

# Book Aid seeks to expand learning opportunities in Africa

**KENYAN MAKING  
APPEALS ACROSS  
REGION**

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**SUPERIOR** — In Kenya, the government provides free primary education, but parents have to pay for a child's high school education, a native Kenyan explained as he visited here with members of the Superior Pawnee Computer Society last week. Kimathi William, founder and president of Book Aid Foundation, Kenya, said that was why he was seeking mostly high school level books in his appeals to churches and schools in south central Nebraska. It costs about \$250 to send a child to a high school in Kenya



William

for one year, William said. Since the average person only makes about \$1 per day, a family can't afford the cost of books on top of the basic fee. William said he was seeking books on subjects like biology, physics and chemistry, which don't change, as well as encyclopedias and other reference books. The books he collects are given to schools, which lend them to the students for the term or place them in libraries. Books that are being discarded in high school classrooms or libraries in this country still have value in Kenya, he said. The Evangelical Free Church in Grand Island is serving as a collection site for books for Book Aid. The telephone number is (308) 382-1398. William also is seeking story books for elementary students, and works of fiction for high school. Of the 19,000 primary schools in Kenya, just 3 percent have a bookstore, let alone a library, he said.

"Children don't read for leisure, or to gain knowledge," he said. "They read to pass examinations." William arrived in Nebraska during the March blizzard. "I wondered what I had gotten into," he said. "Nobody could meet me, and I had to spend a couple of days in Omaha before I could go to Grand Island." He had planned to team up with Larry Yost of the Superior Pawnee Computer Society on a fundraising tour that would benefit Book Aid, Kenya, and the SPCS project to send reconditioned computers to Kenya's neighbor, Southern Sudan. Because Yost is ill, they have postponed that trip for a few months. Meanwhile, William has been speaking to churches in Grand Island and Kearney, where he said he was receiving positive responses. In addition to appealing for books, he is seeking funds to help transport them to Africa. Books are shipped in 20-foot

containers, which will hold about 2,500 books. The cost for shipping a container is about \$5,500, which is slightly more than \$2 per book. "It's worth it," he said. "We get at least eight years of use from a book." William will leave this week for Annapolis, Md., where he will meet with Steve Frantzych, professor of political science at the U.S. Naval Academy. Frantzych is president of Books for International Good Will, which is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Parole, Md. This will be their first meeting, although Book Aid, Kenya has received some of the books Frantzych's organization has collected. Thousands of secondary schools in Kenya have no functional libraries, William said. Book Aid has programs in about 250 of them. The group begins by lobbying and advocating the benefits of a library in a school, then helps

set up a small room with an encyclopedia, dictionary and atlas as a starting point. As books become available, the library expands. In February, Book Aid launched a project to set up Web sites for the schools in their program. Some schools have only one computer; others may have up to 20. With the Web sites, the group will be able to share materials, so that one computer resource will serve all of the schools. To date, William said, Web sites have been completed for five schools. Across the country, Book Aid also supports about 20 students whose parents can't afford to send them to school. "It's a beginning," he said. When William was in school (he now is 29), elementary students also had to pay fees, he said. His family was able to send him. "My grandparents lived in a farming community, and my parents had gone to school," he said.

After high school, he enrolled in the University of Technology in Capetown, South Africa, where he studied library science. While there, he wrote a paper on developmental information centers in Kenya, exploring how it would be possible to establish centers at the village level without the expense of a building. Once back in Kenya, he volunteered in the Nairobi Hospice program and soon found himself setting up a library for them. After a year with hospice, he said, he got "back on track" and in September of 2002 got some friends together to start Book Aid Trust, as it was known then. They chose to begin their libraries in school buildings, since most of them had electricity, they would be secure, and the African people could use them. Book Aid headquarters are in Nairobi, with four branch offices. Today the organization employs 14 people and has more than 60 volunteers.

## State

### WINDY WEATHER

Strong wind gusts from a South Dakota snowstorm knocked out power in parts of the Nebraska Panhandle Wednesday and left trails of damage throughout western and central Nebraska, officials said. Downed power lines caused outages in several areas in the northwest section of the Panhandle, said Les Tlustos, a spokesman for the Northwest Rural Public Power District in Hay Springs. Crews were working Wednesday morning to restore power, but the wind was doing more damage as older problems were being fixed, Tlustos said. "They're relentless right now," Tlustos said of the winds. The wind also cost the city of Chadron its power Wednesday morning, said Mark Miller, a spokesman for the Nebraska Public Power District, which serves the city. In the Rushville and Hay Springs areas in the Panhandle, gusts of up to 84 miles an hour turned over a mobile home, officials reported. The northern part of Sheridan County also got some of the South Dakota snowfall, with up to 2 inches expected by noon, said Kenny Roberg, a forecaster with the National Weather Service office in North Platte. *The Associated Press*

## Heart Walk planning meeting set

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Individuals and sponsors interested in helping out with this year's Hastings Area Heart Walk are invited to attend a planning meeting at noon Friday at the Comfort Inn in Hastings. The annual walk, which began locally in 2003, has been held both indoors and outdoors, said Lora Mead, Seward West regional director of the American Heart Association. Despite inclement weather, about 65 people participated in last year's outdoor walk around Lake Hastings and the YMCA, raising almost \$10,000 for heart research and education. This year's walk — which is slated to again be an outdoor event — has been pushed back one week to Nov. 11 in an

attempt to catch Hastings College students before they head out on Thanksgiving break, Mead said. "It's about a two-mile course," she said. "You can walk it as long as you want. Some people did it twice last year. It's a nice little exercise." For Mead, getting out the word about heart disease is a mission close to her own heart. Her brother, Jim, underwent triple by-pass surgery earlier this month. "I take this job very personally and passionately," she said. "It affects my family on both sides of the family." Over the last year, the Heart Association has funded more than \$3 billion in research grants in Nebraska, Mead said. Through its Go Red for Women movement and events like the

Heart Walk, the AHA continues to get the word out about just how close to home heart disease hits. Cardiovascular disease has killed more people in Nebraska than the next five causes of death combined, Mead said. Yet, cancer research receives seven times the funding from government and public sources, she said. Thanks to "Go Red," the word is beginning to get out concerning just how serious the threat of heart disease really is, she said. Since 2004, "Go Red" has managed to increase awareness from 18 percent to 45 percent nationwide that heart disease — not breast cancer — is the No. 1 risk to women. For information, call Mead at (308) 381-1099.

## Goodbye: Hastings teen dies of cancer

*Continued from page A6*

White said even after doctors told Matthew there was nothing more they could do to treat him, he continued to live life like he was going to live. He wanted to graduate from high school, he had a date and a limo arranged for his prom, and he even was talking to a college in Arizona about a program that would allow him to make use of his other love, music. The end came quickly. Matthew attended school Thursday, and White said he was still "running around being ornery" on Saturday. But on Sunday he grew ill, and was taken to Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital in Hastings. He later was transferred to

Omaha. He died of pneumonia. "One thing that kept Matt going strong as long as he did was the love of family, friends, music — just the love of life," White said. Services are 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Butler-Volland Funeral Home chapel in Hastings with the Rev. Jim Miller officiating. The junior class at Hastings High School will be honorary pallbearers, the family said. He will be buried in Wichita. Memorials are being accepted to help with medical and funeral expenses. Donations can be made at Hastings State Bank, P.O. Box 2178, Hastings, NE 68902-2178, specified for the Matthew Devin Donahue Memorial Fund.

## Dubois man to be arraigned in death


**The Associated Press**

**LINCOLN** — The state Attorney General's Office has filed a first-degree murder charge against a Dubois man in the death of a 75-year-old Pawnee City farmer. Patrick W. Schroeder, 28, also is charged with use of a deadly weapon to commit a felony and forgery. Schroeder, who has been in custody since Friday, is

suspected of writing checks on Albers' account. Albers died of blunt force trauma to the head. His body was recovered Friday from about 6 feet of water in an abandoned well on or near Albers' property. Because of a conflict of interest, Pawnee County Attorney Vic Faesser requested assistance from the Attorney General's Office.


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