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Wichitan earns 44 ribbons

Just call her Sedgwick County's canning queen

By Nancy D. Borst

The number of entries in the open class at last month's Sedgwick County Fair was not what it used to be, but don't blame Paula Webb.

Webb, who lives in Wichita, is a prolific entrant in a category that is something of a dying art. Her canned and preserved fruits and vegetables are perennial winners. The shelves at this year's fair included her carrots, dill pickles, apples (to name a few) and all kinds of jellies and butters.

More specifically, Webb won 44 top ribbons for canning, including four champions, and seven second place ribbons. Her apple jelly was named grand champion.

She acknowledges that canning fresh fruits and vegetables is an art that has declined in popularity. But it's one she enjoys. And preparing her own foods allows her to make healthier choices than store-bought canned goods, such as limiting the amount of salt.

She has cultivated a garden since her children were young (they now are ages 30 and 33). She was active in 4-H as a child and grew up on a farm. She chose to be a stay-at-home mother and came to canning and preserving, well, by prayer.

"One day I was feeling sorry for myself," she said. "I prayed, 'What can I do (to feel better)?'"

She said the answer she got was to take her cooking skills to the next level. She began to can more of the fresh food from her garden and she was able to involve her children, Mark and Lenora. Today, both of them still enjoy cooking.

"I do it to glorify God," she said of her canning and preserving.

So what is her secret? She doesn't have one, really. She said for the most part, she simply follows instructions on packages of pectin or those that come with canning jars such as Ball. Some of her butters come from cookbook recipes. She has tinkered with things a bit over the years but admits she doesn't have anything she'd call an original recipe.

She also enters baked goods and clothing at the fair and they do equally well.

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Focusing in on a single bloom makes the everyday flowers in your garden an eye-popping picture. Learn more about making the most of your digital photography with Digital Answers on page 14.

Photo by Ted Blankenship

It's not just the youngsters going back to school

By B.D. Tharp

If you think school is just for children, think again. As children of all ages wind down the summer and begin preparing for the new school year there are some seniors in the community who are doing the same. Whether they are a part of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) sponsored by the Sedgwick County Department on Aging, or Foster Grandparents sponsored by Catholic Charities, or a new program called Bigs in Schools, a partnership between Big Brothers/Big

Sisters and RSVP – they are counting the days until school starts.


The Foster Grandparents program had 145 volunteers last year in over 70 sites like elementary and middle schools, preschools, church day cares, Rainbows United, homeless shelters, and the Wichita Children's home.

"It's a hands on, interactive program where the volunteer works directly with students who need a little extra help or attention," said Teresa Kunze, Director of Catholic Charities Communications.

"Last year 108,209 hours of help was provided to approximately 4,000 children in the community," said Lyndon Drew, Director of Foster Grandparents. "The volunteers work 15 to 40 hours per week and lower income seniors receive a small stipend to help off set expenses."

Lee, a retired teacher, has been a part of the Foster Grandparent's program for the past five years. "I worked at Lincoln Elementary for two years, then Chisholm

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Kansas Trivia

What major automobile manufacturer was a Kansan? Answer on Page 28.

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Where to call

Do you have questions about services available for older people? Call the information and referral number for the Department on Aging in your county for assistance.

Wichita..... 660-5120

Sedgwick County outside of Wichita phone exchanges toll-free 1-800-367-7298

Harvey County284-6880 or toll free 1-800-750-7993

Butler County.....775-0500 or toll free 1-800-279-3655

Also, look for information on programs and services on the web at www.cpaaa.org

Volunteer programs tap senior's experience for the classroom

Continued from page one

Trail the past three years," she said. "They call me Grandma Lee." She has seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild so when a child asks if she is "really a grandma" she can truthfully answer, yes. "I taught school for 29 years total, first in Nebraska, then Arkansas for 17 years, and then Wichita," Lee said. "I still keep in touch with my students."

She has developed a good relationship with the teacher and principal so she'll know what needs to be done. "I help the children who need it," she said. Lee will take a child into the library and work on whatever subject or problem they are struggling with. "I use creative teaching, like clay or letter cards. Or we draw pictures," she said. Occasionally she calls upon her knowledge of Spanish and German numbers, to show the student the association between the symbols of what they say and what is in their head. Lee is also learning numbers in Chinese.

"Some of the children may be in abusive situations, disabled or have short attention spans," Lee said. "I also know

how to work with the gifted and talented students." Children's education and care has been a focus for the majority of Lee's life and she has no plans to stop now.

Once a month the Foster Grandparents attend an in-service where they have speakers, educational programs and entertainment. "They try to give some information to us that is helpful," Lee said.

Catholic Charities strives to match up the foster grandparent to the location or need as well as the senior's capabilities.

The Bigs in Schools is a new program that just started the spring of 2008. "We are only in three schools so far," said Teresa Hatfield, RSVP Program Manager. Bigs is a great program for seniors who don't have a lot of time to spare. It's a mentoring program for all grades where the volunteer meets with the student one hour per week. "It's more relaxed than tutoring and gives the student a connection, someone to talk to," said Teresa. "We usually partner the older adults with elementary children."

RSVP receives some federal funding through the Corporation of National

Community Service (CNCS) and has over 600 volunteers on roll in 80 different non-profit organizations in Sedgwick County. Many are at work in places like the Red Cross, Kansas Aviation Museum, and Kansas Humane Society. Two elementary schools have been adopted by RSVP and the volunteers are busy collecting school supplies, making reading pillows with recycled materials, pencil pouches and chair back covers. Teresa Hatfield recommends you check the web site for Central Plains Area Agency on Aging (www.cpaaa.org) and click on "Get Involved".

"If you put in RSVP you'll see the

volunteer descriptions," Teresa said. Each job has different time and skill requirements, so you need to find out which one works best for you.

The needs are broad and vary from tutoring children to providing clerical assistance. There are also volunteer opportunities for persons who wish to work from their own home. For example, some volunteers make friendly phone calls; do crocheting, knitting, sewing, or woodworking. Call RSVP at 660-5134 to see what volunteer opportunities might work for you.

Opportunities abound to be a student

Seniors can also go back to the classroom as students. Opportunities encompass auditing classes to once-a-week lecture and workshop series.

Wichita State University, like all Kansas Regents institutions, offers free tuition (fees of \$3.60 per credit hour still apply) to adults over the age of 60 to audit (no credit) classes on a space available basis. Senior Citizen registration for the 2008 Fall Semester is August 26 from 8:15 am to 5 p.m in Jardine Hall on the WSU main campus. This registration is for classes offered on the main campus, west campus and south campus. For more information, call the Registrar's office at 316-978-3055.

Butler County Community College has a Life Enrichment Program offering eight-weeks of informational and entertainment programs in the fall and spring.

BCCC also offers a Golden Grizzly

Card that offers free tuition (fees still apply) to classes on a space-available basis. For more information, call the registrar's office at 316-321-3123, ext. 3123. More information is available at www.butlercc.edu. Links are under Life Enrichment and Community Education.

Bethel College in North Newton offers a Life Enrichment lecture series during the academic year. For more information www.bethelks.edu and follow the link to Convocation and Lecture Series under Community or call 316-283-2500.

Other learning opportunities include Adventures in Learning offered by the East Wichita Shepherd's Center. The Fall session will start in September. For schedule and course listing, call 682-0376. Shepherd's Center of West Wichita is planning a fall session at West Heights United Methodist Church. For schedule and course information call 721-2208.



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