

# Opinion

## Retiring coach/teacher shares poem

*This is the sixth and final column 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.*

### In Their Own Words

**Today: Bruce Graber**  
 Growing up in a town of 500 people, my life and character were formed and reformed many times by family, teachers and coaches. That process never ended as I am reminded daily by my colleagues and mentors of what needs to be done and what the ultimate goal is! I can never remember not wanting to be a teacher and coach as I always relished the relationships I had with so many of my teachers and coaches.

God never blessed me with a son to go with my two wonderful daughters, but he did better than that, he gave me hundreds of football players that I could feel like were my sons and hundreds of young ladies that are like daughters to me. I truly have been blessed.

Each stop along the way has been special for different reasons. Cassville, Mo., was special because it was the first job, in a beautiful place, surrounded by wonderful people. The head coach I went to work for there is now Callie's father-in-law and he still mentors me on the phone every week during the season and about every other week during the off season.

And we were rich — paying only \$100 a month rent for a new two-bedroom duplex with all utilities paid in 1973. Harrisonville, Mo., was special because we were only 20 minutes from Arrowhead Stadium, great BBQ, and we won, and won often, but most importantly that was the birthplace of our daughters.

Hutchinson was a very special move because it brought us back home and it was my first opportunity to be a head football coach anywhere, let alone a 6A school!

My experience in Norton has been special for a number of reasons, mostly the people involved with me as co-workers, administrators, and the young people it has been my distinct honor to be associated with. Norton is very special because I needed Norton, I needed a place to reclaim my confidence and the joy I had always associated with my job.

I needed Norton a heck of a lot worse than Norton needed me! This town, the administration, my staff, and my players gave a guy with an 11-33 record a second chance as a head football coach and track coach. God bless every one of them for that opportunity. I hope none of them regret their association with me and or our program.

About 10 years ago, I wrote a little poem I called "A Coach's Prayer," that I think best relates my thoughts and feelings about this

profession every night I lay in bed. But before that, I would like to thank all of you for your support, your cooperation, your compassion, and your love and ask you to forgive me the times I failed you as a friend or colleague.

I came in saying I was "Proud to be a Blue Jay," and I promise you I leave saying I will always be proud to have been associated with such a wonderful school district, with such a tradition of excellence, and such fantastic people!

#### A Coach's Prayer

Lord send me down an angel to walk with me today

I know my destination, but it seems I've lost my way.

The road map that I started with has long been cast aside

The narrow path I started on, has now become too wide.

Not all of my decisions have been made with you in mind

That's why my mind is cluttered and I'm caught up in this bind.

Regrets of things I know I did, and things I should have done

Of games we played and somehow lost, and games we played and won.

Each night I lay there thinking of mistakes I made today,

To think that one of my mistakes could let one youngster stray

From a life of joy and happiness for what I did or didn't do

That's why I need your help to be a teacher more like you.

These youngsters come to learn to play this game we hold so dear, All knowing that success for some will never be too clear.

But all can be a better man because of what they've done,

If I've but done the best I could with each and every one!

So help me Lord to do this job I love more than I should,

To help each man with honor stand, and stand as you once stood.

With courage and conviction, to always do what's right,

To risk it all in battle and never waiver from the fight.

And when they gather at the church to send my body home

I hope to on that very day reap what I have sown.

Oh how I love my players Lord, for all they've done for me,

I pray that one might say that day — he made a difference for me! — bg

## A rootbeer on the house...



Guests at the third anniversary party, held Wednesday, for Whispering Pines Retirement and Assisted Living Center raised their glasses in a toast. The center's staff, dressed in 1950s costumes, served root beer floats to all the residents and guests.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

## Norton County Fair just around the corner

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sored by Jamboree Foods. Thursday morning the Norton Fair Association will hold the 4-H and FFA Challenge of Champions which offers a \$250 scholarship award sponsored by Kowpoke Supply. The Round Robin Champion Showmanship and 4-H and FFA Livestock Sale and the Jackpot Team Roping Event will also be on Thursday.

Friday evening's schedule has on tap the youth Pedal Power Pull sponsored by Landmark Implement of Phillipsburg. In addition, there will be Mutton Busting and singer Heather Shelley, sponsored by area-wide businesses.

The home-owned carnival will be in full swing 6:30-11:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday with a special kiddie armband night (1 ticket rides) Friday and regular arm band night Saturday.

One new feature this year is a photo booth that will be available out on the midway.

As in the past, the shuttle tram will offer rides to and from the

parking areas.

The carnival rides and games are all a volunteer service and anyone wishing to offer assistance may contact a member of the Norton County Community Service Association, whose officers are Curtis Eveleigh, president; Calvin Wright, vice-president; Deanna Nelson, secretary; and Jim Voss, treasurer.

Members of the 2006 Fair Board are Becky Delimont, president; Spencer Braun, vice president; Julie Thompson, secretary; and Kathy Holste, treasurer.

The Norton County Fair offers something for everyone. Check out the possibilities and guidelines for each department and plan to participate.

## 'H' and 'T' tags are due today

Today is the last day to renew automobile, pickup, motorcycle and/or motorized bike tags for those whose last name begins with "H" and "T", or businesses whose name begins with "H" and "T".

You must bring in or include proof of insurance for each vehicle, which includes the vehicle identification number, policy number and expiration date.

The Norton County Treasurer's office is a limited service driver's license station for renewals on regular driver's. Commercial licenses have to be renewed in Phillipsburg, Hays or Colby.

If you have questions, please call 877-5795.

## Farmer's Market began Thursday

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offer their goods to the public. The mission of the market is to provide vendors the opportunity to produce and sell lo-

cally-grown vegetable produce and baked goods. A good variety of vegetables, produce and baked goods have been available.

## Author Ann Coulter isn't the issue

I did not think at one point that I would respond to the Ann Coulter debate.

I had a wonderful English and journalism teacher, Doris Ballard. When she read my writings, she would question what I meant, "did you mean this or did you mean that." I became very aware that two people could read the same thing and come up with two different interpretations.

The only thing I will say about Ann Coulter's writings is that she has proved her point over and over. This latest debate seems to be over one statement in an entire book. Whether or not I agree with her is not the issue except to say that the far left can say or write lies, use people and the main stream media

### Memories Sonya Montgomery



says nothing. People who write or speak against them are called all kinds of names, whether or not they deserve it.

As for Ann Coulter being a Christian, that is an issue that only she and God can determine. I claim to be a Christian because I have accepted Christ as Savior through grace, and try to do His will; however, there will be people who know me or other people who

claim to be Christian and will say we don't seem to always act like it. If always acting and speaking like a Christian is the criteria for getting into heaven, it won't be very crowded, in fact as I read God's Word, the Bible, I find very few, in fact, only one that qualified for heaven under that assumption.

The "far left" is on a campaign (and they apparently have lots of money behind them) to turn our country into a secular society, and so far they are winning, taking God and right and wrong out of our society. Many of us have been told that we are to be "tolerant" of all people and I believe that is correct, except what I don't understand then is why "they" don't have to be tolerant of other opinions.

**FROM THE MAILBAG:**  
**Draft would end Iraq war**

To the Editor,  
 I whole-heartedly agree with Mary Kay Woodyard on the topic of the draft.  
 If the draft would go in effect tomorrow, the ill-conceived Iraq

War would end in three months.  
 Hank Austerman  
 WW 2 Infantry, Europe  
 Norton

## Students honored for reaching goals

Accelerated Reading celebrations were held at Almena Elementary and Long Island Middle School in May to recognize students' accomplishments.

Top performers in the first grade were Kade Unterseher, Joseph Heskett and Carson Wallace; second grade, Brianna Martin, Sarah Baird and Shayna Vincent; third grade, Macy Kasson, Ame Baird and Brant Cox; fourth grade, Hunter Chandler, Ian Vincent and Aaron

Pinzenscham; fifth grade, Olivia Lowry, Alex Tharman and Patience Coffman; sixth grade, Daniel Field, Tyler Montgomery and Austin Therman; seventh grade, Bryant Herman, Sean Braun and Matthew Dole; and eighth grade, Samuel Field, C.J. Woodmansee and Jordan Herman.

Third and fourth graders received certificates for mastery of Accelerated Math objectives for this year. This was a new program

initiated to promote and improve math skills. The leadership class provided games for the students, followed by refreshments made by the Long Island cooks.

After being treated to banana splits at lunch, the Long Island students were also recognized for their reading achievements. Prizes were awarded to the top reading students in each class, and the students participated in a tug of war and a softball game.

**FOURTH OF JULY**

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 We will, However, be CLOSED on Sunday, July 2**

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