

# Make safety a first for trick-or-treaters

Halloween is supposed to be a spooky night, but parents don't have to be scared about their kids' safety if they follow some simple safety tips from Safe Kids Kansas. Over a recent five-year period, on average, twice as many child pedestrians have been killed on Halloween as have been killed throughout the rest of the year. With the days getting shorter, children are likely to be trick-or-treating in the dark when it is harder to see them and excitement can make everyone less cautious.

"Parents need to remind kids about safety while walking before they go out trick-or-treating," says Cherie Sage, State Director for Safe Kids Kansas. "Children should bring flashlights or glow sticks with them, carry reflective bags or have reflective tape on their costumes to increase visibility to drivers. Children should not wear masks which may inhibit their ability to see hazards."

Safe Kids recommends that children younger than age 12 should not cross streets alone at night without an adult. If kids are mature enough to go trick-or-treating without adult supervision, make sure they go in a group and they stick to a predetermined route with good lighting. Make sure at least one child has a cell phone with them in case of an emergency. Parents must also remind kids to:

- Cross streets safely at a corner, using traffic signals and crosswalks. Try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them. Don't assume that because you can see the driver, the driver can see you. Look left, right and left again when crossing, and keep looking as you cross. Walk; don't run, across the street.
- Walk on well-lit sidewalks or paths. Choose a route that has sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Walk

in familiar areas and choose a route with minimal street crossings.

- Watch for cars that are turning or backing up. Never dart out into the street or cross the street between parked cars or bushes.

Drivers need to do their part to keep trick-or-treaters safe from harm. Safe Kids reminds motorists to be extra careful this Halloween.

Be especially alert. Remember that children are more likely to dart out between cars. That makes it more important than ever for drivers to avoid distractions, such as cell phones.

Take a quick five-second walk around your vehicle before getting in the driver seat. Look for children, pets and toys that may be in your blind zones. Be extra careful when backing out of driveways to look for pedestrians.

Drive more slowly. Slow down and anticipate heavier than usual pedestrian traffic.

Drive with your full headlights on so you can spot children from greater distances and they can see you.

Parents also need to keep in mind there are other hazards for their children on this holiday. Check treats for signs of tampering before children are allowed to eat them. To prevent costume fires, keep jack-o'-lanterns that are lit with candles away from doorsteps and walkways, and consider using glow sticks instead of candles. Look for non-flammable costumes and non-toxic Halloween makeup and make sure children wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes to prevent trips and falls. Finally, children should only go to homes where the residents are known and there are outside lights on as a sign of welcome.

For more tips on how to keep kids safe while walking on Halloween and throughout the year, visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org).

# Gift boosts college library

Family members of Betty Fitzsimmons-Sloan recently donated several unique art books to the H.F. Davis Library at Colby Community College. The library also received memorial donations in Sloan's name.

She and her husband Jack Fitzsimmons were a driving force behind the creation of the college in the 1960s. She was on the Colby School Board and was one of the members who made the decision to support the creation of the college. Fitzsimmons-Sloan also was one of the first instructors at the college. She began teaching speech and drama in 1964. Her drama students presented the first two college stage productions held in the community building.

Fitzsimmons-Sloan resigned from her teaching duties but continued to work part time in the college library for over 10 years.



DEBBIE SCHWANKE/Colby Community College Enrique Trejo, Tribune (from left), art instructor Rebel Jay, James Luch, McPherson, librarian Tara Schroer and Demetria Stephens of Jennings looked over the art books donated by the family of Betty Fitzsimmons-Sloan.

Jack also was involved with beginning and leading the college. He served on the first elected board of trustees.

In recognition of their commitment to the college, Jack and Betty received an honorary degree in May 1998.

Jack and Betty were married in

1944. He preceded her in death on Oct. 14, 1999. Betty was married to Harlan Sloan on Sept. 20, 2003. He preceded her in death on July 22, 2004.

Betty died on Sept. 24. She is survived by a sister-in-law, three daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The donated books are available

for checkout at the library, which is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and 4 to 8 p.m. on Sunday.

# Dry conditions pose challenge to wheat farmers

Soils have generally been very dry in much of the western half of Kansas this fall. Farmers who have yet to plant their wheat basically have three main options, according to Jim Shroyer, Kansas State University Research and Extension crop production specialist.

"First, producers could plant the wheat now into dry soil," Shroyer said. "Dust it in' at normal seeding depth - and hope for rain. This probably is the best option."

The seed will remain viable in the soil until it gets enough moisture, he said. So, rather than cutting back on seeding rates and fertilizer, hoping to save money on a lost cause, producers should increase seeding rates, consider using a fungicide seed treatment, and think about using a starter fertilizer.

"I recommend using higher seeding rates now because where it's dry, the wheat may not emerge until November. Wheat that emerges

so late in the season will have fewer fall tillers than wheat that emerges in September or October, so you'll need more plants per acre to compensate," Shroyer explained.

The main risks to this approach include the possibility that a hard rain could crust over the soil or wash soil from the planting ridges into the seed furrows, potentially causing emergence problems, he said.

A second option is that producers could plant more deeply than normal, if possible into moisture, the agronomist said. Knowing the length of the variety's coleoptile - the protective sheath that covers the emerging shoot - is crucial, however, to deciding whether to plant deep to moisture.

"This option can work if the variety to be planted has a long coleoptile, the producer is using a hoe drill, and there is good moisture within reach," he said.

The advantage of this option is that the crop should come up and make a stand during the optimum time in fall, Shroyer said. This would keep soil from blowing.

The main risk of this option is poor emergence, he explained.

A third option would be to wait for a rain and then plant.

"Under the right conditions, this would result in good stands, assuming the producer uses a high seeding rate and a starter fertilizer, if appropriate," Shroyer said.

The risk of this option, however, is that the weather may turn rainy and stay wet, preventing the producer from planting, he said. The soil could remain unprotected from the wind until spring planting, he said.

Crop insurance considerations and deadlines will also play a role in these decisions, Shroyer added.

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