

## Another wedding steals headlines

Maybe tongue-in-cheek we could call it "news." It was hard not to run across television newscasts Sunday telling us about the marriage of Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, over the weekend. The wedding took its place right up there with other things we considered more newsworthy than this marriage. In fact, we thought it rather sickening to listen to two network hosts talking about the prenuptial arrangement wherein Nicole wouldn't lose anything if this marriage doesn't work out. Talking about a marriage maybe not working out on the very day it took place raises all sorts of questions. And of course the \$100,000 wedding gown didn't go unnoticed either. But still the networks considered it news and felt it should take its place alongside Iraq, immigration, floods, poverty, illness, etc. Perhaps it would have been best placed with topics one generally sees on "Entertainment Tonight," which is sort of an electronic tabloid for the glitzy crowd.

If that wasn't enough, we also caught a report about Naomi Watts, a longtime friend of Nicole's, who jetted into Sydney, Australia for the wedding, and the report included this: "Watts...arrived on a flight from New York wearing a gray sweater and black pants, her hair pulled back with a purple headband." We really needed to know that?

We have become overly infatuated with the lives of those who dwell in fantasyland. And the message that bunch leaves is far too often a message void of substance. But as long as the media insist it warrants this kind of attention, then all we can do is play along with them.

Summation: this is clearly a case of when news isn't news. But we opine. You judge.

—Tom Dreiling

## New program will keep children, families together

High Plains Mental Health Center has begun a new program that will provide crisis and stabilization services to children and families in an effort to keep children in their communities and out of Social Rehabilitation Services' custody.

Helping children and families stay together. That is the goal of a new program at High Plains Mental Health Center. The Center was awarded a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Out-Of-Home Crisis Stabilization Grant from Social Rehabilitation Services Division of Children's Mental Health Services to develop and implement a youth crisis and stabilization program aimed at keeping children in their communities. Homeward Bound Program will serve the 20 northwest Kansas County catchment area of High Plains Mental Health Center. Our belief is that children and families generally belong together and this program is aimed at providing children and families additional options at times when parents may need increased assistance in managing their child's symptoms and behaviors.

The program is setup to serve children with emotional and behavioral needs.

An integral part of the program is accessing resource homes for children. Resource parents will provide short-term (overnight to a few weeks) services in their home.

Resource parents are considered professional caregivers that will provide a service to the child and his/her family. Their role is not designed to replace the family, instead it is to provide support and services to the child and family so as to facilitate the child's return to their family's home as quickly as possible.

### High Plains Mental Health

Participation in the program is voluntary and children will remain in the custody of their parents. Resource parents will be utilized to provide respite care, attendant care and individual community support services the children need to assist them in returning to their homes.

Resource parents will become licensed foster parents, receive extensive training and have daily support from their High Plains Mental Health Center social worker while a child is placed in their home.

The child will also receive services from the mental health center such as therapy, case management, psychosocial groups, and at the same time you and the family work together to facilitate a return to the child's home. Resource parents will be financially compensated for their work with the child and family.

Research indicates early intervention along with services reduces the need for more restrictive placements (e.g. hospitalization or SRS custody).

You can make a difference in a child's life by signing up to be a Resource Home. Resource parents must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school education or GED, reside in the 20-county area, pass a security/KBI check and complete mandatory training requirements classes.

For more information regarding the program or becoming a resource home, please contact Audrey Harper Schoenberger, LMSW at 785-628-2871 or [aschoen@hpmhc.com](mailto:aschoen@hpmhc.com).

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## Those little buggers find me appealing

It's not news to anyone in western Kansas that we've been in a drought these last few years.

And, as hard as it is to find something good about that, the fact is that we've not been troubled with mosquitoes during that time.

The bad news is that the recent rains have brought on an abundance of mosquitoes. I think their years of dormancy have produced a breed of "super-skeeter."

Mosquitoes don't usually bother me. Normally, at picnics or other outdoor gatherings, everyone around me will be swatting 'squitoses and I remain unbothered. I have always bragged that my body chemistry actually repelled the little buggers.

No longer can I make that claim. Mosquitoes this season seem to find me unusually appealing. After complaining to my husband he said, "They probably think you're a re-fueling station on board an aircraft carrier." Not too flattering an analogy but entirely apropos. I see citronella

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



and repellent in my future.

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By the time I write my next edition of this column, our seven-year old granddaughter, Taylor, will have been with us for two days.

I meet Taylor and her mom somewhere mid-point between Dallas and here Friday night. My daughter, Kara, disagrees that Wichita is mid-way, so where we meet is still being negotiated.

It'll probably be somewhere in Oklahoma. Taylor and I will drive back here Saturday.

She has stayed with us at least two weeks every summer since she was two.

And, no, she doesn't get homesick. Unlimited phone calls help. She can call home anytime she wants. The separation is harder on Taylor's mom and dad than it is on her.

The plan this year is for Taylor to spend the month of July with us. We will return her to Dallas about the same time our daughter, Jennifer, will be delivering her daughter in San Antonio. We'll be able to see everyone on the same trip.

Taylor has missed church camp and Vacation Bible Schools, but I did learn of a sports camp for her age group. I'll get her signed up for that and buy a swimming pool pass and she's set. And, lest you think I'm ignoring her cultural upbringing, she is also signed up for piano lessons during her stay.

I'm not sure how much she can accomplish in four or five lessons, but if she's half as smart as I think she is, she'll be playing Chopin and Beethoven before August. Actually, I'll settle for "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

## Time has come to focus on my family

### In Their Own Words

*This is the fifth of six columns written by retiring staff members of the Norton School District. We thought what they had to say at their retirement reception would also be enjoyed by the readership of The Telegram. We thank Superintendent Mann for his assistance in helping us expand their comments to include all residents in the Norton district.*

#### Today: Mary Graber

I started my teaching career in Cassville, Mo., in the fall of 1974. After two years, Bruce and I moved to Harrisonville, Mo., where I spent the next 14 years teaching first and second graders.

In 1990, our family left the hills and trees of Missouri to move west to Hutchinson. While there, I continued to work with first graders and found them to be just as "unique and enthusiastic" as the ones I had taught previously.

Then in 1995, we again moved. This time to "where the best begins" — Norton! This move brought a change of teaching position for me as I went from "teaching a child to learn to read" in a primary classroom to "teaching children to read to learn" in a fourth grade classroom. After four years, I found that I missed the "little ones" and switched back to first grade for the last seven years.

In all, I have taught fourth grade four years, third grade one year, second grade three years and first grade 24 years. I still delight in watching young children as they "light up" when they realize they are "REALLY READING." No two days of

my 32-year career have ever been the same or boring in any way!

In my 32 years in four different school districts, I have been fortunate to work with wonderful teachers and administrators who served as great role models, cooperative peers and supportive friends. I have enjoyed getting to know and work with inquisitive students and supportive parents.

Now it is time for me to turn my focus to my family. My husband would like me to be home before six o'clock at night. My daughters would like me to be closer to provide babysitting services when needed. My mom, who will be 93 tomorrow, would like to see me a bit more often and my brothers and sister would like me to help with my mom a bit more.

Thank you for the support and friendship you have shown me in the last 11 years.

## Lack of draft makes Iraq war different

The lack of concern voiced over the Iraqi War has been a continued source of amazement to me. Now to be sure, there are some rattlings of discontent but when compared to the Vietnam War the protests are very, and I mean very minimal. So why is this?

Well, I have an idea. What is the most noticeable difference? The lack of a draft. Young people protested the Vietnam War because they were expected and drafted to fight it. No wonder we had so many college-age kids on the protest lines. This was an absolute way to create interest in politics in our young adults. When your whole life is threatened with extinction, you pay attention. And pay attention they did and so did their parents. But this war

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



and its protests are not fed by the same things. I guarantee you if more members of Congress had children drafted into service they would be objecting.

But this war, this war is different. The military is all volunteer and so we have a group of young people dedicated not just to the country but its leader. We have officers who come forward to criticize our

military policy but only after leaving the service.

I often wonder where is the press. The media in the past has been our conscience, but they have in many respects lost their courage. Oh, not the ones embedded with the troops, but those covering our politicians. Too many questions or the wrong ones will rearrange the seating assignments in the White House press room making it difficult to get the story.

I'm not proposing a draft, but am proposing we examine this war as carefully as if our child was fighting in Fallujah and make our decisions with both that information and emotion.

We owe it to our children; we owe it to our country.

#### FROM THE MAILBAG:

Exposing the hate crowd is a great service to country

To the Editor,  
I'm not sure about the intention of the editorial critical of Ann Coulter. However, I am sure about one thing, and that is that the hate God, hate Bush, hate America Democrat Party, and it's lapdog national media, has only one goal and agenda: to undermine the Bush administration.  
And, that they are willing to sacrifice

the safety, security, and sovereignty of our United States to accomplish this.

Anyone who exposes these people, regardless of Religion they profess, or the words they choose, is doing the country a great service, and, more power to them.

Thank you.

R.W. Yeager  
Norton