

Amateur radio event being held at Goodland weather service office

The eighth annual SKYWARN Recognition Day will be held from 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1 through 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2.

The day is an event co-sponsored by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League, and is the National Weather Service's way of saying "thank you" to amateur (ham) radio operators for their commitment to helping keep their communities safe.

During the special 24-hour event, amateur radio operators will visit their local National Weather Service office, use existing amateur radio stations, set additional stations. They will also work as a team to contact other hams across the world.

The weather service office covering Colby and northwest Kansas is in Goodland.

"Ham radio operators volunteering as storm spotters are an extremely valuable asset to National Weather Service operations since they are cross-trained in both communications and severe storm recognition," said Scott Mentzer, event organizer and meteorologist-in-charge at the Goodland office.

Last year, more than 115 National Weather Service office across the country participated in the event.

Larry Eblen of the Austin National Weather Service office is grateful for the amateur help.

"I am your biggest fan and stron-

gest advocate," Eblen said. After all, you (hams) are absolutely critical to what we do. You are the eyes and ears of the National Weather Service."

In typical warning situations, it is the direct communication between mobile spotters and the local weather service office which provides vital ground information.

The hams provide real-time spotter reports of hail size, wind damage and surface-based rotation that greatly assists the radar warning operator since that information can be correlated with Doppler radar displays and verify the images.

The results can range anywhere from a more strongly-worded statement to convey a greater sense of urgency, or the issuance of a tornado warning minutes earlier than would have otherwise been possible.

While National Weather Service offices utilized the real-time reporting of severe weather events to assist in warning operations, hurricanes and tropical storms have shown that ham radio operators are equally important during the recovery phase of natural disasters.

There are countless stories of where ham radio worked in tandem with more conventional technology to relay emergency traffic.

For more information, contact Mike Albers, president of the Trojan Amateur Radio Club at 460-3678.

Kansas education commissioner resigns

TOPEKA (AP) — Bob Corkins, whose appointment last year as state education commissioner touched off criticism and controversy because of his lack of experience, resigned Wednesday.

State Board of Education Chairman Steve Abrams announced Corkins' resignation after a closed-door executive session of all 10 members, eight of whom attended by conference call.

The board voted 7-3 to accept the resignation "with regret" and give Corkins a 30-day severance package of salary and benefits Abrams estimated at about \$11,000. His annual salary had been about \$140,000.

Voting against the motion

were Republican conservative Connie Morris of St. Francis, Republican moderate Carol Rupe of Wichita and Democrat Janet Waugh of Kansas City, all attending by conference call. Rupe said later she voted "no" because she opposed the severance package.

"I didn't see any reason to give one to someone who had been there only a year," she said. "I didn't think in good conscience that taxpayers needed to pay Bob Corkins any more money."

Waugh said later she voted

against the motion "because I simply didn't agree adding 'with regret.'"

"I wasn't happy about the severance, but the reality is that will cost less than him staying through the first board meeting in January," she said.

Abrams praised Corkins and said he tried to get him to delay his decision after receiving the letter Monday. He said the board will begin looking for a new commissioner next year, and that Deputy Commissioner Dale Dennis will serve as interim commissioner.

"I think Bob Corkins was a great commissioner. I think he did a great job. He was a great manager and that's what you need in a commissioner in this state," said Abrams, of Arkansas City.

Corkins, who didn't attend the meeting, was hired by the board's conservative majority in October 2005. Asked if Corkins already has cleaned out his office, Abrams said, "The commissioner didn't have a whole lot in his office already and yes, he's already taken off."

His resignation came as no surprise. After the August primary, the board's 6-4 conservative majority switched to moderate Republicans and Democrats who said it was unlikely they would retain Corkins after they take control in January.

"Certainly when others are quoted as saying the first thing they are going to do is fire him, it might have something to do with his decision," Abrams said.



B. Corkins

Five pounds heavier and nowhere to go?



Jeff Friesen, library link

• Pioneer Memorial Library director

Don't forget that Pioneer Memorial Library re-opens 9 a.m. Saturday. If you still have the weekend open, stop by the library and take a look at what we have available. In a rush? - grab a video or a magazine. Otherwise, let the turkey settle while reading one of our many new books. Below are a couple of books that might spark some interest.

Best selling author Anna Quindlen strikes again with her newest novel "Rise and Shine." Meghan Fitzmaurice is the Katie Couric of this story. She hosts the most popular morning talk show on television called "Rise and Shine." Her popularity however, quickly evaporates following an interview when she is caught "live" calling one of her morning show guests an inappropriate name. Meghan's error in judgment cost her not only her career but also the natural fall-out that goes along with being a celebrity.

Bridget, in contrast to Meghan, is a social worker from the Bronx and her sister. Their disparate lives and rocky past have formed a natural barrier between the two sisters. Fortunately, Bridget's patience, wit and level-headedness following her sister's catastrophe eventually leads the two sisters back to that which matters the most: family.

In a different vein, one of the most popular television series today is C.S.I. (aka - Crime Scene Investigation). CSI has captured our imaginations due to the mystery of crime as well as the complex methods that criminal investigators are using to solve crimes in today's world. In her book "The C.S.I. Effect," Katherine Ramsland goes into in-depth explanations of the latest techniques in crime scene in-

vestigations. She uses the CSI television show as a tie-in and launching point to discuss a number of the different CSI techniques used today. Ramsland defines the CSI effect as: "Thanks to these programs, people on juries believe they know all about forensic science and investigation. They're wrong, but they don't know that, and their errors can impact the outcome of a case." If you are ever called to be on a jury or you love the CSI television series, don't miss this book!

And finally, for a different effect and something a little more chic, read Fishbowl by bestselling author Sarah Mlynowski. "The fishbowl effect" is in full force when three roommates, Allison, Emma and Jodine learn to live without privacy. All three girls have very different personalities and seemingly have very little in common. That all changes in one evening when a small accidental fire ruins the apartment kitchen. Enmity turns to unity when the three roommates have no choice but to join forces in an effort to pay the expensive repair bill to fix the kitchen. Generating fast cash turns out to be a bonding experience as it pits three focused and creative women against the male species. Guess who comes out on top?

Enjoy your post-Thanksgiving weekend!

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 W. 4th and open seven days a week. Winter hours are as follows: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. For more information contact the Library at 460-4470 or visit our web site at www.colbylibrary.com. As always, we are here to serve you.

Holiday shopping begins

Bargain shoppers, many braving frigid temperatures, headed to the nation's stores and malls before the sun rose on Friday to nab specials on everything from toys to flat-screen TVs as the holiday shopping season officially opened.

In a slowing but still steady economy, retailers heightened their pitch to shoppers with expanded hours, generous discounts and free money in the form of gift cards.

A growing number of stores and malls threw open their doors at midnight. CompUSA Inc. and BJ's Wholesale Club Inc. even opened on Thanksgiving for the first time to grab customer dollars before the competition does.

"Retailers are doing more to get

consumers into the stores earlier this year," said C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, based in Charleston, S.C.

At a Wal-Mart store in Cincinnati, Gary Miller, a 45-year-old computer programmer, was on the hunt for a 20-inch LCD television that he had seen advertised online.

"My wife sent me out for this one," he said, pointing to the television in his shopping cart. "But then I saw this one (a 20-inch conventional TV) for \$85 and said, what the heck, I'll get that one, too." Meanwhile, Monica Midkiff, a 27-year-old homemaker from Peebles, Ohio, said she got up at 3:30 a.m. to go to Wal-Mart for a VTech game system.

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