



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

\$2,000 up for grabs on Saturday

By TOM (TD) DREILING

Free Press Publisher

Where does the time go? Seems like just yesterday that hundreds of Colby area Christmas shoppers gathered in the Colby Community Building with fingers crossed to see if they would walk away with a tidy sum of money as winners in the *Christmas on Us!* retail promotion.

Well, it's that time again. On Saturday at 11 a.m. in the Community Building, Colby Free Press staffers will again haul in the barrel of tickets and begin the process of pulling out two lucky winners—one will receive \$500 in scrip money and the other will be the grand prize winner of \$1,500, also in scrip money to be spent at any or all of the 24 sponsoring merchants.

As of today, the sponsoring businesses have given away \$450 in scrip money to 9 instant winners. A 10th person out there could be holding the final instant winning ticket. If no one claims it, then Saturday morning's drawing will also include that \$50 instant winning ticket. Total money given away this year will add up to \$2,500.

Guesses as of today are that in excess of 45,000 tickets, perhaps more will be in the barrel for Saturday's drawing. If each ticket represents a \$10 purchase, that means an awful lot of money was

spent in Colby's *Christmas on Us!* stores this season that might have been spent out-of-town. Even if some merchants gave tickets for purchases less than \$10, and perhaps even free tickets, it still represents one whale of a lot of dollars spent locally. Today is the final day to get tickets from participating merchants in advance of Saturday's drawing.

The 9 instant winners so far are Poppy Dean, Alisha Shirley, Tracy Shull, Dewey Augustine, Marvia Miller, Ronda Brottem, Rylinda Barnett, Theresa Baker and Geri Landry.

Last year's grand prize winner was Marilyn Friesen and Janet Phelps won the second place stash of cash.

This year's sponsoring merchants are: Golden Hardware, Amy's Fashions, Beringer Hardware, Colby Implement, Peoples State Bank, Interior Connection & Quilt Cabin, Somewhere Special, Colby Glass Company, T.O. Haas Tire, City Limits Bar & Grill, Stan's Automotive, Bankwest of Kansas, Colby Photo, Great Western Tire, Office Works & Home Furnishings, Hot Topics/Oo-Oz Spas, Tubbs & Sons Ford Sales, Dillons, Colby Ag Center L.C., Orscheln Farm & Home, Dougherty Implement, The Sports Shoppe, Colby True Value and your *Colby Free Press*.

An honored judge faces trial in Cheyenne County

ST. FRANCIS (AP) — A year ago, Cheyenne County Magistrate Judge Tamera Zimbelman was honored by Attorney General Carla Stovall for her commitment to crime victims.

But now Zimbelman will stand trial sometime next year in Cheyenne County District Court for misdemeanor intimidation, a charge filed by Stovall's office. Her trial, which had been scheduled to begin Wednesday, was postponed because of a scheduling conflict by her attorney, Michael Day of St. Francis.

She is charged with intimidating a man she accused of snatching her purse in a bowling alley a year ago.

Zimbelman accused St. Francis resident Christopher Merklin, then 21, of stealing her purse Dec. 22, 2001, from Cheyenne Bowl. The judge said she had "circumstantial evidence" that

Merklin took the purse.

A police search of Merklin's pickup the day of the alleged theft turned up nothing.

A few days later, Zimbelman's then estranged husband, Reil Dean Zimbelman of St. Francis and Scott Allen Baumfalk of Kanorado showed up at a house where Merklin lived with his parents and sister. They allegedly demanded the purse be returned.

Dennis Merklin, Christopher's father, pressed criminal trespass and disorderly conduct charges against the two men. Their trial date is today.

Christopher Merklin later told authorities Zimbelman called him and told him to drop the charges or she'd take him to jail for burglary.

Zimbelman denied the accusation, and the case was referred to Stovall's office.

Sebelius' appointees named

TOPEKA (AP) — Key appointments by Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius:

Governor's Staff

— Chief of Staff: Kathy Greenlee, former general counsel at the Insurance Department. Announced Nov. 7.

— State Budget Director: Duane Goossen, retained from outgoing Gov. Bill Graves' administration. Announced Dec. 6.

— Chief Legal Counsel: Matt All, assistant insurance commissioner. Announced Dec. 6.

— Constituent Services Director:

Vicki Buening, consumer education coordinator for the Insurance Department. Announced Dec. 6.

— Policy Director: Jeremy Anderson, former campaign aide and former aide to Senate minority leader. Announced Nov. 7.

— Communications Director: Nicole Corcoran-Basso, former campaign spokeswoman. Announced Nov. 7.

Cabinet

Commerce and Housing: Lt. Gov.-elect John Moore, former senior vice president for Cessna Aircraft Co.



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Clarissa Unger, Jamie Quenzer and Taylor Miller worked on Monday to collect toys from the classroom of Colby High School teacher, Jennifer Higerd. Higerd's classroom donated the most toys to the SOS toy drive and will receive a pizza party for their efforts. The seminar students of Nancy Rundel came in second.

Students remember the less fortunate

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Students from Colby High School's *Supporting Our Students* (SOS), gathered toys on Wednesday to help brighten the Christmas of less fortunate children.

The group, which centers on pier listening, visited the Larned State Hospital in November and had the opportunity to meet children and adolescents who are currently being treated in the facility.

Doug Finley, SOS sponsor said that through the visit they were able to "dispel" some of the myths about mental illness. The pier groups learned how they can be a support to a student who may be integrating back into the public school system from an institution similar to the Larned State Hospital.

Finley also said that the Colby students were made aware of the lack of funding for "extras" such as Christmas gifts and decided to do their part in playing Santa. Each day students in the high school participate in a seminar class that is similar to a homeroom

or study hall.

All students were encouraged to bring presents to donate to the cause and participate in competition between the classrooms to see who could donate the most toys. SOS members went to each classroom during the seminar time on Wednesday to pick up the toys. Students throughout the school donated nearly 100 gifts which will be used to benefit families locally as well as the children and adolescent units at Larned State Hospital.

Finley praised the students of Colby High School for bringing so many gifts for the cause.

"This allows the students to provide community service and to take a step outside the box," said Finley.

Finley is assisted as the sponsor of SOS by Heidi Diercks. Students who are members of the group are Jamie Quenzer (chairman), Taylor Miller (co-chairman), Jared Dinkel, Liz Sothman, Joey Melnyk, Clarissa Unger, Maret Peterson and Christopher Finley.

Phillipsburg teacher

Pleads 'no contest' in bomb threat

HILL CITY (AP) — A Phillipsburg teacher has pleaded no contest to making a bomb threat that caused a junior high school to be evacuated.

Jan Johnson, a fifth-grade teacher with 26 years experience, pleaded no contest Tuesday to a reduced charge of making a criminal threat.

She had been charged with aggravated criminal threat in the March 21 incident.

District Judge Bill Elliott said the maximum sentence for the offense is a \$100,000 fine and 17 months in jail.

Johnson's attorney, Robert Diehl, said the agreement between his client and special prosecutor Leonard Dix will include probation.

Dix is planning to seek restitution, but Diehl said he plans to challenge whether some of the parties requesting restitution deserve it. So far, 10 claims have been filed.

Johnson's sentencing is scheduled for 11 a.m. Jan. 16 in Phillips County District Court.

On the morning of March 21, a teacher — not Johnson — told Princi-

pal Rick Riffel there was a handwritten note in the girls' locker room that said, "Bomb in the building. Get out now."

The 220 students and staff were evacuated to a church and traffic on U.S. 36 was rerouted.

Nearby businesses were emptied, parents were alerted by radio of an emergency at the school and a Capitol Police officer and his bomb-sniffing dog were flown in from Topeka.

After a 90-minute search, no bomb was found.

Colbyite on world title team

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

Colby Community College freshman Shanda Draper was part of the team that won the world championship in horse judging at the American Quarterhorse Youth Association World Show held recently in Dallas.

Draper, 18, a graduate of Colby High School, is majoring in sociology and is also part of the horse show team at the college.

Along with teammates Kendra Baehler, Ana Douthit and Emily Schmeidler, and coach Julie Wolf, coach of the Kansas State University judging team, Draper competed in horse judging in four categories: reason, halter, performance and overall judging.

The girls practiced together for three days in Fort Worth before the competition.

"They are a great bunch of girls," said Wolf. "They all worked really hard."

It was the first time that the girls had judged together. By attending camps and clinics, they learned the same techniques and styles.

"We knew that consistency would be the key," Draper said.

The team, representing Kansas, took first in performance team judging, halter team, reason team and overall team judging.

Schmeidler was also the winner of the overall individual category and Baehler was third.

Baehler was also third in performance individual, while Schmeidler was fourth in that category.

Schmeidler took first in the reason individual category, while Draper was second, and Baehler tied for third.

Schmeidler took top honors in halter individual as well, with Draper finishing second, and Baehler fourth.

"I really had a great time working with Emily, Kendra and Anna," Draper said.

"I'm looking forward to seeing them again."

Syracuse mayor faces abuse charges

SYRACUSE (AP) — Authorities have filed a misdemeanor domestic-abuse charge against Syracuse Mayor Garrett Shamburg.

Grant County Attorney Doug Campbell, who was named special prosecutor because the Hamilton County Attorney feared a possible conflict of interest, filed the charge Tuesday. He declined to comment on the case.

Shamburg, who has been mayor of Syracuse since 1991, is accused of committing domestic battery Nov. 3 against his wife, Mary Shamburg. He was arrested and released on \$1,000 bond.

Mary Shamburg filed for divorce soon after the incident.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Wednesday's high, 50
Low this morning, 18
Year ago today, 53 & 11
Temperature at 11:15 today, 39
Soil temperature, 38
Records for Dec. 19: 71 in 1979, -18 in 1989

The forecast

Tonight, mostly clear, lows in the upper teens. Friday, sunny, highs near 50. Friday night, partly cloudy, lows near 20. Saturday, sunny, highs lower 40s. Saturday night, clear, lows in the upper teens. Winds will be generally in the 10-15 mph range.

Briefly

McLemores to give free concert

In appreciation to the community for support of the "Pickin' on the Plains" Bluegrass Festival, the McLemore Family will present a holiday concert starting at 7 p.m., Sunday, at Fairview Estates. Admission is free and the public is cordially invited to attend.

Pool schedules holiday hours

The Colby Community College swimming pool, which closed on Tuesday, will remain closed through Friday. The pool reopens on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 21-24, for open swim from 4 to 6 p.m. and again on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 26-29. The pool will be closed until further notice beginning on Monday, Dec. 30. For questions, call the college at 462-3984.

Christmas party planned Saturday

Prairie Senior Living Complex will hold its annual Christmas

party for friends and relatives of the residents on Saturday, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the facility. There will be refreshments and entertainment during the two-hour celebration, officials said.

Landfill hours announced

The Thomas County landfill will be closed on Christmas day and the day after, said Larry Jumper, supervisor. The landfill will be open at its regular hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Friday of Christmas week. The landfill will also operate on its regular weekend schedule of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. For questions, contact Jumper at 462-8139.

Colby Schools dismiss Friday

Colby Public Schools will dismiss classes at 1:30 p.m., Friday, for the holiday break, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent. Buses will run accordingly, he said, and school will resume on Monday, Jan. 6, 2003. For questions, call either the building-level princi-

pals or the administration building at 465-5000.

City announces holiday schedule

The City of Colby sanitation department will not be operating on Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 24 and 25 due to the Christmas holiday. For residents whose normal trash day is Tuesday or Wednesday, it will be picked up on Thursday along with the Thursday route, said Gerry Bieker, public works director.

Delivery scheduled for Saturday

SHARE delivery is set for Saturday at 9 a.m. in the Sacred Heart School gym. Items in the share include: bacon, breaded chicken tenders, fish, little smokies, ground beef, potatoes, baby carrots, lettuce, broccoli, apples, oranges, tangerines and red pears.

Businesses asked to participate

With the Wellness Fair nearing, businesses are being asked to take part in promoting health and wellness by covering the cost of registration and/or screenings for their employees who may want to participate. The fair will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18.

