



COLBY FREE PRESS

Corn steals the show

Oakley hosts its 31st annual husking contest over weekend

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

OAKLEY — Corn was the name of the game on Friday and Saturday as people from all over gathered for the 31st Annual Corn husking Contest at Oakley.

Events for the entire family were held in conjunction with the event that has been held in Oakley since 1971.

The two-day affair started with a VIP Cookoff Contest on Friday in which recipes using corn were entered and judged.

Warren Park, chairman of the Corn husking Committee said that they had a tremendous turnout of community volunteers for the event.

"They need to be praised for their hard work," he said.

Park said he believed that nearly 50 people entered the corn husking competitions. This is the only national

qualifying tournament in Kansas, so huskers from as far as Atchison travel to compete in Oakley. This year, the national competition will be held in Hunnington, Ind.

The corn husking competition is divided into several categories. Categories included: a novice division for those who have been husking for two years or less; girls and boys youth, young women and men, senior women and men, men's golden agers, women and men's state open class, and team competitions.

Park, who has been the chairman of the committee for 30 years, said that contest had been stopped during World War II. The "old style" of picking was revived and continues today.

Pickers race against the clock as they have 10, 20, or 30 minutes of husking time depending on the class in which they are competing. Wagons are pulled along-side of the huskers who must

make sure they take every ear of corn off of the stalk. A person follows behind the picker to gather the left behind ears of corn. There is a deduction for ears that are left.

Park said that Ambassador Challenge is the team competition division. Teams from businesses come together in teams of three to compete against one another.

Along with the corn husking competition, people visited the arts and crafts show, and two events were held for the children — a corn ear throwing contest and the corn pile money hunt. The Oakley Schools Art Department also held a "Corn Art" competition for the event.

The event concluded with an awards banquet at the Oakley Country Club on Saturday night.

Winners of the contest, along with an action picture, will appear as soon as the results are compiled.



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Silas Smith, son of Ruth Smith of Winona participated in the Kid's Corn Pile Money Hunt on Saturday, but by observation, it appeared Silas was having more fun throwing the corn rather than hunting for the occasional hidden coin.

Budget rhetoric grows as voting day approaches

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press Writer

JUNCTION CITY (AP) — Taxes are important for Jason Gonzalez. The 19-year-old is more likely to vote for a gubernatorial candidate who pledges not to increase them.

He thinks taxes are too high — not so much because of what they take out of his paycheck from the A&W restaurant off of Interstate 70, but what customers pay on burgers, hot dogs and root beer floats.

"Even around here, say you pay for a meal, the tax is usually a lot," Gonzalez said.

So far, Democrat Kathleen Sebelius and Republican Tim Shallenburger have been trying to appeal to voters like Gonzalez who don't want to see higher taxes to solve the state's financial mess.

But they've made other promises to woo voters, most notably about education spending.

Many legislative leaders doubt whether Shallenburger and Sebelius can keep those promises and solve the problem of the state not having enough money to keep its services at current levels.

Those lawmakers had hoped that continuing bad news about state finances would push the candidates to be

more realistic.

Instead, the candidates' rhetoric has moved closer to pure budget hokey.

"The reality check needs to hit soon for the gubernatorial candidates," said Senate Majority Leader Lana Oleen, R-Manhattan.

Shallenburger and Sebelius want to avoid increasing taxes. Both make keeping such a promise more difficult when they talk about education spending.

Shallenburger began the general election campaign with perhaps his most forthright statement. He told reporters the morning after the Aug. 6 primary that schools could withstand a cut of up to 3 percent — \$69 million — if the alternative were raising taxes.

He now says the statement was taken out of context and that he does not intend to cut education funding, even though aid to public schools is about 52 percent of the budget.

Sebelius hammered on the post-primary statement to woo moderate Republicans away from Shallenburger, a conservative.

Her message also is pitched at unaffiliated voters like 20-year-old Robin Diehl, who works at the Sapp Brothers convenience store in the same building as the A&W restaurant.

Largest meat recall ever begins

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Poultry processor Pilgrim's Pride is recalling 27.4 million pounds of cooked sandwich meat after warnings of possible contamination from the listeria bacteria — the largest meat recall in U.S. history.

The company recalled 295,000 pounds of turkey and chicken products from a suburban Philadelphia plant on Wednesday, but expanded the recall over the weekend after tests came back positive for a strain of the potentially fatal bacteria, the company said Sunday.

The nationwide recall covers deli meat sold under the company's

Wampler Foods brand. The meat was processed at the company's plant in Franconia, Pa., from May 1 through Oct. 11.

Each package being recalled bears the plant number P-1351 inside the USDA mark of inspection and a production date.

The deli products were sold in retail groceries, delicatessens and food service distributors.

Customers are being asked to return the meats to where they were purchased for a refund.

Listeria can cause high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and nausea, according to the USDA.

She and her husband plan to have children and, "That'll be one of my major concerns, the education they're getting."

But Sebelius went further. She now says her goal is increasing state aid by \$1,000 per pupil — at a cost of about \$576 million — over four years.

Shallenburger has said the state will need to cut about \$200 million from its budget, an average of 10 percent of everything outside of education, which he described as reasonable.

But the figure does not seem reasonable for individual agencies.

For example, the Department on Aging's budget is \$145.4 million, but 86 percent of the dollars — more than \$125 million — go to nursing homes caring for elderly Kansans.

"We'd find ourselves in a mess," said Assistant Aging Secretary Doug Farmer noted.

At the Department of Corrections about 60 percent of its \$212 million is spent directly in its prisons. A 10 percent cut would mean closing institutions and eliminating staff positions, spokesman Bill Miskell said.

"That doesn't mean the inmates would go away," he said. "We'd put additional bunks in a correctional facility, with no additional staff."

If such agencies are protected, other agencies and programs take a larger hit.

The higher education system, with a \$699 million budget, easily could be a target for cuts.

This semester, tuition increased by 25 percent at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University in response to the state's budget problems.

But both candidates insist that efficiencies in government can be found, if a new governor is determined to look.

This could be yours



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Jeremy Downing of Colby admired the 2001 Ford Mustang that Tubbs and Sons of Colby is donating to the Hospice Auction coming up on Saturday, Oct. 26 at the City Limits conference center.



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Branda Heinrich read an alphabet book to her camera-shy daughter, Courtney, during the Reading is Fundamental book distribution.

Parents, kids take to reading

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

Reading is a part of everything we do. Day in and day out, we read without even stopping to think about how we learned. The program RIF, which stands for Reading is Fundamental, develops and delivers family literacy programs to help younger children in learning to read and to motivate older children to read.

Members of the Colby headstart class recently brought their parents and family to a fun night at the Colby Grade School cafeteria. The evening centered around the Reading is Fundamental program.

Julie Brown, headstart teacher, said that during the fun nights, the families get together to enjoy a pot-

luck and read as a family. Brown said that the evenings have a theme and the parents participate in a hands-on activity with the children.

The headstart group participates in the Reading is Fundamental program four times a year. The preschool class, three and four-year olds, have the opportunity to select a new book to have their parents read to them, at the end of the evening, they are able to take the new book home with them.

The program was founded in 1966 and is the nation's oldest and largest non-profit children's literacy organization. Each year, 13 million books are distributed to homes in hopes of increasing literacy among America's children.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers
Sunday's high, 67
Sunday's low, 27
Low this morning, 30
Year ago today, 65 and 35
Temperature at 11:15 today, 60
Records for Oct. 14, 94 in 1921, 24 in 1893

The forecast
Tonight, clear, lows in the lower 30s. Tuesday, sunny, highs in the mid-50s. Tuesday night, clear, lows in the lower 30s. Wednesday, sunny, highs in the lower 60s. No precipitation is forecast during the period.

Colby Water Usage
• Oct. 11-12-13 = 1.348 million gallons per day

Briefly

Sacred Heart auction is Saturday

Sacred Heart parish in Colby is having its annual charity auction, "Underwater Safari," on Saturday at the Colby Community Building. Doors open with a silent auction at 6 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres will be served throughout the night. The oral auction will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the parish rectory, or call 462-2179.

Hospice Auction is Oct. 26

The annual Hospice fund-raising auction will be held in Colby at the City Limits conference center on Saturday, Oct. 26. Those wishing to contribute to the auction or would like tickets can contact the organization at 462-6710 or 1-800-315-5122. Keep an eye on the Free Press for more information. Proceeds from the auction ensure that Hospice support is available to terminally ill individuals and their family members.

Flute, harp duo to perform

The Western Plains Arts Association will present the Flute and

Harp Duo of Megan Meisenbach and Mary Golden at the Sharon Springs High School auditorium on Sunday, Oct. 20 at 3 p.m. (Central Time).

They are highly acclaimed as among the finest touring artists today. Admission at the door is \$8 for adults and \$4 for students or by WPAA season passes.

History group sets meeting

The family history group will meet from 3-5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 20, at Pioneer Memorial Library. Emma Rogers will report on the genealogy meeting in Norton with Jim Swan. All are welcome. Come prepared to share if you wish.

Beims benefit at Atwood Oct. 20

A benefit for Braden Scott Beims, infant son of Mitch and Cortney Beims, Colby, will be held in Atwood at the Knights of Columbus Hall from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 20.

Chicken noodle soup, chili, desserts and soft drinks will be available. This will be a free-will offering. Everyone in the area is invited to attend.

Auxiliary still needs items

Donations of good new or used holiday items are needed for the *Recycled Holidays Sale* sponsored by the Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary. Donations may be left at 545 Woofter Avenue in the evenings after 5 p.m. or call 462-7777 or 462-6896. The sale will be Saturday, Oct. 19, from 8 to 11 a.m. at 545 Woofter Avenue.

Amusement group to meet tonight

The next meeting of the Thomas County Amusement Association will be Monday at 7 p.m. in the Thomas County Office Complex. One of the items on the agenda will be the rides local representatives saw during a visit to Sterling, Colo. All interested persons are urged to attend the meeting.

School fun night planned

The public is invited to the Fall Festival and Family Fun Night hosted by Heartland Christian School in Colby on Oct. 31 from 6:30-9 p.m.

For more information call the school at 462-6419.

