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KENNETH FRAHM

Sheila Frahm passed out baseball cards to men in Havana, Cuba, who were taking cigarette breaks in the front of a building. Cuban men are always eager to get American baseball cards from foreign visitors, she said.

Former state leader reports on Cubans

By Marj Brown

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Should the United States lift its half-century-old trade embargo against Cuba?

That was the question posed to Sheila Frahm, a Colby native and former Kansas lieutenant governor and U.S. senator, when she told about her trip to Cuba. Frahm gave the program at a meeting of the Morning Glory Methodist Women's group at the home of Amy Kendrick on Thursday, April 23.

Frahm said she thinks lifting the embargo would be a good thing, but she feels that is something we all must decide for ourselves. Kansas farm groups have pushed to end the embargo, saying farmers could sell wheat and feed grains to the island nation.

Program chair Janice Frahm began the presentation by giving a history of the government

of Communist-ruled Cuba, and then turned the program over to Sheila, her sister in law.

Sheila and her husband Ken were members of a Wheat Seminar Group sponsored by Kansas State University and led by Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the university at that time. The group got permission from the U.S. government to visit Havana in November 2003.

They were fortunate to be allowed to go to Cuba, Sheila said, because if you go to Cuba without government permission, and they stamp your passport there, you cannot get back into the United States. Sheila Frahm said their passports were not stamped.

She said a friend suggested that she might want to take plenty of small bills to give as tips and a good supply of baseball cards. She said people in Cuba can use

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KENNETH AND SHEILA FRAHM

These buildings in Havana, Cuba, look pretty nice, according to Sheila Frahm. However, she says, Cuban buildings are often in a state of disrepair when you look at them closely.

No flu cases confirmed in county yet

By Kevin Bottrell

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County health officials stress that no cases of what has been known as the swine flu have been found in Thomas County.

Susan McMahan, Thomas County emergency management director, said that rumors that several cases of the newly renamed "H1N1 virus" had been diagnosed in the county are just that. McMahan told Thomas County commissioners Thursday she had received a call reporting two cases in the county, but that the medical director for the Thomas County Health Department, Dr. Gary Slavens, told her no lab tests have been done for the virus, first reported in Mexico.

In a Thursday press release, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment said that, as of Thursday night, no further cases have been confirmed in Kansas. Two cases in Dickinson County were reported early this week involving a man who had been at a meeting in Mexico and his wife.

The World Health Organization,

in a release this morning, put the number of confirmed cases in the United States at 109. A child who had come from Mexico died in Texas, but no further deaths have been reported. The outbreak continues to grow in Mexico, with 156 confirmed cases and nine deaths. Other countries with confirmed cases include Austria, Canada, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

World Health is not recommending any restrictions on travel, but the organization raised its alert level Thursday from Phase 4 to Phase 5, indicating widespread human-to-human transmission and the distinct possibility of a worldwide pandemic.

Officials said they renamed the virus partly because pork producers complained the name "swine flu" was hurting their sales. The virus cannot be contracted by eating properly cooked and handled pork products, officials said, and pork generally is safe to eat. Experts believe the strain probably was passed from live pigs to humans, but the meat is not a danger.

Wal-Mart to hold safety fair Saturday

Wal-Mart and several agencies plan a Child Safety Fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday on the store parking lot on Willow Avenue. The sponsors hope parents and anyone else interested in child safety will turn out.

Certified child passenger safety seat technicians from the Kansas Highway Patrol will check seats and mounting. Other experts from the Colby Fire Department, the Regional Prevention Center and Smart Start will be available to give information on car seats and

other safety topics. Safety seat technicians are certified through Safe Kids Worldwide, which writes the curriculum for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, said Karen Merryman of Smart Start.

The Child Identification Program will be providing voice, DNA and photo identification kits for parents, sponsored by the Atwood Masonic Lodge.

All services are free. For information, call Smart Start Northwest Kansas at 465-9103 or 443-3715.

Commissioners tackle air conditioning

By Vera Sloan

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Everything from air conditioning units, salary increases, emergency management and vet bills, to birdhouses, had a spot on the Thomas County Commission agenda on Thursday.

Al Smith, contract custodian at the Thomas County Office Complex, told commissioners that the units used to cool and heat the waiting room and the classroom at the Health Department had bad compressors.

"When the compressor is done, the unit is done," he said, noting that one unit had been replaced last year.

Commissioner Paul Steele asked why they were still using older individual heat pump units, and not a central system.

"There is no attic for duct work," Smith said, "and there is a chilled water system in the part of the building that serves the Cham-

ber of Commerce and the meeting room The units are old, and there are no replacement parts for them anymore."

The commissioners agreed it would be better to have a professional look at the system and get an estimate before spending money on something that won't work.

"We just need to find a better way to make it work rather than constant replacement," Steele said.

Smith told them the fire alarm in the Health Department didn't work, either, and that there is no light switch at the entrance door. He said Director Connie Walden wanted a switch at the north end of the hallway so she wouldn't have to walk all the way to the end of the hall, in the dark, to turn on the light. He said Jeff Unger of Jim's Electric was aware of the wiring situation and could take a look at it. The commissioners tabled the issue until Monday, May 11, to give Smith time to get a report.

Walden, who was attending a meeting in

Kansas City, sent a request via Smith, that a spring on the bird house needed to be fixed, and that she would like to have more concrete poured so she could have a second birdhouse.

Walden also wanted new aluminum-framed education boards, readable from both sides, to hang from the glass partition. The commissioner's agreed that the last improvements made to the education boards should be sufficient.

Next on the list was a broken storm window. Commissioners told Smith his contract is for maintenance and cleaning, and he could buy parts for the window and do the necessary repairs. They said birdhouses aren't in the budget, and denied the other requests.

Susan McMahan, emergency management director, said she a planning grant for \$19,486 had been approved. She said her department will be needing a new vehicle, as the one she has goes in about once a month for repairs. She

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Briefly

Barbershop on tap at college

The quartet Realltime, the 2005 international champions of Barbershop, will headline the program for "Back to the Roots of Barbershop," sponsored by the Colby Area Barbershoppers on Saturday. Shows will be at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the Frahm Theater of the Colby Community College Cultural Arts Center. Tickets, \$10 each in advance or \$12 at the door, can be purchased from any member or by calling (800) 269-7059 or (785) 462-2474. People who have tickets for the April date may use them. Will-call orders can be held at the ticket window.

College honoring the Smiths

Colby Community College plans a reception for Dr. Floyd and Mary Smith at 3 p.m. Wednesday in the Student Union. The Smiths will receive the 2009 honorary degrees. Everyone is invited. For questions, call Debbie Schwanke at 460-5411

Mission session set in Rexford

The Rexford Community Church will hold its annual mission conference starting at 8 a.m. Saturday and continuing Sunday. Jerry Latimer will give a video presentation on a recent rip to Mongolia. Saturday night, there will be pizza for the youth and a program by Dan Wahlgren of Laramie, Wyo. Sunday worship will feature both speakers, followed by a dinner. The theme is "Be Not Ashamed." For information, call (785) 687-4361.

Baptist women plan craft day

The women of the First Baptist Church plan a crafting get-together from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the church fellowship hall. Come get together with others for fellowship, work on projects or learn how to do some new crafts. There will be a demonstration on card embroidery and iris paper folding, with

supplies available. Samples are on display in the windows at Colby Photo. Snacks and refreshments provided. For questions, call 462-2967 or 462-2336.

Church offers free seminar

Bring a brown-bag lunch for free seminar on "Pathways, Disease or Wholeness" at 9 a.m. Saturday at Redeeming Love Ministries, 345 N. Franklin. The speaker (by digital disk) is Henry Wright. Bible college students can gain 2.25 credit hours. Call (785) 650-2375 for questions.

Former Colby doctor to talk

There will be a public "meet and greet" for Dr. Peter Burgos, a former Colby physician, and his family from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Sunday at the Heartland Christian School, 1995 W. Fourth St. Come hear Dr. Burgos talk about his medical work in Asia at the 10:45 a.m. Sunday service at the Colby Wesleyan

Church. For more information, call 462-8391.

City spring cleanup next week

The annual Colby spring cleanup will be Monday to Friday next week, May 4-8. Residents may use this time to spruce up their yards. The city will remove items placed at the curb. For information or to schedule a pickup, call 460-4410.

Thrivent to work at center

Members of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will be cleaning and preparing a planting site from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Prairie Senior Living Center and then plant flowers 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday. For questions, call 460-2443.



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