury a hydrant. This snow needs to be moved off of the hydrants as soon as possible. In the event of a fire, valuable time may be taken by fire officials looking for and clearing away the area around the fire hydrant.

City of Norfolk Fire Chief Shane Weidner asks that anyone with a fire hydrant on their property make sure there is clear access to it.

“In general it is unlawful to obstruct the use and/or view of any fire hydrant in the city. The city code and the International Fire Code speak in general about this. We prefer that each property owner with a hydrant adjacent to their property assume the responsibility to clear away and keep clear the fire hydrant. This ensures easy access and quick water supply in the event of a fire. Some property owners do this and some don't. The fire, water and street departments do attempt to locate fire hydrants that are buried and clear them; however it is much more efficient if everyone pitches in,” Weidner said.

The city's fire trucks carry a water supply of 750 gallons and up. However, this water can be used up quickly and valuable time can be taken

from fighting a fire to looking for additional water. Property can be destroyed and lives put in danger in those few minutes or seconds it takes to establish that supplemental water supply.

While many of the hydrants do have a tall marker rod attached to help with locating them during a snowy winter, it is imperative that they are shoveled out.

Persons are asked to shovel a walkway to the hydrant from the street and make a clearing around the hydrant at least four feet in diameter. When firefighters are wearing their heavy equipment and dragging heavy hoses to be connected to a hydrant, they need room to work. If they are forced to flounder in knee-deep snow, it takes them longer to hook the hoses up to the hydrants, wasting precious time.

It is necessary that not only snow but ice and snow be kept off of the hydrants. There also shouldn't be other obstructions around fire hydrants. Residents should not hang lawn decorations or lean items onto the hydrants. It's important that shrubbery and trees are not planted around hydrants.

According to City of Norfolk Fire Code, “No person shall build, place or maintain any structure or maintain any plant, tree, or shrub that will interfere with the operation of, or intended use of any fire hydrant. Plants, trees, or shrubs shall not be allowed to grow around, adjacent to, or over hydrants to the extent that they interfere with the vision of personnel attempting to locate such hydrants or they interfere with the operation of, or intended use of such hydrants.”

Residents should also not paint the hydrants. Never try to repair a hydrant. Leaking hydrants need to also be immediately reported to the fire or water department.

Chief Weidner said that if residents need to report a leaking hydrant or are unable to clear the snow around the hydrant, they can contact the Fire Division at 844-2050 for assistance.

“Keeping fire hydrants clear and in good operation is a safety issue for everyone in the city. The time it takes to find and clear a hydrant really does make a big difference in the potential damage a fire can cause,” Weidner said.

"My life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I got hold of for a moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

-- George Bernard Shaw

The Legacy of Warren Cook

By Michael Nolan, Executive Director
League Association of Risk Management

The rain that had fallen steadily throughout the September morning subsided as I drove into the parking lot of Norfolk's St. Joseph's Rehabilitation and Care Center. I had been commuting routinely from Lincoln to Norfolk on weekends since May 1, my final day of service after 28



Norfolk's former mayor Warren Cook at 92. Until the inevitable end, he was a community patriot.

years as Norfolk's city administrator. It was a fortunate side benefit of my new position with the League of Nebraska Municipalities that I was still able to maintain relationships with Norfolk friends. I had traveled that morning to visit one of my closest: the former mayor of Norfolk Warren Cook, who was a resident in the facility. Though an agile and energetic 92-year-old, he had recently fallen and fractured a hip. His recovery was occurring slowly and painfully, yet he had agreed to allow me to interview him for a future story I hoped to publish in the *Nebraska Municipal Review*.

The stimulus for Warren's story had come from a chance meeting that I had nearly a year previously, at the National League of Cities Conference in New Orleans. In seeking unsuccessfully a certain municipal track session at the conference, I had accidentally encountered a book-signing by Sylvia Lovely, executive director of the Kentucky League of Municipalities, who had recently authored *The Little Red Book of Everyday Heroes*, about ordinary people who make extraordinary civic contributions to their communities. Lovely's phrase for such citizens resonated powerfully with me: she described them as "community patriots". Her book that I read in a couple hours evoked wonderful memories of events I had experienced with Warren Cook and many other Norfolk citizens.

As I entered the lobby of the rehabilitation

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center, a staff member ushered me down the hallway into a conference room where Warren, in a wheel chair, and Beth, his second wife of 14 years, were seated. Beth had recently turned 90. After handshakes and hugs, we proceeded with the 75-minute interview of the decisive events of Warren's more than 60 years of community service. Warren related that he had first come to Norfolk from Hastings in 1944 as a sales representative of Montgomery Ward. After several weeks' residence and having experienced Norfolk's civic hospitality, Warren phoned his first spouse Johnnie who had not yet relocated to Norfolk. (Johnnie died in 1994.)

"I phoned my wife who was in Hastings and told her 'We are here to stay!' And Johnnie said: 'Well how do you know that all of a sudden?' And I said: 'Because people who have lived here for years who don't know me from anything have spoken to me and said hello. And if I ask a question about this town, it gets answered.'" Warren recalled the occasion, "It was a very strange, but glowing type of feeling. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

An event that proved to be pivotal in Warren's life, and perhaps had affected his decision to live permanently in Norfolk, had occurred a few days prior to his phone conversation with Johnnie. Though automobiles had been scarce during World War II, Warren had been assured by a local dealership that the next car they obtained for sale would become available for him. When the car arrived, Warren went to the bank for a loan, but despite the fact that he had a "regular, good salary," the bank turned him down for the loan.

In those days, the *Norfolk Daily News* was located near Montgomery Ward, and while he was delivering store ads for publication by the newspaper, he had a conversation with *Daily News* publisher Gene Huse that would affect him for the rest of his life. Warren related to Mr. Huse that the bank had turned him down for the



Mayor Warren Cook with Norfolk High School students, 1960.

loan, and then went back to Montgomery Ward. By the time Warren returned to work, the bank had phoned him to indicate that the loan would be approved. Warren said that Gene Huse had talked to the banker and had told him, "I want you to give that kid the car. I won't make his payments, but if you don't get your money, I'll see to it that you do."

"You can imagine what kind of a man I thought Gene Huse was," Warren recalled. "From then on for years and years, he would call me into his office, just to talk and make himself available. And as a result, we became very great friends. After I was elected mayor, he was on his hospital bed and wrote me a letter congratulating me. And he never got off of his bed," Warren said. "That was how my relationship with Norfolk became in cement. There wasn't any way you were ever going to get rid of my affection, my love and my thoughts about Norfolk on a daily basis."

My eyes misted as Warren related the story. I had never known Gene Huse, who was third generation in the Huse family lineage, but I had known his son Jerry and several family members and had concluded for myself on many occasions how they constantly had been community-builders throughout the history of the newspaper, long before the term "public journalism" came

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into vogue. Gene Huse had been one of several important mentors for Warren during his formative civic years.

“Gene Huse had a book ‘Chasing Goat Feathers’ that he made me read, and it made all the difference,” Warren said during the interview. (I realized later that Warren had gotten the title wrong – the publication he had referred to was actually an essay named *Goat-Feathers*, by Ellis Parker Butler who had written it in 1919 as a self-assessment of Butler’s own inability to live his life to its full potential. I promised Warren that I’d read it.) Warren added, “Gene Huse also taught me that the more public stuff you did, the less credit you got for it.”

During the many years I had known Warren Cook, I had ceased to be amazed at the anecdotal trove of memories he had accumulated about people he had met during his life, as well as his precise recall of events despite his age. Warren was a natural socializer, and he had developed a vast network of relationships throughout Nebraska and the country. I recalled past occasions at public gatherings when I’d be trying to have a word with him, and three or four people would be queued ahead of me waiting to visit with him. Beth shared with me her same frustration: “Sometimes he didn’t even know them,” she said, “but it didn’t matter to him, he enjoyed conversations.”

Another friend (and important counselor) Warren made was Norfolk businessman Ralph Reeves whom Warren fondly referred to as “Gramps”. While Warren was still employed by Montgomery Ward, Ralph Reeves asked him, “What do you want to do with the rest of your life?” Warren replied he’d like to be in business for himself. With financial assistance from Reeves, Warren decided to begin Cook Sporting Goods, Inc., “because there wasn’t one in town”. Warren would own and operate the business successfully from 1946 to 1962. Without Warren realizing it, the sporting goods business would eventually provide his basis for entrance into the civic life of Norfolk.

“I was selfish,” Warren said, “I was in the sporting goods business.” Warren and several



Warren Cook Park : *“Pertineer anybody, child or anybody else, who has been in Norfolk when they were in grade school played on that field.”*

-- Warren Cook

other business people became interested in starting a recreation program for kids. The result of their efforts became the first community recreation field of about 3.2 acres north of the current library, which was designated as “Warren Cook Park” by the City of Norfolk in 2001. The park today consists of one youth softball field with the balance of the green space available for youth soccer. “Pertineer anybody, child or anybody else, who has been in Norfolk when they were in grade school played on that field,” Warren said. “That’s why it means so much to me.”

“We asked all the schools, the Catholic schools, the grade schools, if they had a person who could work with the City in the summertime and run a program for kids.” Warren said, “We got about five different coaches from the High School and the Catholic School who would run the program with volunteers. The City paid them and it worked well because in those days it was good summer employment for teachers.”

From these events, Warren realized that he

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could make a difference in the future success of the community. “Ralph Reeves had been on the city council, explained to me how things worked,” Warren recalled. “In those days, you were nominated at a committee meeting, the next thing you knew you were a candidate.” Reeves and others persuaded Warren to seek election to the city council, and he was successful in 1948, serving until he ran for mayor in 1957. During this interval, he was also chair of the board of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and vice president of the Nebraska Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Warren was approached to run for mayor by a prior mayor Glen Riecker, whom Warren described as “a very honest and capable man who did a lot for the community.” Warren ran against the incumbent mayor Bert A. McCreary in 1957 and defeated him. After the election, Warren determined that he wanted to try to run city government like a business. He observed how school boards ran, with an administrator who was delegated the everyday operating responsibility for the schools. Warren and city council members decided they needed a similar staff member. “We didn’t want a city manager,” he said, “but a position with less formality. The elected officials advertised and got applications from several applicants out of Kansas,” Warren said. “We decided they were too fast for us. They looked at us as coming along to help a little town up north of Kansas City.”

One night when the city council meeting was over and only the city council and he remained, Warren told them: “We’ve got to have somebody help us run this thing day to day.” Warren said, “I turned and looked at Greg Stuve (a 4th Ward city council member) and said ‘Greg, would you take the job?’ And Stuve said, ‘I thought you’d never ask!’”

“The position created was an administrative assistant that later became the city administrator position,” Warren said, “It wasn’t as complicated then as it has now grown to become. Greg would come into my office in the store every Monday morning,” Warren said, “and we’d go over what

he was gonna do that week. If I thought it was wrong, we wouldn’t do it. Well, I wasn’t always right. There were several times when Greg was right, and I was wrong.”

“We were a great combination. We had fun and thoroughly enjoyed what we were doing. And mostly, we didn’t know what we were doing! I think I was pretty lucky. I’m not sure exactly why, but I guess it was because what we were doing was fresh. I never felt resentment or embarrassed at people giving me the dickens for doing the wrong thing.”

Warren said that Ralph Reeves, Jerry Huse, local businessman Dave Powell, bank president Bernard “Mike” Delay, school superintendent Dr. Allen Burkhardt and other community leaders were among those who counseled him how to get the town moving economically. These informal advisers resulted in the creation of the Norfolk Action Council that was formed during Warren’s tenure as mayor to promote economic development. The Action Council would eventually be responsible for bringing Nucor Steel and other Fortune 500 companies to Norfolk.

“We read someplace that there was an outfit in Florida that was looking for a place to land,” Warren recalled. “We had never done it (economic development). We were dumb about how to go about it. But it ended up that Dave Powell and I went to Deland, Florida, and I had cut a piece of green out of the golf course and put it in a small ice cream container, and carried it all the way to Deland, Florida to visit the president of Roehr Products, the predecessor to Sherwood Medical.”

“Old man Roehr was such a wonderful old man,” Warren said. He recalled the eventful meeting with Mr. Roehr (doubtlessly embellished with Warren’s peppery expletives):

Roehr said: ‘What in the hell have you got in that box?’

Warren said: ‘I’ve got a piece of green off the golf course.’

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Roehr said: 'What the hell did you bring that down here for?'

Warren said: 'I just wanted to prove to you that we play golf up north, and I want to show you what we can do for your employees.'

Roehr said: 'If you've got enough guts to do that, we've got enough guts to come look.'

And then Warren added, "I've always said it was a piece of green off the golf course that brought Roehr Products to Norfolk." Roehr Products became famous as the pioneer of plastic hypodermic syringes, and Warren said there was a time when 25 percent of the entire production of plastic syringes in the United States came from the Norfolk facility.

Warren did not seek re-election after his final term as mayor concluded in 1963. When he was no longer mayor, Warren ran his sporting goods store and resumed being an "ordinary good citizen". He was amazed by the number of people, especially mothers interested in what ought to be done for their kids, who come into his store to ask him about current public issues. "I enjoyed thoroughly people asking me what ought to be done in the city and I wasn't even mayor." Warren said.

"I never felt responsible for any of the good things that came. I didn't look at it that way. I looked at it 'OK you went after Roehr. You were mayor; that was your job.' I didn't look at it with any return at all; my return was what happened as far as the city itself. I remember one time my dad was out here and we were looking at something and one of my proudest moments was when he said: 'Well, you did this.' I said, 'I didn't either; we all did it!' There wasn't anything personal in it, except to be honest with you, I loved it."

In 1966, Governor Frank Morrison appointed Warren to the Nebraska Centennial Commission. Warren described Morrison as one of Nebraska's most effective governors. "He never forgot who

he was or where he came from, about this State. He felt this was the greatest place in God's green earth to live. He had as great of female support as I've ever known. His wife Maxine was a wonderful lady."

As an undergraduate involved in UNO campus politics in 1970, I had gotten to work with Frank Morrison on several issues affecting the university. I thought that Warren's comment about Maxine Morrison was especially notable – the relationship Warren had with Beth after 14 years of marriage was very similar. Beth had become Warren's best friend and confidant – his "other" – just as Maxine had become these qualities to Frank Morrison. I reminded Warren, with tongue-in-cheek, that he had been a lifelong Republican, and I thought his well-spoken regard of Morrison was interesting because Frank Morrison was a Democrat.

In 1987, when Norfolk banker Mike Delay decided to not seek re-election on the Nebraska Public Power District board, Mike sought Warren to run for the position. Warren was elected and re-elected concurrently for two six-year terms. In 1999, NPPD established a competitive process among the districts' retail and wholesale customer communities to determine the site of a proposed call center that would staff 40 employees at an average salary of \$40,000 plus benefits. At Warren Cook's encouragement, the Action Council, City of Norfolk and Norfolk Chamber of Commerce collaborated on developing an aggressive proposal.

Despite the fact that Norfolk was NPPD's largest retail customer, Norfolk representatives quickly understood that Kearney was the likely first-choice of the NPPD staff because of the community's central location and university. Kearney's phone system that was superior to Norfolk's was also a critical factor that was difficult to overcome. I remember the frustration that then Chamber Exec Timothy Brazeal and I had because the phone system appeared to be a fatal hindrance to Norfolk's further consideration. We concluded that we had nothing to lose by promoting a "grass roots" strategy to foster Norfolk's

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competitive advantage.

One Friday afternoon, prior to the NPPD Board decision, Warren Cook, Jerry Huse, Timothy Brazeal and I met at Jerry Huse's office and developed a considerable call list of every Nebraska public official or business person we knew with a nexus to NPPD. Not surprisingly, Warren Cook knew more of the people listed than did the rest of us. We parsed up the list of names, went to our respective offices and spent the rest of the weekend phoning these people to help us persuade the NPPD board to site the facility in Norfolk.

A few days later, I was attending a League of Nebraska Municipalities Conference, and I received a phone call from an NPPD staff member informing me that Norfolk had been selected as the site of the NPPD call center. The staffer was as astounded as I was, and while I was certainly pleased by the news, I deliberately refrained from exhilaration. When the call concluded, I immediately phoned Timothy Brazeal, exclaiming, "You will never believe this, that old man stole those



Warren Cook and his first spouse Johnnie in 1968 met then-California Governor Ronald Reagan. A "natural socializer," Warren met six US presidents, numerous sports personalities and other celebrities during his life.

jobs from Kearney!" I had meant the term "that old man" with the utmost respect and veneration. Warren Cook was nearly 84 years old on that occasion.

I learned later that the NPPD board had taken several votes. The first was apparently a stalemate between Norfolk and Kearney, but because of the quality of the working relationship between Warren and other board members, a majority of the board had sided with Warren on the succeeding motions.

In the days that followed, I encountered various NPPD staff members who were friends, and I made sure that my demeanor was humble. The same staffer who had phoned previously informed me that because Norfolk had been selected as the site, NPPD would have no choice but to trench a redundant fiberoptic line between Columbus and Norfolk to provide backup for call center operations. The cost would be substantial.

Certainly many rural Nebraskans know about the portion of Warren's life that I've not mentioned previously: his service on the Nebraska Livestock Board from 1980 for the next 20 years and his authorship of the *Life Stock Market Digest* where he wrote a column called "Mashed Potatoes." Warren told me that what made his column different from other publications was that he didn't know anything about livestock so he wrote about people. "That's what fascinated the farmer," he said. "Hell, he'd heard all of this talk about his livestock, and he got a kick out of making it a personal type of thing." Warren named the column "Mashed Potatoes" because he couldn't think of anything else and because every livestock banquet he attended always served mashed potatoes.

At the end of the interview, I asked Warren, "How many people in your public life have you met? How many people right now on this earth know who Warren Cook is?"

"I couldn't put numbers on it," he said. "I'm just friendly."

Beth said that she had prepared an entire typed page listing famous people whom Warren had met, football players, movie stars and others

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he had met. Later, I looked at the list that included the names of John F. Kennedy, Harry Truman, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, Richard Nixon, Bobby Kennedy and a host of celebrities, sports personalities and other notable people.

Warren was tired from the interview and said he was cold. Beth reached for a quilt that one of the nursing home staff had brought for him, and she draped it around him as we concluded the interview. Ironically, it was a Nebraska football quilt, perhaps symbolically appropriate for the occasion. "I'm ready to go back and lie down," he said.

I asked him: "You're going to be all right, aren't you? I mean you're going to mentally choose to fight." Warren said, "Oh yeah, oh yeah." I said, trying to encourage him, "Here's what you've got to realize, Warren: your body may be getting old, but inside of you is the spirit of a fierce warrior." He said – his energy ebbing – that he would fight to become well.

As I returned to my vehicle, I knew instinctively that Warren would probably not recover, that a broken hip is a formidable challenge to overcome when you're old. In the subsequent visits we had during the three remaining months of his life, Warren's health noticeably diminished. On one occasion before he nodded off asleep, I asked him "Warren, do you believe that Jesus is God?" His response immediately with a grin was: "Absolutely, no doubt in my mind."

Warren Cook has left rural Nebraska an exceptional legacy – his example of effective citizenship. After Warren's death, I got on the Internet, found an on-line copy of Ellis Parker Butler's *Goat-Feathers*, and as I had promised Warren, read it. On page 19, I discovered a line as remarkable as Warren Cook himself: "No one ever succeeds by allowing himself to be deflected from the most important business of life, which is making the most of the best that is in him." Throughout his life, Warren became the best version of himself. Until the inevitable end, Warren Cook was a community patriot.

Snow Removal Violation Information



City Code does not allow for snow to be pushed or blown into the public streets from a sidewalk, private drive or a parking lot. It is also illegal to move snow across a street to the opposite terrace when cleaning a parking lot or driveway.

There are some different

rules that apply downtown in the area bounded between Madison Avenue on the South, 8th Street on the West, Braasch Avenue on the North and 1st Street on the East. If you have questions about what is permissible in this area, please contact Jim Koch, Transportation, Building and Grounds Director at 844-2181.

Be kind and thoughtful of your neighbors and fellow citizens when cleaning up after a snow.

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Aerial Photos of Norfolk Now Available

By Diane Becker
City of Norfolk Staff Writer

If you want a birds' eye view of Norfolk or, more specifically, a view of what it would be like if the bird had digital imaging capabilities, you can go to <http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us>. Click on the paragraph in the right hand column that describes, "Norfolk and surrounding area aerial photos and flood plain map." You can also go to <http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/mapsaerials/>. There you will find detailed photos of Norfolk from the air.

According to Jim McKenzie, information technology director for the City of Norfolk, these photos were taken by plane in 2007. The Nebraska GIS steering committee has made it possible for communities to partner together so that it's much less expensive for the pictures to be taken and published.

"The software is rather expensive. We wanted to make this information available to the



Shown above is an aerial view of Norfolk with the intersection of 13th Street and Norfolk Avenue in the center

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public so we partner with a lot of other communities. There are engineering aerials taken every two years that are shared with various government entities," McKenzie said.

The City of Norfolk put the photos taken by the planes onto their server. They then use a free zoom program so that people are able to zoom in closely to see yards and even sidewalks in Norfolk.

A disclaimer on the entry page of the aerial photos states: "These photos and maps are provided on an "as is" basis for informational purposes only. The City of Norfolk does not warrant their accuracy, completeness, currency, or suitability for any purpose, and further expressly disclaims responsibility for all incidental, consequential or special damages arising out of or in connection with the use these photos and maps. These photos and maps are not intended to be used as an authoritative public record for any geographic location or as a legal document and have no legal force or effect."

The images are useful and have been accessed by business people, engineers, realtors, and developers. Images taken in 2005 are available on the site. A 2005 flood plain map is also on the site. The Macromedia Flash Viewer is required to read the maps. Go to <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/> to download a free version of the software.

When you choose the Norfolk 2007 Aerial Photo link, you will go to a map that shows all of Norfolk and much of the surrounding area on the screen. There is a menu bar at the lower edge of the map. The plus (+) sign allows you to zoom in on the map in various increments. The more you click, the more you zoom in. The minus (-) sign allows you to zoom back out. The download time of the images varies according to how fast your Internet connection speed is.

McKenzie said that when someone zooms in on the map, the software brings up tens of thousands of smaller jpegs (a computer image format) in different layers. The images on the edges are then dropped off to decrease the download time.

The four arrow keys will pan over different parts of the map. The last button, which looks like an arrow inside of a circle, sends the user back to the home screen or the original view of the map.

Zooming in on the map is interesting for anyone, not just those looking for possible development sites or highway routes in Norfolk.

It's easy to get a bit "lost" when zooming in on the map. To orient yourself, try to not zoom in too far until you know where you are on the map. For instance, it might be best to start out by zooming in on Highway 81 south of Norfolk. You will be able to see the Elkhorn River winding around the south side of the city. Take your mouse and hold down on the left click on the map then drag your mouse down the map to go north and show an aerial view of TaHaZouka Park. Pull your mouse to the left and you'll go to the right of the park and be able to see an aerial view of the ball fields.

Continuing north of Highway 81, you'll see the viaduct and the railroad tracks before approaching Omaha Avenue. Vehicles are distinguishable on the highway. You can then pan over to the Sunset Plaza Mall and click on the map which allows you to zoom in, also. You might be able to see tiny figures in the parking lot but that's as far as you can zoom in. There's no worry of someone zooming in to see you what you're wearing as you walk across the lot. Continue north to the intersection of Pasewalk Avenue and 13th Street. There you will see the star shaped Bank-First park in memory of the five victims of the bank shooting.

Move the map north and you'll be able to distinguish homes, driveways, cars sitting on the side street and sidewalks. Fortunately the images are taken in the winter so the tree branches are bare and allow a view of what's underneath.

Head farther north to Norfolk Avenue and then slide the map east to see the medians in the street and the downtown area. You can then slide far enough east to see the flood control area and bike path. Keep going northeast and you can see Woodland Park from an aerial view.

McKenzie said that the maps are used frequently in the City of Norfolk offices. They have internal software so that city officials can measure between points on the map.

"I wanted to measure the city council chambers for a projector and was able to use the aerial maps instead of measuring it using a tape measure at the site," McKenzie said.

Engineers can use the maps for lot sizes, width of roads and for distances between sites on the map.

"It's a pretty cool technology," McKenzie said.