

Bus tours keep museum hopping during summer

By Anne Miner
Prairie Museum of Art and History

It's bus tour season! We've had groups from Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, and the singers from Sweden who were in town this week toured the museum during the stormy afternoon before their evening performance.

We continue to get positive feedback from our out-of-town visitors: "Wonderful experience. Thanks!" "Loved the kid-friendly fun." "I could spend hours! Loved it!" "Your museum is absolutely delightful. I've visited many local museums and I believe this is the best one I've seen."

My personal favorite is this one: "I love your museum, Grandma!" left by Chris Griffin's granddaughter on a recent visit. She also drew a very yellow picture of the Eller House that now hangs on her grandmother's office door.

We've been including more interactive things for kids like period dress-up clothes in the buildings, so it's gratifying to know that both kids and adults are appreciating our efforts to make the museum an inviting and accessible experience for all.

Reading and hearing rave reviews from travelers who stop in and are surprised at the quality of our museum is rewarding. Much more so are the moments when our fellow Thomas Countians discover – or rediscover – their museum and decide to show it off. In the past couple of weeks, we have received notes of appreciation from members of the Touslee family who gathered here recently to do some genealogical research and appreciated staff help in locating resources, and from Richard and Kathy Calliham on

behalf of the Master Farmers and Homemakers who enjoyed a tour of the museum and grounds in June.

Larry Dilts has been doing a bang-up job (with a lot of actual banging!) dealing with the ongoing maintenance issues that come with being responsible for eight buildings. He has been fashioning replacement windows for the Cooper Barn, and lately has been working on a new window for the dining room of the Eller House. Visitors will have noticed the large boarded-up spot on the north side of the house, and a glance at the other windows reveals that they, as well as the back door are also in serious need of attention.

The sprinkler system in the Cooper Barn needs major repairs and the north wall of the sod house has been yielding to the elements. It is currently propped up to prevent further damage, which we figure is what people who lived in sod houses during the settlement era did when their homes started to slump.

The buildings are among our major assets in helping to tell the history of our region, but are also a bit of a money sink. It was in part to ensure financing for building maintenance into the future that the Connection Campaign to establish an endowment was begun in 2008. Three years later the campaign has yielded half of the \$500,000 we thought it would take to generate enough interest income to cover expenses. So, we continue to do the best we can to create a quality, educational museum experience for all and keep the buildings up at the same time.

The school art exhibit will be up through June, followed by an exhibit of Theresia Aschenbrenner's quilts in July and August. Come out soon and enjoy your museum!



Pat Ziegelmeier, Melody Bober and Leona Dickman

Music conference teaches teachers

By Christina Beringer
Colby Free Press
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Area piano teachers Pat Ziegelmeier of Gem and Leona Dickman of Grinnell attended the statewide Kansas Music Teachers' Association Conference on June 10 and 11 at Emporia State University.

"The conference included educational sessions that help music teachers be better instructors," said Colby Community College pianist, Pat Ziegelmeier.

"Creative Collaboration: Mak-

ing Every Lesson Come Alive," "Off-the-Beaten Path Teaching Treasures" and a teachers' question and answer panel were a few of the breakout sessions offered at the conference.

Performances were also given by featured clinician and piano composer, Melody Bober of Minnesota, and featured concerto soloist Dr. Jane Solose of Niagara Falls, Canada. Attendees were given the opportunity to analyze and interpret various musical pieces during the educational platform.

Ziegelmeier said she has been

attending the conference for many years and takes an active role in the organization as executive secretary. Among many honors, she is a member of the Nationally Certified Teachers of Music, a Kansas Music Teachers' Association Power of One Honoree for her work in education and the Kansas foundation chair for the Music Teachers' National Association.

Dickman teaches private piano in Grinnell and is president for the local chapter, Northwest Kansas Piano Teachers Association.

On the Beat

COLBY POLICE Wednesday

1:04 a.m. – Closed trunk lid on vehicle; note left.

2:04 a.m. – Officer was told that he needed to go inside the B-Hive. Transported subject.

2:10 a.m. – Clerk found a hypo needle on a shelf at business. Item removed and disposed of.

4:29 a.m. – Security check at Walmart.

4:34 a.m. – Highway Patrol advised of an erratic driver westbound on I-70 between Grinnell and Oakley.

5:26 a.m. – Vehicle window broken out and purse taken. Report filed.

5:57 a.m. – Caller reported a barking dog. Unable to contact owner.

7:44 a.m. – Caller reported vehicle parked at 1195 S. Range for extended period of time. Vehicle

owned by customer; reporting party will attempt to contact.

12:11 p.m. – Caller reported two vehicles with hazard lights on. Flat tire, help en route. Everything OK.

7:16 p.m. – Accident on Nashville by Co-op.

11:14 p.m. – Security check at the Aquatic Park.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Wednesday

6:30 a.m. – Took two prisoners to Hays for another agency.

7:45 a.m. – Caller reported uncontained horse in the area of U.S. 24 mile 51. Unable to locate.

9:36 p.m. – Report filed on incident.

10:42 p.m. – Caller advised of dispute. Report filed for battery.

11:45 p.m. – Booked Rafael Castro.

Slot machine overpays win

PITTSBURGH (AP) – State regulators say a gambler won a \$25,000 jackpot on a Pittsburgh casino slot machine that should have paid out only \$12.

The Gaming Control Board tells the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* the false jackpot happened on May 29, 2010. The generous payout happened in one of five instances involving Rivers Casino machines that weren't properly tested.

The board was to have levied an unspecified fine against the casino. But it nixed a consent agreement with the casino Monday after some board members felt a stronger message needed to be sent.

Casino officials say the player was allowed to keep the jackpot and that it paid all taxes on it. Rivers spokesman Jack Horner says the casino takes it seriously.

Oklahoma harvest quality high

ENID, Okla. (AP) – Wheat officials say Oklahoma's wheat harvest is down as expected this year, but that the quality of the crop is good.

"We actually did have a very good product," Oklahoma Wheat Commission Executive Director Mike Schulte told the *Enid News and Eagle*. "Test weights were extremely high in all areas of the state, 60 to 64 pounds."

The industry standard for top-rated wheat is 60 pounds.

"We even had reports of some areas with proteins as high as 14 to 18 percent," Schulte said. "It was a much different story from last year when we had reports of averages of 11.5 or 11.7 percent protein levels across the state."

Eleven percent protein content is considered average.

Roger Don Gribble, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service northwest area agronomist, said this year's crop was "better than expected."

"Quality was extremely good, protein content as well as test weights," Gribble said.

"If our foreign buyers are looking for good quality wheat they need to come to northwest Oklahoma."

The U.S. Department of Ag-

riculture has estimated the total wheat crop this year to be 74.8 million bushels with a forecast yield of 22 bushels per acre. That's down from 120.9 million bushels harvested in 2010 with a 31 bushel-per-acre average.

Much of the decline is blamed on weather that included drought, hail and tornadoes, Schulte said.

"There were areas in the state that received less than a quarter of an inch (of rain) from the time it was planted," Schulte said. "We had tornadoes ... in Kingfisher and Canadian counties and an area near Chickasha. We had about 30,000 to 40,000 acres impacted by tornadoes."

The U.S. Drought Monitor reported Wednesday the western

half of Oklahoma remained in a drought rated extreme to exceptional.

Mike Rosen, manager of Wheeler Brothers Grain Co. in Kingfisher, said the beating the crop took from severe weather at the end of last month hurt yields in some area but didn't others.

"The yields were off 35 percent from normal in some places to as much as half off," he said. "We had some wheat that was single-digit (yield) and some that was in the mid-40s. You just wonder why."

"I think every acre in Kingfisher County got hailed," Rosen said. "It was better than what I had expected. I figured we'd struggle to get a 20-bushel crop here."

Ice cream truck robbed

FALL RIVER, Mass. (AP) – Call it a cold case.

Police in Fall River are looking for a masked man who robbed an ice cream truck.

Police tell the *Herald News* the truck's 66-year-old driver was stopped at an intersection at about 9 p.m. on Sunday when a man entered the truck and demanded money.

The victim told police he felt

something like a knife being held to his side before the suspect grabbed money from the cash drawer and fled on foot.

The victim sustained a minor injury to his right knee trying to stop the suspect.

The thief is described as a 5 foot, 10 inch white man with a thin build, who wore a black, zip-up hooded sweatshirt.

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