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Vol. 99, No. 86
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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Special:

See pictures from the Alma Halloween Parade.

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Friday

November 3, 2006

Bomb threats give schools a scare

By VERONICA MONIER

Two bomb threats in two days gave the Norton School District a scare this week. Superintendent Greg Mann said the first threat was found written on a wall in the boys' bathroom adjoining the student lounge near the high school office on Tuesday after school was dismissed. The message, he said, was "I'm going to blow up this school."

A second threat was left in a boys' bathroom on the upper level of the junior/senior high building shortly after noon on Wednesday and had a different message, he said.

In response to the first threat, Mr. Mann said the remaining staff and students were asked to leave the building and junior high basketball practice was dismissed. The district called the Norton Police Department.

"While school personnel and the police were 99 percent sure the message was a sick prank, it was decided to err on the side of caution," he said. "The incident was reported to the Kansas Highway Patrol, who responded by flying in two bomb sniffing dogs and their handlers that night. The junior/senior high building was extensively searched during the night. Every classroom, locker room, closet, student locker, storage cabinet, loose back pack and trash can were sniffed by the dogs, and fortunately and as expected, nothing was found."

With the discovery of the second threat, the district evacuated the junior high students to the Methodist Church and the high school students were taken to the East Campus gym, he said. This was around 12:50 p.m. Mr. Mann said evacuation sites aren't known until the order to evacuate is given.



School employees placed barricades in front of parking lot and driveway entrances at the Norton high school and junior high school Wednesday after a bomb threat was made against the buildings.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Norton, Kansas Home of Ruby Pflieger

Briefly

Paper will be a day late next week

Tuesday is election day. Tuesday is also the day your *Norton Telegram* would normally arrive on your doorstep or in your mailbox.

But things will be a bit different this coming Tuesday — election day. "The *Telegram* will arrive a day late (Wednesday) so we can provide our readers with the results of the District 1 County Commission race," said Tom Dreiling, publisher.

Those results won't be available until late Tuesday night. The candidates are Richard Thompson and Reva Benien.

"We know there was a lot of interest in this race and, rather than have our readers wait until Friday to get those figures, we will put the paper to bed late Tuesday night with that information within," Dreiling said.

"We hope this does not cause an inconvenience," he said.

Election coming up on Tuesday

Tuesday is election day and in Norton County 3,747 voters are registered to cast ballots. Voting sites will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Figures show 2,308 of the registrants are Republicans, 641 Democrats, 789 Independents and 9 Libertarians.

Here are the voting locations: Almena City & Township, Almena City Hall; Center Precinct No. 1, courthouse lobby; Center Precinct No. 2, courthouse lobby; Harrison, Almena City Hall; Highland Precinct No. 1, Lenora City Hall; All of Modell, Lenora City Hall; Highland Precinct No. 2, American Legion Building; Highland Precinct No. 3, courthouse lobby; Solomon Precinct No. 1, American Legion Building; Norton City Ward One, Ward Two and Ward Three, American Legion Building.

Weather

Forecast:

Tonight — Partly cloudy with lows in the lower 30s. **Saturday** — Partly cloudy with highs in the lower 60s. **Saturday Night** — Partly cloudy with lows in the mid 30s. **Sunday** — Partly cloudy with highs in the lower 60s.

Kingham report:

Tuesday Low 20, High 40
Wednesday Low 19, High 48
Thursday Low 22, High 61
(Readings taken at the Karolyn Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for meeting our deep need for spiritual food. Help us remember to put you first every day. Amen

Schools doing what they can with security

By CAROLYN PLOTTS and VERONICA MONIER

Schools can not be run like a prison. But, the recent school shootings in Pennsylvania and the bomb threat locally, have caused county school officials to take a closer look at school security.

"We have plans in place," said Greg Mann, superintendent of the Norton School District. "But they're designed to deal with a situation after it's taken place. Parents want to know what we're doing to prevent an incident. We are vigilant — we question strangers in the building."

"Frankly, nothing can be done to prevent a 'crazy' on a mission from doing what they have set their mind to do."

He said nothing is taken lightly. Years ago a student might get upset and make a threatening statement and it would just be passed off. Nowadays, he said, if a student made a threat, police reports would be filed.

Mr. Mann said security plans have been reviewed with the school's administrative team. They, in turn, have reviewed the plans with faculty and staff.

A security plan evaluation of the three school buildings determined that several doors could not be locked from the inside. A local locksmith has been authorized to retro-fit about 50 locks. The cost will be about \$7,500.

It's been suggested that only the main entrance door at the schools be left unlocked. That's not feasible because students have to be allowed movement between buildings, and fire code compliance has to be kept

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Governor wins Telegram's straw poll

By TOM DREILING

It's all over. *The Telegram's* straw poll's last straw trickled in Wednesday and the final tally ended as it started in late September with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius on top.

But not by much.

Three votes came in at the close with the governor getting 2 and Republican Jim Barnett 1. That gives Gov. Sebelius a total of 52 votes overall to Mr. Barnett's 50.

A total of 103 votes were counted. The extra vote came from a respondent who declined to vote for either Sebelius or Barnett, so it was tossed in the pile of people taking part.

The *real poll* is just days away, Tuesday, Nov. 7.

There was only one comment attached

to the last of the straw votes. It reads:

"I am voting for Mr. Barnett. He knows what he is — Republican! That's more than I can say for Mrs. Sebelius who surrounds herself with as many Republicans as she does Democrats. Remember the Dixiecrats? Well, Mrs. Sebelius can form her own party and call them the Wheatcrats."

Thespians gear up for school play

By JOAN HALE

The Norton Community High School Drama Club is busy putting the finishing touches on this year's Fall Play, entitled "Shoestring Theatre".

The play is about a theatre director named Mr. Sanders who has discovered his budget has been cut by 80 percent for his upcoming play. It was to be an epic retelling of the timeless classic, "Cinderella", an expensive show that includes grand costumes, elaborate sets, and high-priced special effects.

Adding insult to injury, Mr. Sanders learns that his budget is being cut because the executive director of the theatre, and her pal, the president of the board of directors, have embezzled the "Cinderella" money to fund a nice long cruise in the Caribbean. Mr. Sanders is outraged and decides to take matters into his own hands saying, "If it's a low-budget show they want, it's a low-budget show they'll get."

His low-budget production stars local yokels who cannot act and a set befitting a child's backyard play. But, revenge turns from sweet to bitter when Mr. Sanders learns that the cruise was a surprise for him and his wife.

Too late, the show has already opened. This is a play within a play that everyone is going to enjoy.

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One of the actors practiced her French accent during Thursday night's play practice for the Fall Play. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

WELCOME HUNTERS

