

Your turn...

Reader wishes he would have spoken out earlier on Norton baseball issue

To the Editor,

I have never written a letter to a newspaper before, but after Wanda Daniels wrote a letter expressing how a mother felt about her son and baseball, I would like to give a father's view.

Some very interesting things are happening around the area in high school football. Two teams that Norton has played in football are dropping to eight man football. I see a trend developing that having a baseball team would allow our athletes a chance to continue to compete against league schools.

Not being from Norton but moving here from Nebraska, I have observed that Norton has a lot to offer to all its residents. The schools are some of the best and their athletic teams always strive to be the best. I have four sons in school and two of them would like to see baseball as a sport they could play in school.

For three years, Coach Joe Durham has tried to get baseball as a sport here in Norton. Again this year he went in front of the school board expecting to get a vote on his proposal, but the board's way of denying the proposal is to table the vote to another month. I was shocked to learn that not one member of the board would put it to a vote.

When Coach Durham went in front of the school board he was shown a paper showing how much it would cost to start a program from scratch. According to the information he received, it would cost approximately \$20,000 to start the program from scratch.

The good thing is Norton doesn't have to start from scratch. The Norton Recreation Facility, along with the Norton American Legion, could help defer the cost by allowing the team to use their equipment. The facilities are here already; the Legion bought new uniforms last year so that cost can be deferred along with some of the equipment. The Legion played approximately 50 games last year, the high school schedule is only 20 games, five home games and five away, not counting the post season.

One thing Norton is blessed with is a coach who has played Major League baseball. This year Steve Jeltz helped Coach Durham. Coach Jeltz has 10 years of Major League experience and to waste his talent and his experience would be a crime. How often can our sons or daughters say they had a Major Leaguer for a coach?

If raising the money is one of the sticking points, I am sure that somehow we can raise what is needed to get the program started. Coach Durham tried to get baseball here three years ago and I wish now I would have said something then. It is sad to watch a whole town miss out on the joys of watching Norton High School baseball because no one was willing to step forward and be a leader and not a follower.

Very rarely do you see high school students get a shot at college baseball if the team doesn't have a high school team. Coach Durham has sent college coaches copies of his Legion team's stats, but they had already signed everyone they needed.

I am sure writing this letter might ruffle some feathers, but how long can the hopes and chances of our young students be dashed because a very small handful of people are against baseball?

Clay Ulmer
Norton

Here is good example of what giving blood can do for even a young child

To the Editor,

Grace, daughter of Jake and Alisha Smith of Downs, is too young to know the important role blood donors are playing in her young life.

She was diagnosed with a brain tumor when she was only nine months old and has had her entire blood volume replenished twice.

This would not have been possible without the kindness of blood donors.

Because there was blood on the hospital shelves when Grace needed it, Grace celebrated her third birthday Dec. 13.

Because of generous blood donors, she is able to be a big sister to her baby brother, Gabe, and is able to toddle around, pushing her beloved baby dolls and stuffed animals.

The kind staff at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, where she is currently a patient, even allows her stuffed dog, Ace, to accompany her while she receives chemotherapy and radiation. As Grace's treatments progress, she may require more blood transfusions.

Every day cancer patients, accident victims, and people needing emergency surgeries need blood. Blood donations for those everyday needs are especially critical in the winter months, because donors are often busy with holiday activities, fall ill, or simply can't get around because of snow and ice.

The Red Cross will be in Norton on Wednesday, Dec. 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Norton Junior High School gym.

Everyone who comes in to donate will receive a free T-shirt. Please make your lifesaving appointment to donate blood by calling 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543).

Donating blood is safe and easy, and each donation can save up to three lives.

When you give blood, you give another laugh, another hug, another birthday. Your blood could mean the world to someone who needs it and their family.

Sincerely,

Kim Talkington
American Red Cross
Donor Recruitment Representative

Picture of the Week



Mother Nature's handiwork was evident by this light fixture turned chandelier following the recent ice coating in the Norton community. The light is situated on the front of McDonald's. Taken by Vicki Henderson of *The Telegram* staff, it is the first of what we hope will be many submissions for *Picture of the Week* honors. If you've photographed something out of the ordinary, bring it to Tomd's attention at the paper. It may end up as the *Picture of the Week*. You won't win a prize, but you will win some publicity.

This is a weekend of mixed emotions

This is a weekend of highs and lows for me. On the bright side today is the fifth wedding anniversary of son Todd and Darci. On the downside, Saturday marks the 32nd anniversary of wife Jeanine's passing. When Todd lost his mother on Dec. 15, 1975, he was 3, today he is 35. Lance was 5, he is now 37. Denise was 17, she is now 49. Among the three kids, there are four grandchildren who never had benefit of Grandma Jean's wit and wisdom.

Over the years, I have always watched with more than just passing interest the reaction of the two younger kids — the boys — when they visited their mother's gravesite at Goodland. They would always say there is little they can remember of her. But at 3 and 5, as I look back on my life, I can't recall anything of any significance at those ages. So I understand where they are coming from.

Leukemia brought an end to Jean's life at age 37 at St. Joseph Hospital, Denver. It was nine months from the day of diagnosis at the hospital in Goodland to the day of final departure. But during those nine months there was always hope. Good days, days not so good. But always hope.

The realists we both were served us well as we prepared for the day when three kids waiting at home would not have someone to call mother. Jean's calm and calculated manner, knowing well that time was not on her side, was — I always felt — somewhat of a gift from her to me to carry on, to be strong, that everything will be OK.

It eventually came out that way — everything was OK — but that took some time. After all, 10 days from the date of her death was Christmas and 3- and 5-year olds think Santa Claus at that time, 3- and 5-year olds have no clue what death is.

The drive from St. Joseph Hospital in Denver to Goodland seemed like an eternity. Music of the season filled the car as I drove along I-70 with questions nearly consuming me. Most importantly,

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



"How do I break the news to the kids?" As I searched for answers, Jean's calm and calculated manner, at the end game of her life, contained the unspoken words "be strong." When I arrived home I gathered the three together to break the news. The reaction was as expected, tears from Denise, nothing from the two little ones. Moments later, only after they saw their sister in tears, did they display a tiny hint of emotion. They softly cried, but not for the reason I thought. After all these were 3- and 5-year olds. When I asked them why they were crying, they said innocently and truthfully, "Because sister is."

That all happened 32 years ago Saturday.

Since that time, Denise and Darren have a daughter, Samantha; Lance and Tobie have a daughter, Alyssa and a son, Caleb; and Todd and Darci have a son, Grayson. And good news arriving just days ago, when good news is better than custard pie (my favorite), is that Todd and Darci will be giving Grayson a playmate in the summer of 2008.

Five grandchildren. Hey, Honey! If you can hear me, it worked out very well, hasn't it?

-td-

Well, on the political side of the ledger, Bill Clinton continues endorsing wife Hillary, and in the process is stumbling over the folks who are supposed to be running her campaign. He's trying to make it look like he's the candidate. Mitt Romney is angry at Mike Huckabee over a religious remark. Rudy's upset with the media over the attention it is giving to his then-lover's special police department

treatment at taxpayer expense (she is now wife #3). Sen. Obama called in Oprah, who called in thousands of people to listen to his message in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. Fred Thompson refused, rightfully so, to answer a yes or no question with yes or no asked by the moderator of a rather poorly constructed debate in Des Moines earlier this week.

Other than that, it's been quiet on the political front!

-td-

It was the day after Christmas when a church's pastor stopped to look at the manger scene, when he noticed that the baby Jesus figure was missing from the cradle. Later in the day, he saw a little boy with a red wagon walking down the street and in the wagon was the figure of the infant Jesus. He walked up to the boy and said, "Son, where did you get that little baby Jesus that's in your wagon?"

The little boy replied, "I got him from the church."

"And why did you take him?" asked the pastor.

The little boy hesitated a second or two, then said, "Well, about a week before Christmas, I prayed and I told Jesus if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride in it!"

-td-

Students and alumni of Fort Hays State University, don't lose any more sleep over a possible name change. President Ed Hammond told a large gathering at the university Wednesday that the name will remain **Fort Hays State University**. The announcement was greeted with applause and cheers! A drive of sorts was underway to rename the school the University of Western Kansas. Readers of *The Telegram* who responded to our little poll can feel proud that their input probably played a role in the decision.

-td-

Have a good evening. And this weekend, why not take the family to a place where the name won't ever change: CHURCH!

Thumbs Up...

To... Roberta Martin, for sharing her remarkable story about making Christmas ornaments for her children and grandchildren, a project that has carried on for 35 years.

To... Ramona Pabian and Evelyn Paden, for your heart-warming project at the Norton Cemetery.

To... Principal Larry Mills, for a well-deserved honor.

To... Michelle Armbrister, for your love of animals as demonstrated by the *Mittens* program.

To... the volunteers who braved unfavorable weather, to provide more private space for those who utilize The Haven.

(To submit a name of names for this bi-weekly salute, e-mail tomd@nwkansas.com, call 877-6908, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654, fax 877-3732 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

Your political connection

- ★ **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- ★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

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Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Tom Dreiling..... editor and publisher
Christie Anderson..... advertising
Veronica Monier..... staff reporter
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts..... society editor
Sherry Hickman..... bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson..... computer production