

Lightning is nothing to play around with

This is lightning safety week and it is being observed now because numerous lightning fatalities and injuries occur at this time of year.

Billed as "National Lightning Safety Awareness Week," all stops are being pulled out by the National Weather Service in an effort to raise the seriousness of this killer.

During this week, the weather service in our area and weather services all over the country, have been promoting lightning awareness by issuing public information statements and playing special safety information on NOAA Weather Radio.

The Fourth of July holiday is just about upon us and this is a time when more people are outdoors at picnics, at the lake, playing baseball or attending parades, fireworks displays, touring golf courses, dipping in community pools from sea to shining sea or just outdoors to be outdoors.

Situations creating lightning can pop up often without warning. Toward that end, the National Weather Service has posted some excellent information about lightning awareness on its web site. Topics include the science of lightning, indoor and outdoor safety, the history of lightning, statistics of being killed or injured by lightning and what type of injuries occur. Their web site is located at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>.

There is another good site posted by the National Lightning Safety Institute at <http://www.lightningsafety.com>, where you will find discussions about lightning accidents and incidents, statistics and lightning safety.

During the past week, the Goodland National Weather Service office has issued public information statements discussing a different aspect of lightning each day, and NOAA Weather Radio stations in the tri-state area have been playing short segments.

Don't be fooled by lightning. It is deadly. It has its eye on you. But there are things you can do to protect yourself, especially if you are caught out in the open. Just go to the broadcast locations and web sites available to assure your safety.

Summertime is fun time. Keep it that way. Don't let lightning bolt you out of the picture.

—Tom A. Dreiling



Media '04: facing the challenges of life

According to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, white male property owners (otherwise referred to in the document as "the people") are entitled to a free and fair press.

In the eloquent wording of our founding fathers, the document goes on to say "This freedom given unto the press includes their right to endlessly cover matters of small importance, including the outcomes of reality television shows after the invention of television and everything Michael Jackson and Britney Spears do after the invention of the non-white-male citizen."

Of course, we have come along way in two hundred years. In the 1700s, by the time news of Britney Spears dating (or marrying) a new man reached the public, Britney would most likely already have broken up with (or divorced) the gentleman. Today, cable news reports such things instantaneously. Fox News even has a "Britney Watch" above the stock ticker in the lower right-hand corner of the screen to monitor Britney's personal life around the clock.

The point is, and I'm sure you thought I was never going to get to it, that after two hundred years we still enjoy the same freedom of the press that we did in 1776. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our nation, this year let's make it a point to be

College Bound

Brandon Gay



thankful for our free, fair, and sometimes even accurate news media.

As always, the media has stepped up to the election-year challenge. While the American people focus seriously and intently on one of their most important duties as citizens of the United States of America, selecting their next president, the media are making an all-out effort to keep everyone informed of all the important issues surrounding Scott Peterson.

Of course, the media are not completely ignoring the presidential race. The most valuable of all journalists, the cable news political analysts, are very concerned about who John Kerry is going to pick as his running mate. Here's an excerpt:

Anchor: "We here in the media have been talking endlessly about who John Kerry should pick as his vice president for about three months. Just how important is his selection? And is there any chance it will be Scott Peterson?"

Analyst: "Basically, the most important

thing to remember here is that none of this actually matters. People don't care about who the vice president is anymore than they care about who the president is or why Scott Peterson said he was fishing when he obviously wasn't. Well, actually, that's probably too cynical of me, Bob. Of course they care about Scott Peterson's fishing habits."

Anchor: "So, if it's true that voters rarely base their votes on who the vice presidential candidate is, we can probably go ahead and predict the winner of the election, can't we?"

Analyst: "Yes, Bob we can. We're quite certain about this. John Kerry is going to lose the election with a mere 51 percent majority of the popular vote. Quite an embarrassing finish for a guy some people in this business thought warranted as much coverage as the last Joe Millionaire."

Anchor: "Thanks, John. And don't forget to tune in all next week for our special 'Countdown to Kerry's Release of a Running Mate Short List' and all this week for our special 'Preview to Our Countdown to Kerry's Release of a Running Mate Short List.' And finally, a month from next Tuesday please remember we'll be having a five-minute roundtable discussion on issues surrounding social security unless Scott Peterson is ready to discuss what kind of bait he uses."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Flags were destroyed with love, honor

The recent rains have washed the dust from the skies and the dirt from the leaves of plants around the area. It is amazing to see the transformation from the dull to the bright in only a matter of a couple days. Mother Nature has a way of coloring the world; whether it's a rainbow or a stormy canvas or a sunset that makes you pull over and stare in amazement.

Changes people make can have the same effect. A bright new paint job, beautiful flower gardens and a smile are just a few things people notice on a day-to-day basis. Living in this part of the country, I've noticed that people take pride in their endeavors and want to do things to the best of their abilities. The flying of a United States flag is just one way in which we show support and patriotism for our country. The flag can have a different meaning to different people. Some think of past loved ones, others relatives that are currently serving their country, and still others, thankfulness that they live in a country with the freedoms they enjoy daily.

Throughout the history of this great nation, organizations have sought to establish methods and etiquette for properly displaying and disposing of the flag. The American Legion adopted a Manual of

Ceremonies at the Third Annual Convention in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1921. This manual has been amended 36 times in the past 83 years. The last amendment made was by the National Executive Committee, May 2-4, 1995.

The Ceremony of "Dignified Disposal of Unserviceable Flags" was used on June 14 by the American Legion Posts No. 304 (Long Island) and No. 266 (Almena). The posts had collected over a hundred flags that had become unserviceable by being displayed in tribute, memory and love, and were retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites. It is my hope that new ones will grace the landscape; a view that may cause some of us to just stop and stare in amazement. The proper display of the American Flag with vibrant colors instills a sense of pride that a faded and tattered flag may not.

A special thanks goes to the businesses and people who made it possible for the dignified retiring and proper disposal of unserviceable flags. A special thanks goes to Abner Williams who gave a presentation at the close of the ceremony.

Sincerely,
Ken Tharman
Long Island

A role model who is worthy of the title

He didn't say much, but he really didn't need to. He wasn't a flashy figure, but it wasn't a requirement of the job. In my mind, he seemed ageless and although I knew him for many years he seemed to always look the same.

His inner office was reserved for very serious business, generally business not of the positive nature, but nevertheless I think those of us who knew "The Principal" respected him.

I was surprised when talking with a gentleman the other day to discover, this same person had been his principal also. "Oh, yes," he said, "I had him at the beginning; you at the end of his career." But as this gentleman shared his story it was clear the young principle was very similar to the man I had known.

The then young man feared he could not attend high school because he needed to earn money to help his family. He went

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



to "The Principal" and told him he wouldn't be able to enroll.

"Well," said Mr. T., "I hear they need someone at the auto shop. Why don't you try there?" And he did, and the young man, because of the job, was able to attend high school and receive his diploma.

"The Principal" was a man who saw the whole picture and worked to find solutions. He knew the community and their commitment to education. The Principal was an expert on mushrooms and was frequently called upon to identify a mush-

room a young child had mistakenly eaten. He was an avid gardener, but first and foremost he was our Principal.

They talk about presence and he surely had it. Some hated him and some loved him, but all respected him. If you were to ask us "back then" we would say we feared him, but as we've gotten older I think most of us would agree what we termed as fear was more reverent.

Times have changed a great deal since then, but one thing does remain the same, teachers and principals are powerful role models.

Norton has always placed a high value on education and part of that value rests in employing people who believe in children.

Much of what we learn comes more from the attitude than the action and I believe this was true of "The Principal". He taught by his very presence.

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ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Wednesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

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Publishers, 1970-2002

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