



COLBY FREE PRESS

Two Sections
28 pages

Support salaries ignite sharp exchange

By JAY KELLEY
Colby Free Press
Fiscal uncertainties, lower enrollments and rising costs are all figured into the Colby School Board's plans as they prepared for another year at Monday's board meeting.

divided, at least on the issue of raises for classified personnel. Superintendent Kirk Nielsen recommended a 3.5 percent raise for non-classified personnel, plus paying for one month's insurance during the summer vacation. Board member Gary Walker asked, "Do any of our long-time paras or custodians make even what a first-year

teacher makes?" Nielsen said he didn't know for sure, but he doubted that would be the case. Walker said he had a problem with percentage increases, because "five percent of \$50,000 is a lot more than five percent of \$20,000." Board member Gerry Fulwider asked about waiting to decide until after the legislature had finished the edu-

cation bill. Board member Bill Miller also questioned the increase in salaries, saying, "When we pay more and have fewer students, eventually they will intersect." Board member Wilburn Holloway asked, "How are going to pay for this?" "We are setting the budget for next year," explained Nielsen. Holloway also asked about paying

for all three months. Nielsen said it would cost about \$12,000 and only benefit 12 out of 36 employees. Walker wanted to know if there was a salary schedule. Nielsen said, "No one has ever wanted one." "That system is too open to abuse," Walker said. Fulwider moved to approve a 4-percent raise with one month's health insurance and an in-

crease of sick leave to 15 days for classified personnel and Walker seconded it. The vote was Fulwider and Molstad for and Holloway and Walker against with Miller abstaining and Cindi Kriss and Cathy Gordon absent. After the vote, the board decided by consensus to table salaries for both classified and administrative personnel until the next meeting.

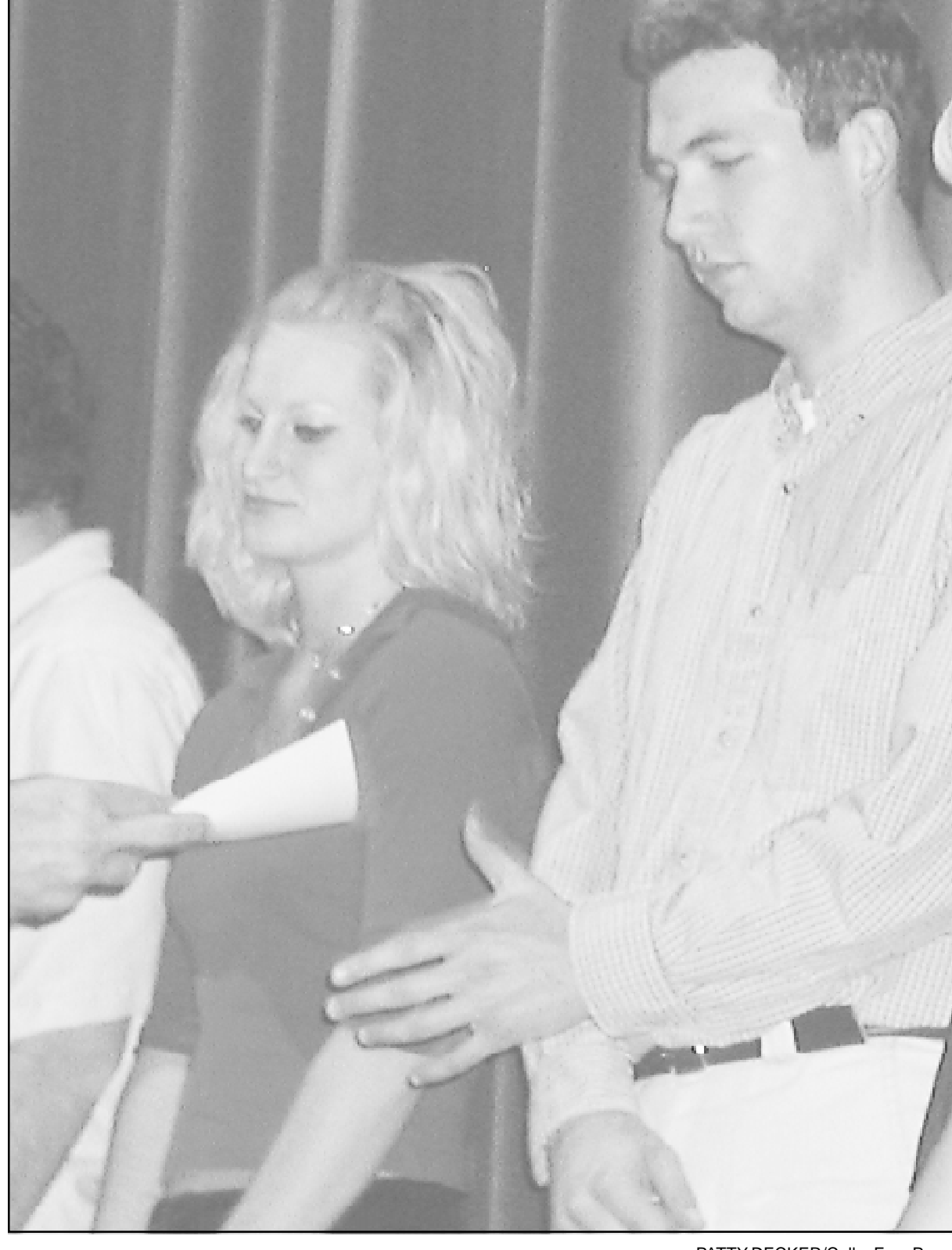
Hundreds of awards presented at Colby High School event

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor
Outstanding achievements by Colby High School freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors highlighted the annual awards ceremony Tuesday night in the school's auditorium.

in the reading assessment. Ashley Denneler received an academic letter; bronze academic award from Fort Hays State University; voice of democracy scholarship from the VFW; National English Merit Award, All American Scholar Award and National History and Government Award from the U.S. Achievement Academy; Thomas County Tuition Grant from Colby College; and recognition as this year's Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper.

More than 450 awards were distributed to 155 students ranging from scholarships and grants to all-around excellence in academics and notable achievements at the high school, according to Joni Clark-Leiker, high school counselor. In addition to the more than 130 scholarships offered from private individuals and state and national universities, Colby Community College gave a total 50 scholarships or grants to Colby students alone. The following students, in alphabetical order, were this year's recipients of either scholarship money or certificates of achievement: Jodi Cranston received an academic letter; was named a Kansas Honor Scholar by Kansas University; recognized for her participation in scholar's bowl; named a Kansas State Activity Scholar; National English Merit Award winner through the U.S. Achievement Academy; and appointed to the International Academy of Merchandising and Design. Kara Criswell was given a performance award and dance scholarship from Barton County Community College. Hope Daniels was recognized as a participant in the scholar's bowl. Karen Davis was named CCVEP Employee of the Year; honored for all A's in CCVEP and OJT; recognized for her participation in forensics; and named for her participation in the first annual Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. Anthony Dawdy received the Thomas County Tuition Grant from Colby College. Brett Dempewolf was recognized for outstanding achievement

Tasha Diederich was recognized as outstanding Spanish II student. Joey Dinkel received an award for participating in forensics; and he also received a Thomas County Tuition Grant from Colby College. Stephanie Dodson received the Thomas County Tuition Grant; Silver Academic Award from Fort Hays State University; Excellent Spanish IV student; and also 2001 Regents Recommended Curriculum Completer. Andria Douglas received an outstanding reading award in English I. Shanda Draper received an academic letter; outstanding American studies student; and excellent Spanish III student. Ty Dupy received an award for outstanding achievement on the writing assessment; Thomas County Tuition Grant; Bronze Academic Award from Fort Hays State University; and for his participation in forensics. Clayton Elliot received an academic letter; outstanding achievement on the reading assessment; Kansas High School Activities Association Citizenship Award; Dane G. Hansen Scholarship of \$2,500; engineering scholarship of \$1,000 from Kansas State; foundation scholarship of \$2,750 from Kansas State; Miller Black and Gold Award of \$4,800; Thomas County Tuition and Presidential Scholar; the Embry Riddle Aero presidential scholar award and \$30,000 scholarship; Kansas Honor Scholar; English IV student of the year; Scholar's Bowl letter winner; Pre-Calculus Student of the year; 2001 Re-



Nicole Olsen and Jay Stewart received awards at the Academic Awards ceremony Tuesday night at the Colby High School. The school recognized students for their scholastic achievements.

commended Curriculum Completer. Erika Erickson received an academic letter; was a scholar's bowl participant; and outstanding French student. Chelsea Gordon received an academic letter; was recognized as a scholar's bowl participant; and Britt Focke received a Basic Electricity Series Scholarship from Wyoming Tech.

Brian Friesen was recognized for being a scholar's bowl participant. Brian Friesen was recognized for being a scholar's bowl participant. Chelsea Gordon received an academic letter; was recognized as a scholar's bowl participant; and Britt Focke received a Basic Electricity Series Scholarship from Wyoming Tech.

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Numbers no concern at present

By JAY KELLEY
Colby Free Press

Lower enrollments will probably affect the Colby School District eventually, but administration officials told board members it wouldn't happen in the near future. Business manager Jo DeYoung told the board at Monday's meeting that enrollments had dropped a little since 1990, but the real drops in enrollment didn't come until this year's second grade class.

According to DeYoung, this year's senior class enrolled 109, making it the largest in the decade. The other middle school classes are running in the 90s, while K-5 classes run from 50-78. DeYoung explained, "Sacred Heart (parochial school) takes about 15 kids out of the lower grades, but we get them back, later." Middle school principal Rob Ross said the Sacred Heart students were a little behind on technology, but caught up easily. "They excel in the basics." Becky Holtwick, elementary school principal, told the board they had 68 for pre-enrollment this year, up from last year's 60 and a low of 50 in 1998. Kathy Elliott, from Sacred Heart School, told the *Free Press* their pre-enrollment was 16 this year. Enrollments were still lower than in the 1980s, when Nielsen, who was elementary school principal then, remembered classes of 100+ enrolling in kindergarten. District officials said they are making plans to head off the need to reduce staff drastically. Nielsen told the board he was planning to replace a middle school physical education position vacated by the retirement of Tom Bowen with a paraprofessional. Teachers at the high school are changing schedules to fill some classes left open in social studies after the loss of Michael Barry. "What about the added classes, don't we have to add teachers?" asked Board member Wilburn Holloway. "Not necessarily," said curriculum director Diana Wieland, explaining that many of the courses were taught during alternating years, or in place of another course in the same field. "Our Applied English is taught by certified English teachers," she said. High school principal Bryan Bullington said the foreign language teachers also teach English courses. Board member Bill Miller wanted to know what happened when "rising salaries and lower enrollments intersect." "Then we'll have to lay off teachers," said Nielsen, adding he didn't think that would be necessary for quite some time.

Leaders ponder ways to shorten legislative session

TOPEKA (AP) — Having lived through the longest wrap-up of a legislative session, leaders aren't too keen to repeat the experience. Many of their ideas for improvement center on the budget. When legislators reconvened April 25 after a two-week break, they faced closing a \$206 million hole in the next state budget. Their leaders said the

problem made the wrap-up unusually difficult. The Legislature adjourned early Tuesday, the 13th day of its wrap-up period and the session's 98th calendar day. The longest previous wrap-up was 12 days, in 1991. Senate President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, said the lengthy wrap-up session shows that lawmakers would

do better to draft budgets in two-year cycles. Other legislators suggested the state ought to change the schedule for releasing updated revenue estimates, which are crucial to settling on appropriations. "The process is driven by the budget," said House Speaker Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan. Leaders noted that the Legislature had to rewrite the budget it had ap-

proved April 6, just before the recess began. The appropriations were for the state's 2002 fiscal year, which begins July 1. Two days before they recessed, legislators received greatly reduced estimates for revenue collections in fiscal 2002. The previous ones had been made in November, and both Gov. Bill Graves and legislators had been basing their spending decisions on them.

Legislators didn't have time to go back into the budget recommendations they had spent all session preparing — not if they were to meet the deadlines their rules impose. Traditionally, revenue estimates are released in November and April. A dramatic revision in the spring creates the kind of problems legislators faced this year.

Briefly

Weather: Continued warm
Generally warm with thunderstorms. That's the National Weather Service forecast for the Colby region through Sunday. Tonight, cloudy, 30 percent chance for thunderstorms, low around 50 and northeast winds 5-15 mph. Friday, cloudy, thunderstorms possible, high in the lower 70s and northeast winds 5-15 mph, turning to the east. Friday night, cloudy, thunderstorms likely, low in the 50s. Saturday and Sunday, sunny, high Saturday 75-80, low Sunday in the 50s and high in the 90s. Wednesday's high in Colby was 89 and the overnight low this morning was 53. There was no additional precipitation, leaving the month's total at 2.27 inches. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 69 degrees. The records for May 10: 92 in 1893 and 27 in 1981. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Fair board meeting tonight
The Thomas County Free Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. today in the 4-H Building to make plans for the coming fair. The meeting is open to the public.

Food drive planned Saturday
Letter carriers at Colby Post Office will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Thomas County Genesis program on Saturday, May 12. Post officials ask that people leave items by their mailbox or on their porch. For information, call 462-7408.

Rec equipment needed
Donations are being accepted to replace equipment for the Hoisington Summer Recreation program lost in the April 21 tornado. Equipment may be dropped off at the Church of Christ, 510 E. Fourth, and monetary donations should be given to the Sports Shoppe. Equipment needs

include: a chalk machine; three sets of bases with metal tie-downs; catchers' equipment and bats; soccer nets and goals. The city of Colby has provided two green bins for drop-off at the church building. For more information call the church office at 462-6322 or Toni McAdams at 462-6248.

Red Cross sponsors meeting
There will be a Community Disaster Awareness meeting, Thursday, May 17, beginning at 7 p.m., according to Donna Finley, executive director of the Thomas County Red Cross Chapter. The meeting will be held at the Colby Community Building's Little Theater with information on how families can be more prepared in the event of a tornado. Everyone is invited to this meeting. For questions, call 462-7161.

Reception for principal next week
The Colby Parent-Teacher Organization is sponsoring a

reception for Colby Elementary School Principal Becky Holtwick, who is leaving the district at the end of this school year. Everyone is invited to attend the event from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 22, in the cafeteria at the grade school.

Middle school dance Friday
The Colby Jaycees are sponsoring a year-end dance for middle school students from 7 to 10 p.m., Friday, at the Jaycee Center. For the last dance of the year, said Lori Haberer, one of the organizers, fifth grade students are invited. Pizza and drinks will be available and prizes will be given away.

County Prom Album
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