

## New optometrist meets community members



Andrea Sis (left), a new optometrist at Vision Source, chatted with Amanda Wahlmeier, the wife of optometrist Mark Wahlmeier and Wayne Horlacher. They had gathered

Thursday afternoon at Business after Five, sponsored each month through the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

# Blueberry bandit great-grandson fated to find favorite fruit in stores

I have a great-grandson who is just nuts about blueberries. Yeah, blueberries.

While it might be a bit more understandable if a little kid wanted a banana or a couple of strawberries, or even an orange, this boy seems to prefer the fruit that very few of us know anything about.

When I was his age, I knew my way around a handful of sandhill plums that grew wild out in the pasture. Jelly beans were my true favorite, especially the black ones, and I had probably never laid eyes on a blueberry.

It's not like the kid tries to grab a box of blueberries off the top shelf of the produce counter when he's wheeled by in the shopping cart. He's only 2 years old and couldn't reach them if he tried. But at home, every time he walks by the fridge he's got his hand out.



**Kay Melia**

### The Gardener

You must understand here that Aiden comes by his food preferences naturally. His mom is a registered dietician and understands what kids should be eating. Jelly beans? The kid has probably never seen one. Blueberries? Absolutely, and Mom plucks a box of these delicious berries off the shelf and then quickly hides them under the other groceries so that Aiden can't eat them all before the shopping cart arrives at the check-out counter.

Let's face it – blueberries are probably a major mystery to most of us. Experienced gardeners may

plant a few bushes and then wait five or six years for them to produce fruit. But generally if we crave berries, we'll plant raspberries or blackberries and certainly strawberries. But the beautiful blueberry bush is absent in most High Plains back yards.

But, you know? There's a good reason for its absence. Gardeners around here probably shouldn't even think about planting them, because our soils just aren't right for blueberries.

High Plains soils are mostly alkaline soils, as opposed to acidic soils. Blueberries thrive only in acidic soil which have PH values of 4 to 5 on the sometimes complicated PH scale, while High Plains alkaline soils sometimes reach 7.5 or even 8 on the scale that considers 7 as neutral.

To lower the PH, you must add

sulphur to the soil. To raise acidic soils PH, you would add lime. It's all a little difficult to understand, but the bottom line is that blueberries are not easy to grow in these parts.

And so, those of us who relish blueberries must pay about \$3 for a pint of the vitamin-packed fruit, and if we only knew, they're worth every cent. Blueberries are described by those in the know as the world's most healthful food, rich in vitamins C, E and K ... loaded with manganese and fiber, and the highest level of antioxidants of any food. Eating them regularly can make a noticeable difference in our overall health.

I'm glad Aiden likes blueberries and not jelly beans. Smart kid!

## Scholarships available for African-Americans

Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger is seeking applicants for six \$1,000 scholarships and one \$500 scholarship to be awarded to African-American students enrolled in Kansas universities, colleges or community colleges during the 2014 spring semester.

The deadline for spring semester 2014 applications for the African-American Monumental Life Settlement Scholarships is Tuesday, Oct. 1. A scholarship committee of community volunteers and department staff members will award the scholarships. This will be the last set of scholarships through this program.

The funding for the scholarships came from a nationwide legal settlement regarding premiums charged by Monumental Life Insurance Company to African-Americans. Com-

missioner Praeger advocated for establishing a scholarship program for Kansas African-American college students with the state's share of the settlement. The Kansas Legislature passed a law designating the funds for these scholarships.

An applicant for the scholarship must meet these requirements:

- The applicant must be an African-American student.
- The applicant must be enrolled as a student at a Kansas accredited institution of higher learning during the 2013-2014 school year.
- The applicant must indicate on the application that his or her designated major is in mathematics, computer science, business, accounting, economics, finance or investments.
- The applicant must have a cumulative col-

lege grade average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale.

The applicant must supply an academic reference letter from a teacher or administrator at his or her higher learning institute, as well as a one-page essay describing career goals.

The applicant must be available to be interviewed.

Eligible students can contact the office of minority affairs or student financial aid at their colleges or universities for more information, or they can download the information and application online at the Kansas Insurance Department's website, [www.ksinsurance.org/gpa/scholarship.htm](http://www.ksinsurance.org/gpa/scholarship.htm), or on the department's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/kansasinsurancedepartment](http://www.facebook.com/kansasinsurancedepartment).

## Fort Hays offers season tickets for performances

A Christmas performance from Ireland, the most popular English opera of all time and a completely new story from America's favorite TV family headline the 2013-2014 season of the Encore Performing Arts Series at Fort Hays State University.

"This season is a truly special one," said Vince Bowhay, chair of the Special Events Committee. "Patrons should expect to be challenged and inspired by the artists performing on the Beach/Schmidt Auditorium stage. Also, patrons should expect to purchase tickets early, as several shows will sell out this year."

Bowhay said a diverse and international season will appeal to both the regular season ticket holder and the first-time patron alike. The season will open with the 250th Encore performance –

The Broadway Boys, a collection of six of the most striking leading male voices currently singing on Broadway. Additional shows include The Addams Family, Memphis and a special off-season event, the Vienna Boys Choir.

This year also marks the debut of the Keith Sebelius Lecture Series. Named for the late Fort Hays graduate and 1st District congressman, the series will feature a debate between former presidential candidates Rick

Santorum and Howard Dean, in addition to a lecture from former White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove.

Season tickets for the encore series and the lecture series are now on sale. Fort Hays State

University students, senior citizens and youths all receive discounts. For information, call the Student Service Center at (785) 628-5306 or go to [www.fhsu.edu/encore](http://www.fhsu.edu/encore).

## Deaths

### Kenneth F. Eicher

Kenneth F. Eicher, 91, Colby, died Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013, at his home.

Services are pending with the Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel in Colby, 462-7979.

### Kenneth E. Searls

Kenneth E. Searls, 57, a Quinter welder, died Thursday, Aug. 15, 2013, at the Via Christi-St. Francis Medical Center in Wichita.

He was born Dec. 31, 1955, in Atwood, the son of Roy and Betty Jeanne (Howard) Searls.

On Aug. 12, 1983, he married Tammy Wark in Colby.

He worked for D.C. Welding of Quinter. He loved being outdoors, especially if it was on the road, riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

A sister, Carol Ann Heim, preceded him in death.

Survivors include his wife of 30 years; his parents, of Atwood; four sons, Chris (Michele) Searls, Jacob (Holly) Searls, Justin (Janelle)

Barrett and Brandon Searls; a daughter, Angela Searls; a brother, Dan Searls; a sister, Debby (John) Sandoval; and 10 grandchildren.

Memorial services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2013, at the Quinter Church of the Brethren with Pastor Keith Funk officiating.

No visitation. The family suggests memorials to the Midwest Transplant Network or TWR Memorial Fund for Fallen Bikers Families, in care of the Schmitt Funeral Home, 901 South Main, Quinter, Kan., 67752.

Condolences for the family may be left at [www.schmittfuneral.com](http://www.schmittfuneral.com).



K. Searls

## Expo about families

Genealogists and others interested in tracing family history can glean new research skills from the Midwest Family History Expo, Friday and Saturday, Sept. 6 and 7, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney, Neb.

Exhibitors from throughout the U.S. will show the products and services available.

The expo is coordinated by a private company but will incorporate information available from the Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City. This provides an opportunity for attendees to learn

how to use the Salt Lake City resources by Internet or mail without traveling to Utah.

More than 25 courses will be offered each day, including details on researching Czech populations in Nebraska, shooting photos with a cell phone camera and Swedish genealogy.

There is no charge to hear the expo's keynote address or visit the exhibit hall, but there is a charge for attending the classes.

For information, go to [FamilyHistoryExpos.com](http://FamilyHistoryExpos.com) or call (801) 829-3295.

## Colby Rotary Club

The Colby Rotary Club met Tuesday with 38 members and guests Andrew Brockelman, Joe and Cathy Brockelman, Jonathan Brockelman, Jacob and Alisha Cersovsky, Tracey Galli and Mary Ann Juenemann.

The August collection for Thomas County Genesis was taken.

Sandy Wilks was recognized with a five-year membership award.

Marc Alwin was inducted into the club by Membership Chair Mike Tubbs. Alwin's sponsor was Jeff Horlacher.

Cindy Cersovsky had the program. Her guest was Jonathan Brockelman, who talked about his recent nine-week mission/internship to India. Brockelman, who is pursuing an agronomy degree, will be a senior at Kansas State University.

He told members he wanted to use his summer to help people and experience life in a different culture. He traveled to the far north part of India, in the Himalayan Mountains close to Pakistan.

He said the trip allowed him to step back 150 years in farming practices. There is no machinery to speak of, meaning all farming is done by hand. When he arrived in India, the farmers were harvesting oats using a hand sickle.

Brockelman said it took two full days to cut an acre of oats by hand. The seed had been cast by hand, then covered with dirt by a ox-drawn plow.

Brockelman said the farmers have no knowledge of how to fertilize or correct nutrient deficiencies in the land, so he prepared a lesson with posters. He said they were interested in the information, he added, and said they would share it with neighbors.

The average farm size is half an acre to one acre, he said, and a two- or three-acre farm is considered large. A decent wage is \$6 to \$7 per day for a middle-class family.

Brockelman said there is a sense of brokenness in this Muslim country, but the people are somewhat content. There are seven to 10 different languages and groups in the country. He said he also had opportunities to share his faith while he was in India.

Alwin won Roto Lotto.

The club meets at noon each Tuesday in Room 106 of the Colby Community College Student Union.

— Relda Galli

## 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.

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