



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Business in Colby said good

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Christmas business is pretty good, and seems to rival figures of last year's season, according to a random survey taken by the *Free Press*.

The Interior Connection and Quilt Cabin, in their new home at 1525 S. Range, said their business has increased greatly. Millie Wiley, store employee, said this is the first year for the business, owned by Junelle Hills, to operate in a retail sense for the Christmas season. Hills merged her business, The Interior Connection, with the Quilt Cabin in early spring after the purchase of Joyce's Fabric.

Wiley said that in the past, their business was not focused on shoppers, but rather catering to those trying to spruce up their homes for the holidays. She said that with the move to their new location closer to Interstate 70, they have seen more shopper traffic.

Nationally, retail analysts say that home electronic items and kitchenware appliances have sold well since the shopping season started the day after Thanksgiving.

Steve Wolf, manager for Great Western Tire, 1170 S. Country Club Drive, said today that their appliance sales are steady compared to last year. He said the other "hot ticket item" usually purchased around the holidays for them, tires, aren't doing so well. People who would usually be buying snow tires this time of year are not buying them since we have had very little snow this season.

Mark Beringer at Beringer Hardware, 165 W. 4th, said that appliance sales have been extremely strong this year, but their overall business is about the same as it was last year.

Another store which is "holding steady" for the season is Office Works and Home Furnishings, 960 S. Range. Manager Eugene Wieland said their Christmas traffic is comparable to years past.

"Bedroom sets are very popular gifts, but we have been selling many glassware and other items as well," said Wieland.

At Golden Hardware, 490 E. 4th, manager Brian Gustin said that although sales are "very comparable to last year," the Thanksgiving weekend proved to be very successful for their store.

Gustin said that typically the Thanksgiving weekend is not very busy for them and they do not focus their advertising for that specific time. "This year sales were really strong for that weekend," said Gustin.

College is forced to cut programs

WINFIELD (AP) — Southwestern College is reducing support for its popular summer theater program because of tight economic times.

College officials are reducing the summer theater schedule by 75 percent, officials said Tuesday.

The most visible casualty of the cuts will be the Horsefeathers and Applesauce Summer Dinner Theatre, which will have only one production instead of the full schedule of four shows next summer.

The college contributed about \$44,000 to the semiprofessional theater company in 2002.

Fixing the mouth helps the music



Kids prepare for concert

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

It's all a matter of how you fix your mouth, and these three Colby Elementary School fifth graders are doing just that as they practice for their Monday concert at 8 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium. Members of the percussion section, deeply engaged in the number being performed, are, from the left, Gray Henry, Cameron Baird and Brock Wagoner. In addition to the fifth graders, the Colby High School band will also be presenting their winter concert as well that same night. Another elementary music program involving third grade students at Colby Elementary School is planned for Thursday, Dec. 19, at 1:15 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the grade school auditorium. All events are free and open to the public.

Rotary seeks local help in eradication of polio

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby Rotary Club has taken on a mass mailing campaign asking people to help in the international goal of eradicating polio forever.

"The local club has vowed to raise \$6,000 of a total \$80 million goal internationally in order to complete the job next year," said Jeff Horlacher, Colby Rotary International service

chairman.

The club has mailed some 3,576 letters to area residents asking for donations to this cause.

"A donation of just one dollar can provide 12 doses of the polio vaccine for children," he said.

In providing background, Horlacher said that Rotary International decided to pledge its efforts in 1985 to eliminating polio from the world.

Along with raising money for this cause, more than one million men and women have given their time and personal resources to help immunize nearly two billion children in more than 122 countries.

Three years after Rotary International made a commitment to eradicate polio, Horlacher said, there were some 35,000 cases of the disease in 125 countries. By the year 2001, the number

of polio victims was reduced to 600 reported cases in 10 countries.

The overall mission of Rotary clubs throughout the United States and the world is to completely eliminate the disease by the year 2005, but donations are needed.

"We are asking everyone to assist us in this pursuit," he said, "by sending your family's contribution of \$1 per person or more to Colby Rotary Polio

Fund, P.O. Box 300, Colby, Kan., 67701.

The Rotary's campaign to eliminate polio is nearing completion and together, as a community, Horlacher said that we can be a part of delivering to all children everywhere a lasting special gift — a world free of polio.

For questions, Horlacher can be reached at (785) 462-2241, or Les Brown, president, at (785) 462-2000.

U.N. weapons inspectors fan out across the Iraqi countryside

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A newly reinforced corps of U.N. weapons monitors, rapidly expanding its schedule of surprise inspections, sent teams out across the Iraqi countryside again today and made return visits to a large complex where Iraq once worked on a nuclear bomb.

Deep in the western Iraqi desert, near the Syrian border, another U.N. team was in the second day of its inspection of a remote uranium mining site.

It was the start of the third week of inspections, after a four-year gap, under a new U.N. Security Council resolution mandating that Iraq surrender any weapons of mass destruction and report on nuclear, biological and chemical research and production.

That report, totaling 12,000 pages,

was filed over the weekend and was already being scrutinized closely for any new sources of concern about the Iraqi arsenal and intentions.

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China — were given uncensored copies of the report. Copies given to the other 10 council members will have sensitive details of nuclear technology edited out, a move that some of the countries saw as an affront.

On Tuesday, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that decision was "fine, but the approach and style were wrong."

Such new information would aid in planning the arms monitors' work in Iraq over the coming months. U.N.

officials hope to cover hundreds of industrial and research installations, many of them "dual-use" sites whose products or equipment could be devoted to either civilian or military use.

Twenty-eight new inspectors flew to Baghdad on Tuesday, bolstering the U.N. operation to 70 inspectors. U.N. technicians also readied the first of eight helicopters expected to join the monitoring effort.

The United Nations hopes to have 80 to 100 inspectors at work in the field each day by late December. They come from both the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, UNMOVIC,

whose inspectors specialize in chemical and biological weapons and mis-

siles. On Tuesday, they mounted the largest number of inspections yet, visiting 13 sites.

The farthest afield was the al-Qaim mining operation at Akashat, in the desert 250 miles west of the Iraqi capital. That inspection was scheduled to last two to three days.

In the 1980s, the Iraqis exploited the phosphate deposits at al-Qaim for their uranium content as well as for fertilizer, producing some 100 tons of uranium over six years.

The site came under U.N. inspections during a previous monitoring regime in the 1990s.

An UNMOVIC statement said the al-Qaim team "is tasked with verifying the status of destroyed equipment

(and) to determine that no uranium extraction activities have been resumed."

Other nuclear inspectors Wednesday again visited al-Tuwaitha, Iraq's major nuclear research center, 15 miles southeast of Baghdad.

In the 1980s, Iraqi scientists and engineers at al-Tuwaitha worked on developing technology for enriching uranium to levels usable in bombs.

The complex contains more than 100 buildings, many of which were destroyed in U.S. bombing during the 1991 Gulf War.

U.N. officials said the new round of inspections there would last at least through Thursday, as IAEA specialists checked for any signs of revived Iraqi interest in nuclear weaponry.

In Colby

Remains of meth lab found near bridge

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Colby police officials are asking for help from the public after a father and son discovered the remains of a methamphetamine lab while taking a walk on Tuesday afternoon.

The location where the meth lab remains were found was in the area of the Pine Street bridge, located west of South Park Apartments, which crosses Buffalo Park. Gary Shull, Colby Police investigator, said today.

"When we were advised of the lab just after 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, which

included toxic chemicals in containers as well as trash from the lab materials, we immediately contacted Jim Engel with the Thomas County Sheriff's office to help in the clean up," he said.

Shull said that officers believed this was not a dump site, but rather a lab that was still manufacturing the illegal drug.

Although Colby Police Officer Shane Finley is also certified with the State of Kansas to do this type of clean-up work, Engel was on duty at the time and volunteered to remove the items.

In total, the clean up took about one

hour, Shull said, and the materials found at the site will be disposed of at a later date.

"We are interested in knowing if anyone might have seen any suspicious activity during the past few days in the area where the meth lab materials were found," Shull told the *Free Press*.

For those who might have information that could help the Colby Police Department with the investigation, Shull encourages them to call (785) 462-4460. All information will be kept confidential, he said.

Briefly

Duttons take the stage on Sunday

The Western Plains Arts Association will sponsor a concert by the Dutton family on Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium. Admission at the door will be \$15 for adults and \$5 for students. Western Plains Arts Association season passes will also be accepted. Funding for this performance has been contributed by the City of Colby Special Law Enforcement Fund at the Thomas County Community Foundation, and also by the Thomas County Community Foundation Kansas Hospital Fund.

Hospital Gift Shop drops prices

The *Gift Shop* at Citizens Medical Center has embarked on a sale now through Dec. 27, with everything 20 percent off — excluding food items and knives.

Malcolm's pianists to perform

Piano students of Mrs. Shirley Malcolm will present their winter piano recital on Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the Colby United Meth-

odist Church. Students performing will be Amanda Barnum, Dryden, Lucas and Tess Baumfalk, Bryan Brewer, Cade and Shane Carter, Melissa Crumrine, Mandy Edmundson, Curtis Fulwider, Nate Horinek, Bailey Koerperich, Cameron McLaughlin, Kelsey Shields, Andrew Toth, Kaid Wark and Brock Wagoner. Rick Carter will provide rhythm accompaniment. Everyone is invited to attend.

Kriss' students to play

The students of Sharon Kriss will be featured in a Christmas Piano Recital on Saturday starting at 10 a.m. at the Colby United Methodist Church. Those performing will be: Lauren and Morgan Bell, Rebecca and Alex Muirhead, Cody Brown, Dustin, Samantha, and Nathan Reed, Lacy O'Neal, Michael Tubbs, Britany Bange, Kelsea and Emily Geschwentner, Katrina Kaus, Skyler Mengel, Kayla Skiles, Ashley Standage, Cameron Baird, Kaitlyn Albers, Katelin Neuenschwander, Abbie and Megan Allen, Joshua Baden, Kevin Lang, Karl Pratt, Tanner Glad, Valarie Higerd, Erika Erickson, Taylor Miller, Andrea Siemsen and Adelle DeGood. The recital is open to the public.

Commodities to be distributed

The USDA Commodity distribution is set for Monday at the RSVP office in the Senior Progress Center in Colby. Commodities can be picked up from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Eligible persons receive them according to income guidelines.

Fair board to meet Thursday

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet Thursday at the Thomas County 4-H Building at 8 p.m. Kerry Wark, president of the Thomas County Amusement Association is a scheduled guest and the discussion of the contract with the association is on the agenda. The meeting is open to the public.

Sacred Heart programs planned

There will be two separate Christmas music programs at Sacred Heart School in Colby with the first scheduled for Thursday beginning at 7 p.m. involving students in first through fifth grades. The preschool and kindergarten students will hold their program on Tuesday, Dec. 17, also starting at 7 p.m.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Tuesday's high, 62
Low this morning, 20
Year ago today, 59 & 23
Temperature at 11:30 today, 48
Records for Dec. 11: 79 in 1939,
-15 in 1932

The forecast

Tonight, clear with lows in the mid 20s, northwest winds up to 10 mph. Thursday, sunny, highs in the upper 40s, northwest winds up to 10 mph. Thursday night, clear early then becoming cloudy, lows in the lower 20s. Friday, clearing and sunny, highs in the mid 50s.

