



COLBY FREE PRESS

Commissioners receive Health Center update

BY MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Gene Garrison, Susan Clark and Diana Stithem, of the High Plains Mental Health Center in Colby, visited with the Thomas County Commissioners at their Monday meeting.

Garrison, manager, said High Plains Mental Health will be opening a hospital in Hays to provide a 72-hour bed facility. Garrison said the facility would be located in the former Hadley Regional Medical Center. This length of time is usually enough to get the patient over a crisis, Garrison said.

Clark works with adults at Colby House. She said the 15 residents in that facility are all from northwest Kansas. The house is for low income persons with mental illness and is filled to capacity, she said.

Stithem said she works with youth 21 and under. She said the early intervention programs for children help parents to learn parenting skills.

Garrison said he would be stopping by to update the commissioners.

In other business:

- Tax abatements for a total of \$929.11 were approved. One was for a tower already assessed, and the other was for a building which had been double assessed for three years.

- The commissioners approved a proposal to pay Marc Gilman \$1,428.67 for curb and sidewalk repair in front of the courthouse. The broken curbs at the sidewalk will be removed and replaced with handicap ramps. Work will be done when the weather warms up.

- The commissioners said they had received two applications for EMS director, and hoped to have more.

The next commissioners meeting will be at 9 a.m. Friday, March 29, the last business day of the month, in the commissioners room of the courthouse. All meetings are open to the public.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Kayla Harry, a Colby Community College presidential scholar, was one of four scholars who volunteered at this year's Colby Community College Endowment Association dinner and auction Saturday at the

Comfort Inn Convention Center. The event saw the largest attendance, donations and contributions ever, said Larry Arehart, president of the board.

U.S. turns up pressure for halt in Mideast war

KUWAIT (AP) — Vice President Dick Cheney is joining forces with U.S. Middle East envoy Anthony Zinni in turning up U.S. pressure for an elusive Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire.

Cheney headed to Israel today with a request from Arab leaders that he pressure the Israelis to allow Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to attend an Arab summit in Beirut, Lebanon, later this month.

Cheney, making a brief stopover in Kuwait, said that when he got to Israel he would do "everything we can to encourage Arafat and (Israeli Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon to enter into a cease-fire so there is no further loss of human life."

At a news conference with Kuwait's deputy prime minister, Cheney declined to say whether he might meet with Arafat, even though time had been set aside in his schedule for a meeting with the Palestinian side.

The vice president said he would

look to Zinni for advice on how he could best serve the cause of getting the two warring sides back to the table for peace talks.

Cheney said Zinni was "in the midst of difficult and delicate negotiations."

The two were to meet at the Tel Aviv airport later Monday upon Cheney's arrival in Israel.

Kuwait's deputy prime minister, Sheik Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, urged Cheney to appeal to Sharon to allow Arafat to attend the Arab League summit.

"We hope this wish will be taken into consideration," he told reporters.

Although Sharon recently lifted some travel restrictions on the Palestinian leader, he has yet to say if he will permit Arafat to attend the Arab conclave. Cheney and Zinni were to meet with Sharon later in the day.

Kuwait was the ninth and final Arab nation the vice president has visited in his weeklong trip to the region.

College endowment auction biggest ever

Event gets boost from Roofmasters, Garvey Foundation

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Nearly 400 people attended the annual Colby Community College Endowment Association's dinner and auction on Saturday, which saw the largest attendance and highest proceeds in its history at \$84,500.

Two major contributors, the Garvey Texas Foundation of Ft. Worth and Roofmasters in Colby, gave \$25,000 and \$10,000 respec-

tively, were also acknowledged for their support.

"I think the efforts of the total endowment board in making this event so successful were fantastic," said Larry Arehart, president. "Pam Geihlsler, the administrative director, also needs to be commended for her hard work and, on behalf of the board, we all have a lot of gratitude to the community for its confidence in the college."

More than 200 businesses, organizations and individuals in Colby and the surrounding areas donated items or cash for the event.

"We had donations from people in Goodland, Oakley, St. Francis, Hoxie, Atwood and Oberlin," he said.

Arehart said he thinks the reason for the endowment association's continued success is because of positive attitudes toward Colby College.

"We have a tremendous community that believes in the college and who want to see it grow and thrive," he said.

"The college has a major economic impact in the area and every dollar generated multiplies by seven times that in the northwest Kansas area," he said.

Arehart said that when people support Colby College through the endowment's scholarship fund, they are making an investment that will come back to the area in the form of services, supplies and other items.

"This economic impact is significant

and it takes everyone to make it happen," he said.

The endowment board exceeded its goal of \$60,000 and was pleased with the outcome this year. Last year's event made \$49,000 with about 300 people attending.

"I am just ecstatic with the great support we had this year," Geihlsler said. In addition to Arehart, other board members include Todd Barrows, treasurer; Sandy Harper, secretary; Mark Winger, president-elect; Stan Edmundson, Troy Faulkender, Velma Goodheart, Sherry McDonald, Janet Myers, Nancy Saddler, Phil Shuman, Daryl Strecker and Cal Williams.

Supreme Court's budget order alters balance of power in government

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — With a two-page document, the Kansas Supreme Court altered the balance of power in state government.

The court declared last week that it had the authority — the "inherent power" — to look after its financial affairs, then raised court fees to solve the judicial branch's budget problems. An order signed by Chief Justice Kay McFarland bypassed the Legislature and Gov. Bill Graves, raising filing fees by \$5 and marriage license fees by \$25.

After decades of deferring to the legislative and executive branches on budget matters, the judicial branch asserted itself. It reserved for itself the right to have a significant say in the financial resources available to it.

"This may open up a Pandora's box," said Rep. Rocky Nichols, D-Topeka, a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Even legislators who question the validity of the Supreme Court's order understood why McFarland and her colleagues acted. Years of financial frustration pushed the court to take matters into its own hands.

"It's sad that we have forced them to use their inherent power . . . the court has been very good about resisting that temptation."

Mike O'Neal, R-Hutchinson and
chair of House Judiciary Committee

For at least a decade, the judicial branch has seen the growth of its caseload outpace increases in its funding. Holding staff vacancies open for two or three months became the norm; last year, McFarland suffered the indignity for several months of being the only chief justice in the nation without a research attorney.

Payroll consumes about 97 percent of the judiciary's budget, leaving few good alternatives for reducing costs.

Without an extra appropriation of \$600,000 for its current budget, the Supreme Court planned to close all court offices for three business days before June 30. And McFarland warned that Graves' proposed \$81.2 million budget for the next fiscal year would leave the

courts \$3.5 million short of meeting payroll and covering basic operating expenses.

By last week the Senate already had approved the supplemental appropriation for the current budget, but relief for the next fiscal year appeared unlikely. House members have rejected numerous tax-raising proposals, even though the state faces a \$679 million gap between expected revenues and required spending over the next 15 months.

For years, the Supreme Court has sent a proposed budget to the governor's staff, often seeing a reduced version submitted to legislators. For years, chief justices lobbied for money.

"The Legislature treats the judicial system like an executive branch agency, and it's not,"

said Rep. Mike O'Neal, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

Deference to the Legislature's power to write laws is a staple of Supreme Court decisions. With previous budget problems, the Supreme Court has complained but adhered to a tradition of asking the Legislature to approve fee increases and allowing lawmakers to control spending.

"It's sad that we have forced them to use their inherent power," said O'Neal, R-Hutchinson. "The court has been very good about resisting that temptation." Legislators who question the court's action point to Article 2, Section 24 of the Kansas Constitution: "No money shall be drawn from the treasury except in pursuance of a specific appropriation made by law."

They also cite Article 11, Section 5: "No tax shall be levied except in pursuance of a law." Now, some contend that the higher fees imposed by the court are tantamount to a new or increased tax.

"The court doesn't have the authority to tax," said Rep. Tony Powell, R-Wichita, an attorney. He added a warning: "I do not think the Supreme Court wants a showdown with the Leg-

islature."

Yet a showdown with government's other branches is not inevitable.

Attorney General Carla Stovall does not plan to challenge the Supreme Court order, spokesman Mark Ohlemeyer said.

"Our position is that we believe, with the separation of powers, that this is within their right to do," he said.

And Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman John Vratil, R-Leawood, said: "I'm glad to see the courts take some action to meet their financial needs." Even if some legislators want to challenge the Supreme Court, they're not sure how to go about it. Powell suggested raising a civil rights issue — whether the fee increases deny poor Kansans access to the courts — in federal court. Others note that McFarland and her colleagues decide questions about Kansas government and interpret the state constitution.

What's clear is that the court is exerting control over its budget instead of letting the Legislature limit the judicial branch's spending. If this year's order stands, it can be the basis for similar — and perhaps more aggressive — action in the future.

Briefly

Weather: No big change

There is a chance for precipitation, but that won't come our way until probably Thursday, said the National Weather Service in its forecast for the Colby region this morning. Tonight, mostly cloudy, slight chance for flurries, lows in the middle 20s, brisk northerly winds 15-25 mph, gusting to 35, then decreasing to around 10 mph by morning. Tuesday, sunny, highs 45-50 and northerly winds 5-10 mph. Tuesday night, clear, lows around 30. Wednesday, partly sunny, highs in the middle 50s.

Thursday, outside chance for rain or snow, overnight lows in the 25-30 range with highs 35-40. Colby's high Sunday was 56 and the overnight low this morning was 22.

Precipitation remains at 0.01 inches to date for the month. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 41 degrees. The records for March 18: 90 in 1921 and -3 in 1958.

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

College board meets today

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. today in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building. Agenda items will include discussion and approval of the negotiations package offered

to the Faculty Alliance; child care report; approval of contracts; approval of agreements; resignation. Gasoline and diesel fuel bids will be reviewed. Bills will be paid, and the board will consider any other item of interest to any member. The meeting is open to the public.

Park fee reminder issued

Thomas County Clerk Tracey Perkins reminds that park fees will be going up April 1. If there are questions, contact her office at 462-4500.

Recycling center takes phone books

The Thomas County Recycling Center is taking old tele-

phone books at its collection site, 720 E. College Dr. in Colby. Those wanting to drop off the books should use the magazine bins, coordinators said.

Storm spotter class slated

The National Weather Service in Goodland and the Thomas County Emergency Management will present a storm spotter and safety class in Colby on Tuesday, March 26. The training will begin at 7 p.m. in the Student Union of Colby Community College. It is free of charge and is intended for all age groups. The program is conducted once every year by National Weather Service meteorologists. For information, call 785-899-7119.

