

Op-ed

Good teacher gift from heaven

My mother taught school for more than two decades. She not only loved to teach, it was her passion. For many years she drove to Hays to take Saturday classes, attended summer school during the farm's busiest season, and drove to surrounding towns for evening classes. All this in an effort to attain her college degree because she knew the time was coming when her 'normal school training' would not be enough.

She had strong feelings about education, children and learning methods. One thing she believed was children learn by being children, i.e. play time is as important as classroom time. She worked in the early mornings and late evenings to provide the best learning environment she could. My mother did not expect her students to share those extended hours.

For many years the value of homework has been debated, now some studies reveal the benefits of homework may not outweigh the problems associated with it,

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



mainly a dislike of school. Some studies indicate homework for younger children may actually be detrimental. Other studies reveal increased homework does not necessarily result in academic success.

Our five children over the years attended schools in Nevada, Alabama, Oregon and Kansas. From state ranked test scores we ran the gamut of the academic success line, with Oregon near the top and Alabama one up from the bottom. Some schools focused on 'teaching to the test', while others taught to the child. What reflected academic success for our children? As a parent the real learning took place when it reflected life, whether imaginary or real.

Those teachers who themselves recognized the overall excitement and interest in life passed that on to the children.

My mother felt there were many avenues toward learning. My parents both believed learning took place in all areas, not just the classroom, but in the pasture, from the neighbors and maybe most importantly by simple observation. Inquisitiveness results in exploration which results in learning. Einstein became interested in relativity because of playing with a magnet as a child. Small things can yield big results.

I think I am probably right when I say, I doubt if my mother was any better teacher once she received her college degree. Her passion and love of children is what made her a gifted teacher.

On her 100th birthday she received countless letters from former students and from one a dozen roses. Learning is an exciting challenge and a good teacher is a gift from heaven.

(mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net)

Sound Off

Norton and surrounding communities came together the last week of October 2008 to provide a drug and alcohol free event for people to celebrate Halloween at the Valley Hope Association Monster Mash Bash and Haunted House.

The net proceeds from the event have been donated to the Norton Valley Hope patient care fund and will provide drug/alcohol treatment for some who could not otherwise afford it.

Businesses and individuals from Norton and as far as Hoxie and Quinter, donated funds, building materials, food items and their time to help make the event a huge success! More than 100 volunteers

helped provide entertainment to the more than 1,200 people who showed up for the Monster Mash Bash and dared take a tour of the haunted house.

At this time, the Valley Hope Association wishes to express its deepest gratitude to all event sponsors, all volunteers, and to everyone who showed up to enjoy the show. We are so grateful and appreciative.

Thank you so much to everyone who was involved in any way with this successful community event.

Dr. John Leipold
Executive Vice President/
COO

Vacant seat remains on council's agenda

The Ward 3 city council vacancy is among items to be discussed at Wednesday's 5:30 p.m. Norton City Council meeting.

As of today, three residents have filed required paperwork to be considered for the unexpired term of former councilman Ron Briery who recently resigned.

Other agenda items include: Diane Becker will present the Norton City/County Economic Development semi-annual report; Mayor Corns will ask the council to consider a light for the flag pole; Rob Lawson will give the city administrator's report; Kim Snyder will ask the council to consider

2008 utility write-offs and give a report on the finance committee meeting; Donna Foley will give a public works committee meeting report; and the city will pay bills.

The meeting, in the council room at the City Building, is open to the public.

County: Thompson stays as chairman

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Development Board to be delivered by commission chairman Richard Thompson at the next board meeting.

Chairman Thompson was re-elected chairman.

In other news from the meeting:

- Tom Brannan, Norton County Road and Bridge supervisor, said road maintenance is being done where possible; however, due to the frozen conditions, projects are limited. He said work continues on roads that have wash outs and completion of roads on the Federal Emergency Management Agency project.

- Mr. Brannan said he sent out information packets for bidding on steel that will be needed for the 2009 projects. The closing date is Feb. 6, and the commission will review the bids on Feb. 9.

- The commission and Mr. Brannan discussed fuel bids. He presented information to the commission on various options available when bidding fuel.

- Jeff Bridges, DeWay Financial Network, discussed financial options on the emergency medical services building facility. Mr. DeWay provided a financial plan that would allow the county to proceed with financial support for the facility.

Kansas law provides for the

Bonds and Warrants with a lease, a lease-purchase or installment-purchase agreement for construction.

- Dues for several county associated entities were approved: Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging \$4,000; League of Kansas Municipalities \$441.42; Kansas Legislative Policy Group \$563.94; Kansas Association of Counties \$1,314.10; Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group \$1,028; Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission \$4,093; and the National Association of Counties, \$400.

- Curt Archibald, Norton County Solid Waste supervisor, said he had received a letter from Mike Selm, an Environmental Engineer with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, asking for additional information on the proposed construction of landfill permitting and development of Cell 3 and construction of the liner in Subcell areas 4 and 5 and the west portion of Subcell area 6. The commission said they would review the letter and forward it to BG Consultants, who will have to reply to the request.

- The First State Bank, the First Security Bank and The Bank were approved as the county depository banks.

- The Norton Telegram was designated as the official paper

for the county.

- The mileage rate for the county was set at \$.55 per mile, in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service Standard Mileage Rate.

- The commission interviewed Shad Chandler for the hospital board.

- Reggie Beckman, Norton County Noxious Weed Supervisor, presented the proposed right-of-way spraying contract for the Kansas Department of Transportation. The commission approved the contract.

- Diane Becker, Norton City/County Economic Development director, talked with the commission about a current Rural Development loan application. The commission had questions concerning the remittance of funds. County Attorney R. Doug Sebelius had completed the necessary loan documents and the security agreement for the completion of the loan.

- Judy Carlyle, emergency medical services billing clerk, asked the commission to consider writing off some accounts, totaling \$460. The commissioners suggested that the billing write-off be delayed until additional information can be gathered.

- The commissioners paid mid-month bills.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Burton: served on board three years

(Continued from Page 1)

Tourism Board for the last three years as a service representative. I had wanted to get involved, and was approached by a council member about the opportunity on the board.

Q. What is one of your goals if you get appointed to the position?

A. If I'm appointed, my goal

is to just serve out the term and represent Ward 3 and their interests, make sure they have a representative.

I'm not going to run in April because I'd like to buy a house, and I'm not sure where in Norton I'll end up.

Q. Do you have a "pet" project you'd like to accomplish as a member of the city council?

A. I don't have a 'pet' project,

since I'm only going to be on the council for a short time, but I do think there are some issues that need to be addressed.

I have some concerns about recreation activities and the streets in Norton.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. Yes. I'd like the opportunity to step up and represent Ward 3 for a short period of time.

Five recovery suggestions

We have talked a lot about the disease concept of addiction, how the disease affects not only the addicted person but also the family and some of the gifts of recovery. Today, let's talk about the five suggestions of recovery.

These are: 1) don't drink or drug (if you are a family member or friend of an addicted person your suggestion would be to 'let go trying to control the addict'); 2) get to a meeting; 3) get a sponsor; 4) read the literature/work the steps; and 5) get a Higher Power.

The first suggestion seems so logical, doesn't it? If I want to get clean, I should stop using! Or, if I am a family member or friend of an addict, I should let them go to face their own consequences. The reality is, few of us come to recovery ready to stop drinking for the rest of our lives or come expecting to allow the other person to have responsibility for their lives. These are the things which continue to keep us sick. To begin the process of recovery, we must be able to look at our situation, see it for what it is and accept reality. This is rarely a pleasant or easy process. That is why we have the rest of the suggestions.

Get to a meeting. AA, NA, Al-Anon and all the other 12-step meetings work on the belief that alone we are not strong enough to beat our addictions. They teach

Where There's Hope Carla Moore

We need to reach out to a group of people trying to win the same battle. One of the outcomes of living in addiction is that we become isolated from the rest of the world — not always physically and mentally. We start to have strange ideas about how the world is put together, what is normal and who we can trust.

We go to meetings to hear others talk about their experiences so we have a standard to gauge our behavior and thoughts by. For the addicted person or their family, it's often relieving to hear other people talk openly about what we used to keep secret for fear someone would think we were crazy. We also have the chance to hear how others have worked recovery and faced various challenges in the process of staying abstinent.

Get a sponsor. A sponsor is someone who will work the steps with you, listen as you share those things you are not ready for the group to know, and get direct feedback from. They are not there to lend you money, babysit your children, or provide rides — although sometimes they do.

Read the literature/work the steps. The literature contains the experience of the founding members and offers hope. It's a great way to get a meeting when there isn't one. It keeps us focused on the solution rather than the problem. Working the steps (in order) begins the arduous task of healing ourselves. First we work on our relationship with the Higher Power, then we clean our own houses, then we help others. It's all in the 12 steps.

Finally, get a Higher Power. The program is built on spirituality — not religion. It is important for each person to begin working on a relationship with something outside of themselves. This comes through prayer and meditation as well as working the rest of the suggestions.

I realize I have gone through these quickly. We will spend more time on them as the weeks progress.

By the way, it has been brought to my attention that a number of you have wondered what the word "Namaste" means. Namaste (pronounced Na-ma-stay) is a Hindu (Sanskrit) word which means, "The Divine in me blesses and honors the Divine in you."

(Enjoy the New Year and if you have any questions or comments, you can contact me at cmoore@valleyhope.com.Namaste — Carla.)

Business notes

Ag Valley Co-op Board President Tom Hansen presented a check in the amount of \$10,000 to Dean Weldon Sleight, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis. The donation is to be used for the new education center in Curtis. The new education center is projected to cost \$9.7 million. \$1 million dollars was raised from private contributions prior to Dec. 31, 2008 in order to qualify for the remaining \$8.7 million to be paid by the State of Nebraska.

"Ag Valley Co-op Board, management and staff are pleased to

be able to financially assist the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis achieve their goal of raising \$1 million dollars from private contributions in order to make this project become reality," said Ron Hunter, Ag Valley Co-op General Manager. "Agriculture and agribusiness are vital to the state of Nebraska and Ag Valley Co-op recognizes the need to provide facilities that will enable our students to get the best agricultural education possible and hopefully remain in the area upon graduation."

Ag Valley Co-op has locations

in: North Platte, Maywood, Moorefield, Curtis, Indianola, Bartley, Cambridge, Holbrook, Arapahoe, Edison, Oxford, Orleans, Stamford, Beaver City, Hendley, Wilsonville and Lebanon in Nebraska and Norton, Reager and Clayton in Kansas. Ag Valley currently has 262 employees and is one of the largest tax payers in the area.

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