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Pages 6 & 7

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75 cents

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Sports:

Norton will host annual J.R. Durham Wrestling Tournament Saturday, Norton and Northern Valley C-team action.

Pages 8 & 10

Friday
January 7, 2005

Highlights and lowdown on 2004

Norton, Kansas Home of Eugene Wiltfong

Briefly

Signup soon for lamb payments

Sign-up for the \$18 million Ewe Lamb Replacement and Retention Payment Program, which pays ranchers to expand their ewe lamb breeding stock, ends Jan. 13. An eligible producer must have purchased or retained ewe lambs for breeding purposes between Aug. 1, 2003, and July 31, 2004, and must have retained the qualifying ewe lambs in the herd for at least one complete offspring lambing cycle. The rancher must not have received funds under the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program for the same ewe lamb. The form needed to apply for the program is available at the Norton County Farm Service Agency office, 11640 Pineview Drive, Norton, and on the web site at: <http://forms.sc.egov/eforms/mainsewlet>.

Four positions up for election

Four positions on Norton's city council will be up for election in 2005. They are Mayor, Ward I, Ward II and Ward III. The filing deadline is noon, Tuesday, Jan. 25 at the City Clerk's office. The filing fee is \$5. Voter registration books will close at 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 14. A primary election will be held March 1 if more than two persons file for one position. The general election will be held on Tuesday, April 5. Registration books will close at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 21.

Weather

Forecast:

Tonight — Partly cloudy with areas of fog after midnight. Lows around 15. Southeast winds around 5 mph shifting to the southeast 5 to 15 mph after midnight. **Saturday** — Partly cloudy with areas of fog early in the morning. Highs in the upper 30s. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the south around 10 mph in the afternoon. **Saturday Night** — Partly cloudy and not as cool. Lows in the upper 20s. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph. **Sunday** — Partly cloudy with highs in the mid 40s.

Howell report:

Tuesday High 24, Low 6, 2" Snow
Wednesday High 14, Low -3, 3" Snow
Thursday High 26, Low 19
Week ago High 63, Low 32
Month ago High 47, Low 29
Year ago High 30, Low 13
January precipitation50 inches
Year-to-date precipitation50 inches
(Readings taken at the Paul and Pat Howell farm
10 Miles North and 1/3 Mile East of Norton)

Prayer

Beloved God, help us to live with joy, knowing that you are our guide and that you live with us all the days of our lives. Amen

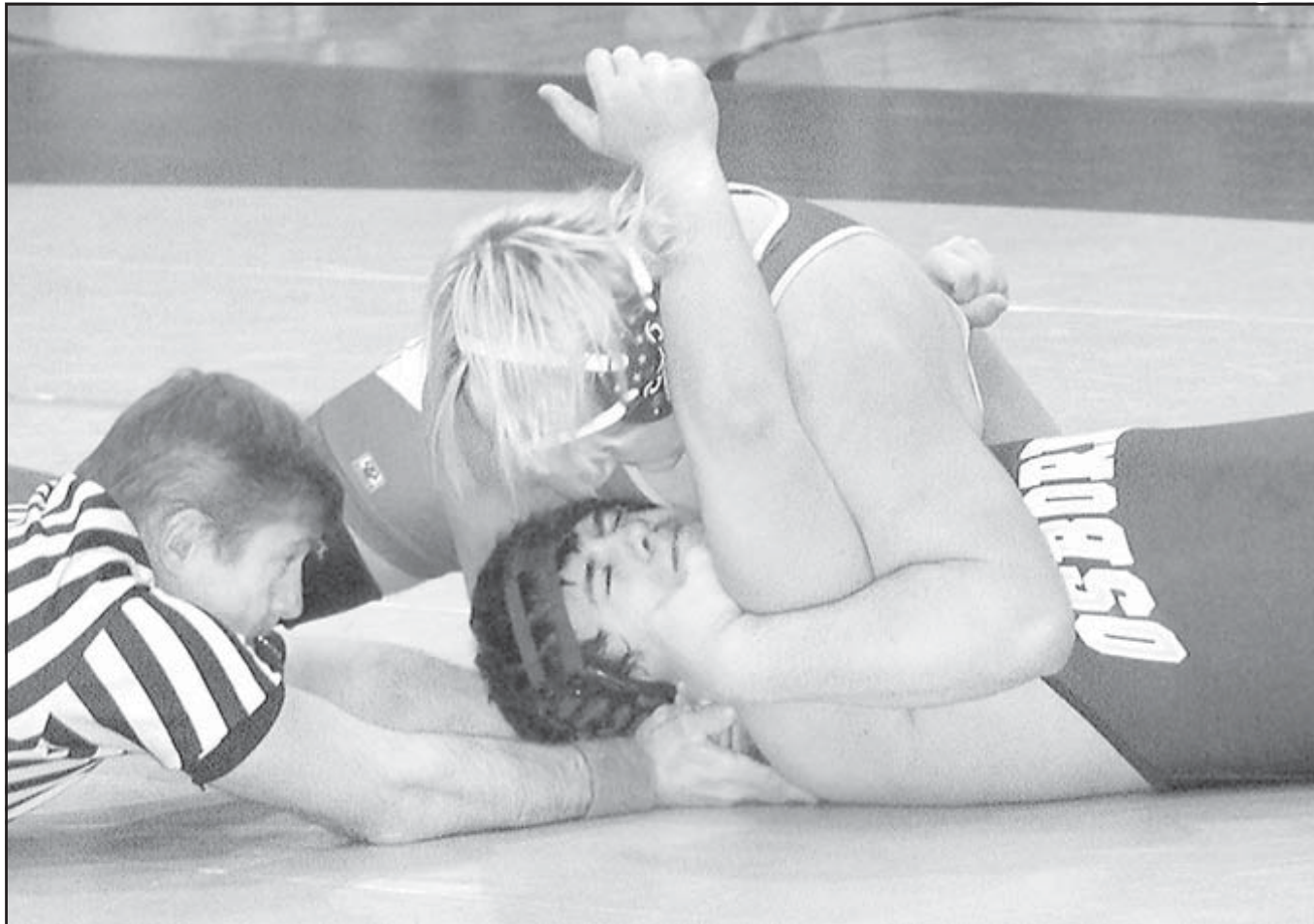
While the world watched the triumphs of the Olympics and the tragedy of the tsunami in southeast Asia in 2004, Norton had its own triumphs as the high school wrestlers took state and the sixth-grade football team won the Midwest States championship. Tragedy struck with plane and car crashes which claimed the lives of a spray plane pilot and a state senator.

Blue Jay wrestlers win championship

Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School wrestling team won the Class 3-2-1A state championship. The Blue Jays defeated defending state champion Hoxie when Michael Sprigg won the 275-pound match in overtime. It was the first state wrestling championship for Norton in 31 years. Coach J.R. "Jake" Durham's Blue Jay wrestlers won the state title in 1973. It was the sixth and final state championship for a Coach Durham team.

- The Norton sixth-grade football team compiled a perfect 12-0 record en route to the Western Kansas Football League championship and Midwest States championship under head coach Lamont Shirk.
- Teams from Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri competed for the title. The Norton players also went undefeated and won the league championship a year ago as fifth graders.
- Dustin McEwen, former all-around Norton athlete and Fort Hays State University football star, was enshrined into the Tiger Sports Hall of Fame. The 1995 Fort Hays graduate, passed for 5,718 yards and 42 touchdowns during his three seasons as the starting Tiger quarterback.
- Doug Reusink, Norton Community High School boys basketball coach, was named Boys Basketball Coach of the Year for 2003 in all classes. He received the honor from the National Federation of State High School Associations Coaches Association. Coach Reusink's 2003 team was the Class 3A state champion.
- Neal Philpot, a 6-foot-4-inch, 254-pound senior quarterback from Norton, completed his college football career by leading his No. 1 nationally ranked Pittsburg State team to the NCAA Division II national championship game. The Gorillas suffered their first loss of the season to third-ranked Valdosta State from Georgia but Philpot became the all-time total yardage leader in Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association history by running and passing for 10,168 yards.
- Basketball goers were shocked when they watched Colby player Shane Stover hit one of the door windows at the Norton Memorial gym during a February game, breaking the glass and cutting arteries and muscles.

Fans with medical and first aid training rushed to his side to assist and stop the bleeding. Stover was then rushed to the Norton County Hospital and from there taken to Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. He had severed the smaller of two arteries below the elbow and cut his bicep muscles. The senior basketball player had to sit out the rest of the season and the track season as well, but has since



Junior Michael Sprigg carried the weight of the Norton Blue Jay fortunes on his broad back in the 275 pound championship finals of the Class 3-2-1A State Wrestling Tournament in Hays. It was do-or-die for Sprigg who had to win the match to earn Norton's first team state championship since 1973 and he didn't disappoint.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

recovered and is now playing basketball at Sterling College.

Men die in plane, automobile crashes

After three months in the Via Christi St. Francis Medical Center burn unit in Wichita, Dennis Kasson, 52, Wilsonville, died of injuries that he received when a spray plane he was piloting crashed in July. The plane crashed in a field northwest of Norton and hit a power pole that was in the field. The plane caught fire and Mr. Kasson was badly burned. He was taken to the Norton County Hospital by farmer and county commissioner Leroy Lang, who saw the plane go down, and was then flown to Wichita. Norton Fire and Rescue, Norton County Emergency Medical Service, Norton County Sheriff's Department all responded to the scene. Mr. Kasson was treated for third-degree burns that covered 60 percent of his body. He underwent numerous skin grafts and was kept in the intensive care unit. He died in October.

State Sen. Stan Clark was killed in May as he was driving on I-70 near Oakley. His car was crushed between two tractor-trailer trucks during a dust storm. Sen. Clark, who had no passengers, was taken to the Oakley hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Hundreds of mourners attended his memorial service, which was held at the Oakley High School auditorium. His wife Ruth replaced him in the senate for the last few months of his term.

(Continued on Page 5)



Brianna White makes contact with the ball despite a slight vision impairment during the T-Ball season which began June 2 and continued through June 23.

— Telegram photo by Brandon Gay

Relief effort sought by former student

By DICK BOYD

Money is being raised in Norton to aid the refugees in Sri Lanka, which was one of 12 countries hit by the huge tsunami waves on December 26. The local relief effort is being coordinated through Dinesh Kumarajeeva, whom many will remember as an American Field Service (AFS) exchange student in Norton during the 1980-81 school year. His host parents were Marian and the late Bill Predmore. Donations in cash or check are being accepted at the United Northwest Federal Credit Union in Norton and should be at the credit union by 2 p.m. on Friday, January 14. Checks should be made out to Sri Lanka Relief Fund. Dinesh is living in the Boston area but his sister, Dinusha, still lives in Sri Lanka. The local donations will be wired to Dinusha, who is a kindergarten teacher at

the British International School. "My sister has been working through a team of medical doctors to distribute immediate relief," said Dinesh in an e-mail to Lance Atwell of the Class of 1981, who lives in Clear Lake, Iowa. "She is focusing on the children in the refugee camps. The medical needs are simple but massive in quantities. Simple things like antibiotics, over the counter medicines, medical gloves, water purification tablets are the need of the hour. Private individuals are purchasing these items and providing them to the medical teams spreading around the country to prevent waterborne and mosquito related epidemics. Especially, the children need



D. Kumarajeeva

to be protected. "Lots of honorable individuals, mainly medical doctors, have organized to attend to the displaced on an urgent basis. They take materials in private cars to refugee camps that have been set up in churches and public buildings. Lots of children are in these camps and probably will have to spend three to six months in refugee/displaced status. "A lot of international aid is slowly rolling into the country but delivering the materials is a problem given the infrastructure damage. Sending money directly is the most effective way to help immediately. The small scale targeted efforts are more useful than major relief programs, which will be effective in the long run. One-hundred percent of the donations sent to my sister will go to the children of the victims.

(Continued on Page 5)

New acting preparedness manager named

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Norton County Sheriff Troy Thomson will be the acting emergency preparedness manager for the county. During their Monday meeting, Norton County commissioners handed Sheriff Thomson the key to the emergency preparedness office, which they had received from former manager Alvin Mapes. The commissioners and sheriff talked about upcoming meetings that Mr. Mapes had set up or had planned to attend. A meeting on Thursday was to be for

(Continued on Page 3)



Above, four-year old Wyatt Helland takes a long, last look at his mom, Tana Rae Riley-Helland, as she leaves for active duty. At left, Madison Stephenson, 3, and Caleb Hileman, 2, play with their puppy at Prairie Dog State Park before the fireworks display.

— Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts

Ups and downs of 2004

(Continued from Page 1)

One vote won primary election

It was a close race for the Norton County commissioner seats in District 2 and 3.

• In the Republican primary, it was first thought that District 3 Incumbent John Miller had defeated his opponent, George Gassmann, by six votes. However, when the ballots were canvassed, it was discovered that several ballots were put in the wrong bag. When the missing ballots were counted, Mr. Miller had won by a single vote.

Mr. Gassmann could have asked for a recount, but he would have had to pay the costs and decided not to do so.

In the general election Mr. Miller defeated his Democratic opponent Robert Clydesdale by 62 votes.

• The race for the District 2 seat also was close in the primary with Incumbent Leroy Lang defeating his opponent Ivan Kingham by 33 votes.

In the general election, Mr. Lang again defeated Mr. Kingham, a write-in candidate.

• Before the general election, two anonymous flyers were printed and mailed to county residents, making accusations that Mr. Lang was not following confined animal feeding operation regulations. Mr. Lang refuted both flyers.

Hospital fix-up gets finished

It took the Norton County Hospital just under two years to finish its \$4.3 million renovation.

The renovation included updating the laboratory, X-ray, office registration, business office, nurses' stations, and patient rooms.

With the renovation, the hospital bought new equipment and installed a tele-medicine area, allowing it to communicate through interactive video with Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney.

• Lenora's Rural Telephone also had a big year, starting in a feature story in the *New York Times* about how the business is helping to keep the community going.

The article, titled "In Kansas, A Growing Phone Company Helps Keep a Small Prairie Town

Former Norton student raising money

(Continued from Page 1)

"Thanks for everyone's kind attention to our needs. About 40,000 people have died in Sri Lanka. Over a million people are displaced. Most of them have found refuge in churches, temples and public buildings.

Alive", featured the company and its role in Lenora's economy.

• Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas, which has two group homes for developmentally handicapped men and women in Norton, was able to breathe a little easier in April, after wondering if the money for homes in Norton or Russell was going to be cut.

At the last minute, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius chose to allocate the money so both cities could keep their facilities. At the time, the two Norton homes employed 35 full and part-time people to provide 24-hour care to 12 residents.

Tennis, art get community help

When the Norton School District chose to take girls tennis off of the fall sports schedule because the tennis courts were in such bad repair, the community banded together to get the courts fixed and tennis back in the school schedule.

The school board said the courts were no longer safe to use and voted to replace tennis with girls golf.

But, the community, led by Jay Holste, parent of a tennis player, managed to get a grant of \$2,500, asked the city and school district for \$3,375 each and raised the rest of the \$13,500 needed to fix the courts.

• The Norton school board decided to replace longtime teacher Peggy Stull, when she retired. It had been suggested that one art teacher could handle both grade and high school, but parents said they wanted to keep the expanded program.

• In April, about 25 youth banded together to clean up the skate park in Elmwood Park and attempted to raise money for some improvements. The skaters even organized a competition to raise money.

City, county reach agreements

After long negotiations, the City of Norton and Norton County officials managed to come to agreements on the jail and dispatch services and the airport.

• Both sides seemed to be happy when the dispatch contract was renegotiated and payment and services were worked out.

A problem had arisen with the

amount the city was paying for services. While costs had gone up the amount the city had to pay under the contract had not. After some hemming and hawing, the contract was re negotiated and signed.

• The old Airport Board was disbanded and a new one put into place with representatives from both the city and county at-large, two members of the city council and two members of the county commission.

Officials said the new board was put together to make airport operations run more smoothly.

• Both the city and county have been benefiting from a sales tax increase, which was put into effect in 2003 to make up for cut state funds.

• The city worked for nearly a year to get a new animal shelter built. In May when the new facility was finished, Animal Control Officer Sherry Hickman showed off her new facility. Not only is the new building a lot bigger, it also has heat.

• Something that wasn't so popular was when the city council voted to increase parking fines from \$3 to \$25 with the hope of getting people to follow regulations.

• An area of Wilberforce Street just north of East Campus was recently made into a no parking zone for all vehicles except for those that are registered to schools. The school board wasn't thrilled about the situation as it eliminated about 9 percent of the parking at East Campus, but said it understood why it was done and that there was a problem some times.

• The city also kept a small increase in electrical rates in effect for another year to offset budget problems caused by generating equipment in need of repairs. The increase was put into effect this summer, then extended.

Vaccine shortage plagued county

The national shortage of flu vaccine had some people in the county concerned. When a large distributor was found in violation of health codes, its shipment to the U.S. was canceled, causing a major shortage.

For a while, only the most high risk people were given the vaccine. Now, the county health department has enough vaccine to give a shot to anyone who asks.

"This will be a highly personalized and micromanaged effort.

"Although my immediate family was evacuated and water had come within 500 yards of our residence, they were never in physical danger. However, the fear and uncertainty have affected all of them. Thousands of people, espe-

cially the poor, were not as lucky.

"Thanks for your prayers."

For those who wish to write Dinesh, his address is: Dinesh Kumarajeeva, No. 3 Oak Place, Watertown, MA 02472-3714. His telephone number is (617) 504-2902.



The hill at Elmwood Park, a popular winter attraction, was filled with sledders after a three and a half inch snow. Here Hannah Pollock glides down the hill effortlessly after a push from her father, Mike Pollock.

— Telegram photo by Brandon Gay

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