

Back to school 'special' time for parents, students, commander says

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

It's that time of the year again — time to go back to school. With four children, I've done this a few times. It's always a special time of year.

I hope you've taken some time to enjoy the summer with your family. Take it easy this weekend and enjoy your family's company before life gets a little more hectic.

On Monday, Aug. 15, 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley Commanding General Maj. Gen. William Mayville will authorize time off during morning and afternoon for Soldiers to drop off and pick up students.

Make sure you check with your commander as well.

I'd like to see a few tips as you prepare to send your children back to school.

Now, I'm not necessarily an expert, but luckily we have some experts on post. Child Youth and School Services, Army Community Service, Kansas State University Research and Extension at Fort Riley and the Garrison Safety Office are all great organizations on post with resources I



Col. Clark

encourage you to use.

Let's start with preparing for the big day.

The transition from summer back to school can be a difficult one for some. Make sure to put a positive spin on going back to school. Talk to your children about what they are excited to learn about, what friends they are excited to see again.

And if your children are anxious, ensure them those feelings are normal, too.

Read any and all paperwork your children bring home. This often contains very important information for the school year. Also, make sure emergency contact infor-

mation is up to date.

Make sure you help your children get off to a good start — hit the books early. Don't let your children get behind in their school work. Ask about what they are learning.

Encourage healthy behavior by making sure children get enough sleep, eat healthy meals, get exercise and play time, and stay on a schedule. This will all help your child be a healthy student.

Now, what about safety?

As I've mentioned before, safety is one of my top priorities. You also may have read in last week's paper that Fort Riley Police Department began patrolling school zone areas

Aug. 9. As of Aug. 15, the first day of school, FRPD will begin issuing fines for those not obeying posted school zone speed limits, which are 20 mph. Please abide by these speed limits. After all, they are in place to protect our children. Remember that pedestrians have the right of way in cross walks — also abide by this regulation.

Parents: Ensure that your children, whether walking, biking, taking the bus or being dropped off at school, are being mindful of the traffic around them. I encourage you to read the safety article on page 5, which provides several tips to ensure our children ar-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CYSS - 785-239-4920
ACS - 785-239-9435
KSRE - 785-239-9931
GSO - 785-239-2514

rive to and from school safely. Also, remember Fort Riley schools are operated by our great community partner, Geary County Schools Unified School District 475. For more information, visit www.usd475.org.

If you would like to comment on this column or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, send an email to rlc.post.newspaper@com.us.army.mil.

Environmental concerns at Fort Riley topic at MRC

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Manhattan community leaders were informed Aug. 3 on what the Fort Riley Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division is and what they do during the monthly Manhattan Military Relations Committee luncheon at the Manhattan Country Club.

Shawn Stratton, lead wildlife biologist, Environmental Division, DPW, also informed the community leaders of the various recreational activities available to Soldiers, Families and the general public.

According to Stratton, the Department of Defense manages 30 million acres on 425 military installations across the U.S., with more than 100,000 of those acres being at Fort Riley.

Of those acres, more than 73,000 are open for public recreational use, with more than 64,000 acres being grassland. Areas not open for such use, include the impact area, Digital Multi-Purpose Range Complex and the cantonment areas.

"(DoD) has some of the most endangered ecosystems, along with 330 federally listed threatened and endangered species," Stratton said. "On Fort Riley, the big topic is the tall grass prairie. It is one of the most endangered ecosystems we have in North America."

Of the grasslands located at Fort Riley, about 67 percent is unbroken native tall grass prairie, he said. The training areas are primarily composed of grassland vegetation, with scattered wooded areas along ravines and low-lying areas.

At and near Fort Riley, there is more than 1,500 acres of wetlands including streams, rivers, ponds and a portion of Milford Lake.

Fort Riley's Environmental Division has a cooperative agreement with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and Tourism.

Because of this partnership, Fort Riley doesn't charge for a

fishing license, and in return, the wildlife and parks handles stocking Fort Riley's 29 recreational ponds, Stratton said. Anglers wishing to fish at Fort Riley are required to have a State of Kansas fishing license, however, and to follow the checking-in and checking-out procedures.

Fish stocked in Fort Riley's ponds include rainbow trout, largemouth bass, channel cats, crappie, blue gill and flat-head catfish.

Fort Riley also encompasses more than 13 miles of rivers and 130 miles of streams.

During his presentation, Stratton shared the Environmental Division's mission "to sustain an environment in compliance with the nation's mandates that effectively supports combat forces execution of their assigned mission" with the group.

The Environmental Division is comprised of the Pollution Prevention Branch, Restoration and Compliance Branch and Conservation Branch, Stratton said.

"The Conservation Branch involves culture resources, the archeology, the fish and wildlife, agronomy, pest management and forestry," he said.

Throughout the year, the Environmental Division handles brush control, prescribed burns, herpetological surveys, recreational pond management, river and stream management and eagle-banding activities.

To recreate at Fort Riley, visit the Environmental Division office, located in Building 407 on Main Post or the Outdoor Recreation Center, located in Building 9011 near the Forsyth neighborhood.

During this month's luncheon, Whitney Lukenbill was welcomed as the new military community liaison for the Manhattan MRC.

The next MRC will be Sept. 7 at the Clarion Hotel with retired Lt. Col. Art DeGroat, director of military affairs, Kansas State University, as the guest speaker.

MRC welcomes Lukenbill as new liaison

By Shandi Dix
1ST INF. DIV. POST

For the past three years, Whitney Lukenbill has played the role of military wife. As of June 27, Lukenbill has added the role of military community liaison for the Manhattan Military Relations Committee to her resume.

"While I might not have an extensive professional resume, I believe that I can bring a new energy to the Manhattan and Fort Riley communities," she said. "The bond between the two communities has grown and strengthened over the last few years, since this position was established at the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. I

want to keep that relationship strong, but also make Fort Riley, Manhattan and the (Central) Flint Hills Region a place where Soldiers and Families want to stay and come back to often."

Lukenbill said she wants to give Families a reason to go off post into Manhattan for military appreciation events and military discounts at local businesses or organizations.

"I am going to try and get the (Family readiness groups) and various clubs and organizations more involved in what Manhattan businesses have to offer their services," Lukenbill said. "The goal is to get the Families to experience Manhattan, with all it has to offer, and

through word-of-mouth, have Manhattan be the place Soldiers and Families come to do their shopping, eating, relaxing and a place to enjoy time with each other."

With Fort Riley's recent growth, Lukenbill said she believes Manhattan has grown as well in order to accommodate the influx of service members and their Families.

"There is very open communication between the two communities that allows us to better assist the Soldiers and Families. My ultimate goal is when a Soldier finds out they will be stationed at Fort Riley, instead of being disappointed, I want them to be excited. I love Kansas, and I want to help oth-

ers love Kansas, too."

Lukenbill and her husband, Capt. Chester Lukenbill, officer in charge, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, are from the Kansas City area, so it was nice to be stationed somewhere familiar, she said.

Lukenbill's education background includes a bachelor's of science degree from the University of Central Missouri. She also is an American Council on Exercise certified personal trainer.

While at UCM, Lukenbill played softball for four years. "It was there I learned the true meaning of teamwork

See LUKENBILL, page 13



Shandi Dix | POST

Dogs of all shapes and sizes cool off during the second annual Speedos and Fidos event Aug. 6 at Main Post Pool at Riley's Conference Center.

POOL Continued from page 11

Byler thought the event provided more than just a cool off for the dogs.

"I think it's pretty cool. It's

an opportunity for them not to only enjoy the water, but to meet other dogs in the neighborhood," she said.

PICERNE Continued from page 11

ilies in the pursuit of higher education, establishing a tradition of community service and encouraging professional career paths through education, internships and mentoring. The Foundation has awarded

more than \$3 million to date in scholarships and grants since 2006 and its volunteers have supported numerous community service projects throughout the country.