



A family of bike riders with only one bike is just one part of the Golden Dragon Acrobats. The troupe, from Hebei, China, will perform on Halloween in the Colby High School Auditorium.

Western Plans Art Association bringing acrobats to Colby

The Golden Dragon Acrobats, sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association and the Kansas Arts Commission, will perform at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 31, in the Colby High School Auditorium.

The acrobats represent the best of a time-honored tradition that began more than twenty-seven centuries ago. Direct from Hebei, China, our company has traveled to all 50 states and to over 65

countries on five continents. With performers trained in the rigorous art since early youth, the troupe has won international acclaim. The company has been presented with several major awards over its history including the National Association of Campus Activities Entertainer of the Year Award and the Campus Activities Today's Performer of the Year Award. Under the casting direction of

Asian Artists Productions in Plano, Texas, performers are chosen from the People's Republic of China. The production company maintains a team in the U.S. to manage details of the tour. Admission is with a Western Plains season ticket or at the door, adults, \$15, students kindergarten through high school, \$7.

Massive 'gator found in lake

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — A Massachusetts woman has a remarkable souvenir from South Carolina. Maryellen Mara-Christian bagged a 13 1/2-foot, 1,025-pound alligator in Lake Moultrie. Mara-Christian said Friday that she's an experienced hunter, but this was her first gator. The 48-year-old former bank marketing officer from Fitchburg, Mass., was hunting Wednesday with her husband, a firefighter and

a part-time hunting guide. It took about two hours to secure the gator before they could shoot it. The .22-caliber gun they used wasn't powerful enough to put the animal down, so Mara-Christian used a knife to sever the alligator's spinal cord. Meat processor Steve Drummond said the gator had so much fat that only about 40 pounds was usable meat. He will stuff the animal for Mara-Christian to display.

Midwest bankers say region's economy better

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Rural bankers in 10 Midwest and Plains states are more optimistic about the regional economy, but a new survey released Friday suggests business remains weak in many areas. "Unfortunately, very healthy farm income is not translating to healthy business activity," Creighton University economist Ernie Goss said. The overall Rural Mainstreet economic index remained in negative territory below 50 in October but rose to 48.4 from September's 47.6. Any score below 50 suggests the economy will contract over the next six months. The hiring index remained at a weak 46 in October, and Goss said many areas continue to lose jobs. But the report's confidence index, which reflects bankers expectations for the economy six months out, improved in October to 57.3 from 54.9 in September and 46.0 in August. "The higher agricultural commodities prices should help stimulate the rural economy in upcoming months," said Bradley Bauer, president of Pinacle Bank in Ogallala, Neb. Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas,

Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming are surveyed for the report. Goss and Bill McQuillan, chief executive of CNB Community Bank of Greeley, Neb. oversee the survey. Goss said several indicators in the survey suggest 2010 has been a good year for farmers in the region. The agricultural equipment sales index jumped to 61 in October from 56.2 in September. The farmland price index increased to 60 in October from September's 57.7 and August's 55.3. Terry Engelken, CEO of Federation Bank in Washington, Iowa, said recent farmland auctions attracted prices of more than \$9,000 per acre. The home sales index declined to 42.1 in October from September's 47.6, suggesting slumping sales. The October retail sales index was 45.1, slightly lower than September's 45.2. Two of the bank indicators, checking deposits and CDs, remained at healthy levels above 50 for the eighth straight month. But the loan volume index fell to 48.4 in October from September's strong 57.4.

Agency recommends screenings

While the pink breast cancer ribbon is familiar to many people, most don't know how many lives are affected by breast cancer. An estimated one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer at some point in her life. Screening and early detection can help identify cancer in its early stages when the disease is most treatable. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment is encouraging women to learn about the effectiveness of screening and early diagnosis. "Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women, other than skin cancer," said Secretary Roderick L. Breiby, "Women are encouraged to talk with their health care providers about what screening tests are right for them and when to have them."

More than 200,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and nearly 40,000 will die of the disease. In Kansas, 1,916 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). "The best screening tool for breast cancer is a mammogram," said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, state health officer. "A woman's chance of survival is best if cancer is detected early, before it spreads to other parts of the body. In fact, when breast cancer is found early the five year survival rate is 98 percent." Several lifestyle recommendations may reduce the risk of breast cancer. These include avoiding tobacco, staying active, maintaining a healthy body weight, limiting alcohol intake to one or fewer drinks per day and increasing fiber intake with whole grains, vegetables and fruits. The department promotes breast cancer screening and provides services for age appropriate,

low income, uninsured women through its Early Detection Works program. About 27,000 women in Kansas between the ages of 40 and 64 are eligible for this program, which provides clinical breast exams and mammograms through a network of providers across the state. Should breast cancer be diagnosed through this program, Medicaid — through the Federal Treatment Act — pays for treatment. For information, visit www.preventionworkskansas.com. Women seeking these services may call (877) 277-1368 to see if they qualify. For more Kansas cancer information and resources, visit www.cancerkansas.org.

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