

Norton soldier has right attitude

We have nothing but admiration for Tom and Cathy Brannan for the part they are playing to better the lives of three U.S. soldiers in Iraq. A story on the front page of the March 16 edition of *The Telegram*, detailed a project assuring those soldiers they will receive care packages and letters — letters they have been without since arriving in Iraq.

Thanks to S/Sgt. Jason Brannan, Tom and Cathy's son — who is also stationed in Iraq — the plight of these fellow soldiers came to light, sparking the interest and response here in Norton.

Anyone who has ever been in the military stationed overseas knows how precious letters are. They do so much to boost the morale. "Mail call" is without question the most important time of the day. And if you are not recipient of a letter, it can be a real downer.

The three soldiers S/Sgt. Brannan mentioned in his conversation with his parents, aren't Norton products, but that makes no difference. Jason saw a need and acted accordingly. For his unselfish behavior, he certainly deserves more than a pat on the back, he deserves a flood of letters from all of us for caring. In a situation such as Iraq, caring for one another is a form of survival. We can add to that by becoming actively engaged in the need S/Sgt. Brannan highlighted.

And where should the letters go? To the following:

- Sgt. Jared McGrew, C Company/1-28 IN, Unit 42532, APO AE 09361
- PFC Tyler Grogan, C Company/1-28 IN, Unit 42532, APO AE 09361
- PFC Michael Bono, C Company/1-28 IN, Unit 42532, APO AE 09361

And please also remember Jason by including him in your correspondence:

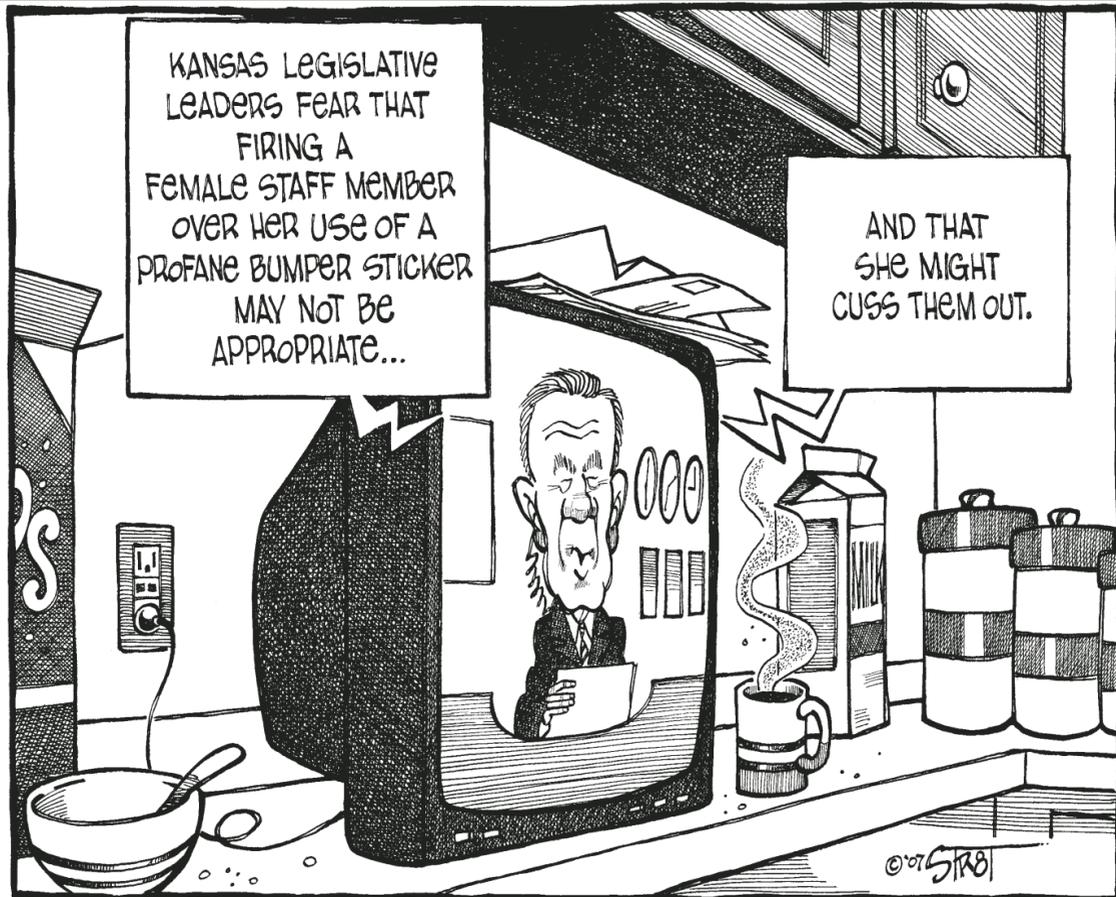
- S/Sgt. Jason Brannan, C Company/1-28 IN, Unit 42532, APO AE 09361

These four soldiers are all members of the "Big Red One," stationed out of Ft. Riley. They are serving in Baghdad with a combat ground infantry unit. Their tenure will be a year to a year and a half.

Thanks Jason, Jared, Tyler and Michael for your service. We are proud.

To our readers, please send them a note, thanks for their service to their country and its cause. Of course that cause is FREEDOM.

—Tom Dreiling



Congressman turns talk into action

You might say Congressman Jerry Moran is putting his feet where his mouth is. Jerry, as most everyone in his gigantic First District call him, said he and his staff are participating in K-State Research and Extension's 2007 Walk Kansas Fitness Challenge. The challenge is a state-wide fitness program where teams collectively walk the distance across Kansas — 423 miles.

"We talk a lot about health care costs in Washington, D.C., but we need to focus on preventative health care," he said. "Regular exercise is one of the best ways to stay healthy. Walk Kansas is a great way to start developing healthy habits and my staff and I are excited to be a part of this program."

The fitness challenge continues through May 5. Jerry and his Salina, Hutchinson, Hays and Washington, D.C., offices have combined to form three teams. In addition to walking, miles can be tracked through other physical exercise like running, swimming, bicycling or playing team sports.

Many Norton countians are taking part in the fitness challenge. In fact you might be surprised at some of the names on the roster. Proudly, our own Dick Boyd, an avid jogger, joined the challenge and is an eager participant. He figured, that since he's physically attuned, he might as well contribute to the effort.

With favorable weather beginning to enter our picture, you might want to seriously think about getting out and doing something to help you become a healthier you.

-td-

It's called Lunesta. It's supposed to help you sleep. It's a prescription med, but the television commercial sees it as a late-night intruder in the form of a butterfly of sorts. It flies in and out of homes and as it passes over those supposedly unable to sleep, they doze off instantly. Something bothers me: the way it flies in and out of those homes in the commercial. Every bedroom has an open window and no screen. Now, how safe is that? The next

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



intruder may not be Lunesta, but it may be *Burglarnesta*.

-td-

Oh boy, another fight's in the works, this time involving the Democratic-controlled Congress and the Republican-controlled White House. It has to do with reigning in the advisors closest to President Bush to appear before committees looking into the firing of eight U.S. attorneys. The Dems threaten with subpoenas, President Bush brushes the threat aside. President Bush would let them appear in a private setting, but not before television cameras and committing to taking an oath to "tell the truth..." This situation, if not resolved in a sane manner, could lead to a constitutional crisis. Get used to it, gang, because there will be more of this stuff going on until President Bush turns in his keys in January 2009. Too often these people act like spoiled brats. We need a Capitol Woodshed, run by the taxpayers, to straighten them out...Congressmen, Senators and the President, if need be. We really expect more than we are getting, disappointingly.

-td-

Are you wrinkled with burden? Come to the church for a faith-lift.

Also remember, as summer nears, the church is prayer-conditioned.

-td-

I haven't been paying much attention, but talk on one of the late night radio talk shows indicated smoking is beginning to play a more prominent role on the big screen. Supposedly, movie makers argue that more and more, young people are turning to cigarettes. Of course they're not

saying that smoking scenes on the screen have anything to do with that. Too bad.

-td-

I was more than just surprised to see in *The Palm Beach (Fla.) Post*, a picture of several young people, including my niece Molly Uppenkamp, and her quote appearing in the accompanying story. Molly, a student at Boston University, and 11 other students, spent their spring break in Delray Beach, Fla., reroofing a house, damaged nearly two years ago by Hurricane Wilma. The students were part of the university's Alternative Spring Break program. "Being up North, you hear about hurricanes on TV, and then it disappears. This is almost two years later and there is still all of this damage. It's amazing to see how long it takes to recover from a disaster like that," she is quoted as saying. This was Molly's second year in the Boston University program, spending her first working with wetland mitigation concerns in Kissimmee, Fla. Good job!

-td-

Suffering from truth decay? Brush up on your Bible.

-td-

While watching Bill O'Reilly Wednesday evening, I was again disappointed in his need to show us, his television viewers, the drinking and sexual pitfalls associated with college spring breaks. His cameras did some undercover (no pun intended) work at Padre Island off south Texas. It was tacky, it was gross, it was a no-need-to-show situation.. I came away from that x-rated part of his program wondering if the old guy likes looking at those young bodies. We aren't stupid, we know what goes on at the party sites during spring break. That's as old as time itself. Why cannot O'Reilly point his cameras at the young people who don't go south for sex and booze, but to do something good. That's the real story, sex and booze isn't. He is a sensationalist.

-td-

Have a good evening. And if you need a change of scenery this weekend, find it in your church.

Thumbs Up to . . .

- ✓S/Sgt. Jason Brannan, for sharing and caring.
- ✓All who donated blood at the recent drive in Norton. (e-mail)
- ✓Darleen and Lillian, far away fans of *The Norton Telegram*. (e-mail)
- ✓The "child of the 40's," Liza Deines, who continues to share with us here in Norton her thoughts and knowledge she has gleaned over her lifetime. Thank you for sharing! (e-mail)
- ✓Valley Hope, on your 40th anniversary. (e-mail)
- ✓Brian Thompson and Christine Eveleigh, on your recent engagement. (e-mail)
- ✓The young man who stopped to assist me in changing a flat tire. (called in)
- ✓Two thumbs up to Tom Dreiling, for the way he "tells it like it is." (brought in)

(To render a salute in this column, e-mail tom@nwkans.com, fax 877-3732, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, or mail to or drop by the office at 215 S. Kansas Ave.)

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On this issue, love takes back seat

It is with deep sadness I watch as the church of my upbringing and the church of my choice heads into another round of threatened separation because of primarily one issue, the ordination of gays and lesbians as bishops and the sanctioning of same sex unions. Regardless of one's opinion on this matter I would pray few would see supporting a schism within the church as the answer.

It never ceases to amaze me when we claim, as Christians, to love and embrace all, all that is who look, act and do as we do. I don't know the answer to the gay issue, but I do know when you believe in God, gay or straight, you want your relationships validated by the very church where you turn for strength, love and guidance.

Heterosexual people do not have the patent on this need. God does not ask us to judge, He merely asks us to love each other. We love, and the judgment and re-

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



venge of others, if you so believe, is God's.

In the global picture we expect peace in countries of varying tribes, sects and religions and yet within our own families we often cannot find peace. We separate or ignore one another in an effort to find it. Within our church families, we threaten excommunication, division, all to pacify our own need to be right. We resort to angry, painful dissolution. The old adage, charity, and I might add, peace begins at

home. When divisions and separations occur it does not resolve the problem, it only teaches us to live with anger and separation. In the language of a two-year old, either play my way or I will take my marbles and go home. How sad.

Each side believes with the greatest of conviction their "rightness." I don't expect my church to have all the answers, only my God has those. I do believe my church, which I include as all churches, to have the God mandated belief in acceptance, love and forgiveness. What a sad example we set for other world religions when we cannot agree to disagree. We founded our country on freedom of religion, which includes a freedom to choose that religion. There is room for us all in God's mansion... He has told us that. We must not shut the door in the name of house cleaning, but rather invite everyone in and let him or her choose the room of their choice.