

Jim comes to the hens' rescue

Sometimes, I feel like every chicken that sets foot on our place is signing his/her own death warrant. Remember last year when I told you that one or two of our chickens were showing up dead every day? And, I shared with you how last summer we hatched out 11 chicks of our own?

Well, one-by-one, they began to drop off. Two escaped the pen, never to be seen again. One fell victim to the dreaded "pecking order." Another just woke up dead one morning. Then, last week, the real massacre began. We found the remains of a chicken every day. Even the feisty old rooster fell victim. We were down to three hens when Jim decided to fight back.

He secured the hens in the coop then, set his live trap in front of the opening. Sure enough, the next morning we caught the culprit. A fully-grown raccoon. And, was he mad. Not too cooperative about being coaxed out of the trap and into a "gunnysack", either. If he ever finds his way back to our place he probably has a built-in GPS.

I'm not sure if there is a moral to this story. But, we have 15 new chicks, safe in a box, in the bathtub and I want them to know we didn't murder their cousins. The chicks

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



are old enough to graduate to the chick brooder outdoors. They'll still need a heat lamp but, we promise to do everything we can to keep them safe.

We thought, surely, we would get some of the precipitation predicted for this area. But, just like so many times before, this winter, it went all around us. Friends to the south reported they couldn't get out of their driveway over the weekend. My brother, Bob, called Monday morning to say they were just getting dug out.

I know it rains on the "just and un-just" alike but, Lord, we sure need some moisture.

Our Bible study group finished our study of Phillipians. To celebrate we had a pot luck! Isn't that how Christians celebrate everything? We cook and eat. Everyone brought finger foods and we had a gourmet feast. As a group, we

decided our next study would be on heaven. The Bible actually says very little about heaven so it will be interesting to see how such a big book could have been written without much on the subject.

After our meeting we played games. And considering the rowdiness of our bunch, it's a wonder the cops weren't called. A group mixer called, "I Never", had everyone laughing and, in some cases, on the floor. Later, we divided into two groups to play board games. My group played "Balderdash". It was a word definition game. Words are my "thing" and I thought, "Oh, yeah, this will be fun."

However, these are words no one has ever heard. Oh, they're real words but, certainly not in anyone's vocabulary that I know. Words like "scerfy", "sangbag" and "conchers".

The object was to write a definition that might fool your opponents into thinking it is correct, while you try to guess the real meaning. The only thing I was good at was writing the phony definitions.

We have some real comedians in our group. And, it was agreed, "There is no fun like the fun Christian brothers and sisters can have."

Two Norton students picked

Blake Van Eaton, Norton and Andrea Lowry, Almena, have been selected as Anderson VIP Student Ambassadors for the 2009-2010 academic year at Fort Hays State University.

They will serve as official representatives at a variety of special

events, including homecoming, athletic, presidential dinners, alumni gatherings and more. Those selected must be full-time undergraduate students with a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average and be able to attend 9 to 10 events per year.

Election

(Continued from Page 1) is running for re-election.

#5, currently held by Craig Renner, who is running for re-election.

#6, currently held by Elaine Lofgreen, who is not seeking re-election. County Clerk Robert Wyatt has filed for this position.

Registered voters who live in Norton's school district will vote at the American Legion in Norton.

Northern Valley School Board:

Two seats open in District #1: Clint Lowry is running for a seat.

Curtis Lowry is running for a seat.

One seat in District #2 is open, however, no one filed to run for

the position.

Registered voters who live in the Northern Valley school district District #1 and At-Large in Almena and Grant Townships will vote at the Almena City Hall. The part of Emmett Township and Belle Plain Township that are in Northern Valley school district will vote at the American Legion in Norton. Voters who live in Northern Valley school district in Phillips County in District #2 and At-Large will vote at the Long Island Community Center.

Lenora School Board:

#4, currently held by Nicole Rhea, who is running for re-election.

#5, currently held by De Ann David, who is running for re-election.

#6, currently held by Jim Nine-mire. No one filed for this position.

All of Lenora school district in Highland Precinct #1 in Norton County will vote at the Lenora Community Center. All of Lenora school district in Solomon Precinct #1 and east 1/2 of Modell Township in Norton County will vote in Norton at the American Legion. Lenora school district in Allison Township in Decatur County will vote in Jennings at the Senior Center. Lenora school district in Alodium Township will vote in Morland at the City Hall. Lenora school district in Graham County will vote in Hill City at the courthouse.

If you are unsure of where to cast your ballot, call 877-5710.

Yummy

(Continued from Page 1)

not be the basic choices of apples, oranges, bananas, celery and carrots, but much of the food will be foods they may have not experienced such as asparagus, dried apricots and dates, mushrooms, purple cauliflower, Mexican potatoes, avocados, raspberries, blueberries, squash, snow peas, cabbage, brussels sprouts, and

many more.

This project is in hopes the students can learn some of the benefits of the different colored fruits and vegetables, to try a variety of nutritious foods, and to increase awareness of the importance of "5 a Day" being a healthy number of servings., she said.

This information could then be tallied and used by cooks and other

organizations for additional positive experiences for the students.

"This was such a success last year we felt it was worth doing again," said Mrs. Bolt.

"We had over 50 different fruits and vegetables for the students to choose from last year. The students are looking forward to trying something 'new and different' again."

Try effective communications

Effective communication includes getting your message conveyed accurately, as well as being a good listener, both of which involve skills that people can learn as well as improve. First of all, when discussing ideas or feelings, take some time beforehand to organize your thoughts so that you have a clear understanding of the information you want to share. And then present those thoughts in a logical manner, so the other person gets a clear picture of what you want to explain. Don't just assume that the other person already understands.

Encourage an active dialogue by inviting the other person to respond, using questions such as "What do you think?" or "How do you feel about that?" Pick an appropriate time and place so that the other person can hear and respond without being distracted. If the information is personal for either or both of you, then find a

Plain Sense Karen Schueler

private place for the conversation. Be aware of nonverbal communication as well. A person's tone of voice and body language also convey meaning, and can give a different impression than the verbal message.

Being a good listener is also an important part of effective communication. Too often, we hear only part of what the other person is saying because we are already thinking about our own response. Active listening involves giving your full attention to the person speaking by making eye contact, leaning forward, and acknowledging with short comments or nodding your head. Be non-judgmental; keep your opinions or personal stories to yourself, or until after the other person has had time to talk about everything they

want to share. Whether communication is written or spoken, or in a group or one-on-one, respecting the feelings and opinions of others is vital, whether you agree or disagree with what is being said. Proper timing, good listening skills, and sometimes a sense of humor are all necessary components of good communication.

(Contributed by Karen D. Schueler, MS, LCPC, Director, PEO - Prevention, Education and Outreach Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, PEO-Prevention, Education and Outreach Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality)

Signature Auction items on display

Smoky Hills Public Television's 2009 Signature Auction collection is on display through Saturday, April 11 from 12 noon-9 p.m. on Monday through Saturday, and 12 noon - 6 p.m. on Sunday at The Mall in Hays.

One of the station's most popular fundraising events, the 2009 edition of the Signature Auction will be held live April 17-19 at The Mall with all of the festivities broadcast live from 7-10 p.m. on Friday, April 17, and 4:-10 p.m.

both Saturday, April 18, and Sunday, April 19.

Nearly 400 items will be up for sale in the Auction - over 280 items in the exclusively on-air portion of the event, and close to 100 items in the station's exclusively online component, according to Jayne Heller, director of development.

All proceeds from the Auction go to benefit the station.

A hand-painted, silk Chinese scroll, just one of nearly 50 pieces

of elegant Chinese art, a pub table and stools, three Sirena Collection Merit Diamond pendants, a guided spring turkey hunt, and packages for Kansas, U. S. and Caribbean travel are just a few of the unique and unusual Auction items, Heller noted.

"The Signature Auction features fine and folk art, antiques, furniture, jewelry, travel packages, and other unique and interesting items," according to director Heller.



~ Dana Paxton ~



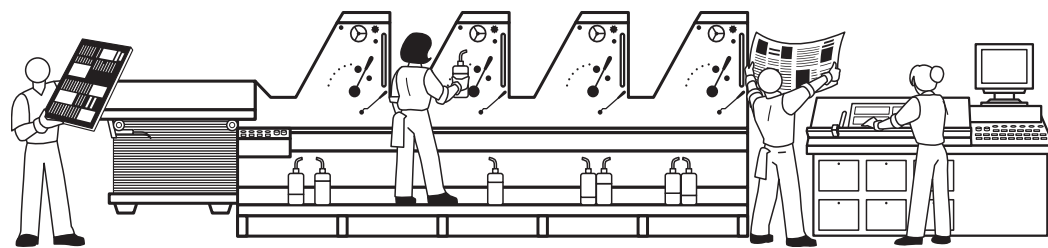
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