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Crime rates drop in last decade

In 2012, 31 personal crimes were reported in Liberal, down nearly 4 percent from 2011 and more than half from 2006. In 2006, more than 1,200 property crimes were reported to the LPD, and despite a slight rise in 2012 with 657 last year, that number has also been reduced by half in the last six years.

By MORRY PRICE
• Leader & Times

In the middle part of the last decade, Liberal's crime rate was high, so much so by the 5th half the distinction of having the 2nd highest level of per capita crime in the state per capita.

"Through no one's own fault, we had a reputation of attracting some politics-driven ACLU-led civil rights lawsuits over the creation of Vice," The Liberal Police Department Chief Morry Price responded to annual reports and while the report showed a drop in the statistics, one thing it does not compute is one of the biggest complaints in the community: the rubber stickers - for number of times the Liberal Police arrested in 2012.

"We have over the years, over the new programs aimed towards traffic violations," Dill said. "We have written a lot. We generally give quite a number of traffic violations."

Dill said the department has a lot of Liberal officials buying equipment such as traffic signals and signs to tickets and questioned.

In 2012, 1,000 traffic accidents were reported in Liberal in 2012, with 58 injury accidents. Compared to 2011, non-injury accidents were down nearly 12 percent, and injury accidents were down nearly 5 percent.

Injury accidents did rise a little, with 4.5 percent increase from 2011, but overall, those numbers have decreased from the 2006 peak of 1,200 accidents. LPD is going to eliminate as many accidents as possible.

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CHIEF DILL

from China to Oz

Casandra Norin moves halfway around the world to take position as children's librarian

By MICHAEL COLEMAN
• Leader & Times

Casandra Norin is all about fun. Eight and a half years of teaching English to Chinese school children in Shanghai, China, has taught her fun and outdoor activities. Living halfway around the world from her husband and 10-year-old daughter hasn't stopped the smile from her face.

Norin arrived in Liberal less than a month ago to take on duties as the children's librarian at Liberal Memorial Library's Children's Room and training. The new Thursday-night program for parents and children, "Family Time Library," is her brainchild. Norin said the program is for one more time, 37 children come with their parents. The group spent an hour playing with educational toys.

"I don't think learning even has to be learning," Norin said. "We took all the furniture out of the room and we had a blast. We had a lot of fun and got down on the floor to play with the kids."

Having spent most of the last decade visiting and teaching in Shanghai, Norin said she knew about Kansas, from what she expects the heat

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McElroy takes over long-time local mortuary

By MORRY PRICE
• Leader & Times

In 1937, L.A. Miller owned a funeral home in Liberal and until 1992 the mortuary continued to operate under the name Miller Mortuary.

That year Miller's grandson, Homer Miller, resold all the business to Jim Kauffman. Kauffman continued to serve the community as the owner of Miller Mortuary until he died in 2011.

Kauffman's widow, Nola, kept the business open but sold it in 2012 to Jim Kauffman's son-in-law and daughter's husband, Jeff Miller. Kauffman's son-in-law, Jeff Miller, becomes the official owner.

Miller, a 2002 graduate from Liberal High School and retired mortuary in Dallas, where he would receive an associate of science degree in mortuary arts from the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service.

While in mortuary school, McElroy was a director assistant at Rainbow Funeral Home in Dallas. He also was a director assistant in a nation serving about 5,000 families a year.

McElroy would have seen his apprenticeship at Miller Mortuary in Liberal, which is 20 miles from the Oklahoma and Texas borders in southwest Kansas.

McElroy said serving at the larger funeral home in Dallas was a great experience, but he would even funeral direction back get to work.

"For the most part, it can be a lot darker, more dark and dreary in a big city than in a community such as Liberal." With a small operation, we do it all. I'll do anything from embalming to the dressing of the rest and to meeting the

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Rose McElroy stands near the sign in front of Miller Mortuary at 904 N. Lincoln in Liberal. McElroy recently purchased the funeral home from the Kauffman family. He also runs a Shelter Insurance agency in town, and he said he will remain active in both businesses. | staff photo/Leader & Times

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DINOSAURS INVADING LIBERAL
After a million year absence, dinosaurs are returning to Liberal and will remain for a while.
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