

Bowl for Kids Sake raised \$13,000 to meet goal

First of all I want to thank the volunteers and businesses for their support in raising money for Bowl For Kids Sake 2006 for Sherman, Wallace and Cheyenne counties.

The April 1st event went well, and the goal of over \$13,000 was realized. As I have mentioned before, the money stays in the respective counties and goes toward the costs of administration, case management, volunteer and family intake and general office needs. The funding has increased each year, and we hope to continue to make a positive impact on the youth in our communities.

In a recent House Representative



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session on April 4, Nebraska Representative Tom Osborne gave a floor speech entitled "The Fall of Great Nations." I would like to share some of the points that he made regarding our nation and the need for mentors, the number of kids needing a mentor and other interesting points that concern all of

us. I will share many of his points over the next few months.

He started by quoting British Prime Minister

Tony Blair, "All predominant power seems for a time invincible, but in fact, it is transient."

Osborne said he felt that Blair's reasoning was great nations "assume that they are going to go on forever."

Osborne cites Rome, Great Britain itself, a world power from the

1600s to the 1800s, and Russia. The common themes that these collapses had, he said, are "the citizens became less willing to sacrifice for others and for their country, citizens became more self-absorbed and had a greater desire for the state to provide instead of providing for themselves, a weakening of commonly held values and a decline of spiritual commitment."

Osborne continued by asking what that has to do with the United States. He said, "Juvenile Court Delinquency caseload in 1960, with really not very many cases, quadrupled by 1995 and 2000."

The factors that Osborne feels

contributed to this epidemic include "family structure has eroded. In 1960, the out-of-wedlock rate was 5 percent. Today it is 34 percent; in parts of our country, the out-of-wedlock birth rate is 60 and 70 percent. Today, nearly 40 percent of our young people grow up without both biological parents. One-third of all school-aged children come home to an empty house for at least part of the week."

Osborne showed the United States is an example of a country at-risk in this story: "There is a greeting card company that contacted the inmates in a prison just before Mother's Day, and on a whim, they decided that they would provide Mother's Day cards for any inmate who wanted to send a card to his mother."

"The reception was very good. Almost 100 percent of the inmates accepted cards, sent them to their mothers. So they decided that they would try the same thing on Father's Day, and yet they had almost zero response."

"Practically no inmate would

write a card to his father. I would assume the reason is that so many of the people there were people who had been abandoned by their fathers, did not have fathers, and as a result, you could see a tremendous dichotomy between those who were still attached in some way to a mother as compared to those who were attached to their father."

That is an example of what our nation is facing, from the pen of a former coach that has worked with a tremendous number of kids.

Osborne continued, "The foundation in our culture, the family, is certainly under assault. It does not mean that we do not have good families — we have many good families — but there has been some sign of erosion, some things that are certainly very concerning. Of course, the family unit is the basic element of our social structure. When that begins to fall apart, then things begin to get very difficult indeed."

Stay tuned to some more of "The Fall of Great Nations."

Mowers going strong; maintenance needed

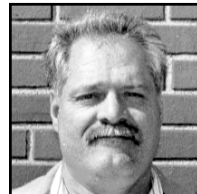
I saw my first mower of the season going in early March and the activity is strong right now.

Lawn chores that were missed in the fall may show up in a dull mower blade or purple flowers in the yard.

A mower is a mechanical tool that needs regular maintenance to perform properly, just like your car. It needs regular oil changes, air filters cleaned or changed and, of course, the blade sharpened.

The blade seems to be the most neglected item. A dull blade will give the lawn a whitish cast. A dull blade does not cut cleanly but rather shreds the ends of the leaf blades. The shredded ends dry out, giving the lawn that whitish look.

A sharp mower blade is even more important when the turf starts putting up seed heads in a month or



dana belshe

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so. The seed head stems are much tougher than the grass blades and, therefore, more likely to shred. Under normal use, mower blades should be sharpened about every 10 hours of use.

The plants with the little purple flowers that are starting to make themselves known in home lawns are called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit.

Though it actually comes up in

the fall, most people do not pay much attention to this weed until it starts to flower. Trying to kill it

at this late stage usually is a waste of time and money. Though the plant may be burned back, it will rarely be killed.

So what do we do? Remember, this is a winter annual; it comes up in the fall, matures in the spring and dies as soon as it starts to get hot. All that we can do now is keep it mowed until nature takes its course.

However, we can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit usually germinates about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D,

Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out or Trimec in early November can go a long way toward eliminating henbit next spring.

The plants are small during the fall and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees so the henbit is actively growing and will take up the chemical.

Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec or one of the special henbit herbicides early before the henbit has put on much growth.

Dana Belshe is agricultural agent for Kansas State University Research and Extension and the Sunflower Extension District, covering Sherman and Wallace counties.

Medicare Part D deadline looming for seniors

The Part D drug benefit is considered the biggest change in the Medicare program since its inception four decades ago.

And, with only 5 weeks until the deadline, seniors who do not sign up for the new Medicare Drug Program may pay higher costs if they choose to sign up in the future. Talk of a delay in the May 15th deadline has subsided and now seems highly unlikely since top Medicare officials announced in March that there was no need to extend the deadline. The May 15 deadline does not apply to people who celebrate their 65th birthdays after the enrollment period ends. They will be able to sign up for the drug benefit when they become Medicare eligible. Seniors without comparable drug insurance who delay enrolling in a Part D plan will pay for waiting, as monthly premiums will increase by



sandy praeger

- insurance comm.

1 percent of the national average of premiums for each month they wait to sign up and they'll go without coverage until next year.

Those with comparable coverage (i.e. through a retirement program) will not have a penalty assessed if they wait to sign up. The enrollment period for coverage in 2007 begins Nov. 15.

The daunting task of sorting through all of the red tape and multiple choices of the new federal drug plan has made the decision a bit overwhelming for Kansas seniors. The new drug plans can be confus-

ing, and education is the key to selecting the right plan.

Some key things to remember about the Medicare Part D program:

1. Everyone on Medicare can get drug coverage regardless of income or health.
2. It is not mandatory that you sign up.
3. To get coverage, you must choose one of the private drug plans that Medicare has approved.
4. If you have limited income and qualify for "extra help" you will pay very little.
5. If you have good drug coverage from another source (i.e. an employer), you may not need the new benefit, but it's wise to check.

There are several sources which Kansas seniors, looking for an ob-

jective overview of the various plans, can visit or call:

- Visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE.
- SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling of Kansas) has counselors available to answer questions and help with enrollment. To locate a SHICK counselor in your area, call 1-800-860-5260.
- Consumer Assistance Representatives at the Kansas Insurance Department are also on hand to answer questions and may be reached by calling (800) 432-2484 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

matters of record

Municipal Court
These are cases decided by the Goodland Municipal Court:

April 10: Brenna Markson, Aurora, Colo., run stop sign, fined \$76. Robert D. Russell, improper turn, fined \$76.

Louis Box, Arapahoe, Colo., improper handicap parking, fined \$86.

April 12: Shannon D. Bulter, amended speeding 33/30, fined \$80.

Wendy F. Huthansel, amended speeding 33/30, fined \$102.

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April 26th, from 3-5 pm.
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