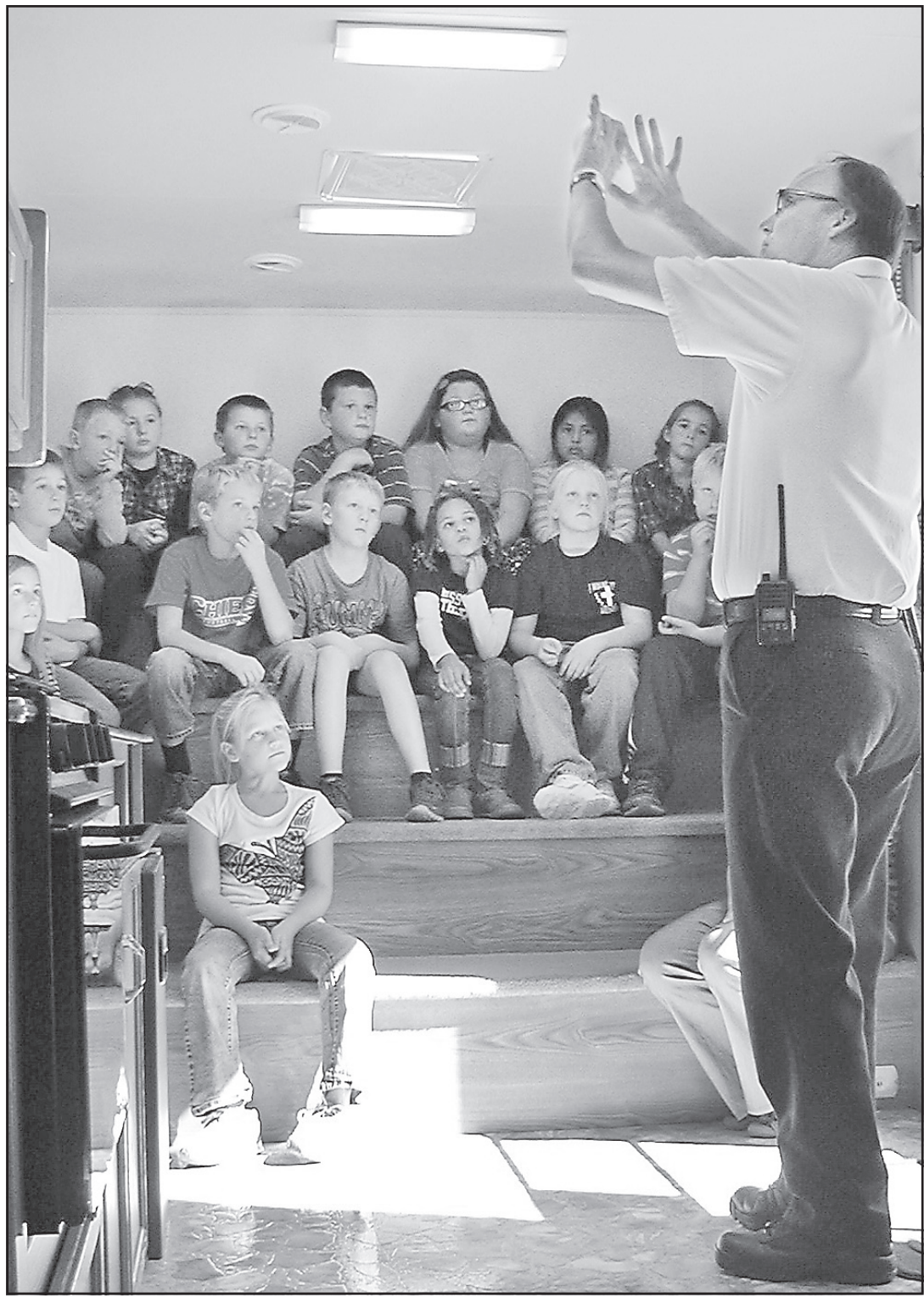


Fire safety comes first



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press  
Assistant Fire Chief Sean Hankin told students how to get out of a burning house at Sacred Heart Catholic School on Oct. 8. The fire department had its fire trailer there as part of Fire Prevention Month.

Drought eases in Kansas

By Jim Suhr  
AP Business Writer

ST. LOUIS — Recent storms helped ease the grip of the nation’s worst drought in decades on several key Midwest farming states, raising hopes that the winter wheat crop will fare better than this year’s corn, which is in the final stages of being harvested.

The U.S. Drought Monitor’s weekly update released Thursday shows that 62.4 percent of the lower 48 states remained mired in some form of drought during the seven-day period that ended Tuesday. That’s down more than a percentage point from the previous week.

The benefit of recent downpours was more pronounced in states such as Iowa, the nation’s biggest corn producer. Thursday’s update showed that 63.9 percent of Iowa still is in extreme or exceptional drought — the worst two classifications — in what marked an improvement of nearly 12 percentage points from a week earlier.

Those two categories fell in

Kansas from 95.7 percent last week to 77.8 percent now, while in neighboring Missouri those numbers slid from 15.1 percent last week to 11.8 percent. Nebraska’s showing in those classifications dropped 2.5 percentage points to 95.31 percent, and Illinois remained relatively unchanged, at 7.16 percent.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported Monday that 79 percent of the nation’s corn crop has been harvested, which is more than double the average amount harvested by this time over the previous five years. That speed was especially evident in Iowa and Illinois, where 87 percent of the crop has been brought in from the fields.

Seventy-one percent of the U.S. soybean fields have been reaped, up from the previous half-decade average of 58 percent, the USDA said.

The slight weakening of the drought in the nation’s Corn Belt followed a couple of recent storms that blew through the Great Plains, leaving behind as much as 4.5

inches of rainfall in some areas, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Matthew Rosencrans wrote in Thursday’s update. It was released by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

More storms are expected in coming days, with the National Weather Service forecasting “a fairly wet pattern” across the northern tier of the continental U.S. and across the Midwest, Rosencrans wrote.

That’s welcomed news to growers of winter wheat and corn and soybean farmers, all hoping that significant moisture this autumn and through the winter recharges what had been bone-dry soil in time for next spring’s planting season.

The USDA said about 71 percent of the winter wheat crop is now in the ground — a pace consistent with the five-year average — even though only 36 percent of those plantings have emerged, off 8 percentage points from the norm over the previous half decade.

Texas professor offers Halloween law book

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — A Texas Tech law school professor has looked at Halloween-related cases and whether the celebration offers a legal excuse for crime.

Victoria Sutton’s new book is called: “Halloween Law: A Spirited Look at the Law School Curriculum.” Details were announced by the school in Lubbock.

Sutton, who teaches constitutional, biodefense and biosecurity law, says her research has found a great number of cases revolving around Halloween.

In the criminal law section, Sutton looks at whether Halloween excuses vandalism to some degree.

She says the short answer is no

and that courts in general have decided that “vandalism is still vandalism.”

Time to get group ready; trivia tournament nears

Calling all trivia buffs! Get your team of six to eight players and get ready for the next Pioneer Memorial Library Trivia Night. At 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 8, we will be playing our annual competition. Come have fun, win prizes and laugh a lot.

The books I am discussing this week are a combination of fiction materials.

The first is “Night Watch,” by Linda Fairstein. This is book four of the *Alex Cooper* series. The author comes to her hair-raising thrillers via work as New York City prosecutor.

Alexandra Cooper returned home after dinner to a pile of bones in front of the door of Luc Rouget’s converted mill, now home, in France. Alexandra, vacationing with Luc, had imbibed a bit too much to fully understand the import of this discovery. What she came upon next shocked her; three skulls at the entrance of Luc’s restaurant. The book goes on from there.

The next book is “The Land of Decoration,” by Grace McCleen. Protagonist Judith McPherson finds that she is able to make miracles happen. She discovers this through her faith and understanding of seeing things differently. Judith is challenged at school for the strange way she walks out her beliefs. When her father’s factory is going to have a strike, she takes this creative power and tries to shelter those she loves.

The next fiction item is “The Impeachment of Abraham Lincoln: A Novel,” by Stephen Carter. This is not historical at all. It is clearly fiction, because in this book, best-



Melany Wilks  
•Library Links

selling author Carter writes that Abraham Lincoln survived the assassination attempt and was then under impeachment for challenging the Constitution and the legal requirements of his office.

A young black woman, Abigail has been hired to defend the president. She is out of place in Washington, but decides she must immerse herself in his defense and find a way to get around all the politics and conspiracy. The book explores just what authority the president had for the actions he’d taken as president. This is what makes the book different from many other books of its kind. You explore these tenets while working through the book.

The next book is “The Age of Miracles,” by Karen Thompson Walker. Julia and her family are living in disturbing times. The whole world has just changed catastrophically. In fact, earth’s rotation slows, gravity changes and the length of days and nights are altered. She and her family must not only live through this, but also try and solve her grandfather’s perception of a government conspiracy. She delves into his copious information, which requires her to decide what she believes and what this means for their survival.

Just this last weekend, I borrowed from the library the DVD “Hunger Games,” by Lions Gate. This was originally a book written by Suzanne Collins. The movie was very intense and had quite a message to it — not a relaxing, mindless movie.

The theme of both book and movie is that the U.S. has experienced an Armageddon-type period and now is rebuilding. It has a heroine and a love-struck young man, both trying to not only to save their own skin but honor their supposedly disgraced society and region.

This book makes us look at the deep issues of hope, good versus evil, beliefs, values and perspectives of a society. These then allow us to make the decisions we do that affect governance, society in general, and life in particular. I have not read the book yet, but am told it is even more intense than the movie. I will read this book, plus the sequels, “Catching Fire” (Book 2) and “Mockingjay” (Book 3). More often than not, I read the book then watch the movie, but this time I am impressed enough to consider the opposite.

This week is the Spooktacular Book Sale — to 7 p.m. tonight, 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Friday and 9 to 3:45 p.m. Saturday. This book sale will not be as full as last time, so you may be able to find some real treasures.

Remember our hours have changed for the fall and winter season. We open at 9 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, at 5 p.m. Friday and at 4 p.m. Saturday. Sunday hours are 1 to 4 p.m.

High Plains Art Club

The High Plains Art Club met Oct. 9 at the Colby United Methodist Church. President Ruth Hughes conducted the meeting. She announced member Fritz Ostmeier had a stroke and was in the hospital in Denver.

A workshop by Shela Page Reilley will be on Saturday, Nov. 3, at the church. Aspiring artists and club members are invited. Bev Kern distributed the list of supplies for the workshop. People should contact her for information.

David Ketchum won a first place prize at the art show in McCook. Marlene Carpenter and Tom Peyton also participated in the show.

Hughes said Friends of the Library contacted her and wants the club to paint or decorate three chairs to be auctioned off at the silent auction in February.

Proceeds of the auction will benefit the Pioneer Memorial Library.

Kern and Carpenter volunteered to decorate chairs. The third will be decorated by a committee with a patriotic theme, passing the chair around from person to person.

Rebel Jay is sponsoring an art walk from 2 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 27, in Colby. Several members indicated interest in participating.

Kern brought a video about painting by Helen Van Wyke.

Other members present were Marion Boyd, Poppy Dean, Margaret Denneler, Alice Wolf, David Ketchum, Karen Reed, Marilyn Surmeier and Maxine Nelson.

— Maxine Nelson, secretary

Pastel workshop coming in November

The High Plains Art Club of Colby is holding a pastel workshop featuring professional artist Shela Page Reilley as the instructor.

The class will be at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, in the Colby United Methodist Church fellowship hall.

Cost will be \$20 for Colby art

club members and \$25 for others. Those attending can pay at the door on the day of the workshop.

Call Bev Kern at 462-2876 for a list of supplies needed.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat (bushel)	\$8.29
Corn (bushel)	\$7.50
Milo (hundredweight)	\$12.86
Soybeans (bushel)	\$14.19

2013 THOMAS COUNTY EXTENSION COUNCIL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PDC) ELECTION

ALL REGISTERED VOTERS IN THOMAS COUNTY ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE!

PDC members give direction, plan, implement and evaluate the county Extension educational programs.

Please mark your choices with an “X” by the corresponding name. Choose THREE IN EACH PROGRAM AREA for a total of 12 people. The last line may be used for write-in candidates and the corresponding line must have an “X” on it. Elected candidates term will start January 2013.

Agriculture (Choose 3)	Family & Consumer Science (Choose 3)	Economic Development (Choose 3)	4-H & Youth (Choose 3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Lynn Goossen	<input type="checkbox"/> C. Diane Gerstner	<input type="checkbox"/> Jacque Golemboski	<input type="checkbox"/> Carla Brown
<input type="checkbox"/> Craig Reed	<input type="checkbox"/> Peg Tole	<input type="checkbox"/> Jim McLaughlin	<input type="checkbox"/> Danita Comfort
<input type="checkbox"/> Ross Sloan	<input type="checkbox"/> Jane Wehkamp	<input type="checkbox"/> Marilyn Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Melissa Stramel
<input type="checkbox"/> Stan Strange		<input type="checkbox"/> Christy Rocca	<input type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Woofter
Write In	Write In	Write In	Write In
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please return the ballot by mail to the Thomas County Extension Office, 350 S. Range, Suite 16, Colby, KS 67701 or hand deliver by 5 p.m. Wednesday, October 24, 2012. Ballots are also available at the Extension Office October 8-24. For more information about Thomas County K-State Research and Extension and our programs, visit [www.thomas.ksu.edu](http://www.thomas.ksu.edu).

**American Legion**  
Post 363  
1850 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St.



## Steak Feed

Serving Grilled Rib Eye, Baked Potato, Vegetable, Roll & Dessert

**Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
★ **\$15.00 per person** ★

# BEAD SHOW

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**October 19 & 20**  
**Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-4**

**CITY LIMITS CONVENTION CENTER**  
(EAST END OF COMFORT INN HOTEL)

FREE ADMISSION

New colors of Chinese crystal, now over 450 colors of Japanese seed beads, more choices of semi-precious stone, vintage West German beads and buttons, lampwork glass pendants, lots and lots of good beads! Betsy Beader wire and tools, closeouts... demonstrations.

INFO: 520-907-5124 • BEAD HELPER WANTED • WE BUY OLD BEADS AND JEWELRY