

Silent art auction at library

The Norton Friends of the Library will be sponsoring an art print, silent auction at the Norton Public Library from April 21, until May 1. The Friends had purchased many art prints several years ago when the Library was still at 101 East Lincoln. The framed prints will be on display in the Art Gallery of the

Library at 1 Washington Square beginning April 21. Those wishing to bid on the prints are asked to get a bidder's number at the front desk. Bidder information will be kept confidential. Bidders may bid as many times as they wish in \$5 increments. Beginning bids will be \$25 on each piece. Final bids must be placed

no later than May 1. Winning bidders will be contacted by phone and asked to pick up the print no later than May 3.

All proceeds will go to the Friends of the Library to help with the Summer Reading Program and other activities for children.

Brussels sprouts, not a favorite

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If for some reason you happen to utter the words "Brussels Sprouts" to some unsuspecting soul, you're liable to get some kind of a quizzical blank stare in response. Either that, or the retort "don't you ever put any of those things on MY plate!"

Brussels sprouts certainly isn't the most popular vegetable in the garden. In fact, I would guess that they probably rate at about second from the bottom, just ahead of arugula. But I'm afraid most gardeners rely on the reputation given to them by those who absolutely despise them. Really though, if you haven't tasted 'em, don't knock 'em! If you have never tried them, then why not pick up a few and see what the rest of the family thinks.

I have a tendency to describe brussels sprouts to gardeners who ask about them as "little cabbages." But in retrospect, that's probably not fair to either brussels sprouts or cabbage. But sprouts DO have a distinctive cabbage flavor, but much stronger. Like, "you never ate a forkful of cabbage that tasted

like that!" I suspect it's a simple matter of flavor intensity that causes most gardeners to shy away from them.

Brussels sprouts are one of those crops that enjoys the cool air, so the transplants should be set out in the garden about now. However, they will withstand summer's heat better than many early season crops, so a little later planting time is acceptable. Keep in mind though that it takes about 80 days for the plant to produce. Many gardeners successfully put them out in the summer and try to time it so that they can get a couple of light freezes on them at about the time they mature. They are noticeably sweeter tasting after a freeze or two.

Aphids love brussels sprouts about the time they are setting on. A hard stream of water from the hose a couple times a week helps disperse them.

A couple of varieties of sprouts work well in this area in case you grow your own plants. Franklin, or Long Island Improved are viable. If you buy the transplants, whatever your garden center offers will be fine.

Stacy Harris, a garden writ-

er offers a recipe for preparing brussels sprouts that really sounds good, and I will try it soon. It's called Creamed Brussels Sprouts.

1 quart (about a pound) of brussels sprouts
2 tablespoons butter, melted
3/4 cup whipping cream, heated to a boil

1/2 pound bacon, fried
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Trim stems and remove outside leaves of sprouts.

Blanch sprouts for three minutes in boiling water. Drain. Arrange sprouts in a single layer in baking dish. Pour butter over sprouts and add salt and pepper. Bake for 10 minutes while you fry the bacon and lay it on a paper towel.

Pour hot whipping cream over sprouts and bake for 15 minutes more, or until the sprouts are fork tender.

Remove from oven and crumble bacon on top. Serve while hot.

If for no other reason, this recipe should encourage you to set out a few brussels sprouts plants, and do it soon! Always watch closely for aphids!

Storm siren at Prairie Dog



The City of Lenora donated a storm siren to Prairie Dog State Park and after Midwest Energy removed the siren free of charge from Lenora it was finally placed last Thursday. Blue Valley Public Safety from the Kansas City area was hired to place the siren as they are seen doing in the photo. Park staff and the Norton Correctional Facility automotive shop did some minor repairs and maintenance on the siren over the winter months as well as painted it. The City of Norton donated an old radio controller that will work allowing Norton County Dispatch to set it off at the same time when they activate the City of Norton sirens. Funds for the installation came from the Friends of Prairie Dog State Park, Sebelius Lake Association, Norton Travel and Tourism Committee and the Prairie Dog State Park agriculture account. Prairie Land Electric did the electrical installation and is donating the electricity for it. The siren was tested on Thursday as well and all systems seem to be a go. Park Manager Toby Kuhn said that this has been a long time coming and is happy to know that the campers will be much safer with the siren.

- Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Farm loan program modifications create flexibility for farmers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced increased opportunity for producers as a result of the 2014 Farm Bill. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available here.

"Our nation's farmers and ranchers are the engine of the rural economy. These im-

provements to our Farm Loan Programs will help a new generation begin farming and grow existing farm operations," said Secretary Vilsack. "Today's announcement represents just one part of a series of investments the new Farm Bill makes in the next generation of agriculture, which is critical to economic growth in communities across the country."

The Farm Bill expands lend-

ing opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

Elimination of loan term limits for guaranteed operating loans. Modification of the

definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size. Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to two percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent. Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership down

payments from \$225,000 to \$300,000. Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit. Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government. Increase of the guarantee amount on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrow-

ers and beginning farmers. Micro-loans will not count toward loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rule-making processes. Visit the FSA Farm Bill website for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

Future

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Scholarships, by Lucas Maddy, \$300 each to Marisa Maddy and Darcy Bainter; James A. Maddy Scholarship, by Rod Maddy, to Darcy Bainter and Marisa Maddy, \$1,000 scholarships; Don McMullen Scholarship, by Dallas McMullen, to Marisa Maddy.

Randy Clydesdale announced results of the Clydesdale Essay. Winners were Marisa Maddy, Darcy Bainter and Johnnye Ruder.

Mr. Beydler also announced that Cole Renner was the winner of the \$400 Anderson Scholarship; winners of \$500 S&E Scholarships were Kolton Harting and Johnnye Ruder.

He also announced that Bailey Ambrosier, Darcy Bainter, Travis Cressler, Zach Esslinger, Austin Hager, Kolton Harting, Marisa Maddy, Cristine Nelson, Garret Otter, Cole Renner and Johnnye Ruder were winners of FFA scholarships of varying amounts.

The award for highest fruit sales went to Quentin Wentz.

Officers announced the following Proficiency Award winners: Stewart Whitney, Crop Production; Keith Sander, Placement in Ag Mechanics; Lexi Voss, Beef Production; Molly Maddy, Poultry Production; Wyatt Harting, Ag Mechanics Design and Fabrication; Marisa Maddy, Sheep Production; Kolton Harting, Diversified Livestock; Kolton Harting, Beef Production; Bailey Ambrosier, Darcy Bainter, Johnnye Ruder, Senior Academic Awards; Josie Otter, High Point Greenhand and Star Greenhand; Kolton Harting, Star Chapter Farmer; Cole Renner, Chapter Star in Placement.

In a separate announcement, Mr. Beydler stated that Johnnye Ruder had received the \$5,000 Burlington Northern Railroad Scholarship.

During the evening, he thanked the seniors, other members, administration and parents, FFA Alumni and members of the community for all they have done for the Norton FFA.

The FFA officers also individually thanked Mr. Beydler for all he has done for them.

Other accomplishments

Kolton Harting was a NW District Star Farmer, Cole Renner was a NW District Star in Placement, Travis Cressler, Austin Hager, Kolton Harting and Cole Renner were State FFA Degree recipients; Johnnye Ruder was 2013-14 NW District Vice President and Molly Maddy is a 2014-15NW District Secretary/Treasurer candidate.

The officers inducted Randy Clydesdale as the newest Honorary FFA Member.

This year's keynote speaker was Lindy Bilberry, the current State FFA President.

She mentioned several U.S. Olympic stars and how they became successful. "They achieved greatness because they stepped out of their comfort zone," she said. "You need to go for your goals with all you have. When you find something you want to do, hard work is the important thing. Do not quit. My challenge to you FFA members is to do what you want to do so much that you'll keep doing it, whether you win or lose. This attitude will really matter when you get into your life's career. Think how much better you will be with this win or lose attitude!"

The current officers are: Kolton Harting, president;

Johnnye Ruder, vice president; Marisa Maddy, secretary; Darcy Bainter, treasurer; Molly Maddy, reporter; Zach Esslinger, sentinel; Travis Cressler, historian.

They installed the new officers: Molly Maddy, president; Peyton Renner, vice president; Michael Kasson, sec-

retary; Josie Otter, treasurer; Ryan Thrailkill, reporter; Dalton Vanover, sentinel; Quentin Wentz, historian.

Doing well in District contests

With many of the District contests completed for the year, the Norton FFA Chapter has the possibility of winning another

top award.

In the District Land and Homesite Evaluation they finished first, in Regional Land Judging they were first, in Public Speaking they were first, in Ag Sales they were first, in Leadership School they were second, in Job Interview they were first, in District Dairy

Judging they were first, in Poultry Judging they were first, in Ag Mechanics they were seventh, in Smith Center Livestock they were fourth and in State Fair Ag Mechanics Display they were first.



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