

Take advantage of the best local guide to what's on TV next week with The Telegram's handy schedule of programming.

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Tuesday

February 7, 2006

Norton, Kansas

Home of Harwood Lockhart

Briefly

Fastpitch softball is a possibility

Fastpitch softball may be returning to Norton.

All girls 18 or younger, and their parents, who are interested in playing girls American Softball Association fastpitch are welcome to attend a meeting about organizing a Norton fastpitch softball team. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 20 at Natoma Corp. on east U.S. 36. Those attending are asked to use the east entrance.

For more information, e-mail Darin Campbell at soup1@ruraltel.net, Erin Hill at EHill@USD211.org, or Kirk Foley at Kirklejj@ruraltel.net.

'Sweetheart' could make you a winner

Make sure you are registered at participating "Sweetheart of a Deal" sponsors for your chance to win one of four prizes.

Kowpoke Supply, E11 even Skin Essentials and *The Norton Telegram*, all in Norton and The Cardinal Bar and Grill, Norcat, will draw their winners' names Friday morning. *The Telegram* staff will contact the winners to take their picture accepting their prize.

Program honors students Feb. 16

The Huck Boyd Community Center, Phillipsburg, is the site of a reception at 7 p.m., Feb. 16, for the annual Student Recognition Program sponsored by Fort Hays State University.

Students will receive certificates for a variety of scholarships that have been awarded by the university.

The reception will include a dessert buffet provided by the university's alumni association, a presentation by university President Edward H. Hammond and a drawing for a \$400 scholarship from Commerce Bank of Hays.

The deadline to register is Friday. Students from Norton, Graham, Phillips and Smith counties are invited.

For more information, call the admissions office at 800-628-FHSU.

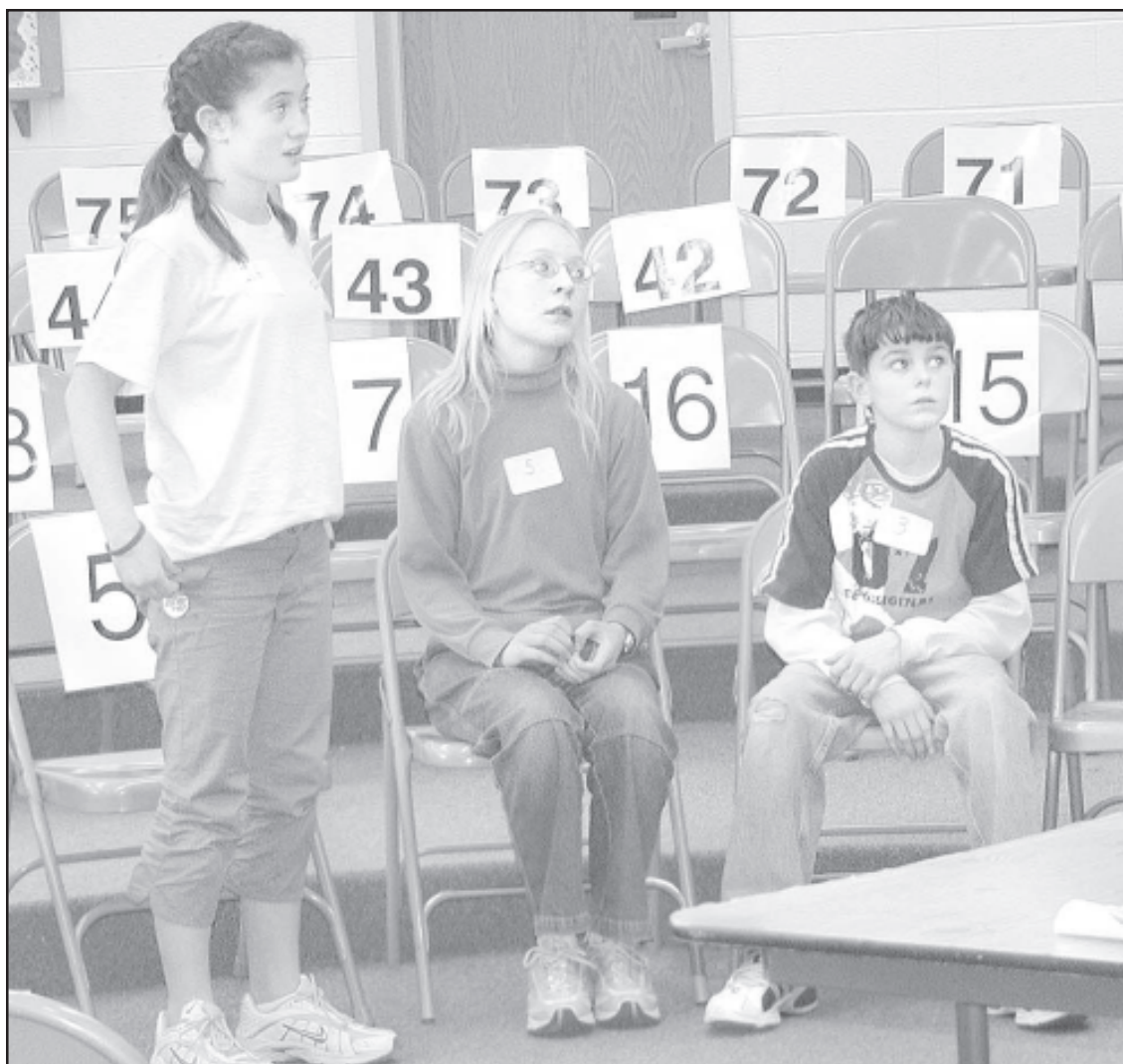
Weather

Forecast:

Tonight — Partly cloudy with lows around 19 and northwest winds around 10 mph. **Wednesday** — Partly cloudy and colder with highs in the mid 30s. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph. **Wednesday Night** — Partly cloudy in the evening then clearing with lows around 18. **Thursday** — Partly cloudy and not as cool. Highs in the mid 50s.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for this new day. Help us to look forward with rejoicing to the events of this chapter in our story. **Amen**



Johnnye Ruder, Rhee Carlson and R.J. Ellis (above) wait to see if Johnnye spelled a word correctly during the Eisenhower Spelling Bee. Shawna Gibson (top left) and Anthony Wente (bottom left) both did their best to spell out the difficult words given to them.

— Telegram photos by Veronica Monier

Spellers make the grade

Eisenhower student makes top marks

Johnnye Ruder, Eisenhower Elementary School fourth grader, was the winner of the school's spelling bee held Feb. 1.

The competition began with 104 fourth through sixth grade contestants. Easy "warm-up" words led the way into more difficult words. After twelve rounds, there were only two contestants remaining, Johnnye and sixth grader, R.J. Ellis.

Johnnye won out with the correct spelling of "in- (Continued on Page 5)

Fourth grader takes Lenora championship

Kelsey Marx, a fourth grader at Lenora Elementary, is the new school spelling bee champion. Kelsey competed against 13 other students in the competition. She won by correctly spelling "express" and then "splendid".

Placing second and third, respectively, were Royce Fanders and Kirstin Georgeson.

The alternate will be Danielle Wagoner. Kelsey, Royce and Kirstin will represent the school at the county spelling bee to be held Feb. 15 in Lenora.

Norton hospital is in reasonably good health

By VERONICA MONIER

The patient's diagnosis was comforting.

Doing better than expected.

The patient in this case is the Norton County Hospital.

Chief Financial Officer Brian Carlton told the Norton County Commissioners Monday during their quarterly visit that they are halfway through their fiscal year.

He said, as of Dec. 31, the hospital has had 2,219 patient days, 356 admissions, 28 babies, 125 surgeries, and 7,431 Doctor's Clinic visits.

Almost all of the statistics are right in line with previous years. He said admissions and lab procedures are up, while patient days and clinic visits are close to average.

Commissioner Leroy Lang said it looked like the hospital was holding its own.

Mr. Carlton said they were very busy in the first part of the year and now things have quieted down a bit.

As for financial information, he said at the end of December the hospital had \$4.6 million in patient revenue. They had budgeted \$4.4 million for the entire year.

There is \$416,000 in other operating revenue, which includes the disproportionate share payment. They didn't budget for the payment because they didn't know if they would be receiving it.

He said they had \$1.3 million in deductions from revenue. This is also higher than they budgeted for.

"But," he said, "you take the good with the bad. As revenue goes up, deductions will go up as well."

Operating expenses totaled \$3.7 million, he said; \$3.5 million was budgeted for the year. Non-operating revenue totaled \$106,000 so far.

He said, at the moment, the hospital is operating at a net loss of \$23,065. But, he said, they had budgeted for a loss of \$100,000.

"Our revenue is above budget and so our expenses are above budget as well," Hospital Administrator Rich Miller said. "Obviously, when we have an increase in patients, our salary and wages, repairs and maintenance go up. That's just the nature of our business. Our utilities are also up, but we put quite an increase in the budget for that."

"We're having a fairly good year to this point. We wish we didn't have the \$23,000 deficit, but it's not too bad for a hospital."

Commissioner Dean Kruse asked how many people worked at the hospital.

Mr. Miller said about 110 at both the hospital and clinic. He said the hospital is probably the third largest employer in the

county behind the prison and New Age.

"Well, it's a nice facility you have up there," said Mr. Lang.

In other business, Mr. Miller said:

• The hospital was looking at making a few renovations, although nothing major. He said they were looking to renovate the physical therapy area to increase privacy, increasing the privacy in the reception area at the clinic and would like to modernize the surgery area.

Mr. Miller said they were also looking at renovating the space leased to Colby Community College to accommodate more nursing students. He said they were meeting the college board on Monday, Feb. 20, the date of their next hospital board meeting, to talk about the future of the nursing program in Norton.

• Melissa Wachendorfer was recently hired as the new director of nursing. Mr.

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Northern Valley forensics scores well at Oberlin meet

The Northern Valley Forensics Team had some high placings in the January 28 meet at Oberlin, their first of the year.

A total of 25 students are out for forensics this year and they were allowed to take 18 events to the meet. This resulted in 16 students being able to participate.

The team was comprised of new talent — Hannah Hawks, Cody Callaway, Kelli Cole, Ethan Hays, Alysia Shearer and Stanton Nelson; and returning talent — Tom Bartley, Avery Thalheim, Ashley Kingham, Melody Miller, Jessie Redeker, Amanda Hopkins, Andrea Lowry and Jena Jessup. Ten other schools entered students.

The top six participants from each of the nine categories moved on to the final rounds.

Those making it into the finals from Northern Valley with their placing were:

- Jessie Redeker and Tom Bartley, serious duet, sixth place.
 - Andrea Lowry and Jena Jessup, IDA, fifth.
 - Amanda Hopkins, serious solo, fourth.
 - Andrea Lowry, humorous solo, second.
 - Stanton Nelson, informative, second.
 - Ethan Hays, extemporaneous, fifth.
- The Northern Valley Forensics Team is coached by Ken Tharman.

More walkers wanted for annual health program

Walk Kansas is about to start again. The low cost health and fitness program will begin Sunday, March 12 and runs through Saturday, May 6.

During the eight-week program, teams of six people record miles with the goal being to walk 423 miles as a team. This is equivalent to walking across the state of Kansas.

Team members can exercise independently at a time and place that's convenient for them or choose a time for physical activity with family, friends, neighbors or co-workers.

The team concept has contributed to Walk Kansas's success. Knowing that team mates are counting on you may be all that's needed to encourage exercise.

Though initially developed as a walking program, 15 minute segments of aerobic exercise - running, bicycling, swimming, dance and step aerobics, weight training and team sports, for example - also may be counted toward the fitness goal.

Walk Kansas, sponsored by K-State Research and Extension of Norton County, is easy, yet helpful in reducing stress, lowering blood pressure, losing weight and reducing risks from diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Tracking fruit and vegetable consumption, which will be included in the Walk Kansas program again this year in Norton County is credited with increased con- (Continued on Page 5)