

Colby College grad receives national nod

Colby Community College graduate Jerry L. Robben is receiving national recognition by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) for his research in cataract prevention.

Robben, who graduated from Colby Community College in May 2003, will be a presenter at the 2005 ARVO annual meeting to be held May 1-5 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

A Sharon Springs native, Robben is majoring in biochemistry at Kansas State University. Biochemistry is considered by many to be the most difficult major in the biomedical sciences at KSU. Graduates of the program typically have the equivalent of a minor in chemical engineering or chemistry in addition to biochemistry.

Robben currently works in the lab for Dr. D. Takemoto. He has completed a project which resulted in the prevention of hydrogen peroxide induced cataract formation and will provide the basis for further work on gene therapy in lens.

In addition to his lab work and studies, Robben is also a DJ for private parties and weddings in the Manhattan area.

Robben was enrolled in Colby College's biology and microbiology classes taught by longtime instructor Vernon Wranosky.

"Jerry is a representative of many local students who found a field of interest during their education at Colby Community College," said Wranosky.

"He willingly acknowledges the importance of our dedication to the completion of individual student goals. Colby College's faculty's goals and aspirations for the young people of northwest Kansas are reflected by this fine young man because of his education, ethical and work values," Wranosky said.

Robben has applied for admission to the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago.

He is the son of Tammy and Randy Robben of Sharon Springs and the grandson of Jim and Judy Withers, also of Sharon Springs. Both Jim (class of '54) and Judie (class of '59) are graduates of Colby High School.

Truck accident sends driver to hospital

SELDEN — A single vehicle accident early Saturday morning sent a Nebraska man to the hospital.

Rene M. Alonzo, 34, Lexington, Neb. was westbound on U.S. Highway 383 about 4 a.m., when one of the wheels on the 2001 International semi-truck he was driving left the right side of the roadway. The accident occurred 6.3 miles west of the junction of U.S. 83 and U.S. 383 near Selden.

According to a report filed by Trooper Gerald Stritt of the Kansas Highway Patrol, Alonzo lost control of the truck when he overcorrected. The truck came to rest on its right side in the north ditch.

Alonzo, who was wearing a seatbelt, was transported to the Sheridan County Health Complex in Hoxie for treatment of possible injuries.

Wheat deal with Cuba announced

GARDEN CITY (AP) — State officials have announced a \$3.5 million trade deal with Cuba involving more than 25,000 metric tons of Kansas wheat.

The deal, reached late last week and announced Friday, includes 10,000 metric tons from the Garden City Co-Op, with the rest of the grain being shipped from Wichita and Salina.

"We're excited a new market is opening," said John McClelland, manager of the cooperative. "There's just a lot of optimism right now in southwest Kansas."

Lt. Gov. John Moore said Cuban officials requested that part of the 125,000-metric-ton purchase from the United States include Kansas wheat.

"We will continue to pursue this as a market plan for Kansas," Moore said outside Garden City Co-Op as a grain truck was being filled with wheat.

But, he said, U.S. restrictions need to be lifted in order to increase trade with the communist country in the future.

For a good cause



Dewey Augustine, one of the Lube-A-Thon coordinators (background) and another helper took part in the annual event Saturday, which raised more than \$2,000 toward the Dennen Field Project.

County commissioners have board seats to fill

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners are looking for a few people to serve on two different boards. The commissioners discussed the matter at their Monday meeting.

They received a letter of resignation from Sheriff Mike Baughn who was one of three county appointees to the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance board of directors. Baughn resigned due to his election as sheriff.

Chairman Ron Evans said anyone living in District 3 can contact commissioner Ken Christian for more information.

They also need a replacement for the board of zoning appeals because Lyle Saddler's term ended. Evans said anyone interested can contact County Clerk Shelly Harms.

The commissioners also heard a presentation on the Thomas County Health Department from administrator Juanita Dewey.

She gave a run down on all the services the department offers, as well as the facilities and upgrades that have been done.

Dewey said the filing system has been revamped and now meets privacy standards.

The health department also offers lab testing services.

"We've had a good response, two

to three people every day," she said.

They also discussed changing the locks on several of the courthouse doors.

Harms had a proposal from Colby Glass for five locks and 40 keys for \$350, which the commissioners approved. She said they also submitted the cost of keyless entry, which would cost almost \$1,500 per door.

On the subject of building maintenance, courthouse custodian Jenny Smith asked the commissioners if something could be done to fix the west basement entrance. She said after rain or snow, water pools in that spot and there is nowhere for it to drain out.

Evans said they would ask Glenn Strait of Strait Associates Architects about it during his presentation on courthouse roof repairs. The commissioners decided to get Roofmasters Roofing to take digital pictures of the flashing and gutters on the roof to see what can be done and how much it could cost.

In other business the commissioners approved:

- Their meeting schedule for the year.
- Nex-Tech to install a firewall in the courthouse's AS400 system.
- The purchase of a diesel storage tank and pump for the county landfill.

Hearing in Hays will deal with schools' science standards

Anyone interested in learning more about science standards for Kansas schools can do so at a public hearing Tuesday in Hays.

Rick Reeser, St. Francis, is a member of the Kansas State Science Standards Committee appointed to the State School Board.

Reeser is encouraging all interested in the topic of science standards to attend.

The public hearing will take place starting at 7 p.m. at Hays High School on E. 13th Street. For more information, contact Reeser at (785) 332-3997 or at 890-7517.

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"Neighbors helping neighbors"

Teacher-student sex cases still showing up in Kansas

WICHITA (AP) — Nearly two dozen Kansas teachers have lost their certificates since 1998 amid allegations of inappropriate sexual contact with students or other children, records show.

Authorities attributed the prevalence of the cases to an increased awareness of the problem and a relatively new state law.

The 2001 law makes it a crime for a teacher to have consensual sex with a 16- or 17-year-old student. The "unlawful sexual relations" law was originally written to prevent prison guards from having sex with willing inmates, but teachers now are bound by it as well. A conviction can carry a sentence of five to seven months in prison.

Four school employees in Wichita have lost their jobs since November amid allegations of sexual contact with students. Of the three who have been charged, two were charged under this law. The investigation continues into a fourth man.

"It used to be that a 16-year-old could have sex with a school-

teacher," said Lt. Roy Mitchell of the Wichita/Sedgwick County Exploited and Missing Child Unit. "While it was in poor taste, it was not a crime. Now it is."

But even before the law was passed, the State Board of Education always made it a policy to revoke the license of any teacher caught having sexual contact with a student, said board attorney Kevin Ireland.

State records show that since 1998, the state has taken action in 22 cases where Kansas teachers lost their licenses or were denied a new license because they had been convicted of sex crimes involving children.

He said a handful of those cases involved teachers in Missouri or Oklahoma who also had licenses to teach in Kansas.

Though troubling, the number of cases came as no surprise to experts.

"It's aberrant behavior, but it's not aberrant in terms of what's happening across the country," Kansas State University professor Bob Shoop said.



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