

These two teachers go above and beyond the call

Most of us when children reach those "dreaded" junior high years, do what we can to distance ourselves, but not George Rossi. This junior high science teacher just completed his 14th trip to historical Washington D.C., accompanied by 28 Norton Junior High School eighth grade students.

Fellow teacher Lucas Melvin has accompanied Mr. Rossi for several years as the "tech person", enabling family back in Norton to view the day's activities via the Internet. This year's tour also included three parent chaperones.

Not only did Mr. Rossi complete the 14th tour, but this year also marked the 500th student to participate. According to Mr. Rossi's count, 510 Norton youth have taken this trip. These students and their parents make a commitment to this project, often years in advance, saving money to make it possible. It is not school sponsored, nor do they hold any fund raisers, it is merely offered as an educational opportunity.

Mr. Rossi says each tour varies a bit in its composition and they recently extended it from a three-day tour to a four day one allowing them to visit Williamsburg and Jamestown. They visit all the major memorials on Memorial Day, including Arlington National Cemetery.

When asked what he felt the tour gives to these youth, Mr. Rossi says it offers the "connecting pieces" of history and "peaks their interest in future events".

But it isn't just about what our youth receive from this journey, Mr. Rossi also tells what our young people leave behind. The tour people have told him in the past and again this year you can "spot a kid from Kansas". Mr. Rossi said the D.C. locals are accustomed to having the tours, and once again this year people in restaurants commented to him and the tour driver how well behaved the Norton youth were. Quite a compliment to Mr. Rossi, Mr. Melvin, our school, our parents, our community and most of all these young people.

A big thank you to two teachers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to share a passion for history. Thank you for your dedication, enthusiasm and energy. You have laid a foundation in these young people for learning and experiencing new things, a gift which will truly keep on giving.

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Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



Rumor mill, cadillac, and summer's start

Life in a small town can be great. It's quiet, peaceful and, except for the occasional stray dog running loose, there's no crime. It's great that is, if you're a native to the area. If you're a newcomer, trying to fit in — trying to enjoy some of those amenities and leave behind the big city, you might find yourself on the opposite side of friendliness.

There is no rumor mill like a small town rumor mill. A person's reputation may be destroyed before they even know people "are talking." And, of course, no one has ever stopped to ask if any of it is even true. I know city folk gossip, too, but it seems like there is an intended maliciousness in small towns that I never saw in the city.

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



Thumper's advice still stands: "If you can't say something nice — don't say anything at all."

Jim has been having fun. His dad gave him a 1964 Cadillac hardtop that had been parked in his garage the last 34 years. A little dusting; a little cleaning; a little

tune-up and the old girl runs like a top. We've been "tooling" around town" in it, trying to act cool. He's already driven it to two classic car shows.

Do you think in 40 years the cars we're driving now will be classics with people clamoring to restore them?

Local swimming pools finally opened. Unseasonably cool weather kept the pools closed and the kids home. Even with the temps barely making the required 65 degrees, youngsters flocked to the water. It didn't matter if their teeth were chattering, or their skin was blue — they were going swimming, no matter what. The one thing it does mean is — summer is here.

Your turn

Rep. Moran serving us very well

To the Editor,

Kansas is fortunate to have Congressman Jerry Moran representing us in Washington, D.C. Moran has a long list of votes cast that he should be praised for. The most recent one is his vote against the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007, or what used to be known as the farm bill.

Over the course of the last two and a half years, Jerry has worked to protect Kansas' interests in the course of farm bill debates, hearings and in the drafting of the legislation. However, with the advocates of the American farmer and rancher growing fewer and fewer, the bill that resulted was one that does not serve farmers well.

Moran knows the priorities of Kansans because every week he visits with the people of our state. At town hall meetings, main street visits and stops at coffee shops and co-ops, Moran knows Kansas. That knowledge, combined with his solid judgment, has led him to make many tough decisions on behalf of Kansans, even when the pressure in Washington, D.C., told him to do otherwise.

At a time when the American people are rightfully becoming more and more uncertain about elected officials, we are fortunate to have Jerry Moran working for us.

Sincerely,

Doyle D. Rahjes
Agra

Your political connection

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Session's highlights, disappointments

It is my honor to serve the Kansas 40th Senatorial District in Topeka. Like you, I treasure the rural way of life that we have in Northwest Kansas, and I work hard to protect that. Each legislative session presents new challenges, and I accept each one working head-on to ensure Northwest Kansas' strong family values are kept in place.

Highlights of the 2008 Kansas Legislative Session

- Driver License Fees
- Vehicle Information Processing System (VIPS)

This bill increases the photo fees for a driver's license by the Department of Revenue from \$4 to not more than \$8. In addition, it requires payment of a photo fee for the cost of the photo to be placed on an ID card other than a driver's license. This bill allows moneys deposited in the Photo Fee Fund to be used for the administration and operation, including equipment, associated with the issuance of licenses to carry concealed weapons as well as driver's licenses and ID cards. The effective date of this bill is Jan. 9, 2009.

This bill will finance the integration and modernization of the Vehicle Information Processing System (VIPS), the Kansas Driver's License System (KDLS), and the Kansas Vehicle Inventory System (KVIS) of the Division of Vehicles in the Department of Revenue. This bill creates the Division of Vehicles Modernization Fund that will be used solely for the creation and maintenance of the new system. This bill authorizes a \$4 surcharge paid at the time of vehicle registration and this revenue will be deposited into the Modernization Fund. The registration of fleet vehicles will be exempt from this surcharge. The surcharge will be effective on Jan. 1, 2009 and will expire on Jan. 1, 2013.

In an effort to provide budgeting certainty for local school boards, the Senate passed and sent to the governor a school finance plan increasing base state aid by \$59 per pupil to \$4,492 for the 2009-2010 school year and beyond. Recognizing a one-time opportunity to create a rolling appropriation, the Senate took the lead to increase school funding by the rate of inflation.

Senate Doings
Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



which the consolidation take place, plus two school years.

This bill defines a micro utility truck as a motor vehicle with the following characteristics that are NOT a work-site utility vehicle:

1. Not less than 48 inches wide
2. With an overall length, including the bumper, of not more than 144 inches.
3. With an unloaded weight, including fuel and fluids, of more than 1,500 pounds.
4. Able to exceed 40 miles per hour as originally manufactured.
5. Manufactured with a metal cab.

This bill will make it unlawful to operate a micro utility truck on any interstate, federal, or state highway (except to cross such a highway); within the corporate limits of any city unless authorized by such city; or on any public highway or street unless the vehicle complies with equipment requirements for lamps, brakes, and other equipment such as horns and mufflers.

This bill includes micro utility trucks among non-highway vehicles, and their owners will therefore be required to obtain non-highway titles. This bill provides for a fine of \$60 for unlawful operation of micro-utility trucks.

This bill changes the name of Fort Hays State University Endowment Association to Fort Hays State University Foundation.

In addition, this bill will appropriate funding to the Board of Regents for the Kansas Academy for Math and Science (KAMS) for fiscal years 2009 to 2014. KAMS is an accelerated residential program for Kansas high school juniors and seniors who are academically talented in science and mathematics.

The purpose of KAMS is to provide an opportunity for academically talented pupils to work in a community of peers and to earn simultaneously college credits and a high school diploma at a state educational institution designated by the Board of Regents. The Board designated

Fort Hays State University as the site for KAMS going forward, and will appropriate funding for the program based on estimates provided by Fort Hays State University and the Board of Regents.

Disappointments during the 2008 Kansas Legislative Session

I am disappointed that neither Chamber pushed out an Illegal Immigration Bill. When push comes to shove, too many people view this as a federal government issue. My fear is that if we wait on Washington to enforce laws to control this issue, it may never happen. I believe that individual states must take the lead and perhaps then the Feds will follow. Several neighboring states are working to pass legislation that will require illegal immigrants to follow procedures to become U.S. Citizens, and my fear is that if Kansas does not act, we will become a safe harbor for illegal immigrants.

I was disappointed with the Governor's veto of the Comprehensive Abortion Reform Act of 2008 (CARA). CARA will not stop a legal abortion, it simply heightens the record keeping and reporting requirements for late-term abortions being performed in Kansas to make sure they are complying with the law that has been on the books for 10 years.

CARA also provides protection for young women and girls who are being pressured by family, friends, or even sexual predators to have an abortion. It baffles me who could be against enforcing current law and prohibiting coercion and exploitation of young women.

By far the biggest disappointment for me during the 2008 Legislative Session was the Governor's continual veto of the Sunflower Energy Proposal. I am a huge proponent for our Rural Electric Cooperatives, run by local boards that keep the consumers interest as their main focus. The wind energy proposals are exciting, but I feel we must back that up with energy that is reliable, cheaper, and more dependable such as coal.

The proposed Holcomb plant is no doubt the cleanest and most modern and safe plant in the nation, if not the world. This affects five utility cooperatives in my district alone, and without compromise it will have a negative impact on the rising costs of Western Kansas power.

Any questions or concerns can reach me at PO Box 97, Grinnell, Kan. 67738 or email rostmey@ink.org.

Sincerely,

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer
40th Senatorial District



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