



COLBY FREE PRESS

Lights! Action! Camera! Colby's Christmas parade days away

By TOM (TD) DREILING
Free Press Publisher

"It's going to be a good one." That's the way organizers of Colby's 2001 Lighted Christmas Parade describe it. Sponsored jointly by the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and your Colby Free Press, the parade begins its march along Franklin Ave. at 6 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 9. Participants will begin forming around 5:30 at the intersection of 2nd and Franklin. The parade route will be north on Franklin to Santa City at Fike Park.

Deanna Mallory, one of the organizers, said entries so far are numbering near 30. And if you haven't yet entered there is still time. Call the Chamber of Commerce office at 462-3401 and tell them what you are entering, then show up at 2nd and Franklin Sunday afternoon late and join in the fun. It's that simple.

Mallory said there are five religious entries, "and that is exciting." She also said the National Guard will carry the Colors "and that will be something to look forward to."

From all reports coming to the Free Press from Chamber and other sources, the parade will feature a variety of entries. Mallory said a big flatbed truck will carry youngsters wanting to be in the parade and adults will be on board to supervise them.

"The kids are encouraged to wear festive clothing. She also said that "lighted snowmen pins will be worn by the children." The flatbed will take on its young cargo in the parking lot of the former Boogaarts Supermarket.

Mallory said that around 20 motorcyclists involved in the "Toys for Tots" program will also be featured.

Santa Claus will make an appearance, but because his sleigh was recalled for installation of a stronger seat belt, he will be riding in a 1948 Jeep belonging to Dick and Kay Weston. Mrs. Claus will make an appearance in a not-too-familiar fashion — in a wooden wagon being pulled along Franklin Ave. by a team of oxen. Something about the reindeer running out of their supply of sports drink and unable to muster up the energy necessary to join the oxen.

The traditional — law enforcement vehicles, the fire department and implement dealers — will take their place in the line of march.

But the big thing at this point in the planning is encouraging even more people to take part.

Families, neighborhoods, clubs, musical groups — the list would be endless — will all make this a memorable Christmas parade of lights. And word is that a number of people from surrounding towns will be coming in to see what Colby has put together this year.

According to Leilani Thomas, of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the voice of the 2001 Christmas Parade will be none other than the voice of the Colby Eagles and the Colby Community College Trojans, Mr. Rich Epp.

"This is an evening planned for the entire family, and we are hoping the weather stays nice and as many people come out as possible," Mallory said.

Welcome to Colby
Wrestling Fans
(check pages 4, 5 & 8)



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Dance students throughout northwest Kansas will perform in Sunday's Nutcracker ballet at 3 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium. Pictured are some area youth rehearsing for the production. These par-

ticular dance students will be the "mice" and include Erika Ericksen, Stephanie Wieland, Jessica Lu, Elyse Molstad, Chelsea Gray, Jade DeGood and Brent Hockersmith (not pictured).

Area youth involved in 'Nutcracker'

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

Dance students from Colby and surrounding communities will take the stage along with their professional counterparts in the Christmas production, "The Nutcracker," Sunday, beginning at 3 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium.

There are 25 northwest Kansas dancers from three different studios who will be portraying children in the performance sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association, said Vicky Waldschmidt, public relations officer.

Students from Koleen Barrett's Dance Place in Colby selected to perform are Erika Erickson and Stephanie Wieland, playing mice;

Lauren Bethell, Bailey Hemmert, Kayla Williams, and Kelsie Barrett, party children; and Margaret Vrbas, Amanda Paulsen, Caitlin Henry, Katie Molstad and Elizabeth Benda, Mother Ginger dancers.

Performers from the Cheryl Schwarz Dance Center in Colby selected are Jessica Lu, Brent Hockersmith, Elyse Molstad and Chelsea Gray, mice; Barbara Bickner, Bailey Brown, and Jill Withington, party children; with Tara Phillips, Lauren Gray and May Davis as Mother Ginger dancers.

The Treasa Porter Dance Studio in St. Francis has selected Jade DeGood, as one of the mice and Candice Wiese and Aubree Schlepp, party children. Samatha Slover of Hoxie will also be

performing as a Mother Ginger dancer.

"The students were selected by audition in November," said Schwarz, "with Koleen Barrett, Treasa Porter and I choosing the dancers."

Both Schwarz and Barrett have been teaching the choreography to the students, which was sent to them on video by the David Taylor Dance Theatre in Littleton, Colo. Taylor, a choreographer and owner of the only professional contemporary ballet company in Colorado, put together his version of "The Nutcracker," Waldschmidt said, and it will be a treat for everyone.

The story behind "The Nutcracker," begins with a young girl named Clara who receives the gift of a nutcracker doll from a mysterious stranger, said Waldschmidt.

"Through a child's eyes," she said, "the whole adult world is a bit grotesque and oversized. To emphasize that and the fact that the story is fantasy itself, the first act is all in black and white, which is an art deco approach. "If you are worn down by Christmas tradition, this production will recharge your holiday batteries." Admission will be by association season passes or tickets will be available at the door with adults \$12 and students \$6. As for the area talent, Schwarz said, "these students have been working very hard every Sunday since November and we are encouraging everyone to come and see the outstanding and talented dancers that we have in northwest Kansas."

Group concerned about day care costs

TOPEKA (AP) — A nonprofit advocacy group is so concerned about the cost of day care for infants that it lowered its annual grade for the condition of children in Kansas.

Kansas Action for Children grades the state each year on how well it is providing for its children.

Last year, the overall grade was a B minus. This year, it was a C plus.

Gary Brunk, the group's executive

director, said the biggest reason for the drop is an increase in the cost of care for infants. The report, released Tuesday, said the state needs to do better in providing day care.

The report said that this year, infant care costs amounted to 14.4 percent of a family's income, up from 10.7 percent the previous year. The median income in Kansas is about \$36,000, making the annual infant care costs \$5,280

this year. Last year, the state received a C minus in the child care category. This year's grade fell to a D. But not all of the indicators were negative.

Brunk said wages paid to child-care workers are improving.

And reductions in the infant mortality rate and the number of low birth-weight babies helped push the state's health care grade up to an A minus from a B minus.

Briefly

Weather: Still no moisture

What we really need is moisture, but unfortunately that doesn't appear in the forecast for the Colby area through Monday, at least. Tonight, clear, lows upper 20s and southwest winds 10-20 mph, turning to the northwest late. Friday, partly cloudy and windy, highs near 55, northwest winds 20-30 mph. Friday night, partly cloudy, lows in the mid-20s. Saturday and Saturday night, partly cloudy, highs up to 55 and lows in the upper 20s to around 30. Sunday, partly cloudy, highs right around the 60-degree mark, making for favorable conditions for the Christmas parade in the early evening. Monday, partly cloudy, lows 20-25 and highs in the middle 40s.

Colby's high Wednesday was 50 and the overnight low this morning was 25. Still no precipitation for the month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 39 degrees. The records for Dec. 6: 82 in 1939 and -14 in 1972. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

College to hold winter concert

The Colby Community College vocal and instrumental music departments will present their winter concert on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 7:30 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center on campus.

The Colby College concert choir, Sunflower Singers, concert band and jazz band will be performing. Directors are Dr. David Mruzek and Dr. Philip Shuman. There is no charge to attend this annual event.

High school dismisses early Friday

Colby High School students will be dismissed at 1:15 p.m., Friday, so that preparations can be made for the 2 p.m. start time for the Eagle Invitational Wrestling Tournament,

said Bryan Bullington, principal. There will be no early dismissal for students at Colby Grade School and Middle School.

Singles dance Friday

There will be a singles dance from 8 p.m. to midnight on Friday with Off Limits of Colby performing. The dance is open to all single people and alumni and is the last dance in the year 2001, said Don Birzer, coordinator. For information or questions, call 462-2127.

Christmas program tonight

Sacred Heart School children in first through fifth grade will present their Christmas program tonight at 7 p.m. in the school's gymnasium. The preschool and kindergarten classes will perform on Tuesday, Dec. 11, also at 7 p.m.

Flags fly half mast Friday

In remembrance of Pearl Harbor on Friday, Dec. 7, flags should be flown at half mast from daylight until dusk, said Dean Ludlow, VFW member.

Programs on eating disorders

There will be an eating disorders program presented by Carla O'Connor, RN, MA, LCSW, of Kansas City, for students and the general public from 9:15 to 10 a.m., Monday, Dec. 10, in the Colby High School auditorium. In addition, there will be another workshop for professionals from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that day.

The program for students and the public is free, costs for professionals is \$16 for two contact hours. Those wanting to register can either call (785) 628-6128 or contact sponsors of the program, Janet Worthy at 462-8152 or Jeanene Brown, 462-4850.

Tree of needs



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Gabriel Wilson and Taylor Lemman, preschool students, looked at many tags labeled with items that would help Puddle Duck Preschool on Wednesday. Amy Jennings, director of the school, said the Christmas tree located in the main hallway of the Colby United Methodist Church is the Puddle Duck tree and people wanting to help the school can do so by picking a need off the tree and buying that item for the school. Needs range from paper products to toys and film, film processing and money donations. Other preschoolers, not pictured, but who were looking at the tree were Haleigh Westadt, Darby Sager, Matthew Barnum and Kevin Kappenman.

