

Opinion

Thumbs Up to...

✓ **Joyce Sumner** and **Kathy VanMeter** for your tireless energy in collecting and delivering donated clothing and other items to the missions in Garden City. (e-mail)

✓ **Lucas Melvin**, on your promotion to head football coach at Norton Community High School.

✓ **Monte Montgomery, Greg Plumb, Mary Beth Boyd, Donna and Kaye Goscha, Jennifer Henrickson**, for sharing your displays with the community at the Norton Public Library.

✓ **Lance Roe**, Blue Jay wrestler, on being named Regional Wrestler of the Year.

✓ **To all the advertisers** who made the three-page wrestling spread in Tuesday's *Norton Telegram* possible.

✓ **To the Norton School District** for the superb job in hosting Wednesday's Mid-Continent Elementary League music festival.

(You are encouraged to join the "Thumbs Up to..." Club. If you know of someone, or group, or organization that deserves a pat-on-the-back, please e-mail me at tomd@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, phone 877-6908 or mail to The Norton Telegram at 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654. Thanks in advance for your assistance. - tom)

Don't ever lose hope

An e-mailer favored me with the following, so I thought I would share it with you. Good message.

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect himself from the elements, and to store his few possessions.

One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened, and everything was lost. He was stunned with disbelief, grief, and anger. "God, how could you do this to me?" he cried.

Early the next day he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him.

"How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers.

"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

It's easy to get discouraged when things are going bad, but we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering.

Remember that, the next time your little hut seems to be burning to the ground. It just may be a smoke signal that summons the grace of God.

If you know of someone who feels his or her hut is on fire, share this. It might provide comfort and hope.

-td-

Speaking of hope...I hope we get some moisture.

-td-

Speaking of moisture, I hope it's enough to do us some good.

-td-

I was reading in the *AARP Bulletin*, or magazine, I forget which, where 67 people, age 70 or older, ran all 26 miles at the recent Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. Wow, let's hear it for these folks who refuse to surrender to age.

Good Evening Norton

Tom Dreiling



-td-

A friend told me the other day that he is on the doorstep of his 60th birthday. I noticed a bit of anxiety in his e-mail. We should never feel that way about aging. When the sun sets on each day, chalk it up as another victory.

-td-

I thought this might bring a chuckle. Two guys were talking and here is how the conversation unfolded:

"After our last child was born, my wife told me we had to cut back on expenses. I had to give up drinking beer. I was not a big drinker, maybe a 12-pack on weekends.

"Anyway, I gave it up, but I noticed the other day when she came home from grocery shopping the receipt included \$45 for makeup.

"I said, 'Wait a minute. I've given up beer and you haven't given up anything!'

"She said, 'I buy that makeup for you, so I can look pretty for you.'

"I told her, 'Hey, that's what the beer was for! I don't think she'll be back.'"

-td-

I would be remiss if I did not wish a happy birthday to a friend, Dottie Staab. How old is she? She would slap me silly if I told you!

-td-

I thank those of you using the "Thumbs Up to..." column. I've gotten a lot of positive feedback. Of course such an undertaking requires input from you. Keep it up, those of you using it, and join in the accolades, to those of you who aren't.

-td-

Have a good evening and a good weekend.

-td-

And don't forget to spend a little time in the house of worship of your choice.

Program is for kids after school

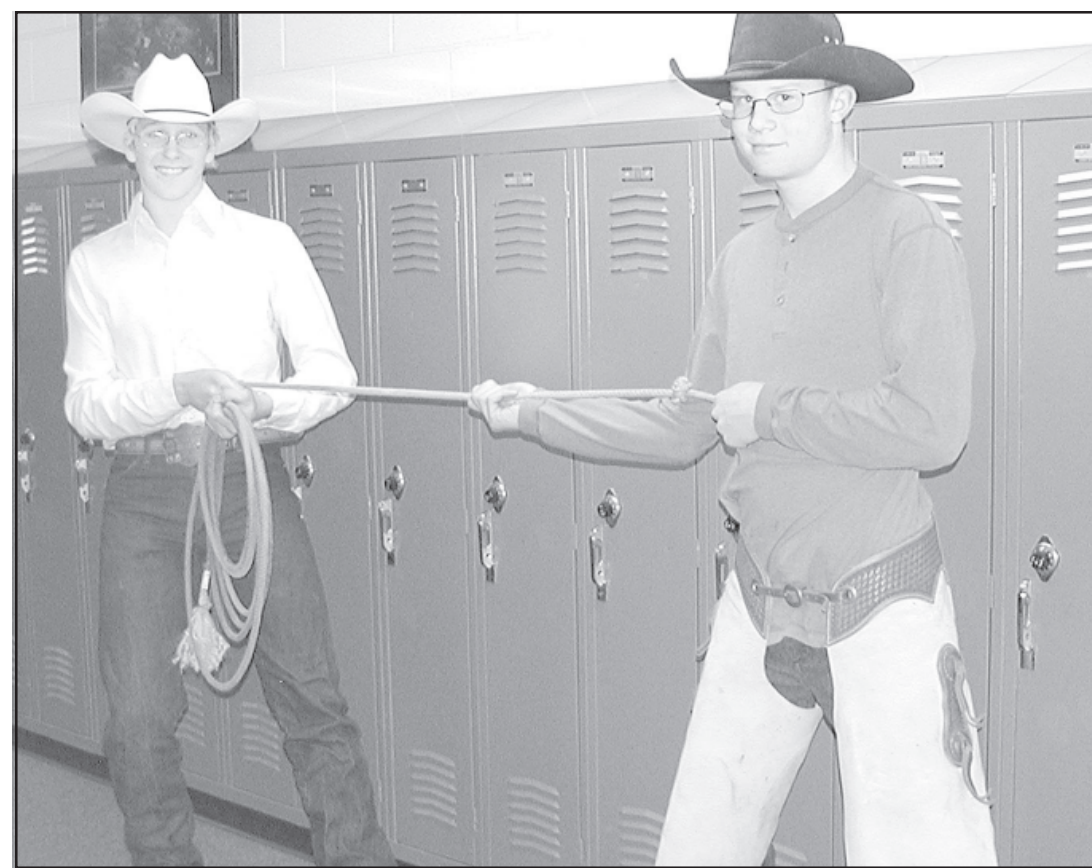
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Pantry at Trinity Episcopal Church.

Almena Grade School gymnasium is the location of the program in Almena Tuesday afternoons.

All programs are dismissed at 5 p.m.

The day and place of the Lenora program has not been decided.

Presenters will be Gina Frack, Norton County Health Department; Janae Talbot, Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center; Pam Shelton, Drug and Alcohol Counselor; Magistrate Judge Deb Anderson; Tamme Johnson, Smokey Hills Regional Prevention Center; police officer, Toby Kuhn; Dan Sturgil, Ph.D., High Plains Mental Health; and motivational speaker, Ward Foley.



Yahoo, buckaroo! Donning chaps and cowboy hats, on Tuesday, two members of the Norton FFA Chapter celebrated FFA Week activities. Coady McMullen, 15, (left) roped his buddy, Donny Hildebrand, 14. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Youth ranch is closing its doors

(Continued from Page 1)
find out about the closing until Thursday. At the time, she said, they had four kids at the ranch. Since then, she said, they have all been moved.

In order to get a youth in at the ranch, she said, they had to be eligible for Medicaid payment, which meant Medicaid paid for 60 percent with federal tax dollars and the state paid the other 40 percent. In order to qualify for this, the youth had to have severe behavior issues or mental health needs. All of those kids would have gone through screening with a case worker.

The case worker talks with the youth about drug and alcohol use, whether the person has been violent, whether the youth was able to

be controlled by parents and other things.

At a "level 5" facility, she said, the boys can only be held for 90 days and then screened again and can possibly be held in the placement for another 50 days. After the 140 days, the state pays 100 percent if their bill.

Mrs. Pratt said the ranch here wasn't the only facility they work with. Juvenile Justice has kids in placements all over, he said.

Mr. Shike said Kelley has a three-year contract which was up for renewal on April 17. The contract requires a 60-day notice of termination, he said.

The current contract calls for the company to pay the city \$3,600 a month to lease the facility and land. Mr. Shike said the \$3,600 a

month is less than the city was receiving before the contract was renewed three years ago.

When the ranch opened seven years ago, said Mr. Shike, the city was paid by the kid. It was a more lucrative contact for everyone, he said. The last time the city negotiated with the company, though, they settled on the \$3,600.

Mr. Shike said the facility formerly was run by Cookson Hills, a church group out of Oklahoma. Idaho Christian Children's Ranch assumed the Cookson Hills assets and they shut it down. That is when Kelley approached the city with the idea of a youth ranch, he said.

The city borrowed money and redid the facility. Mr. Shike said the city is still paying on the bonds because they were refinanced and

combined with other indebtedness seven years ago. The city pays \$40,000 a year on those bonds.

The money the city gets from the lease, said Mr. Shike, is put in the budget as a line item and then goes into expenses at the ranch.

Mr. Shike said he doesn't think the city has a closed mind on any of the possibilities or options that could go in at the facility.

It will all be discussed. During the Oberlin City Council meeting Thursday night, Councilman Jay Anderson volunteered to work with a steering committee with the Economic Development Corp. to help find a new operator.

The council discussed doing an inventory on the equipment at the ranch and winterizing the buildings.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

NORTON Senior High:

Monday — Jay Singers, a.p.; Wrestling Team Pictures, 3 p.m.; Sub-State Boys Basketball Quarter Finals vs. Bennington, here, 6 p.m.

Tuesday — Jay Singers, 7:30 a.m.; Cheer, a.p.; 06-07 Football Parent Meeting, Gym, 6:30 p.m.; Sub-State Girls BB Quarter Finals, Norton has a bye

Wednesday — Jay Singers, 7:30 a.m.; SAC, a.p.; 06-07 Cheer Sign-up meeting, a.p.; Field Trip to Phillipsburg

Thursday — Kays, a.p.; Sub-State Boys Basketball Semi-Finals at Beloit

Friday — Jazz, a.p.; Sub-State Girls Basketball Semi-Finals at Beloit

Saturday — Forensics at Ellis, 7:30 a.m.; FFA District Selection at Downs, 9 a.m.; Sub-State Basketball Championships at Beloit

Next Monday — Mid-Continent League Forensics, Here, 7:30 a.m. — No School 7-12

Junior High:

Monday — Wrestling Team Pictures, 3 p.m.; Scholars Bowl at Stockton, 4 p.m.

Wednesday — Team Meeting, 7:30 a.m.

Saturday — Mid-Continent Elementary Wrestling, here, 9:30 a.m.

Next Monday — No School, 7-12

Eisenhower:

Monday — Site Council, 7 p.m.

Thursday — Early Childhood-Grade 2 Level Meeting, 3:40 p.m.

Next Monday — Kindergarten Roundup, 7 p.m.

All Schools:

Monday — Professional Development Council, Alice Tweed Center, 4 p.m.

Thursday — Kan-Ed at Eisenhower, 3:45 and 4:45

High School Menus:

Monday — Breakfast: Breakfast tornado, potato puffs, fruit or juice or cereal, toast, milk; Lunch: Cheddar chowder and crackers, raw veggies, hot roll, mixed fruit, Snickerdoodles or chef salad, milk

Tuesday — Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, bacon, fruit or juice or cereal, toast, milk; Lunch: Hoagie sandwich, lettuce and tomato, corn, peaches or chef salad, milk

Wednesday — Breakfast: Long John, fruit or juice or cereal, toast, milk; Lunch: Fish fillet, potato puffs, coleslaw, hot roll, banana split, fruit cup, or chef salad, milk

Thursday — Breakfast: Cinnamon bubble, fruit or juice or cereal, toast, milk; Lunch: Chicken enchilada, lettuce and chopped tomato, hot roll, fruit cocktail or chef salad, milk

Friday — Breakfast: Banana bread, fruit or juice or cereal, toast, milk; Lunch: Cheese pizza, combo salad, rosy applesauce, Rice Krispie treat or chef salad, milk

Eisenhower Menus:

Monday — Breakfast: Sausage pancake stick, syrup, strawberry fruit cup, milk; Lunch: Baked ham, scalloped potatoes, baby carrots pineapple chunks, dinner roll, milk

Tuesday — Breakfast: Apple wedge, banana spears, oatmeal muffin square, toast, milk; Lunch:

Lasagna, tossed salad, peaches, garlic bread, milk

Wednesday — Breakfast: Strawberries, bagel with cream cheese, milk; Lunch: Tuna supreme, green beans, celery strip, fruit basket upset, milk

Thursday — Breakfast: Dr. Suess' Greeneggs and ham, apple juice, milk; Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, Little Smokies, mixed veggies, rosy applesauce, French bread, milk

Friday — Breakfast: Blueberry muffin, peaches, milk; Lunch: Fish portions, potato salad, rosy applesauce, whole wheat roll, milk

NORTHERN VALLEY

Monday — Breakfast and lunch payment due; High School Dance Practice; High School Sub State Basketball; Post Prom Meeting, Almena, luncheon, 7 p.m.

Tuesday — High School Sub-State Basketball; High School Forensics meet at Bushton-Quivera Heights, 4 p.m.

Wednesday — U.S. Supreme Court in Review at Phillipsburg; U.S. Supreme Court in Review, 9-10:30 a.m.

Thursday — High School Sub-State Basketball

Friday — High School Sub-State Basketball

Saturday — High School Sub-State Basketball; FFA District Selection Day at Lakeside; Wall of Fame Induction at Almena Cafeteria, 2 p.m.

School Menus:

Monday — Breakfast: Krispie treats, sausage link, diced peaches, cereal; Lunch: Soft shell taco, tossed salad/dressing, corn, fruit cup

Tuesday — Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, toast, hashbrowns, ham slice, cereal; Lunch: Ground beef stroganoff, whole wheat roll, peas, tapioca pudding

Wednesday — Breakfast: French toast/syrup, sausage patty, applesauce, cereal; Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, little smokies, hot roll, buttered peas and carrots, rosey applesauce

Thursday — Breakfast: Oatmeal w/toppings, toast, strawberries, cereal; Lunch: Chili soup w/crackers, cheese sticks, relish plate, cinnamon roll

Friday — Breakfast: Cinnamon roll, ham slice, diced peaches, cereal; Lunch: Chicken enchilada, tossed salad w/dressing, buttered broccoli, sliced peaches.

School board looks at what to fix in the district

(Continued from Page 1)
maintaining Qualified Zone Academy Bonds money. The rest would come from the district's reserve.

Mr. Mann said the football field could be done in June with the track done in July. The new grass will be ready to play on by the first football game of the season. The bid also includes replacing the sprinkler heads.

Board member Jeff Nielsen asked if any thought had been given to adding one or two lanes to the track.

Mr. Mann said there is no place to add to it without considerable expense. They can't expand inside of the track because of the football field, he said, and to go out, they would have to remove part of the north stadium and hill.

"I wish we could go to seven lanes," he said, "then we could host

the regional meet."

On the capital outlay projects, the board:

- Accepted a bid from Windmill Farms of Almena for improvements to Travis Field for \$39,500.

- Accepted a bid from Track Renovations and Coatings, Inc., of Uniontown to re-do the track for \$61,736.

- Approved the purchase of wall mats for padding in the Eisenhower gym.

- Approved the purchase of kitchen equipment for the junior high and grade school for approximately \$16,000.

- Approved the concrete replacement projects as recommended and directed Mr. Mann to obtain bids for those projects.

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All Of Our

Ag Valley

COOP CO-OP

Locations will be Closing at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, February 28, 2006

This is for our fiscal year-end inventory WE WILL RESUME REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you and for your patience during this time