



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Students put Spanish speaking skills to good use Grade schoolers benefit

By **DARREL PATTILLO**

Colby Free Press

Two Colby High School students had a chance to use their Spanish language skills in the real world Wednesday afternoon.

Seniors Sam Wolf and Sara Nally, students in Vanessa Eicher's Spanish III/IV program, joined the third grade students at Colby Grade School and read to them in Spanish.

The grade-schoolers had been reading a story called "In My Family", which is based on a Hispanic family and their culture. Brandi Jones, third-grade teacher, said that the story her kids had been reading also had a Spanish translation on the page, so she contacted Wolf and Nally to read the story in Spanish. Jones' third-grade students were

joined by the third-graders from Tawnia Bange and Robin Schwanke's classes.

After Wolf and Nally read the story, the third-graders made tortilla chips, maracas, and empanadas, which are pastry-like treats.

Jones thought the kids had a great time listening to the story. "These kids really look up to the high-schoolers, and it was neat that Sam and Sara got to come down here for this."

Eicher said that "it's always neat when the kids get a chance to use what they learn in a practical way."

She added, "They don't get a lot of chances to speak Spanish like that in northwest Kansas."

Colby High School seniors Sam Wolf and Sara Nally (wearing the glasses), read "In My Family" in Spanish to the third grade

students at Colby Grade School Wednesday. Wolf is a Spanish III student and Nally is a Spanish IV student in Vanessa Eicher's class.

Don't throw crop away, expert says

WICHITA (AP) — Light snow that blanketed parts of Kansas on Thursday brought welcomed moisture to some of the state's winter wheat, but the crop needs far more if farmers are to have a decent 2003 harvest, experts say.

"I don't think we ought to throw the crop away," said Jim Shroyer, a Kansas State University Extension wheat specialist. "Things could get better — or things could continue the way they are going, which is not good."

In its February crop update, the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service said 22 percent of the winter wheat condition is in poor to very poor condition. About 45 percent was listed as fair, 29 percent good and 4 percent excellent.

Most wheat is holding its own so far, but significant amounts of moisture will be needed soon for proper root development, the agency said.

About 81 percent of the crop has suffered no freeze damage, and 78 percent has no wind damage.

The 2003 wheat crop can still recover fully, or as near to it as possible, if the state gets more moisture in those parts that are in severe drought, Shroyer said. Thursday's snow storm didn't hurt, he said.

Layoffs could affect Colby, Oakley offices

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

The state's Social and Rehabilitation Services is planning to lay-off 77 employees in five area offices which could affect Colby and Oakley, officials in Topeka said today.

The layoffs, said Janet Schlansky, secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services, are planned in early March, but where those cuts will specifically be made has not been released.

The area offices affected are Hays, which encompasses 21 counties to include Colby, Oakley

and St. Francis, along with Chanute, Hutchinson, Kansas City and Lawrence.

"In addition," she said, "and effective June 6, nine employees of the Manhattan area office will be laid off."

In a statement made to all SRS employees during the latter part of January, Schlansky said that in making the decision to layoff workers, consideration was given to the critical nature of the function in offices.

"With only six months left in the fiscal year budget for 2003," she said, "we are faced with the need for

deeper salary cuts in the 2003, 2004 budget years."

As a result, Schlansky said, this could mean more layoffs in order to live within the budgeted money.

Prior to the decision to layoff workers, she said, the department tried alternative means, citing leaving positions vacant or suggesting or forcing that employees take leaves, targeting department-wide salary reductions, and incentives for resignations or retirement.

Even with those measures to reduce the workforce and salary changes, Schlansky said the department fell short of the budget limi-

tations.

"We have reached the point where we must implement a reduction in force and have notified our staff of the scheduled layoffs," she said.

Along with layoffs in the five area offices, there will also be layoffs in the Topeka office with elimination of 10 probationary, temporary or unclassified positions.

Another area targeted for reduction is the Protection Reporting Center in Topeka.

The center, she said, will be closed and all 43 employees there will be laid off as well. Since No-

vember of 2003, there has been a freeze on all hiring throughout the entire department.

As a means of helping those workers affected, Schlansky said the human resources department is trying to locate jobs for them in other state government offices or elsewhere, and reviewing ways to provide emotional support and informing them of their rights and options.

The major goal, she said, is in continuing to provide Kansans with the programs and services they need and preventing any further program cuts.

Herndon backs out of merger

HERNDON (AP) — After suddenly abandoning a plan to consolidate with a neighboring school district, the city's board of education is again grappling with how to balance its shrinking budget.

The Herndon and Atwood school boards agreed last month to merge, and had planned to ask voters in the northwest Kansas communities to approve the proposal April 1. The state school board had planned to consider the issue during a meeting next week.

But the school board in Herndon

rescinded its earlier decision to consolidate during a meeting Wednesday, doing so in a way that's raised questions about whether board members violated the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

Board members arrived at the meeting with a prepared copy of a resolution to pull out of the agreement, although they had not met in public to request or draft the document; board member David Ketterl had hired a Dodge City attorney to draft the stop-action resolution.

Although the board's attorney,

Jerry Gasper, said Ketterl's action was "not good boardmanship," he said the board could adopt the prepared resolution. He also said that because Ketterl acted on his own, the board did not violate the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

But Mike Kautsch, a University of Kansas law professor and legal adviser for the Kansas Press Association, questioned the board's action Thursday.

"The Kansas Open Meetings Act requires that binding action only be taken after public discussion has

taken place, so if any private discussion took place prior to the meeting, the action would be suspect under the act," Kautsch said.

So heated is the consolidation issue that Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann made arrangements for area law enforcement officers to attend the meeting.

Two deputies from the Rawlins County sheriff's office and one trooper from the Kansas Highway Patrol were seated in the audience.

President Bush tells Saddam Hussein, 'The game is over'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Signaling that war with Iraq is approaching, President Bush says "the game is over" for Saddam Hussein and the United Nations should not permit itself to be "mocked by a dictator."

But France, which is holding out for extended U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq and clings to hope for a diplomatic settlement, resisted Bush's call for a new U.N. resolution to reinforce demands that Saddam get rid of weapons of mass destruction.

"The time has not come" for a second resolution, the French representative to the United Nations, Jean-Marc de La Sabliere, said in New York.

Britain is likely to introduce a resolution in the U.N. Security Council to authorize force to disarm Iraq after top weapons inspectors return from Baghdad and report to the council on Feb. 14, British and U.S. diplomats said Thursday.

"The U.N. must not back down," Bush said, reading a prepared state-

ment in the White House Roosevelt Room. "All the world can rise to this moment."

The number of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region now stands at about 113,000 — nearly half of them in Kuwait, the main launch point for any U.S.-led ground invasion — and it is expected to reach 150,000 by Feb. 15, a senior official said Wednesday.

Bush said Saddam could be expected to begin another round of "empty concessions and transpar-

ently false denials. No doubt he will play a last-minute game of deception."

Secretary of State Colin Powell stood silently at Bush's side. On the wall behind them was a painting of President Theodore Roosevelt, who led the United States into war with Spain in 1898, on horseback.

The Iraqi representative to the United Nations, Mohammed al-Douri, said of Bush, "It sounds like he wants a resolution for war."

In Baghdad, an Iraqi arms expert

submitted to a private interview with U.N. weapons inspectors, the first sign of cooperation in that area.

Bush renewed a series of accusations that Powell had lodged on Wednesday before the U.N. Security Council, including the assertion that Saddam has authorized his lieutenants to use chemical weapons.

"Saddam Hussein was given a final chance," Bush said, referring to the resolution approved unanimously in November by the Security Council.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will be meeting Monday at 9 a.m. at the courthouse. On the agenda is a visit from landfill supervisor Larry Jumper, who will give his monthly report, and Chad Zimmerman, Mike Balthazor and Shirley Weber, of the Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group, who will provide an update on what is going on with their organization.

Commodity distribution scheduled

The United States Department of Agriculture's commodity distribution will be held in Colby from 3-4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17, at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program housed in the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Those eligible to receive commodities are expected to get raisins, cranberry sauce, pears, corn cereal, salmon and peanut butter.

Parent-teacher conferences set

Parent-teacher conferences for Colby Public School stu-

dents is Tuesday and Thursday, Feb. 11 and 13 in their respective buildings. Parents who have not received a schedule should call either the elementary school, 465-5100; middle school, 465-5200; or high school, 465-5300.

Massage clinic announced

The Physical Therapist Department at Colby Community College is once again having their annual massage clinic to raise money for program activities. The event will be on Tuesday, Feb. 11 and Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the PTA department. Costs are available by calling Wanda Davis, 462-4797. Students will get a discount. The event is open to everyone and reservations can be made by calling Erickson. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Square dance planned Saturday

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club is hosting a dance at 8 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building. The caller is Ed Clafin, Gothenberg, Neb., and hosts will serve

different kinds of soup after the dance. Visitors are welcome.

Rotary Club slates soup supper

The Colby Rotary Club is sponsoring its annual soup supper from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18, during the Colby-Goodland basketball game at the Colby Community Building. The cost is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under. Proceeds go toward Rotary projects.

Red Cross to hold classes

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is offering a shelter operations class to help with local shelters in the event of bad weather or other disasters, said Molly Oliver, spokesperson for the organization. The class is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. In addition to the shelter operations class, the Red Cross is always looking for people interested in learning how to drive the ERV (emergency response vehicle). For questions or to register for either of these needed services, call 462-7161 or 462-6133.



Snow mentioned

The forecast for the Colby-Oakley area calls for the possibility of light snow later in the weekend. Tonight, clear and cold, lows 10-15, southwest winds becoming northwest late. Saturday, clouds moving in, highs in the mid 30s, northwest winds up to 10- mph. Saturday night, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for light snow, lows in the mid teens. Sunday, cloudy, another chance for light snow, highs in the mid 30s. Sunday night, clear, lows 15-20. Monday, partly sunny, highs in the lower 40s.

The numbers
Thursday's high, 21
Low this morning, 0
Soil temperature, 33
Year ago, 63 & 19
Month's precipitation, 0.12
Records, 72 in 1943, -20 in 1895

