



COLBY FREE PRESS

Barta takes over at the high school 'Excited to be in Colby,' says new principal

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

New faces are greeting students and parents at Colby High School.

Don Barta was recommended and approved by the school board as the new high school principal, replacing Bryan Bullington, and Kathy Owen was approved to fill the position of secretary to Joni-Clark Leiker, counselor, which was vacated by Liz Gottsch at the end of the 2001-02 school year.

Barta said today that he is excited to be in Colby and looks forward to students returning next week.

"My impression of Colby and the high school is very positive," he said. "We are on the cutting edge of academics and opportunities and have all the advantages of a big city without the big city challenges, such as high crime, gangs, etc."

Prior to accepting the position of high school principal in Colby, Barta said he was the elementary principal from 1997-2002 at Center School District in Kansas City, Mo., which is among some 40 districts in the metropolitan area.

Before that, he said he was the high school principal in Garden City from 1995-97 and also held that position in Rangely, Colo. from 1989-95.

He also served as the high school principal at Dimond High School in the Anchorage, Alaska School District between 1985-89, which he considered to be one of those places with exceptional attributes, similar to what he sees now in Colby.

"Dimond High School was nationally recognized for its high academics and positive accomplishments," he said, "and I think Colby is very much like that as well."



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby High School welcomed two new people for the new school year. Don Barta took over as principal, and Kathy Owen as secretary in the

Barta said he is glad to be here and believes that Colby is an extraordinary place.

"Not since Alaska have I felt so good about the opportunities here and I am

glad I came," he said. When dealing with young people, Barta knows that situations some could construe as problems, he sees as not a problem at all — rather as momentum to go in the

counseling department. Also, freshmen and new student orientation is Thursday beginning at 7 p.m. in the commons area of the high school.

right direction.

"The Colby School District and the community have a 'can do' attitude, are proactive, have great physical plant facilities and our kids like being a part

of the school — that's not something you find in a lot of places," he said.

Along with his experience as a high school principal, Barta has been in the educational system for 40 years, start-

ing his career as a teacher in 1963. He said he has taught at all three levels to include elementary, middle, and high school. At the high school level, he taught English and Special Education and in 1973 took his first administrative position as an assistant principal.

Barta said he grew up in the Kansas City area, but added that his wife, Irmajean (Gridley) is from western Kansas, having been raised in Oakley.

The couple have three adult children, two sons and a daughter, along with seven grandchildren. The oldest son, Alan, 41, works with the U.S. Forest Service in Boise, Ida., and also teaches part-time at Boise State University. His daughter, Lori, 40, is a kindergarten teacher in Oceanside, Calif., and his youngest son, Greg, teaches social studies at a middle school in Anchorage.

"This is a positive, inviting community," Barta said, "and a neat situation for us."

Along with Barta, Owen said she, too, is excited to be working at the school. Her responsibilities will include helping students with scholarships and transcript information.

Her job will also be to assist Joni Clark-Leiker, counselor, and Doug Finley, social worker, with scheduling college visits and other student needs.

As the 2002-03 school year approaches, Barta and the entire staff at the high school encourage people to stop by and visit. Other staff members include Jeff Quenzer, assistant principal and activities director; Pat Sprenkel, attendance secretary and bookkeeper; Laura Cook, executive secretary to Quenzer and Barta; Emily Strange, school nurse; with Leiker and Finley in the counseling department.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley areas

The numbers

Monday's high, 73
Low this morning, 53
Year ago today, 91 and 59
Temperature at 11:15 a.m. today, 68
Colby's overnight rainfall, 0.02
Oakley's overnight rainfall, 0.09

Soil temp at the 4-inch depth, 70
Records for Aug. 13, 107 in 1936 and 40 in 1920

The forecast

Today, partly cloudy, highs in the middle 70s. Tonight, clear, lows in the middle 50s, southwest winds 5-10 mph. Wednesday, sunny, highs in the middle 80s, southwest winds around 10 mph. Wednesday night, clear, lows near 60. Thursday, sunny, highs in the lower 90s. *(Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, unless otherwise noted. Forecast is from the National Weather Service.)*

Colby Water Usage

•Aug. 12=1.805 million gallons
Levels of Concern
Watch Level 3.5 million gallons
Warning Level 4.0 million gallons
Emergency Level 4.5 million gallons
(Three consecutive days)

By **MICHELLE L. HAWKINS**

Colby Free Press

Thomas County's \$2,485,584 budget for 2003 breezed to approval at Monday's county commissioners' meeting when nobody showed up at the public hearing at the courthouse to protest or question.

However, a concerned citizen did show up later to discuss the reasons behind the 4.769 mill increase.

Commissioner Ron Evans, as before, based those reasons on the \$160,000 set aside this year for the new landfill, the "modest" two percent pay increase for county employees, a 19 percent increase in health insurance costs, an increase in the costs for man-

ning the county jail, and both a decrease in interest rates and state funding.

Evans said this was a tough year and that the commissioners worked hard on the budget.

"I just want to thank Tracey Perkins and our accountant, Adams, Brown, Beran & Ball, for all of their number crunching," he said.

After the budget hearing, Francis Landry, Bob Mader, Terry Roberts and Betty Behring came before the commissioners to show concern over the draining of Prairie Dog Creek behind the houses on Cottonwood drive.

Landry said that since it is not draining properly, water is standing and has

become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

"We are concerned about it being a health issue with the West Nile Virus," said Landry.

Evans said that a few years back the county had worked to remove silt and debris that prevented the draining. Since the problem has built back up, the commissioners are going to speak with Chris Bieker, roads supervisor, about the county once again making it possible for the water to flow through properly.

Gerry Fulwider presented the Northwest Kansas Strategic Resolution. The commissioners approved the resolution.

Thomas County 2003 budget breezes to approval

Kansas cattlemen pleading for CRP grazing extension

GARDEN CITY (AP)—Cattlemen Ron Pettz buys 75 gallons of water for every quarter he dumps in the meter at the Leoti water tower.

It takes 16 quarters for him to fill the water tank on his truck and trailer for a single load. Each day — two to four times a day — he drives the 32 miles from his Deerfield farm to the Conservation Reserve Program land in Wichita County where he keeps his cattle on grazing donated by another farmer.

He figures he uses 50 to 60 quarters a day to buy enough water for his herd of 165 cows, plus their 165 calves.

"A person has to do what a person has to do — we just feel thankful we can do this," he said.

But on Monday, he left his cattle-watering tours to his wife to come to Garden City for a chance to talk to U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback and top state and federal agriculture officials to convince them to extend the CRP grazing beyond the Aug. 31 cutoff date.

It became a familiar chorus from cattle producers at each stop in a day-long tour, which included a feed yard near Scott City, a Lane County farm, a grain elevator in Ness City, a nearly dry

lake in Hodgeman County and an implement dealer in Finney County.

At each stop Bill Fuller, state director for the USDA Farm Service Agency, told ranchers he was pushing to extend that deadline. He is also trying to end the 25 percent loss in payment to owners of CRP land who graze their own cattle on their land. Under the present rules, CRP owners can donate the grazing to other farmers without any loss of government CRP subsidy.

Fuller said the tour confirmed for him that the extension he's seeking is needed.

In other business:

• The commissioners discussed the financial report of the 2002 Nine-Run event. "This was a successful fund raiser," said Evans after looking over the report. After expenses, the profits totaled \$1,372.32.

• The decision for computer hardware maintenance was tabled after looking over quotes from Ex-Tech. Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock suggested local bids should be taken to see if the job can be done at home.

• The draft presented by the Thomas County Sheriff's Department over animal control was approved.

• It was confirmed that letters concerning individuals farming and plac-

ing fences in the county right-of-way were sent out to those in violation. The letters were prompted by complaints by citizens in the county who were having troubles moving farm equipment due to the position of fencing. Even said, "When citizens complain, we address it."

• Action was taken to pay the \$65 registration fee for Tracey Perkins, county clerk, for the Resource Conservation and Development Conference on Wednesday in Colby. Perkins will be representing the Thomas County commissioners at the event.

The next meeting of the commissioners will be Monday, Aug. 19, at 9 a.m. in the courthouse.

she has been mean," he said.

Scott County farmer Jon Buehler said he lost money for three years in a row.

"We are desperate out here, we really are," he said.

At a stop at the Don Hineman farm in Dighton, the group got a close up look at some CRP ground that Hineman was grazing. He put his cattle on it Aug. 7 and will have to take them off of it in three weeks under the government rule.

"I'm glad to have it for a little time, but it is not the full answer," he said.

Briefly

Crafters needed for fall event

Plans for the annual Colby Girl Scout Craft Sale are now underway, said Jan Barnum, coordinator. As in year's past, Barnum said crafters are needed for the event, which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Colby Community Colby. For questions or information on how to arrange for a booth at the 'Craft-a-Ganza,' call her at 462-6503.

Hunter education course slated

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Colby volunteer instructors and the Colby Recreation Department are sponsoring a hunter education course. The course will be held at the Colby Community Building on Tuesday, Aug. 27, and Thursday, Aug. 29, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and Saturday, Aug. 31, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. "Students must attend all sessions," said Benny Young, with the Wildlife and Parks Department. In addition, anyone born on or after July 1, 1957, must take and pass a hunter education course before they can hunt in Kansas. Students must also pre-enroll at the Pirate's Den at Southwind Plaza, Colby.

For information, call 462-6631, 462-7602 or 462-3367.

Youth activity in September

The Community Awareness Team is sponsoring a "Coffee House Night" in the City Limits conference room, Saturday, Sept. 14, from 8 to 11 p.m. The activity will feature an open microphone for youth to share poetry, music or other talents, and refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to all students. For questions or information, call Janet Worthy, coordinator, 462-8152.

After 5 Club meets tonight

The High Plains Kansas After 5 Club will holds its 'Fish and Tackle' meeting tonight, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Colby Community Building's Little Theatre. Featured guest is Jim Ferguson who will share stories on adventures in the outdoors. The guest speaker will be Kelvin Boltjes of Sidney, Neb., whose topic will be "Life Preserver."

City to spray for mosquitoes

The City of Colby crews are preparing to spray for mos-

quitoes for the remainder of the summer and anyone who would like to be notified when crews will be in their area can call Jo Strange, executive secretary to the city manager, at 462-4410. In addition, the city is urging residents to check their yards and empty anything that is holding stagnant water, such as cans, swimming pools, tires, etc., to keep the mosquito population to a minimum.

Heartland enrollment underway

Heartland Christian School is accepting enrollment applications for the 2002-2003 school year for preschool through eighth grade. For information, call the school office at 462-6419 or come by the school's new location at 1995 W. Fourth St. in Colby.

College pool being painted

The Colby Community College swimming pool will remain closed until Saturday, Aug. 17, for painting.

Leadership nominations wanted

Applications are now being accepted for the 2002-03

Leadership Thomas County program, said Leilani Thomas, one of the coordinators. The purpose of the program is to develop future leaders for the county. Additionally, people can nominate themselves if they are interested in learning more about 21st Century leadership. Completed forms must be returned by Friday, Aug. 23. For questions, call (785) 462-3401 or stop by at 350 S. Range, Suite 10 in Colby.

Volunteers needed for August event

Cheryl Schwarz and Chuck Dempewolf, co-chairperson's of the Relay for Life event are inviting people to take part in this unique fundraising event beginning Friday, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. Kicking off the event, Schwarz said, will be the cancer survivors walking the first lap on Friday night. The luminary lighting ceremony will be held at 9:30 p.m. and if anyone is interested in walking as a cancer survivor, purchase a luminary or to help in any way, call her at 462-3232 or Dempewolf at 462-3481. "The Relay for Life is about being a community that takes up the fight," she said. "Please support the Relay for Life teams when they come to your door."

