



**JENNA CONFER, fifth grader, works on her project during art class. Students have been working on their projects for the Northwest Kansas League Art Show that will be held on April 8 in Oakley.**

*Herald staff photo by Karen Krien*

## Vision program developed

Are vision problems affecting your child's ability to learn?

Each day, millions of children try to do the impossible...they try to read a book or copy from the chalkboard without the visual skills necessary to complete these tasks.

The See to Learn Program was developed to increase awareness

about the importance of vision to learning. Through the program, nearly 250 Kansas optometrists are working together to alert parents, educators, child care providers and others about the warning signs of vision problems and the need for regular preventive vision care for children of all ages. Some of the warning signs include:

- Frequent rubbing and blinking of the eyes.
- Short attention span or frequent daydreaming.
- Poor reading ability.
- Avoiding close work.
- Frequent headaches.
- A drop in scholastic or sports performance.
- Covering one eye.
- Tilting the head.
- Squinting one or both eyes.
- Placing head close to book or desk when reading or writing.
- Difficulty remembering, identifying and reproducing basic geometric forms.
- Poor eye-hand coordination skills.

To help make sure every child has the opportunity for the early detection of vision problems, participating optometrists provide free vision assessments to 3-year-old children. They also encourage parents to schedule a complete vision examination for their child with an optometrist or ophthalmologist before or during a child's first year of school.

For more information about the program, or for a referral to a participating optometrist call 1-800-960-EYES or visit [www.seetolearn.com](http://www.seetolearn.com)

## Control leaf spot by removing dead leaves

Now is a good time to begin control measures for iris leaf spot by removing old, dead leaves. Iris leaf spot is a fungus disease that attacks the leaves and occasionally the flower stalks and buds of iris.

Infection is favored by wet periods during the spring, and emerging leaves eventually show small (1/8- to 1/4-inch diameter) spots. The borders of these spots are reddish, and surrounding tissue first appears water-soaked, and then yellows. Spots enlarge after flowering and may coalesce.

The disease tends to be worse in wet weather and may kill indi-

vidual leaves. Though the disease will not kill the plant directly, repeated attacks can reduce plant vigor so that the iris may die from other stresses.

Spores are passed to nearby plants by wind or splashing water. Since this disease over winters in old leaves, removal and destruction of dead leaves will help with control.

For plants that had little infection the previous year, this may be all that is needed.

For more information, please contact the Cheyenne County Extension Office at 785-332-3171.

## Control the size of plants

**Air-Layering Can Renew, Shorten Overgrown Houseplants**  
Some well-known houseplants respond to good care by outgrowing their "place." Their owners may try rearranging furniture, but still can end up donating or discarding the hulky plants.

Fortunately, another approach can renew and control the size of such houseplants as croton, dracaena, dieffenbachia, Norfolk Island pine, rubber plant and schefflera, said Ward Upham, horticulturist with Kansas State University Research and Extension.

"By air-layering these houseplants, you encourage one or more branches or the main stem to form roots, while attached to the parent plant. When the roots have developed enough, then you can cut off the new plant or plants and pot them as a replacement for the original," he said.

Air-layering doesn't work with all houseplants, he warned. And, even on plants that lend themselves to the process, it works poorly - if at all - on old or immature wood.

"Your best choice is wood about a year old," he said. "You can grow roots on any part it, but a convenient place is about 12 inches from the branch or stem tip. Just remove any leaves that are in your way."

Then:  
• Wound the stem in one of two ways. (1) Make an upward slanting cut, an inch or more long and half-way through the stem. Place part of a toothpick inside, so the cut can't close and heal. "Splint," if needed to prevent stem breakage. Or, (2) strip the bark in a band one-half to 1 inch wide around the stem.

• Apply rooting hormone to the wounded surface.  
• Pack a baseball-sized wad of moist sphagnum peat moss around

the wounded area. Use unmilled (i.e., long, stringy) peat moss and, if necessary, secure in place with string. (Milled peat moss can be easier to find, but tends to fall away from a stem faster than you can tie it down.) This is where the roots will form.

• Enclose the peat moss ball in clear plastic wrap, overlapping enough to keep the moss from easily drying out. Securely close the plastic wrap's top and bottom edges with electrical tape, string or

such.  
"After that, check periodically to be sure the peat moss remains moist. Water, when needed," Mr. Upham said. "You may see roots emerge in as little as a month, but the new plant will need a lot longer to prepare for being severed from its parent and planted. It'll reach that point when roots have filled the peat moss."

For more information, contact the Cheyenne County Extension Office at 785-332-3171.

## Season is above average on rainfall

*By John E. Vavroch, Civil Engineering Technician Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colby*

The 2009 growing season is shaping up to be an above average rainfall year. While some areas have seen spotty rainfall, other areas have received far more than anyone wanted. Areas that have seen hard, dashing rains have developed problems we have not seen in a few years...Gullies!

The birth of a gully is caused by a couple of things. The first would be slope length or flow length. The second is field slope. When water runs down slope far enough, it "piles up", resulting in concentrated flow. When this flow reaches a steeper slope, it gains velocity, and starts to cut, or erode. Gully erosion accounts for thousands and thousands of tons of soil loss annually on America's cropland.

Grassed waterways are a per-

fect solution for gully erosion problems. Waterway designs are site specific. They are designed individually based on drainage area and time of concentration. Waterways can be tailored to fit the area to be treated. They can be designed shallow and wide to obtain a slower velocity or narrow and deep for faster velocities.

A couple cost-share opportunities exist for establishing grassed waterways. Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) may be a good choice. Along with an annual rental payment for waterway acreage, there are some bonuses and incentives for the practice, which may almost pay for the construction of the waterway. Once the grass is established, the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program waterway may be grazed during the winter for a 25 percent reduction in the annual rental payment.

Many conservation districts also include the grassed waterway in their Water Resource State Cost-Share Program. Incentives and bonuses are not available but the waterway can be grazed which may be a better fit for some producers.

For more information about gullies, please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or conservation district office located at your local county United States Department of Agriculture Service Center. To learn more about Natural Resources Conservation Service, visit the Kansas NRCS Web site at [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov).

## Consultant receives membership again

William E. Small, CLU, ChFC, MSFS, Financial Consultant with AXA Advisors, serving the St. Francis area has fully qualified for the 2010 Million Dollar Round Table. This is the 24rd consecutive year he has achieved membership in this organization.

Membership is recognized internationally as the standard of excel-

lence in the life insurance and financial services business. It also reflects a commitment to continuing advanced education to better serve the financial security needs of families, individuals and businesses.

Mr. Small is a member of the Ark Valley Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, and the Society of Financial Service Professionals.

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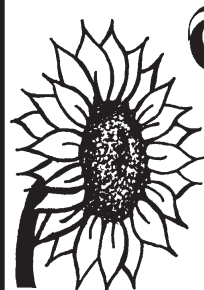


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*From the Kansas-Missouri border to the end of the line at Estes Park, Colo. Casey McCormick, ad manager, will be contacting area businesses in this grand opportunity to promote St. Francis, Bird City & U.S. 36.*

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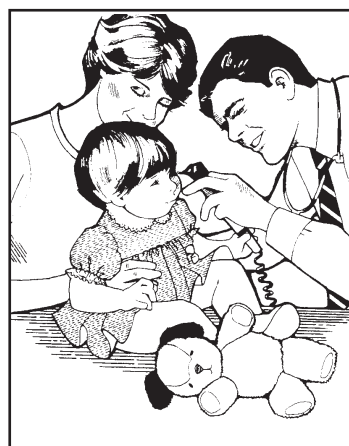
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## Spring School Section

**Featuring students involved in sports, vocal, band, drama, honor society and journalism**



## Rural Health Section

**This section is packed full of information on hospitals, physicians and medical services available in the area**