

PITCH TOURNAMENT

By JAKE DURHAM

The moon was in the first quarter; always a sign of good luck and good fun and when you match that with the Christmas season, spirits will always be at their highest. The Grandmothers were singing Christmas Carols and the Ladies from Lyle were handing out chocolate kisses in red and green wrappers. The Pilgrims from the East were playing knock with snowman cards and the Muddy River Boys were all wearing red caps with white tassels. It was a festive occasion to say the least, and taking it all in were the Red Neck and the Black Hat Kid, wearing Santa Claus neck ties and scouting the competition as they came through the door. It was the final tournament of the year 2004 and the determination to capture still another championship of the current year was strong enough to cut it with a knife. The Brown Eyed Girl shouted, "Begin to Commence", and forty and four rushed to their tables for a night of frolicking and fun.

The first round bidding at table number six went from two to four to six; a definite sign the pushers were at it again. Somewhat dangerous but the results paid off as M J and the Car Salesman marched to the scorers table with first round honors and the initial lead. It was evident things were just heating up as the Cook and the Connoisseur, licking their lips, captured second round honors, but to no one's surprise, it was the Hat Man and the Quiet One who moved into the lead. The signal was given to take a break after round three and as the scores were recorded, the lead changed after each posting. M J and the Car Salesman made it two out of three as they captured the honors again. A quick look at the board showed a three way tie for first place between M J and the Salesman, the Hat Man and the Quiet One and the Cook and the Connoisseur. In fourth place was Bug Man and the Exterminator and rounding out the top five were the teams of the Red Neck and the Black Hat Kid and the Oil Man and the Secretary. From there on down it was stacked like chips on a poker table.

There was more buzzing than bees around a hive as partners were head to head planning strategy for the next series of rounds. Bing Crosby, singing "I'll Be Home for Christmas" could be heard in the background and the Blue Dawgs and the Hound Dawgs announced they were taking side bets as the bell sounded to start round four. The intensity picked up immediately as play got underway and the sounds of success and despair could be heard above the sounds of cards being shuffled and as the score sheets were recorded, Bug Man and the Exterminator captured the honors and announced, "The die had been cast and to continue on would be an act of futility." The Muddy River Boys took the honors on round five, but true to their word, Bug Man and the Exterminator held fast to the lead. The bell clanged to signal a break after round six and as the scores were turned in, most everyone stayed around the scoreboard to assess the situation. The Hammer Man and the Auctioneer took the honors on round six but it was the Hat Man and the Quiet One who moved back into the lead. Bug Man and the Exterminator were in second place, M J and the Car Salesman were in third, Dangerous Dan and the Combine Man were in fourth and rounding out the top five was none other than the Hound Dawgs, hot on the trail and moving up. Another dozen or so were within another ten points and determined to be in the count when the last score was recorded.

Last minute strategy was the name of the game during the break as time was now a definite factor. Those low on the totem pole were feverishly working their calculators to determine what an average they need for the next four rounds to be in contention while those near the top were considering the law of probability and how to maximize the situation. The crucial seventh and eighth rounds were coming up and as the bell rang to resume the action, a new sense of urgency prevailed.

The sound of low flying aircraft came from the back of the room as the Bomber Pilot and the Navigator, who must have been off

course, finally found the radar beam and produced the high round score for round seven which moved them into the top ten but it was the Hat Man and the Quiet One, playing low key along the way, who maintained a narrow lead. The pressure was more intense as the eighth round got underway and the bidding was obviously more competitive. Those low scorers had nothing to lose while those in contention couldn't afford a set at this stage of the game, but couldn't let an opportunity slip away by not bidding their cards if they held them. The Solomon Valley Boys, always in contention, broke a drought as they captured eighth round honors, but the Hat Man and the Quiet One, making the most out of a few good cards, were still holding the lead and by now the question was could they continue on. As round nine got underway; an unusual quietness engulfed the room. A catch-up break was declared for the end of round nine so everyone could start the final round together. The Muddy River Boys captured round nine honors giving them a double for the evening but a set along the way had pretty much sealed their fate. Scores were tight and getting tighter and a the final score was posted after round nine, Hat Man and the Quiet One were still in the lead for the fourth time in a row and for the sixth time out of nine overall. They now held a six point lead over Bug Man and the Exterminator who were in second, M J and the Car Salesman were in third, the Hammer Man and the Auctioneer were in fourth and rounding out the top five was the team of the Chef and the Connoisseur. From there on down you looked with one eye closed as the scores piled in a heap.

Once again the final round was going to determine the champions. The odds might favor the Hat Man and the Quiet One but in this contest, logic has never been a factor, only time would tell. The signal was given to start the final round as players launched into a do or die situation. The bidding was fierce and in some cases rather reckless, but it as some would say, necessary, considering the circumstances. As the scores were recorded, the lead changed with each posting as good luck charms were being squeezed, teeth being clenched and fingers crossed. As always, everything comes to a close and as the final score was posted, it was M J and the Salesman who had captured the honors on round ten for a triple for the evening, but more importantly, they captured the championship as well.

Top ten teams in order were: 1. Mary Jane Wahlmeier and Norman Walter; 2. Dave Sheley and Jack Mechsner; 3. Jerry Darling and Lynn Thiele; 4. Bill Glennemeier and Darren McMullen; 5. Dee and Thelma Bushnell; 6. Myron Veh and Dick Hemphill; 7. Jason Breiner and Rusty Goss; 8. JD Daffer and Duane McEwen; 9. Larry Harman and Tony Hildebrand; 9. Randy Clydesdale and Dan Lauer; 9. Kay Harman and Julia Roeder.

Winning score by Wahlmeier and Walter was 122 points for an average of 12.2 points per round.

High round scorers were: Mary Jane Wahlmeier and Norm Walter; Bill Glennemeier and Darren McMullen; Jerry Darling and Lynn Thiele; Todd and Doyle Brooks; J.D. Daffer and Duane McEwen; Myron Veh and Dick Hemphill; Coy Christy and John Hildebrand.

Triple high round scorers were Mary Jane Wahlmeier and Norman Walter, double high round scorers were Todd and Doyle Brooks. Highest single round score was 22 points by Myron Veh and Dick Hemphill.

Teams not previously mentioned were: Staci Breiner and Kim Gallentine; Fig Millan and Dan Hazlett; Joyce Sumner and Eleanor Jensen; Barbara McKie and Donna Millan; R.D. Thorton and Clent Hatfield; Ed and Cynthia Glennemeier; Gil Otter and Theresa Clydesdale.

As the evening wore down the celebration continued on. The King's recording of "I'll Have a Blue Christmas Without You," could be heard in the background and as someone mentioned, the next tournament would be next year, January the 2nd to be exact. So grab your partner and show up early. Games start at seven.



NORTON FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
The Rev. Lew Van Der Wege, Pastor
804 W. Wilberforce, Norton 877-2196
SUNDAY — 8 a.m. Early Service
9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
5 p.m. Sr. UMYF
7 p.m. Bridge Service
MONDAY — 6:30 p.m. First Place
WEDNESDAY — 4 p.m. Children's Choir
6:30 p.m. NOW Committee
7 p.m. Chancel Choir
8:15 p.m. Bell Choir
THURSDAY — 6 p.m. Bridge Band Rehearsal

EDMOND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Rev. Lew Van Der Wege, Pastor
SUNDAY — 9 a.m. Worship Service

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Georgia Briery, Senior Warden
102 E. Waverly, Norton 877-2589
SUNDAY — 9:30 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer; Lay Reader, Georgia Briery
11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour. Hosts, Ron and Georgia Briery
3-4 p.m. God's Pantry, Mary Hicks

COMMUNITY FULL GOSPEL CHURCH
Pastor Terry Laughlin
e-mail: laughlin@ruraltel.net
313 W. Lincoln
SATURDAY — 7 a.m. Men's Prayer at the church
SUNDAY — 9:15 a.m. Christian Education
10:30 a.m. Morning Worship
6 p.m. Royal Rangers
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. "Created For His Glory" Bible Study

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
Father Vincent Thu Laing 877-2234
stfanci@ruraltel.net
108 S. Wabash, Norton
Mass Schedule
Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Monday 7:30 a.m.
Tuesday No Mass
Wednesday 7:30 a.m.
Thursday 8 a.m. Mass
Friday 7:30 a.m.
Saturday 7 p.m.
Sacrament of Reconciliation
4 p.m. Saturday, 30 minutes before Mass or by appointment
TUESDAY — 7 p.m. Bingo
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. SYF (K-8)
First Friday of the Month — Adoration following Morning Mass
First Saturday of the Month — 8 a.m. Marion Devotions
K of C Third Monday of Month at 7:30 p.m.

NORTON MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE
Hospital chaplain, Monday through Sunday, Jones
Sunday Services, 2 p.m. Andbe Home; 3 p.m., Norton Manor, Worthington

PRAIRIE VIEW REFORMED CHURCH
The Rev. Jeffrey Van Der Weele 410 Holland, Prairie View 973-2794
SUNDAY — 9 a.m. Morning Worship Services.
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
7 p.m. Joint Service at Prairie View

LUCTOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
2 miles east and 3 miles north of Prairie View
The Rev. Jeffrey Van Der Weele 973-2794
SUNDAY — 9:30 a.m. Sunday School and Choir Practice
10:30 a.m. Morning Worship
7 p.m. Services at Prairie View

TUESDAY — 6:30 p.m. Logan Manor Service
7:30 p.m. Council Meeting

REDEEMER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Pastor Timm O. Meyer
e-mail: timmomeyer@ruraltel.net
805 W. Holme, Norton 877-3138
FRIDAY — 7 p.m. New Year's Eve Service
SUNDAY — 9:05 a.m. "Goodness From the Good Shepherd" Radio Broadcast, KQNK 106.7 FM & 1530 AM
10 a.m. Worship Service
11:10 a.m. Sunday School and Bible Study
MONDAY — 5:45 p.m. Confirmation at Alma
7:30 p.m. Worship Service at Alma
WEDNESDAY — 7:30 p.m. Bible Study
SATURDAY — 2 p.m. Ladies Mission Society

NORTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Jeff Nielsen, Minister
Cody Shepherd, Youth Minister
e-mail: ncc_office@sbcglobal.net
208 N. Kansas, 877-2871
FRIDAY — Office closed
SUNDAY — 8 a.m. Early Worship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:40 a.m. Worship Service
No Bible Bowl or Youth Group
WEDNESDAY — 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast
9 a.m. Prayer and Fellowship
6 p.m. AWANA Supper
6:25 p.m. AWANA
6:30 p.m. Bible Bowl
7 p.m. Upper Room Prayer Group
8 p.m. Elders Meeting
SATURDAY — Bible Bowl in Sutton, Neb.

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD
Pastor Terrill Worthington
1010 Churchill Dr. 877-2181
SUNDAY — 9:15 a.m. Time of Prayer (Adults)
9:30 a.m. Time of Prayer (Children in kitchen)
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
10:45 a.m. Morning Worship
7 p.m. Evening Service
WEDNESDAY — 6 p.m. 3D at Parsonage
7 p.m. Adult Bible Study
8 p.m. Committee Meetings

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
The Rev. Rick Rostek
814 N. Second, Norton 877-2430
FRIDAY — 7 p.m. New Year's Eve Worship
SUNDAY — 9 a.m. Sunday School, Bible Class
10:30 a.m. Worship

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ALMENA
Kirk Kasson, Pastor
e-mail: congo@ruraltel.net
SUNDAY — 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Church Services
4:30 p.m. Membership Classes
7 p.m. TFC
MONDAY — 3:30 p.m. Good News
TUESDAY — 7:15 a.m. Teen Women's Discipleship
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Kirk and Kim's Small Group
7:30 p.m. Women's Fellowship
THURSDAY — 7:15 a.m. Teen Men's Discipleship

LIVING HOPE FELLOWSHIP
One mile south of Norton at corner of PDRA road
Pastor Jerry Cummings 877-2426
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Worship and Praise Service.
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Youth and Children's Programs
7 p.m. Adult Home Bible Study
THURSDAY — 7 p.m. Prayer Meeting

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
Phillipsburg Branch
Noel Krouse, Bishop
620 7th Street
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Sacrament meeting
11:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:15 a.m. Primary
12:05 a.m. Priesthood meeting
12:05 a.m. Relief Society
Visitors welcome.



ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, LOGAN
Father Allen Scheer
SUNDAY — 8:30 a.m. Mass
MONDAY — 5:30 p.m. Mass

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF LOGAN
Pastor Troy Buss
SUNDAY — 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Church services
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Bible Study

CLAYTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Kathy Aeillo 669-2554
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Church School
11 a.m. Worship Service

LENORA CHURCH OF GOD
SUNDAY — 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Bible Study

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
404 N. York Avenue, Oberlin
SUNDAY — 9:30 a.m. Worship
10:45 a.m. Fellowship and Educational Hour
Holy Communion, first and third Sundays
7:30 p.m. Congregation Council second Wednesday

NORTON SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
105 S. Case Street
Pastor Jim Nichols
SATURDAY SERVICES — 9:45 a.m. Church Services
10:45 a.m. Sabbath School

LONG ISLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
The Rev. Shelly Cox
554 Washington, 854-7626
SUNDAY — 11 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Morning Worship
FIRST SUNDAY — 12 noon Fellowship Dinner
1 p.m. Administrative Council Meeting
FIRST WEDNESDAY — 2 p.m. United Methodist Women's Meeting in Fall, Winter and Spring

NORTON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Charles Ross
112 S. Archer, 877-5214
SUNDAY — 11 a.m. Worship Service
6 p.m. Evening Service
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Mid-Week Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

ALMENA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Kathy Aeillo 669-2554
SUNDAY — 8:30 a.m. Worship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Bible Study in Fellowship Hall
2ND SUNDAY — Noon Fellowship Dinner
1:00 p.m. Administrative Board Meeting
3RD THURSDAY — 1:30 p.m. United Methodist Women in Fellowship Hall

HENDLEY/WILSONVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES
The Rev. R.L. Malchow
10 a.m. Sunday Worship Hour
1st and 3rd Sundays, Hendley
2nd and 4th Sundays, Wilsonville
Coffee Fellowship after service
3rd Thursday U.M.W.

LIVING WORD BAPTIST CHURCH
308 West Crane
Interim Pastor Terry Laughlin
SUNDAY — 9 a.m. Morning Worship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
MONDAY — 7 a.m. TFC Ministry Team Breakfast
7 p.m. TFC Connection
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Prayer and Praise Time

WILSONVILLE UNITED BAPTIST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Minister, Keith Theobald
SUNDAY — 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Worship and Communion
1st Thursday, B.C.W. 9 a.m.

LOGAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Shelly Cox
303 W. Church, 689-4350
SUNDAY — 9:15 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. Sunday School
9:15 a.m. Fifth Sunday song service

FIRST & THIRD WEDNESDAYS — 6:30 p.m. UMYF
SECOND WEDNESDAY — 1:30 p.m. United Methodist Women
THIRD WEDNESDAY — 7:30 p.m. Administrative Council Meeting

UNITED PARISH OF LENORA
The Rev. Jack Kersenbrock
140 E. Iowa, 567-4420
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Worship Services

LYLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Carol Woodmansee
SUNDAY — 8:00 a.m. Worship Service

MAPLE GROVE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
9 miles west
4 1/2 miles north of Norton
Pastor Leon Neher
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Worship Service
4th Tuesday, Women's Fellowship
3rd Sunday, Noon, carry-in dinner

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEW ALMELO
stjoseph@ruraltel.net
Father Vincent Thu Laing
Pastoral Administrator, Stan Chapin
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass
Friday and Monday 8 a.m. Scripture Communion Service
Weekday Mass Tuesday 8:30 a.m.

ALMENA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Kathy Aeillo 669-2554
SUNDAY — 8:30 a.m. Worship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Bible Study in Fellowship Hall
2ND SUNDAY — Noon Fellowship Dinner
1:00 p.m. Administrative Board Meeting
3RD THURSDAY — 1:30 p.m. United Methodist Women in Fellowship Hall

HENDLEY/WILSONVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES
The Rev. R.L. Malchow
10 a.m. Sunday Worship Hour
1st and 3rd Sundays, Hendley
2nd and 4th Sundays, Wilsonville
Coffee Fellowship after service
3rd Thursday U.M.W.

LIVING WORD BAPTIST CHURCH
308 West Crane
Interim Pastor Terry Laughlin
SUNDAY — 9 a.m. Morning Worship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
MONDAY — 7 a.m. TFC Ministry Team Breakfast
7 p.m. TFC Connection
WEDNESDAY — 7 p.m. Prayer and Praise Time

WILSONVILLE UNITED BAPTIST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Minister, Keith Theobald
SUNDAY — 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Worship and Communion
1st Thursday, B.C.W. 9 a.m.

NORCATUR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Kathy Aeillo 693-4519
SUNDAY — 10 a.m. Worship Service
11 a.m. Sunday School