



CANDY SIDE UP



Register/Bob Johnson

Four-year-old Tasha Vanderman helps her dad, Kenneth Vanderman, fill plastic eggs with candy for an Easter egg hunt at Riverside Park Easter Sunday.

Churches ready for egg hunt

By **BOB JOHNSON**
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About 40 volunteers, mostly members of youth groups from First Assembly of God and Fellowship Regional churches, filled 8,000 plastic eggs with factory wrapped candy Wednesday evening.

The eggs will be scattered about Riverside Park's picnic area for a 2 p.m. Easter Sunday event sponsored by the two churches.

The Easter egg hunt has grown each year, to the point this year the second church, Fellowship Regional, joined

as a partner. Games and food booths will be a part of the celebration. Door prizes, donated by community members, will include tricycles, bicycles, an iPod and gift certificates.

Assembly of God pastor
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Baker 'pulls out all the stops' for music

By **STEVEN SCHWARTZ**
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It takes a skilled operator to make a booming pipe organ sound like music.

Ron Baker, the new chief executive officer of Allen County Hospital, will be a guest musician at First Christian Church on Palm Sunday. He has nearly 40 years of experience on the keys — a passion that he has followed since he began high school.

"Back in the 1960s, we were still in the era when people were pushing music lessons for kids," Baker said.

Baker and his sister began playing the piano in elementary school, taking lessons from Marlene Lenski. He said the competitive nature between the two drove him to try the organ, a different instrument that could show he could be just as talented as his sibling. After playing some Sundays at the Lutheran Church in Humboldt, where Baker grew

up, he was hooked on the organ.

"I got to the point that I enjoyed it more than the piano," he said.

He then began taking lessons from Marjorie Gard, an experienced organist who saw the potential in the young Baker. As a senior in high school, Gard set up an audition for Baker with the chair of the organ department at the University of Kansas, James Moeser — who later became dean of the music school. Moeser was so impressed he accepted the young Baker into the program for the fall of 1974.

"That lasted about a week," Baker said laughing. "What happened is I really got cold feet."

Baker transferred from

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Ron Baker

Senate budget keeps increased sales tax

By **JOHN MILBURN**
Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas senators gave first-round approval Wednesday to their version of the next state budget, including language that would require legislative approval before the state could expand Medicaid coverage.

The bill, which would spend \$14 billion in each of the next two fiscal years, was debated

for more than five hours. Final action is set for today, which would set the stage for negotiators to work out differences with the House over spending.

"We always have to weigh the decisions. We really are weighing priorities through this," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Ty Masterson, an Andover Republican.

Senators included a provi-

sion in the budget bill that leaves open the possibility of Kansas taking a federal offer to expand Medicaid health care coverage, but only if legislators give Republican Gov. Sam Brownback their consent. Brownback has opposed the federal health care act but has said his administration was looking at all options.

Senate President Susan

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New business brings variety to Iola

By **ALLISON TINN**
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There is a new business in town and it's providing a mix of services.

The Phone Shoppe is a cell phone store, which provides nationwide prepaid cellular plans through Page Plus.

Located at 110 East St., it is owned and operated by Iola newcomer Danny Brown.

Brown also wears another hat. He is a bail bondsman and plans to open a bail bonds office at the same location with a large wall separating the two businesses.

Brown, who has been a bail bondsman for seven years, has

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Register/Allison Tinn

Iola newcomer Danny Brown has opened the Phone Shoppe at 110 East St. In addition to the cell phone business, Brown is a bail bondsman.

Ultramarathoners ready, rain or shine

By **STEVEN SCHWARTZ**
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The forecast for Saturday's Prairie Spirit Trail ultramarathon is 40 degrees with a 20 percent chance of rain and snow — a fact that has only increased registrations.

We're not talking about ordinary people here.

"We actually had a couple more people sign up after the forecast was released, and had a couple more decided to bump up to the longer distance," said Eric Steele, race organizer.

This year is the inaugural event for the trail, and 138



people had signed up as of Wednesday afternoon. Steele said he expected only about half as many participants. There are 21 states represented by the runners.

"We are really excited about what we have going for a first-year event," he said.

Steele said he and his organizers, who run Epic Ultras,

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Water restrictions lifted

Based on recent snow and rainfall, the city of Iola has moved from a stage 2 water warning to a stage 1 water watch until further notice.

City administrator Carl Slaugh said the water levels have been high enough in area rivers that the water supply has not been coming from John Redmond Reservoir. The Neosho River Basin Water Assurance District said the water levels were sufficient to lift the warning.

Under stage 1 watches, there are no restrictions on what part of the day people may use water outside of their home (washing cars, watering lawns, etc.).

While no restrictions are in

place, the city still urges citizens to make good use of their water and conserve when possible.

Slaugh said the stage 1 watch will most likely not change during the spring months, based on yearly averages of rainfall.

"It'll be several months before we are likely to get a change," Slaugh said. "There normally aren't any concerns until mid or late July."

He said the city of Iola will post information on water quality and usage on the city's website.

Iola has received 4.07 inches of precipitation for 2013, as of today. Just under half an inch has accumulated in the month of March.



Obituary

Carroll Bland 
Carroll E. Bland, 66, Iola, died Tuesday, March 19, 2013, at Indian Meadows Healthcare Center in Overland Park. Carroll was born May 25, 1946, in Ayr, Neb., the son of William Marion and Juanita (Wright) Bland. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. Carroll married Joyce Munsen and they later divorced. He resided in Iola the past 15 years and worked as a carpenter. Survivors are two

sons, Troy Bland and wife Regina and Todd Bland and wife Tonya, Iola; two brothers and two sisters; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by three brothers. Cremation has taken place. Memorial services will be later. Waugh-Yokum & Friskel Memorial Chapel, Iola, assisted the family. Online condolences for the family may be left at www.iolafuneral.com.

★ Shoppe

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already been providing bond services in Allen County. “I have certain rules about who I will bond,” Brown said. Brown is originally from Buffalo, Mo., and has been in Iola only since January. He decided to open a cell phone service here after a friend introduced him to the business. “It’s a good way to help people save money,” Brown said. “I switched two years ago. It saves a lot of money.” The Phone Shoppe offers plans from as low as \$12 and up to \$69 a month. There is no credit check and no contract. A customer buys a phone and pays a monthly charge to keep the phone on. Customers can keep existing phone numbers and if they

have a Verizon phone they don’t have to buy a new one. The phone plans include talk, text and data plans. When he arrived in Iola Brown said he was surprised to find that there weren’t any bail bond offices being advertised. Soon he will have both businesses up and running but said “getting everything started at once is hard.” Also surprising Brown was Iola’s activity and economy. “I am impressed to see how busy the square is,” he said. Brown said where he is from businesses have shut down and there isn’t much opportunity for employment. For more information contact brown at (620) 380-6181.

★ Budget

Continued from A1
gle, a Wichita Republican, said other states were finding creative ways to expand Medicaid without draining state resources and such moves deserved consideration before closing the door on the federal offer. Both House and Senate bills would spend some \$14 billion — \$6 billion in general state revenues and \$8 billion from federal and other sources — in each of the next two years, beginning July 1. The House took final action on its proposal Wednesday morning, approving it on a 68-55 vote, sending it to the Senate. One difference between House and Senate versions was the treatment of higher education. The House trimmed \$30 million from state

universities, community colleges and technical schools through a 4 percent reduction. Senators are seeking a 2 percent cut, roughly \$15 million. Balancing the House budget depends heavily upon passage of a tax bill, which received first-round approval Wednesday. The task was made more difficult when the bill was amended to remove a \$382 million transfer from transportation programs over the next two years. House GOP leaders were confident the two plans would come together. “It’s something that we’ve been working for,” said House Speaker Ray Merrick, a Stilwell Republican. “At last we’re cutting budgets and trying to save the taxpayers some money.” Both chambers’ pro-

posals closely follow a budget for spending on K-12 education, social
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— House Speaker Ray Merrick
”
services and public safety presented by Brownback. One exception is the deletion by the House for \$3.5 million in funding for a new Kansas Bureau of Investigation lab to be built at Washburn University in Topeka. Senators kept money

for the lab in the budget, aimed at helping the KBI reduce a backlog of forensic evidence waiting to be processed. For public schools, the Senate would increase state aid by \$14 per pupil in 2014, raising it to \$3,852. That increase is made possible by another part of the bill that calls for moving the cost of providing school transportation services — \$96.6 million — to the Department of Transportation. The House plan keeps base aid at \$3,838 per student. The Senate plan would be funded in part through revenues raised by a tax proposal already approved by the chamber. That plan leaves the sales tax rate at 6.3 percent, as it has been since 2010, instead of dropping to 5.7 percent as scheduled on July 1.

★ Marathon

Continued from A1
have been pushing advertisement for the race for several months. Normally a bad forecast would deter people from signing up for a race. But, Steele said the ultramarathoners are a different breed. There are 50-mile and 100-mile distances for Saturday’s race. It begins in Ottawa, follows the trail down to Iola and then back to Ottawa. He said the weather provides its own unique challenges for the race

organizers, as well as the racers. The aid stations will have propane heaters and tarps for the racers to warm up, along with the normal supply of drinks and food for energy. “There’s a greater magnitude of responsibilities for a race like this,” Steele said. Regardless of any challenges, he said the



Eric Steele

runners will be ready. More than half of the people signed up are ultramarathon first-timers. “The people that have climbed into the deep psychological aspect are getting pretty pumped about it,” Steele said with a laugh. The race will start promptly at 6 a.m. on Saturday from Ottawa for the 100-milers, and 8 a.m. for the 50-milers. He said for those looking to cheer on the runners, they will be running through Garnett between 10 a.m. and 2

p.m., and then up to Iola between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The runners have 30 hours to complete the 100-mile portion and 28 hours to complete the 50-mile portion. Rain or shine, it is going to be a long day for the runners. But, he hopes the race will go as smoothly as possible — to reflect the hard work of the organizers. “We are really passionate and driven to put on the best event we can,” Steele said. “We have been working our butts off for the past couple of weeks.”

Obama offers assurances during Israel visit

By EDMUND SANDERS and CHRISTI PARSONS
Tribune Washington Bureau
JERUSALEM — In a much-anticipated visit laden with symbols of friendship and words of assurance, President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attempted to set aside past differences Wednesday and project a united front over how to tackle the threat of Iran’s purported nuclear weapons program and other regional challenges. But even as they tried to strike a more conciliatory tone, the two leaders stuck to sharply different timetables for potentially taking military action. Obama said Iran was at least a year away from developing a nuclear bomb, while Netanyahu warned that the Islamic Republic must be stopped sooner. Nevertheless, the men displayed a measure of personal rapport that has been lacking in previous encounters, with Obama offering a tribute to Netanyahu’s slain brother that nearly moved the

prime minister to tears. And though there appeared to be no substantive change in their positions, Netanyahu offered one of his strongest statements yet of confidence in Obama’s commitment to Israel’s security. “I’m absolutely convinced that the president is determined to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons,” Netanyahu said, though he added his oft-stated declaration that Israel reserves the right to defend itself. Reassuring Netanyahu, and, perhaps more important, the Israeli public, is a major goal of the trip, whose official slogan is “Unbreakable Alliance.” Obama called the U.S. commitment to Israel’s security a “solemn obligation” and said his administration would ensure that \$200 million earmarked for Israel’s Iron Dome missile defense system this year would not be threatened by U.S. budget cuts. “We will do what is necessary to prevent Iran from getting the world’s worst weapons,” he said. “Israel’s security is guar-



Ahikam Seri/AA/Abaca Press/MCT

President Barack Obama is welcomed by Israeli President Shimon Peres, left, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a ceremony at the Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, Israel, on Wednesday.

anteed because it has a great deal on its side, including the unwavering support of the United States of America.” He vowed to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge in the Middle East so it can “defend itself, by itself, against any threat.” The two agree that Iran should not be allowed to develop a nuclear bomb and that military force might be necessary to stop it. But there is a long-standing dispute between them

over exactly when to set the deadline for a military strike. Netanyahu, who last year challenged Obama to publicly announce his “red line” for Iran, seeks an earlier deadline so Israel might still have the option to launch a unilateral attack in the event the U.S. does not take action. “Whatever time is left, there’s not a lot of time,” he said Wednesday. With its superior weapons capabilities and mili-

tary, the U.S. believes it can wait longer, and Obama wants to give economic and diplomatic sanctions more time. In one of the lighter moments of the president’s welcoming ceremony at Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv, Obama was momentarily unsure of which direction

to walk and was told to follow red lines marked on the tarmac. “He’s always talking to me about red lines,” Obama joked, referring to Netanyahu’s warning. Despite the leaders’ lingering differences, concern about a unilateral Israeli strike has receded in recent months, partly because Iran has buried many of its nuclear facilities so deep that they will be difficult for Israel to reach by itself. In addition, after Israel’s national election in January, Netanyahu is weaker politically. His new defense minister, Moshe Yaalon, has voiced skepticism about Israel striking Iran without U.S. support. Another shared concern is the growing unrest in Syria, which borders Israel, and allegations that the embattled government of President Bashar Assad has used chemical weapons against its population.

Rain likely

Tonight, rain likely in the evening, then rain likely, possibly mixed with freezing drizzle and sleet after midnight. Lows near 30. East winds 5 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 60 percent. Friday, cloudy. A slight chance of rain, freezing drizzle and sleet in the morning, then a slight chance of rain in the afternoon. Highs near 40. Northeast winds 5 to 10 mph.



Temperature		Precipitation	
High yesterday	44	24 hours ending 7 a.m.	0
Low last night	29	This month to date	.44
High a year ago	58	Total year to date	4.07
Low a year ago	52	Def. since Jan. 1	.46



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St. Timothy's 1st Annual Chicken & Noodles By-The-Quart Sale
Sat., Mar. 23
9-11 a.m.
~ \$7 PER QUART ~
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
202 S. Walnut, Iola (south door)
365-7306
Donations go to St. Timothy's Community Outreach Program



You're Invited
to join us this
Sunday, March 24
during our
Morning Worship
beginning at
11 a.m.
JANET NICHOLS & LLOYD HOUK
will be our guests
providing special
music during service.
Trinity United Methodist Church
Broadway & Kentucky St.




Palm Sunday Evening at First Christian Church
1608 Oregon Rd., Iola
5:30 p.m.
Enjoy the Musical Talent of Ron Baker on the Organ
6 p.m.
First Christian Church Choir presents
The Easter Cantata, 'Because He Lives'
Join us for an evening of worship in song & music.
