



COLBY FREE PRESS

Proper respect



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Colby Cub Scout Pack 140 learned about the disposal of old United States flags Tuesday night at City Hall. Don Phillips received a flag for disposal from Martin Selley. Other members of the detail pictured are Jarrett Marker and Shawn Phillips. Lynn Marker looked on. Members of the Colby Fire Department also assisted with burning the flags.

Storm coming

Goodland Weather Service offers safety tips with storm season at hand

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Although many of the people present at the National Weather Service presentation on severe storms were spotters or emergency workers, Kevin Lynott said everyone in Kansas needs to know about severe weather.

"Since 1950, there has been at least one tornado in every month except January, somewhere in Kansas," Lynott said.

Severe storm season is usually from late March until late August or early September, although October was northwest Kansas' busiest month last year.

"We had 16 tornadoes in October and 10 on Oct. 31," he said.

The Halloween outbreak also saw the largest tornado of the season, rated F2 by the weather service, with winds from 113-157 mph in Sherman County. Although it hit some abandoned farmsteads, no one was injured and property damage was relatively minor, according to Lynott.

No one was injured or killed in the storms last year, a statistic that Lynott said he wants to continue.

May is traditionally the highest month, with June following close behind and April and July also being busy.

Although flooding is rare on the high plains, it can happen, Lynott said. Flooding is usually the result of slow moving storms and saturated ground from earlier storms.

Some safety tips for severe storms offered by the weather service include:

- Keep a battery-operated weather radio available.
- In case of a tornado, go to the base-

Spotters training held here

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

A large number of emergency workers, storm spotters and others interested gathered at the Colby Community Building on Tuesday night for training on severe storms.

Kevin Lynott, from the National Weather Service's Goodland office, was on hand to inform the group about what to look for during severe storms, including tornadoes, gust fronts and other dangerous events.

He also stressed storm safety. "We don't want spotters, or the public, to put themselves in danger," he said.

Lynott explained different stages of thunderstorms and storm structure, along with visual identification methods important for accurate spotting of storms.

Spotters are more important as they get farther from the radar site. Lynott said the longer distances mean the radar is being sent to higher altitudes because of the horizon. "We don't see the lower altitudes at

long ranges," he said.

Also important is the spotters' ability to confirm what the radar and satellite imagery tells the weather service office.

"We can tell areas where tornadoes might form, but we can't see the tornadoes," he said. Spotters can also give the weather service and emergency responders better information on the size and scope of the tornado, as well as good information about gust fronts and other damaging straightline winds.

"Most of the damage assessment we do turn out to be straightline winds," Lynott said.

Spotters also keep the weather service informed about the size and severity of rainfall or hail.

Even in an age of technology, Lynott said trained storm spotters are an important asset to the weather service.

"The National Weather Service will always have storm spotters," he said.

ment or a small interior room. Avoid large open areas and windows.

• If caught in your car, don't try to outrun the storm. Leave the car and find a low place or ditch until the storm passes. Protect your head.

• Don't be caught outside in a lightning storm. If you can hear thunder within 30 seconds of seeing lightning, you are close enough to get hit.

• Avoid tall trees, poles or other solitary structures, stay inside, or get inside

a vehicle in case of lightning.

• Avoid telephones, televisions or other electrical items during a storm.

• Don't try to drive across flooded roadways, especially at night. It is hard to judge the depth or see if the road has been washed away. It only takes about a foot of running water to move a car off the roadway.

• Stay out of low areas during flooding. If your car stalls, leave it and seek higher ground.

Five candidates vying for three trustee positions at college

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

With the general election only days away, many of the candidates running for various positions have submitted information to the *Colby Free Press* about themselves. Beginning today, those candidates who have responded to the questionnaire will be highlighted.

In the first of this series, five people are vying for three positions on the Colby Community College board of trustees. They are Curt Stephens, Daryl Strecker, Cleona Flipse, Kenton Krehbiel and Thomas Hill.

Curt Stephens, 44, said if elected as a trustee, he would work toward a proactive approach to the development of college programs.

"Our college is an incredible resource and economic benefit to the community," he said. "We must strive to foresee future workforce needs and develop the educational resources to meet those needs."

According to Stephens, the growth and stability of the college is a critical piece in the future of Colby. "We need our enrollment to grow through expanded programs and commitment to



C. Stephens



D. Strecker



C. Flipse



K. Krehbiel



T. Hill

our scholarship programs," he said. In addition, Stephens said he believes the board needs to explore financial options that will equalize funding of the colleges across the state and bring local tax relief.

Stephens earned his associate degree at Colby College and bachelor's degree from Wichita State University. He is owner of Stephens Construction Inc., and is an area farmer. He and his wife, Jackie, have four children — Morgan, 12, Paige, 11, Corbin, 8 and Sydney, 3.

He is a member of the Rotary Club, Colby Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Community Liaison Group, 2000 Leadership Kansas graduate and 2001 Leadership

Kansas Selection Committee.

Daryl Strecker, 26, believes that Colby Community College is one of the biggest assets in town and northwest Kansas. He also said if elected as a trustee, he would like to promote the college more so kids grow up wanting to go to school here and more people know the college exists.

"I want students at the college to graduate with a good education and a good experience, which I think our college does well at both," he said.

Strecker graduated in 1999 with a master's in business administration degree from Fort Hays State University and being a recent graduate he believes he knows what students today want.

He completed his undergraduate work in 1997, majoring in finance. Strecker is currently employed as bookkeeper for Hi-Plains Co-op.

Cleona Flipse has served as a trustee for eight years and is seeking a third term. "I am very proud of Colby Community College, the contributions it makes to the community, the quality of its instructors and the programs it has in place," she said.

"We just had a board retreat which, among other things, we looked at short and long-term objectives we want to achieve," she said. One of the goals the board is currently working on is a tuition waiver for Thomas County High School graduates, aimed at increasing local enrollment, easing the burden of the costs of their education as well as their parents who are among the taxpayers supporting the college.

"We always must keep in mind the taxpayers when we make decisions regarding the cost of operating Colby

College and the educational benefits," she said. "I am running again as I would like to see these goals implemented and hopefully I can contribute to this process," she said.

Flipse and her husband, Bruce, together have six children and seven grandchildren. All of them attended and graduated from Colby High School.

She is a member of the Thomas County Bar and Kansas Bar Association, along with being a member of the Sorosis Club. Flipse has a bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University and juris doctorate from Washburn Law School. She currently practices law in Colby with her husband.

Kenton Krehbiel said he wants to help maintain Colby Community College as a valuable asset for the area. A 12-year veteran of the Board of Trustees, he said, "We have a very valuable asset and resource for our community and northwest Kansas (in the college)." Krehbiel added he would like to see that asset maintained for area people. Krehbiel, 51, is the postmaster in Goodland and has been working for the postal service for 25 years. He is also active in the Kiwanis Club as treasurer

for the Kiwanis Foundation.

He graduated from Brown-Mackie in Salina with a degree in business administration and lives in Colby with wife Sheila. They have two daughters, Sharon and Brenda.

Tom Hill said he wants Colby Community College to be the "go-to" school of the tri-state area.

"I believe my education as a non-traditional student gives me some insight to the education process that other candidates may not possess," he said. "I'd like to use these observations to help the college."

Hill added that recruitment of more students is necessary for the school to continue to improve, as well as fair and equitable pay raises for school employees. Hill's experience includes being a board member for the Kansas Angus Association in the early 1980s and a volunteer for the nature conservancy program. He graduated from Colby Community College in 1995 and the University of Kansas in 1997.

He and his wife, Colleen, have two children, Megan and Zach, who live in Lawrence. They share their home with Molly and Ruccus, springer spaniels and Pheda, a house cat.

State's school funding picture muddied by House committee

TOPEKA (AP) — A House committee endorsed a bill to continue the state's property tax for public schools but voted to reduce the levy and give homeowners an extra break.

Combining two Senate-passed bills, the House Taxation Committee agreed Tuesday to lower the mill levy to 18 mills from the current 20 mills in the 2003 fiscal year and to increase the homestead exemption to \$30,000 from \$20,000 for fiscal 2002. Fiscal 2002 begins July 1.

The changes mean the tax would yield \$369 million in fiscal year 2002 and \$358 million in fiscal 2003. The state expects to collect \$360 million in the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

A mill is \$1 of taxation for every \$1,000 in assessed valuation.

"I expect it will get off the House floor in a reasonably recognizable form," said Rep. John Edmonds, R-Great Bend, the committee's chairman.

Edmonds said he expected to hold a hearing this week on Gov. Bill Graves' \$112 million education. Graves wants to increase state aid for schools by raising sales and motor fuels taxes.

Speaker Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan, said it is only fair to give all House members — Republicans and Democrats — a chance to vote on a plan to do more for education that includes a tax increase.

"A majority of the Republican caucus prob-

ably would vote no," Glasscock said. "A lot depends on the Democrats."

The House Appropriations Committee scheduled a hearing Wednesday on K-12 financing and on the cash reserves held by the 304 school districts. The Department of Education estimates that districts held more than \$386 million in reserve as of June 30, 2000.

By comparison, the state had a balance of \$378 million in its general fund on the same day. The general fund is the largest source of

money for Kansas government programs and where the state deposits most of its tax revenues.

House Appropriations Chairman Kenny Wilk, R-Lansing, said Wednesday's "information meeting" is intended to shed light on the complete spending picture for public education. Repeatedly, the figure \$3,820 — the base state aid per pupil — is used in reference to what districts spend, Wilk said, but that is not the total picture.

Briefly

Weather: Warmer, some sun

The emergence of the sun today came as a surprise as yesterday's forecast called for clouds on Wednesday with highs 45-50. The National Weather Service said today that today's temperature is expected to top out around 55 here at Colby. Tonight's forecast calls for clouds partly with a 30 percent chance for showers, then becoming partly cloudy, lows are expected to range near 30 with northwest winds 5-15 mph. Thursday, look for partly sunny skies, a 20-

percent chance for thunderstorms, highs in the middle 50s and north winds 10-20 mph. Thursday night, clouds and lows 30-35 and Friday, thunderstorms with highs 55-65. Tuesday's high was 36 and the overnight low this morning was 28. There was 0.04 inches of precipitation in the past 24 hours, bringing the month's total to 0.28 inches. The records for March 28: 88 in 1988 and 0 in 1899. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Free tickets at Press, college

Free tickets for Saturday night's performance of the United States Army Field Band and Soldiers' Chorus of Washington, D. C., are now available at the Colby Free Press and at Colby Community College.

Mail-in orders may not arrive in ample time, so the free tickets are being made available to the public at those two locations for quick pick up. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. in the Colby Community Building. Ticketholders are asked

to be seated no later than 7:15.

Endowment auction Saturday

Doors open at 4:45 p.m., Saturday, March 31, for this year's Colby Community College Endowment auction. The event will be held at the Colby Comfort Inn Convention Center on S. Range and over 250 items will be offered via live or silent auction beginning at 7 p.m. The buffet dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. All proceeds will be used to provide scholarships for Colby College students.

