



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## College endowment \$25,000 richer thanks to the late Cora Vaughn

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press  
The Colby Community College En-

dowment Association has received a gift of \$24,605.42 from the estate of Cora Vaughn, a long-time Colby resident who died in April 2001. She requested that memorial donations be given to the endowment association.



Cora Vaughn

According to the endowment's administrative director, Pam Geihlsler, the gift will be used to fund several Colby College scholarships.

"We are happy to be the recipients of such generosity as that which Mrs. Vaughn displayed with this gift. Many students will receive aid in the pursuit of their academic goals as a result of her donation," said Geihlsler.

Mrs. Vaughn was born north of Rexford in 1912. She graduated from Colby High School in 1933 and went to work as a telephone operator. After she married Melvin Vaughn in 1935, they moved to Colorado and throughout the eastern and southern United States. They returned to Colby after World War II and she returned to work as a telephone operator until her retirement in 1975 after 32 years of employment with Southwestern Bell.

Mrs. Vaughn was a member of the Telephone Pioneers of America, Business and Professional Women's Club, Baptist Circle of the First Baptist

Church, and the Liberty Extension Homemakers Unit.

Kathy Woerpel, who started work as an operator at the telephone office in downtown Colby in 1954, remembers Mrs. Vaughn was chief operator at the telephone office when she started there. Shortly after Woerpel started work, Mrs. Vaughn transferred to the business office.

"She was just really great to work with, nice and helpful, always willing to help you if there were any problems," Woerpel said. "She kind of took over when the boss wasn't there. She knew a lot. She was just a nice person all around."

Donna Schielke worked with Mrs. Vaughn at the telephone office for about a year before Mrs. Vaughn's retirement. She remembers her fondly. She said she was trained by her to take over her job as a service representative when she retired.

Service representatives worked in the business office, took care of customers, took orders for anyone who wanted a telephone put in their home, and handled questions about bills.

"She was really a sweet lady. She wasn't going to retire unless I could do her job," Schielke said. "She didn't have any children, but had a niece, and was fairly close to her. She was fun to work with. She tried to do things right," said Schielke.

Marie Brenn, co-worker and long-time friend of the Vaughns, said that since they had no children of their own, Cora (Vaughn) probably left the money to the college because she felt education was good, and thought the college was a good institution.

## Burning down the house



JAY KELLEY/Colby Fire Department

Colby firefighters manned a water cannon at a training fire on west Fourth Street Saturday. The Knights of Columbus wanted to tear down the property at the old Rainbow Drive-in and the fire department took the opportunity to train in a realistic environment, Chief Bob McLemore said. Firefighters from area departments, including Oakley, Winona

and Sheridan County also attended the training, which started at 8 a.m. and continued throughout the day. Twenty-six members of the Colby Fire Department attended the drill. The Knights hope to eventually build a meeting hall, but for now, they will use it for additional parking for the Sacred Heart Church.

## Slumping economy, war on terrorism highlight final months

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

As the year came to an end, the nation was continuing its war against terrorism following the Sept. 11 attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., the economy was still floundering, and yet amidst it all a new spirit of unity had emerged.

While the headlines reflected those issues and more, many other events in Colby and Thomas County shared the spotlight.

For example, the City of Colby spent many meetings bracing for some road projects planned for 2002 by the Kansas Department of Transportation and city road crews. Among those projects scheduled for this year include replacing the intersections at Fourth and Range; replacement of a segment of Range

from Fifth to the viaduct; the viaduct removal itself; a small city project from Seventh to the beginning of the viaduct and the state's plan to work on Interstate 70 between Colby and Levant, which would require some redirecting of traffic into Colby.

Following the Sept. 11 attacks, Thomas Countyans did their part to help the victims of the tragedy by collecting and sending money to the American Red Cross, by participating in patriotic acts such as displaying the American flag in homes and businesses, and some even volunteered to go to New York City to assist in rescue efforts.

Fears of terrorism in the nation's heartland also prompted cropdusters here and throughout the nation to be cautious of suspicious activities and for two weeks, off and on, crop-

dusting pilots were grounded for national security reasons. Ken Bixenman, owner and pilot of Colby's Great Plains Spraying, was among those affected in the grounding order. For Bixenman, had the ban order been two weeks sooner, it would have caused some problems. However, he said that regardless of the timing, it was something he was willing to do his part in order to ensure the safety of everyone.

As for the corn crop, cutting started in late September and "fantastic yields" were not predicted by either the Thomas County Extension Office nor at the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center.

Colby had some good news as October rolled around when the Kansas Humanities Council selected it as one of four cities to host *Kansas*

*Chautauqua: Bleeding Kansas: Where the Civil War Began*. The event is tentatively scheduled to be here in June of 2004.

A young couple, who eluded Thomas County law enforcement authorities in a high-speed chase, terrorized a young rural Colby girl and stole her vehicle, were captured in Texas nearly two months later. Christopher Lambert and Tina Pearce, both of Mississippi, were arrested after a motel employee in Texas called police on a domestic disturbance involving the two.

The Thomas County Community Foundation continued to ask for pledges and donations as the year was quickly coming to a close. The urgency was prompted by the deadline set with the Kansas Health Foundation, the agency matching the grant funds. Weeks before the final deadline, the needed \$150,000 was re-

ceived with Colby Mayor Warren Hixson making the announcement that funding was secured through the Law Enforcement Trust Fund.

Toward the end of the year, awareness of Colby and northwest Kansas was further realized when Sharon Kriss accepted an appointment to the state's art commission board. The appointment would continue to build relationships between eastern and western Kansas in the area of the arts.

During the final weeks of the year 2001, the community was shocked and saddened by the death of Dr. Jeff Jennings, 29, who — just months before — began his family practice with the Colby Medical and Surgical Center.

*Editor's note: This article completes a series on the highlights from the year 2001, which started on Thursday, Dec. 27.*

## For your health



MAXINE NELSON/Colby Free Press

Derek Rall, left, laboratory aid at Citizens Medical Center, takes blood from Mary Jane Smith Saturday morning in preparation for the Wellness Fair which will be from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, at the college. Blood tests will also be taken Saturday, Jan. 12, from 6 a.m.-10 a.m. at the hospital, and results will be available at the Wellness Fair. Nurse practitioners will explain results of the lab work every hour on the half hour at the Wellness Fair. Over 150 people reported for lab work Saturday, which is about half of the 300 who normally attend the fair, said Jeanene Brown, fair spokesperson.

## Commissioners' e-mails not public record, attorney general determines

HAYS (AP) — E-mail messages between city commissioners that are sent or stored on private computers are not public records, even if they deal with city business, the state attorney general's office said Thursday.

"If a specific e-mail communication is not made, maintained or kept by the city, but rather is exclusively made, maintained or kept only by the individual city commission members, it is not a public record," said an opinion by

Assistant Attorney General Theresa Marcel Nuckolls. Hays City attorney John Bird had sought the opinion after The Hays Daily News requested city commissioners' e-mails there.

The paper had heard that commissioners were conducting city business via e-mail, said managing editor Mike Corn. Corn said the paper made separate open records requests in October to each commissioner and to the city, asking for e-mails commissioners sent

to each other and those they sent to non-elected city employees. The paper's attorney argued that both were public.

Bird said he agreed with the paper's attorney that e-mails between a commissioner and a city employee are public, but he maintained that messages between commissioners themselves were private.

Bird advised commissioners that the choice was theirs whether they would provide the material the paper wanted.

## Briefly

### Weather: Near record high

Winter will be bypassing the Colby region for a big part of the week, if the National Weather Service forecast stays on track. Today's high was expected to reach 61 degrees. Tonight, cloudy, lows near 32 and west winds 10-20 mph. Tuesday, mostly cloudy, highs near record-breaking territory with 68 degrees expected (the record is 71) and north-west winds 10-20 mph. Tuesday night, continued cloudy, lows near 32. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, partly cloudy conditions, lows in the middle 20s and highs around 50. No precipitation expected during the period. Colby's high Sunday was 43 and the overnight low this morning was 13, climbing to 22 by 8 a.m. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 30 degrees. Still no precipitation for January. The records for Jan. 7: 73 in 1948 and -19 in 1988. (*The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

### 'Meals on Wheels' needs volunteers

The Meals on Wheels program is in need of volunteers to deliver on Saturdays or Sundays during the odd months

of 2002. Anyone who might be able to help in delivery is asked to call Brown at 462-4850.

### Chamber luncheon Friday

The Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce luncheon will be held at noon on Friday, at the Ramada Inn. Highlighting the meeting will be Melly Schmidt, director of Kansas 4-kids. For information, call 462-3401.

### Busy agenda for fair board

The Thomas County Free Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday, at the Thomas County 4-H Building, to conduct business and make plans for the coming fair. Audrey Hines will be welcomed as the new fair board secretary. The agenda includes: Rosalie Seemann will talk about Genesis; Brent Wiedeman, Farmers & Merchants Bank, will discuss sponsorship of the free barbecue; Thomas County Commissioners will conduct election of 2002 officers; Thomas County Extension agent will report; and reports will be heard from various committees for the coming fair. All meetings are open to the public.

