



COLBY FREE PRESS

Student closes in on goal

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

One Colby High School student has qualified for the National Merit Scholarship Program, which means she scored in the top 1 percent of all high school seniors in the nation.

Chelsea Gordon has now moved into the semi-finalist competition, said Bryan Bullington, Colby High School principal.

As for Gordon, the honor could mean sharing in scholarship awards totaling more than \$32 million.

"I was ecstatic when I found out I had made the semi-finals," she said. "The next step was in writing a 500-word essay on my goals and previous achievements, which needed to be sweeping and general in nature."

Gordon will be notified in March of 2002 as to whether or not she is a finalist.

Bullington noted that it has been many years since a student at Colby High School has qualified for this particular program.

There are three types of scholarship awards, he said, and every finalist will be considered for one of 2,500 national merit \$2,500 scholarships awarded on a state representational basis.

In addition, Bullington said that some 400 business organizations will underwrite about 1,200 corporate-sponsored merit scholarship awards and 200 colleges and universities are expected to provide 4,300 college-sponsored merit scholarship awards.

Gordon said that ever since she found out she was a commended scholar, based on her scholastic aptitude testing, she has heard from many colleges around the country, including some Ivy League schools.

She also offered some advice to younger students with respect to their future goals and what has worked for her. "I think students need to figure out what they want to do that will make them happy and then work extremely hard to get it," she said.

"There is such a short time frame to get to where we want to go and not a long time to accomplish it. I guess it comes down to how you use your time," she said. In order to qualify for the program in the initial phase, Gordon was first ranked based on her PSAT (practice scholastic aptitude testing) and later she took the ACT (American College Testing).

Gordon scored a 1,450 out of 1,600 on the PSAT and SAT and a 32 out of 36 on her ACT.

Looking to the future, Gordon said her dream is to become a member of the New York Philharmonic and she spends anywhere from three to four hours a day practicing her trombone during the school year and 8 to 9 hours practicing in the summer months at camps. Winners in the national competition will be released beginning in April.

"This is a distinguished honor and we are pleased that one of our students has qualified," Bullington said.

Chelsea is the daughter of Greg and Cathy Gordon.



C. Gordon

The 'sacred' singers



Kindergarten students at Sacred Heart School practiced for their Christmas program, which is planned for Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. Along with the kindergartners, preschool students will also be featured in the program. Pictured is Sister Rosalie Cersovsky playing the digital piano with Zach Wallin and Jory Koon singing "Away

In A Manger." Other kindergarten students practicing, but not pictured were Logan Black, Morgan Mengel, Mariah Skolout, Kayla Reeh, Morgan Vap, Randee Skiles, and Andrea Zerr. The first through fifth grade Christmas program, said Dave Evert, principal, is Thursday, Dec. 6, beginning at 7 p.m.

PATTY DECKER/Free Press Editor

Military activity picks up

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Tribal fighters said they captured 80 Taliban soldiers today near the airport at Kandahar as anti-Taliban forces closed in on the Islamic militia stronghold. U.S. warplanes bombed Taliban defenses near the airport.

In Germany, U.N.-sponsored talks that had been gaining momentum suffered a setback when an Afghan leader from the largest ethnic group walked out to protest a lack of Pashtun representation. He is, however, expected to return to the table.

The Taliban soldiers near Kandahar's airport surrendered without resistance when tribal fighters surrounded them this morning and ordered them to drop their weapons, tribal leader Abdul Jabbar said.

Jabbar, speaking in Pakistan, said the fighters also seized five Taliban tanks, four pickup trucks, one anti-aircraft gun and a multi-barreled rocket launcher. Taxi and bus drivers arriving in Kabul from Kandahar on Friday reported fighting Thursday in the two-mile area between the airport and Kandahar itself.

"That area is a no-man's land," said Pacha, a taxi driver. "There is fighting. We can't go there. ... We don't know who it is."

Another tribal leader, Mohammed Anwar, reported airstrikes from the U.S.-led coalition Friday on positions around the Kandahar airport.

The Taliban have barred journalists from Kandahar, 280 miles southwest of Kabul, and the reports of fighting could not be independently verified.

The northern alliance's deputy defense minister, Bismillah Khan, said Thursday that anti-Taliban forces had reached the eastern outskirts of Kandahar and that "there is heavy fighting going on." Speaking in the Afghan capital, Kabul, Khan said his information was based on radio communications with his commanders.

Khan's spokesman, Waisuddin Salik, said Friday that the battles continued. "Outside the city is fighting," he said, adding he didn't have a specific location. Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem said he could not confirm or deny that anti-Taliban fighters had entered Kandahar. He described the city as "relatively surrounded by opposition groups."

The Taliban's supreme leader ordered his followers to fight to the death to defend the city. Residents have reported Taliban fighters digging in around Kandahar in recent days.

"The fight has now begun," Mullah Mohammed Omar said in a message to commanders. "It is the best opportunity to achieve martyrdom."

Speaker: Demand for beef coming back

WICHITA (AP) — Consumer demand for beef has hit bottom and is rebounding, Tyson Foods President John Tyson said Thursday at the Kansas Livestock Association's annual meeting.

"In the end, people still have to eat food," he said.

Tyson Foods, the world's largest poultry producer, merged with one of the nation's largest beef processors when the company acquired IBP earlier this year.

Tyson outlined his company's plans for developing fully cooked, ready-to-eat beef products — telling Kansas cattlemen his envisions for beef the same marketing strategies that made Tyson a household word for chicken.

The company has developed 6,000 variations of poultry-based products in

an effort to design a product the customer wants, he said.

"We made it easier for customers to eat chicken," Tyson said.

About half of the nation now has access to fully-cooked beef products, and by March they will be available across the entire country, Tyson said.

"As much as I would like to think people will eat chicken seven days a week, three times a day, it is not realistic. It is not the real world," he said. "But we do know people want products in convenient form."

His interest in IBP was peaked because that company was moving in the same direction with some of their branded boxed beef products, and he thought the two companies would be a good fit.

Tyson's foray into beef this year has

come at a difficult time for the beef industry.

Export demand for beef has fallen sharply in the wake of the discovery of mad cow disease in Japan, the United States' biggest beef buyer. Domestic demand for beef has fallen at restaurants after the terrorist attacks curtailed travel. Half of the beef eaten in America is consumed at restaurants.

Tyson Foods saw its beef exports to Japan fall between 10 and 15 percent after the discovery of mad cow disease there, Tyson said.

For Tyson Foods, those lower beef sales were offset in part by increases in its pork exports to the country, and to a lesser degree by higher chicken sales there, Tyson said.

Falling demand for beef in Japan coincided with the terrorist attacks in

the United States, he said. At one point, demand for beef from the nation's restaurants fell as much as 30 percent.

But Tyson said consumer demand for beef is rebounding as people begin traveling again, and noted that sales to Japan have turned around some.

As he spoke to the more than 1,000 cattle producers attending the convention, Tyson tried to allay fears that his company would try to vertically integrate the beef industry as it has done in the poultry industry.

Since his grandfather founded the company in 1931, Tyson Foods has acquired or gained control of nearly every aspect of chicken production from hatching baby chicks to contracting chicken farmers, producing its own chicken feed, and even buying its own processing plant.

Senator files suit over videotaping

OLATHE (AP) — A Kansas state senator facing an ouster drive over her views on women's suffrage has gone to court over a videotape that shows her being asked to sign the recall petition.

Sen. Kay O'Connor and her husband, Art O'Connor, say the videotape of the scene at the door of their home was made without their knowledge and was shown at an Olathe high school.

"I am offended," O'Connor, R-Olathe, said Wednesday. The O'Connor's lawsuit, filed in Johnson

County District Court, says the couple's privacy was invaded and seeks unspecified monetary damages. They also want a restraining order to block further showings of the tape.

O'Connor drew national attention in September after she was quoted as saying that the women's right to vote was "not necessarily" in the nation's best interest. She later said that she doesn't oppose the right of women to vote, but said that in an ideal America, women would raise families and not feel the

need to cast ballots.

In their lawsuit, the O'Connors say a woman came to their home on Nov. 10 and asked O'Connor's husband to sign a petition to have Kay O'Connor recalled. The senator and the woman stood in the door, discussing the recall effort. She said another person, whom she did not see at the time, was videotaping the discussion from a distance.

Besides monetary damages, the O'Connors' lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction against showing of the tape.



Thumbs up!



- ✓Rev. Carol Rahn — new minister at the First Presbyterian Church.
 - ✓Shaun Guard — first graduate of the new learning center.
 - ✓Naeem Khan — for sharing your knowledge of the Pakistan, Afghanistan region.
 - ✓Sharon Kriss — on your appointment to the Kansas Arts Commission.
 - ✓Kathi Hapke, and Jim and Molly Oliver — for carrying Thomas County's concern and compassion to New York City.
 - ✓Santa and Mrs. Claus — for sharing the spirit of the season with the youngsters of the Colby area at Santa City.
- (To have an individual or group recognized in this weekly salute, please call TD at the Free Press at 462-3963.)

Briefly

Weather: Continued nice

Nothing major on the horizon to shake the weather pattern for the Colby area, reports the National Weather Service in its forecast at mid-morning today. Tonight, clear, lows in the mid-teens and west winds 5-15 mph. Saturday, sunny, highs in the mid-50s and west winds 10-20 mph. Saturday night, clear, lows in the upper teens. Sunday, sunny, highs right around the 60-degree mark and Monday, partly cloudy, lows in the lower 20s and highs in the lower 60s. Colby's high Thursday was 43 and the overnight low this morning was +11. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 38 degrees. Precipitation for the month remains at 0.98 inches and you can put that figure in the bank as the month's final total as there are no indications that will change overnight. The records for Nov. 30: 75 in 1932 and +1 in 1983. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-

Extension Center, Colby.)

College board to meet Monday

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of Thomas Hall. They will visit the nursing department, hear a presentation by Larry Keirns which was postponed from the last meeting, discuss negotiations in executive session, and discuss any other item any member wishes to discuss. The meeting is open to the public.

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse. Curt Stephens is on the agenda at 9 a.m. to discuss rezoning. Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor, and Thaniel Monaco of Miller and Associates, of McCook, Neb. will discuss the

new landfill site at 9:30. Miller and Associates is the engineering firm for the landfill.

Board to hold special meeting

The Colby Public Schools Board of Education will hold a special meeting on Monday, Dec. 3, at 7 a.m. in the board room of the administration building. The special meeting was called to discuss employee benefits, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent.

Dismissal procedures noted

With colder temperatures now occurring and snow possible, it could become necessary to dismiss school early or cancel it due to inclement weather, Colby Public School officials are reminding parents to listen for media announcements. In the case of early dismissals, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent, every effort will be made to make

radio and television stations in the area aware of the situation. "We will do our best to have the announcement made at least one hour prior to the scheduled dismissal time," he said. When school is cancelled, a media announcement will run no later than 7 a.m. on local radio and television.

Legion plans childrens party

Members of the American Legion in Colby will hold their annual children's Christmas party on Saturday, Dec. 1, beginning at 3 p.m. The party will be held at the Legion post, 1850 W. 4th.

Pancake feed Saturday

The High Plains Lions Club is sponsoring a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building. The cost of the all-you-can-eat feed is \$3, with proceeds going toward community projects.

