

# New owner plans changes at downtown bar, restaurant

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

You might say Roxanne Kent has done a little bit of everything. The new owner of O'Brien's in downtown Norton is a licensed dog trainer and judge. She was a field supervisor for Green Giant foods for several years and managed a Holiday Inn in Denver. She's also worked in accounts receivable for Newton Trucking Co. Now, she can add restaurateur and bar owner to her list of occupations. She started managing the well-known Norton establishment on Nov. 23. When her license arrives in a couple of weeks, her ownership will be official. "Things are changing," she said. "I invite you to check in every day because I am making changes." Upping her food sales is a priority, she said. She has already added 8-ounce sirloin steaks, served with your choice of French fries, tater tots or onion petals to her nightly menu. Pizzas and hamburgers are already big favorites with her customers.

She plans to create a comfortable atmosphere for adults with a lot less smoke after her new "smoke-eating" equipment arrives. "Even though I don't smoke, I will always allow smoking at O'Brien's," she said. "I just don't want it to smell like smoke." Some of the other changes planned are the removal of the snooker tables. As soon as league play is over, the tables are being sold to make more room for tables. She also wants to bring in live entertainment, have bands and dances. O'Brien's is open from 3-10 p.m., Monday and Tuesday; 3-11 p.m., Wednesday; 3 p.m. to 2 a.m., Thursday and Friday; 1 p.m. to 2 a.m., Saturday; and 1-10 p.m., Sunday. The bar has drink specials daily and alcoholic coffees. A graduate of Norton Community High School in 1972, Miss Kent went to Patricia Stevens Etiquette School in Wichita for finishing classes, then on to Wichita

State and later to West Virginia University. Her parents are Kenneth Kent and the late Virginia Kent. In 1992 she returned to Norton and opened The Groom Room, a pet grooming studio. She continues to groom animals and has added locations in Alma, Neb., and Phillipsburg. She is a local and state 4-H judge, does rescue work with dogs, trying to find homes for abandoned animals. She is a former president of Second Chance Homeless Pet Society. She has even trained dogs for drug and bomb detecting. She lives on 12 acres northeast of town with two horses and 10 dogs, which are all rescued and up for adoption. "I've lived an interesting life and I wouldn't change any part of it," she said. "I left, but I came back. In my opinion, Norton is the best place in the world to be brought up in and to come back to." She can be reached at O'Brien's at 877-2419.



O'Brien's new owner, Roxanne Kent, drew a cold one for a customer. She stood in front of the original mirrored bar that, along with the green metal tiled ceiling, is one of the trademarks of the local pub. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts



The Norton Rural Fire Department raised just under \$1,000 at Saturday's hog roast and dance. The benefit was to raise money for equipment. Rural firemen Flint Griffin, Steve Reedy, Jeff Otter, Chief Steve Otter and Jeff Wolf lined up to serve shredded pork, donated by Husky Hogs and cooked by Brad Hopkins, baked beans and potato salad. — Telegram photo by Veronica Monier

## Schools look at improvements

By VERONICA MONIER

There are 16 capital improvement projects the Norton schools would like to do this year but there isn't enough money for all of them. Superintendent Greg Mann said the district could probably spend \$85,000 to \$90,000 safely, but that all 16 projects would be about \$237,300 so it's up to the school board to decide which ones will get done and which will have to wait. The projects are:

- Chorale shells for the music department. The shells would help reflect sound and are portable, so they can be used anywhere. Mr. Mann said the shells are made of fiberboard and are pretty heavy, so probably shouldn't be moved that much — \$6,700.
- Replace two copy machines, one at the junior high and the other at the high school — \$12,000.
- Carpet four classrooms in the north wing of Eisenhower Elementary. Principal Larry Hillman said the rooms were added to the school 12 to 15 years ago and the concrete was never sealed. Because of that, he said moisture and mineral deposits come up, making the tile bubble. He said carpet should last 12 to 15 years — \$5,800.
- Replace an air-conditioning/heating unit and an air-conditioning unit at East Campus. Mr. Mann said the air-conditioning could wait awhile, but the air-conditioning/heating unit needed to be replaced — \$36,000 for both.
- Replace concrete north of junior high gym doors. Mr. Mann said the concrete is pulling away from the door and needs to be replaced — \$4,000.
- Install a concrete walking track around the Eisenhower Elementary playground — \$24,000.
- Repair or resurface the blacktop at Eisenhower Elementary using concrete, not asphalt — \$25,000 (12,500 square feet at \$2 each).
- Install a sprinkler system in front of the junior high and technology lab — \$4,800.
- Replace one of the district's

## Rotary to help with shots

Children have to have their shots to attend school but getting those immunizations isn't as easy as it used to be. Changes in the state's funding has meant a change in how Norton's children receive their vaccinations. Up until last year, Kansas provided immunizations through the county's health departments. Now, the only children who receive free shots are those covered by Medicaid, Healthwave or those with no insurance. Other children have to go to private health care providers or pay for them at the health department. Children receive a series of shots at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 1 year. These immunizations are for the prevention of polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus. State law requires that all kindergartners have the inocula-

tions or receive them within 90 days of admission to school. Norton School Nurse Vicki Enfield said all 33 kindergartners have been taken care of. The school also requires that pupils receive a 10-year tetanus booster. This shot will be administered to 72 students in the eighth grade and high school. Jenda Jones, a nurse with the county health department, spoke to the Norton Rotary Club recently. She said it is a problem for the county health department to provide these shots because often the insurance companies don't pay or the paperwork is so demanding that the providers just give up on trying to get reimbursement. The Rotarians agreed to help pay for the shots and try to get a grant from Rotary International to help pay for future shots. Because of this, she said, the 10-year tetanus boosters will be given free to any students needing it.

## Commissioners admire neatness

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Most people don't look at the floor as they enter the courthouse since it's usually clean and shiny. Norton County commissioners noticed both the floors and the man who takes care of them during their meeting on Monday. Commission Chairman Dean Kruse told Courthouse Maintenance Supervisor Gary Matson that the commissioners are pleased with his efforts and that they were giving him a raise. "You didn't get a salary increase after your first year," Commissioner John Miller said. "You got a cost of living increase but no salary increase." Mr. Matson would normally get a raise after working a year, commissioners said, but he has been on the job for about 18 months now. His salary was raised to \$20,000 and commissioners apologized for the lateness. Mr. Kruse said the only request he has received is that some of the office areas get vacuumed. Mr. Matson said he would be happy to vacuum but it might have to be done before or after hours because of the noise. The commissioners agreed and said that his hours might have to be adjusted to take care of that. Mr. Miller said the commissioners were happy with the lack of complaints. "We've gotten a lot of nice comments," Mr. Kruse said. "People enjoy working with you." "We haven't had any of the complaints about the women's bathroom being nasty or the men's bathrooms smelling nasty," Mr. Miller said. "We haven't given you any direction but things seem to be going well."

Mr. Matson said he's seen some cracks in the marble inside and some has fallen off the door jams. He said there also will be problems with cracks in the courthouse front porch. The commissioners suggested he call Midwest Restoration out of Fort Scott. The company has done restoration work on the courthouse in the past, they said, and the county was happy with the work. Mr. Miller said when Midwest was here several years ago they had said that the porch would cause problems and had suggested drilling holes to help drainage. "It's always better to correct those problems before they get real bad," said Mr. Kruse. With all the ice lately, the commissioners asked if he could put something on the sidewalks around the courthouse to keep people from slipping and hurting themselves. Mr. Kruse said the sheriff has two 50-pound bags of material that is mined near Calvert. The material will not melt the ice on sidewalks but will assure that people will not slip on them. The material isn't a problem for the environment, he said, and will just make the sidewalks safer for pedestrians. In other business, the commissioners:

- Received a contract to spray weeds along the state highways, which they turned over to Noxious Weed Supervisor Reggie Beckman.
- Visited with County Appraiser Alan Hale about the difficulties of finding appraisers in the western half of the state.
- Talked about disposing of a church in Alma. Mr. Kruse said he didn't know if there was any-

thing in the building but the grounds have lots of yard equipment and vehicle parts. The area is an eyesore, he said, and residents would like to see it cleaned up.

- Learned that Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald had fallen on ice in front of the county shops and broken several ribs.
- Heard that the state-required monitoring wells have been drilled at the new landfill. Water was found at 97.5 feet on the first one and 87 feet on the second. The water is being tested.
- Were told that there will be a class today on maintenance for a track loader at the landfill. After the class, a maintenance schedule will be set up and documented, Mr. Archibald said.
- Signed an agreement for 6,600 tons of asphalt millings, stockpiled by the state 16 miles south of Norton, for \$13,200. Most of them will be used in the south end of the county, Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan said.
- Learned that the road and bridge department has purchased a new computer. Mr. Brannan said he had gotten three bids. Mortensen Computer Services in Norton was \$1 higher than two places in Hays but the Hays firms would have charged between \$200 to \$300 for set up. Mr. Brannan said he had purchased from Mortensen's for \$1,473 installed, it being both cheaper and local.
- Tabled the county's participation in the Kansas Legislative Policy Group until County Clerk Robert Wyatt could look over the material and get a cost.
- Held a 15-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege to discuss the private financial affairs of a local company.



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Being a member of the local school board is a complex and demanding job. Norton Board members are responsible for an annual budget of over \$4 million dollars, eight buildings which comprise over 185,000 square feet, 700+ students, and 100+ employees. Membership also involves making tough decisions due to many state and federal requirements and local expectations that are often in conflict. Local School Board members are true public servants as they serve for no pay, in fact, local school board members are the only elected officials in Kansas prohibited by Kansas law from receiving any salary for their service. January is School Board Recognition Month in Kansas. Please tell your Board Members "Thanks" when you see them.

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