

Norton awards track athletes with honors

By **DICK BOYD**

The Norton Community High School girls and boys track teams were honored during the annual Track Awards Night on May 23 in the high school band room.

Coach Bruce Graber introduced the members of both squads and told about their successes. Parents and fans were present to help honor the athletes, who received letters as well as awards.

Named "Most Inspirational Athlete" by his teammates for the third year in a row was junior Blake VanEaton. He was also named the "Most Outstanding Male Athlete" for the second straight year. VanEaton was "Rookie of the Year" his freshman season.

VanEaton was also the high points leader for the boys squad this season with 109 prior to the state meet.

Freshman Laura Lee Baird was honored as the "Most Outstanding Female Athlete". She was high points girls leader with 184 prior to the state meet.

Elected captains by their teammates were seniors Chelsea Cox and Heath Vincent.

The Norton girls were champions of the Mid-Continent League track meet and the Blue Jay boys were the league runnerup team this season. Norton athletes qualified for the state track meet in Wichita in 12 different events.

Receiving girls letters were: Amber Waggoner, Naomi Streck, Klaire Mann, Jaelyn Krueger, Chelle Donovan, Chelsea Cox, Amanda Antrim, seniors; Lacey Roe, Hannah Mills, juniors; Courtney LeClair, sophomore; Laura Lee Baird, Hayli Bozarth, KaraJo Jones, Wiyanna Paxton, Taylor Rossi, Katharine Roy, freshmen.

Boys letter winners were: Andrew Ables, Lance Roe, Josh VanSlike, Heath Vincent, seniors; Nathan Broeckelman, Jared Bebb, Jared Engelbert, Logan Keiswetter, Nic Lewis, Kent Mann, Brett Thomson, Blake VanEaton, juniors; Jared Cox, Wes Georgeson, Tanner Griffith, Logan Kats, sophomores; Zach Bainter, freshman.

Coach Graber thanked his coaching staff, parents and fans. His assistant coaches were Doug Reusink, Dale Engelbert, Todd Fulton, Jason Jones and Anne Stiles.

After 11 years as the head football and track coach at Norton Community High School, coach Graber will become the head football coach and assistant track coach at El Dorado High School next season.

"This was one of the most satisfying seasons I've been through in

a long, long time," coach Graber said.

"We fought through weather problems but had a great time. It was so much fun following these girls and boys and watching their improvement. Meet after meet, we kept getting better.

"We qualified athletes for the state meet in 12 events, the most since I've been in Norton. It was a tremendous spring and I'm excited about honoring our athletes.

"Thank you to everyone. It's been a great 11 years with the outstanding young people I've had the opportunity to work with.

"I couldn't have chosen better teams to go out with. Thanks to everyone for all your support and loyalty.

"I hope I've left something with our young people that will be of value down the road. The greatest thing in my career has been the young people.

"This was a true team in every sense of the word. We had more young people score points this season than in any other season I can remember. It was inspirational to me as a coach to watch different youngsters step up at different meets to aid the cause of winning a team championship.

"The ladies started the season with three straight wins and the guys followed after week one with three straight of their own.

"Going into the league championships, we felt we had a real shot at winning both titles and I am extremely proud of the effort these young people gave in an attempt to achieve that goal. Winning the title with the girls was great but the effort the guys gave us was just as admirable in their second place finish.

"Every meet we came home with a basket full of personal records. That is a testament to how hard our young people continued to work all the way through the season. I could not have finished my tenure here in Norton with a better group of young people. I am very proud of each and every one of you.

"It has been an honor for me to be the coach of such a well respected track program as the one in Norton. I pray I have done nothing to diminish the aura surrounding this program.

"I am very anxious to see what these youngsters do with their talents next spring as I will be watching from a distance and in person at the state meet. It is my fervent hope and prayer that each of you will continue to work hard year round at becoming the very best you can be with what the good Lord gave you. Thank you and God bless each of you!"

Norton graduate running track at Wichita State

By **DICK BOYD**

Jared Foley, a sophomore from Norton, has been a key member of the 1600 meter relay team for the Wichita State University men's track team this season.

The highlight of the relay team's season came in mid-May when they placed third in the Missouri Valley Conference outdoor track meet to propel the Shockers into a second place finish.

The relay team members earned all-conference honors with their third place time of 3:15.09.

The team had a season best time of 3:11.45 at the Kansas Relays where they placed seventh. They won gold medals this season in the Emporia Relays and KT Woodman meet in Wichita. They also placed second in the Tulsa Duals and third in the Missouri Relays.

Foley also ran the 400 meter

dash. He placed fourth in the Tulsa Duals with a clocking of 50.49. His best time of the season was 49.05 in the preliminaries of the Missouri Valley Conference meet. He missed qualifying for the finals by 16 hundredths of a second.

Foley was also named to the 2006 Missouri Valley Conference Track and Field Scholar-Athlete Team. In order to be named to the team, a student-athlete must have placed in the top six at either the indoor or outdoor Valley championship and maintain a GPA of 3.00 or higher.

This season, Wichita State placed 24 student-athletes, the most from one institution, on the team.

Foley is the record-holder at Norton Community High School in the 400 meter dash.

He is the son of Anna and Craig Foley of Norton.

Humana Color Ad In Goodland