



COLBY FREE PRESS

Angel helper



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Colby's Sacred Heart School held its pre-school and kindergarten Christmas program on Tuesday evening. The program featured many holiday songs and scenes. Pictured is Samantha Sicard, kindergarten student, getting some assistance before the event from Sr. Loretta Podlena, first grade teacher.

Santa makes early visit to area woman

Gift makes heart pound and legs shake

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

Imagine throwing one name in the hat along with 811,580 others and coming out the winner of a lottery worth \$110,000.

That's exactly what happened to Loyd and Wanda Russell of Tasco, located eight miles east of Hoxie on Sunday night.

"When I found out we had won the Kansas Cash lottery," Wanda said, "my legs wouldn't quit shaking and my poor old heart was pounding out of my chest because I was so excited."

Reflecting on what happened, Wanda explained that she went into the Hoxie Stop 2 Shop on Sunday evening around 7 p.m. to check her tickets.

"I had been talking to a girl in the parking lot and I jokingly told her I was going in to check my ticket numbers and see if Christmas was going to be good to me or not."

Wanda went into the store to the Check-A-Ticket machine and the message displayed read: *See Store Clerk.*

"I thought something was wrong with the machine," she said. "I wasn't thinking I had won anything at that point."

The clerk on duty told her that she had won \$1,100 and, to that, Wanda said she told the woman, "Oh good."

Then the clerk looked at the amount again and said, "Oh no, I think it's \$110,000...come look at this," she told Wanda.

"I stood at the lottery terminal for quite awhile and couldn't quit shaking," she said.

Within minutes, the owner of the Stop 2 Shop, Gene Deines came in and suggested that Wanda call her husband to have him take her home after seeing

she was so excited and concerned about her driving alone.

"When I called Loyd," she said, "I asked him if he wanted to come to town and get me? I just won a lot of money."

Loyd didn't believe her.

"You did not," he said.

"It took me a long time to convince him I was telling the truth and it also took him a long time to get there," she said.

Apparently, Wanda had taken the family car to Stop 2 Shop and that left Loyd with only one vehicle — the school bus she drives.

"I didn't think the school district would appreciate me bringing it to town to get Wanda," Loyd said, "so I got a ride with my father-in-law."

In a fun-loving way, Wanda said that when her husband arrived, she walked up to him and said, "Sucker!"

"We are always playing jokes on each other and I thought she had put one over on me again," he said. However, the jackpot was true and now the couple is deciding how they will spend it.

"We will be paying off some bills and probably our house," she said. "One thing is for sure, we won't have to worry about making ends meet now."

The family is also planning a very extra special Christmas this year.

Wanda, who drives a school bus part-time and works full-time keeping financial records at the Hoxie Sentinel newspaper office, said she has no plans to quit either job. Loyd works on a ranch.

"We have been humored about our winnings," she said on Tuesday. "There's a lot of people that seem to think we won millions and will prob-

ably be quitting our jobs — it was a lot of money, but not enough to stop working."

The winning numbers, she said, were automatically picked in what's called the "quick pick."

The couple said they play the lottery off and on by buying scratch tickets and treating themselves by spending around \$5 or so — \$3 in powerball and \$2 in Kansas Cash tickets about every other week.

One thing that Wanda said she didn't know until after she won was that it's a good idea to always sign the back of the tickets immediately.

"Just in case you should lose the tickets, they are at least identified and anyone else trying to cash them in would be committing the crime of forgery," she said.

The Russells have four children: Keith, 25, lives in WaKeeney; Dale, 22, is across the road from their home; Rebecca (Feldt), 20, is in Hoxie and their youngest daughter, Christy, 17, is a senior at Hoxie High School.

The couple went to Topeka on Monday to fill out the paperwork and collect their winnings.

As for wanting to keep a low profile on the winnings, Wanda said that would be nearly impossible.

"In a small town like Hoxie, it's hard to keep something like this a secret," she said, "and we really didn't mind people knowing about it."

The last time someone from northwest Kansas won a large amount of money was in 1999, said Marilyn Travis, public relations with the Kansas Lottery.

That winner, Travis said, was Cecilia Moss of Menlo, who won \$100,000 in powerball on Aug. 11, 1999.

Redistricting proposals released

TOPEKA (AP)—Republicans have outlined their proposal for redrawing the state's 125 House districts. Under their plan, two incumbents would live in each of five districts.

The proposal was drafted by GOP House members who serve on the 34-member Special Committee on Redistricting. Republican senators are drafting a proposal for redrawing the 40 Senate districts.

Because they have large majorities in both chambers, Republicans hold 23 seats on the committee. If they agree on a single plan, it probably will win the committee's endorsement before the 2002 Legislature convenes Jan. 14.

The committee is scheduled to meet again Dec. 20 and 21. Republican legislative leaders hope it will endorse redistricting proposals for both chambers. The Legislature redraws members' districts every 10 years to account for shifts in population, using federal Census figures as a guide.

Johnson County, which currently has 17 districts and shares one each with Douglas and Wyandotte counties, would gain two districts within its borders. The Wichita metropolitan area also would gain a seat.

Wyandotte County would lose a seat, as would southeast Kansas. In addition, northwest and north-central

Kansas would lose a seat between them. Under the proposal, four districts would have two Democratic incumbents:

—The new 2nd, with Reps. Bob Grant, of Cherokee, and Jerry Williams, of Chanute.

—35th, with Broderick Henderson and Bill Reardon, both of Kansas City.

—63rd, with Jerry Henry, of Cummings, and Bruce Larkin of Baileyville.

—114th, with Richard Alldritt, of Harper, and Melvin Minor, of Stafford.

The new 110th District contains Reps. Dan Johnson, R-Hays, and Laura McClure, D-Osborne.

American planes bomb Tora Bora after cease-fire deadline collapses

TORABORA, Afghanistan (AP)—A cease-fire collapsed Wednesday as U.S. airstrikes repeatedly pounded Osama bin Laden's Tora Bora mountain bases after cornered al-Qaida forces missed a deadline to disarm and reportedly set new terms for their surrender.

Sporadic bursts of heavy machine gun fire, apparently from U.S.-backed tribal eastern alliance forces, echoed through the area — less than 24 hours after the truce took effect.

Journalists were barred from enter-

ing the battlefield area, where an undetermined number of al-Qaida men were holed up in a desolate mountainside canyon. While one local commander said the surrender might still take place, others doubted whether the men would give up.

It appeared from a distance that bombs from several circling B-52s and other U.S. warplanes directly hit the canyon. Others appeared to fall on other al-Qaida positions nearby in the Tora Bora and Milawa valleys, which are riddled with hundreds of caves and

tunnels. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Witnesses said 60 men, who appeared to be American personnel, were seen near the front line Wednesday. They were wearing Afghan shawls and floppy pacole caps, but were carrying what the witnesses said were U.S.-made weapons and backpacks. An alliance subcommander said 40 British special operations troops also were fighting in the valley.

Pentagon officials warned that some al-Qaida members might still be hid-

ing in the underground network. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said holdouts might continue to fight and that "a wounded animal can be dangerous."

The whereabouts of bin Laden remained unclear. Some U.S. officials and tribal leaders suspect he might be in or near Tora Bora, in eastern Afghanistan. Others believe he is hiding in the country's south.

After the bombing and the missed deadline, some tribal fighters doubted the al-Qaida forces would give up.

However, one eastern alliance commander said the surrender could still hold.

"They are running late. But they have agreed to come down the mountain in groups of between 20 and 40 men," said Mohammed Lal, a senior alliance officer. "We are clearing the area to make a safe place for their surrender."

He said the al-Qaida fighters would ride vehicles down from the canyon to an alliance checkpoint where they would disarm and be searched.

Trucks would then take them to the alliance's command post at Agom village, about three miles to the southeast, where they would be detained.

Lal said he did not know why the bombing had taken place or who had done the shooting.

He did not say why the surrender had been delayed. However, the Pakistan-based news agency Afghan Islamic Press said the al-Qaida troops, mainly foreign Muslims, were demanding that diplomats from their home nations be present.

Briefly

Weather: Sun to return

Improving conditions best describe the Colby region's weather as we move toward the weekend. Tonight, partly cloudy late, lows 25-20 and northwest winds 10-15 mph. There is only about a 20 percent chance for light snow before the clouds break and move on. Thursday, mostly sunny, highs in the upper 30s and northwest winds 5-15 mph, turning to the southwest. Thursday night, clear, lows around 15. Friday, partly sunny, highs in the upper 40s. Saturday, partly cloudy, an outside shot for some light snow during the night, lows in the lower 20s and highs in the lower 40s. Colby's high Tuesday was 59 and the overnight low this morning was 30. There was 0.07 inches of precipitation during the past 24 hours, the first moisture for the month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 36 degrees. The records for Dec. 12: 68 in 1921 and -21 in 1932.. (The daily

temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Santa letters wanted

The Colby Free Press has a special mail box for kids to send their letters to Santa. It is located in the front office and letters placed in the box may also find their way into print in the paper. Moms and Dads are encouraged to have their kids write Santa and to bring their letters to the office. Santa is waiting to hear from Thomas County's youngsters.

Roadwork planned Tuesday

Country Club Drive will be closed to through traffic on Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. for repairs by the Union Pacific Railroad on the crossing by the Colby Livestock Auction Salebarn. For questions, call the public

works department in the City of Colby at 462-4420.

Youth group plans soup supper

The Royal Rangers and Missionettes youth group with the Colledge Drive Assembly of God Church has planned a soup supper from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, at the church, 245 W. Colledge Dr. Cost for the supper is \$5 adults and \$3 for children 9 years and under. Tickets are available at the door or at First National Bank, Farmers and Merchants Bank or Central Detroit Diesel.

Turn holiday lights on early tonight

Residents at Prairie Senior Living Complex will be touring the city tonight and next Wednesday night beginning at 6:30 p.m. to view Christmas light displays. Organizers of the tour are encouraging everyone to turn lights on early

so that residents will be able to see all the lights of Christmas throughout town.

Sweet Thunder offers services

The Colby Girls Fast Pitch Association "Sweet Thunder" is offering babysitting and gift wrapping services each weekend until Christmas in the basement of the Sports Shoppe. The hours on Saturday are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. All proceeds benefit the program.

Vivaldi's Gloria planned Sunday

The Colby High School concert choir and mixed chorus, the Colby Community College concert choir and members of the Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will join to present Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 3:30 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium.

