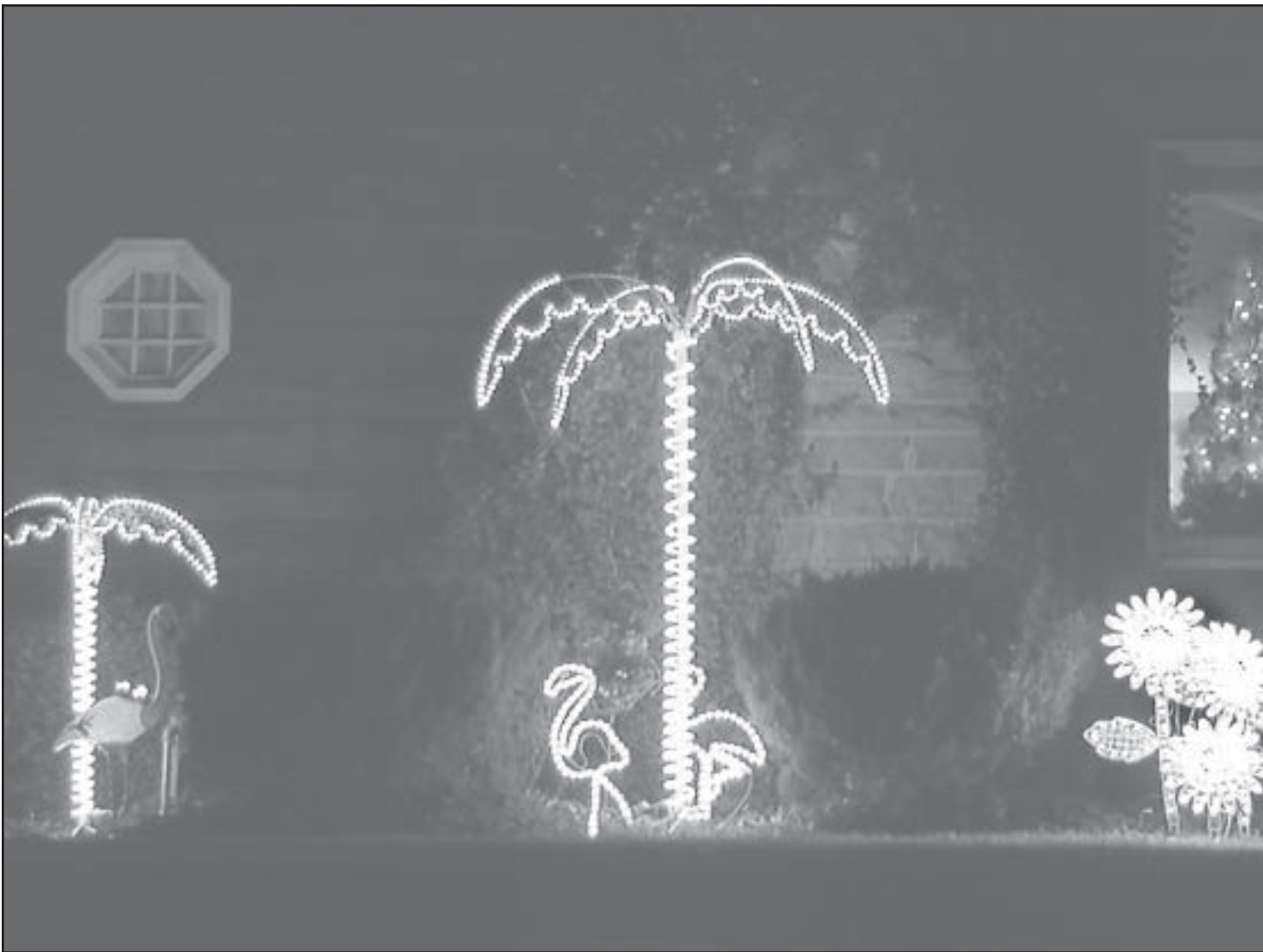




COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

Lights of the season



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Some people might find it unusual to see palm trees and flamingos lighting up Colby during the holiday season. However, this unique light display is one of many around the community. In an

effort to highlight the many bright spots in the area, the *Colby Free Press* will be publishing photographs of outdoor scenes in its Wednesday edition.

Volunteers needed for new Alzheimer resource center

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

People suffering from Alzheimer's disease will have the chance to get memory enrichment help when a new center opens in Colby in April.

The Arts and Inspiration Center will open on April 15, 2004 at the First Presbyterian Church in Colby. There will be an open house at 7 p.m.

The actual opening will be on April 22.

Training for volunteers will be March 23 and 24.

Rhonda Riedel, outreach coordinator with the Great Plains chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, said the center, which will help reach patients through music, art, poetry and drama.

The office will be open one day a month in the beginning.

It will give Alzheimer's patients or people with other similar diseases the chance to get hands-on experience with items that can help stimulate memory.

The center also needs volunteers.

The centers, now open in Parsons, Salina, Garden City and Hays, are funded through a federal grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging.

The grant is seed money for the centers and other Alzheimer's programs. The centers will later need support from another source.

The Alzheimer's Association has given nearly \$140 million to researchers to help find new ways to prevent, treat and eventually cure the disease.

The Association also provides support and programs for patients, families, care providers and health care professionals.

More than 100,000 hours of education, service and support programs have been offered.

Also available is the association's library, which includes reference and research services, reading lists and other information on Alzheimer's.

The group is also working to raise more money for research toward prevention and treatment; improving Medicare to meet health care needs of people with Alzheimer's and preserving and expanding affordable long-term care, including care giver support, Riedel said last week.

For information or to locate an Alzheimer's Association chapter, she encourages people to call 1-800-272-3900 or visit on the Internet at <http://www.alz.org>.

Severe earthquake hits southeast Iran; estimate shows 10,000 dead

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI

Associated Press Writer

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A severe earthquake devastated the historic city of Bam in southeast Iran on Friday, and a preliminary estimate said the death toll could reach 10,000.

Hasan Khoshrou, a legislator for Kerman province where the quake occurred, said there was still no precise number of dead from the magnitude 6.7 quake, but officials working in Bam had given him that figure.

"The quake hit the city when most of the people were in bed, raising fears that the death toll may go higher," he said.

Officials surveying the city of 80,000 people from helicopter said about 60 percent of the city's houses were destroyed,

Khoshrou said. Water, power and phone lines were cut. The earthquake struck at about 5:30 a.m.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported the quake's magnitude was 6.7, capable of causing severe damage. It reported an aftershock of magnitude 5.4 about two hours later.

Authorities in Bam, 630 miles southeast of the capital Tehran, put out a call for blood donations.

"Many people have died," Kerman province Gov. Mohammad Ali Karimi told state media. "Many people are buried under the rubble."

Relief teams set up their headquarters in a public square in Bam because their offices in the governor's building had been ruined,

Karimi told state radio.

Karimi said worried relatives from surrounding areas were heading to Bam and causing massive traffic jams that were slowing rescue efforts. He urged them to stay home and wait until phone service was restored to try to find relatives.

Reports said the earthquake destroyed Bam's medieval fortress, a massive, 2,000-year-old structure that sits on a cliff near the city and attracts thousands of tourists each year. The fortress includes scores of ancient mud huts.

"The historic quarter of the city has been completely destroyed and caused great human loss," said Mehran Nourbakhsh, chief spokesman for Iran's Red Crescent, the Islamic equivalent of the Red Cross.

Authorities have sent numerous rescue workers with helicopters to the area, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

"We are doing everything we can to rescue the injured and unearth the dead," television quoted Karimi as saying.

The United Nations disaster management team in Tehran has asked the Iranian government if it needs help and was to meet later Friday to assess the situation, said Elizabeth Byrs, Geneva spokeswoman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

She said there had been no request from Tehran so far.

Roy Probert, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red

Crescent Societies, said the umbrella group also has had no requests. Probert said the Iranian Red Crescent is well-prepared for earthquakes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences over the earthquake.

In a telegram to Iranian President Mohamed Khatami, Putin said he was "deeply shocked by an earthquake in Iran that brought numerous victims and destruction" and offered his "sincere condolences to the leadership and people of Iran."

Russian Emergency Situations Ministry spokeswoman Marina Ryklina said that two Il-76 transport aircraft with rescue workers and equipment were to leave for Iran later Friday.

WeatherWatch

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie
forecast

Tonight...Mostly clear. Low in the high 20s. Winds 20 to 30 mph. Southwest winds will be from 15 to 25 mph.

Saturday...Clear and sunny. High in the mid 40s. Winds 15 to 25 mph. Winds will be from the west at 15 to 20 mph.

Saturday night...Clear. Lows in the high teens. Winds 10 to 20 mph.

Sunday...Mix of sun and clouds. High in the low 40s. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph.

Sunday night...Mostly clear. Low in the mid teens.

The extended forecast Monday through Tuesday night calls for highs in the 40s and lows in the 20s.

The numbers
Thursday's high, 5
Low this morning, 15
Records for Dec. 26, 64 in 1971 and -8 in 1962
Year ago today, 44 and 7
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00
Month's precipitation, 0.09
Month's snowfall, 3 inches
Year's precipitation to date, 14.53
2002's precipitation to date, 12.60
Soil temperature, 33

The sources:
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby.

A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.

Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Colby Wellness committee reviews details of blood testing

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

With the holiday season coming to a close, organizers of the Colby Wellness Fair hope that many will consider a healthier lifestyle in 2004.

In helping to make those kinds of decisions, the Wellness Fair is planned for Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004.

Along with the fair, however, is a great opportunity to have various screening laboratory tests will occur prior to the event, said Tracey King, one of the organizers.

Blood tests will be drawn on Jan. 8, 10, 12, and 13 from 6 am until 9 a.m. with registration in the lobby of the Citizens Medical Center Specialty Clinic. Participants should fast for 10-12 hours prior to the test to obtain an accurate level on the Lipid Profile, she said.

"Laboratory tests for the fair have been selected to give those interested an opportunity to monitor their level of wellness," King said. "If abnormal results are obtained, participants are encouraged to share the results with their own physician for evaluation." On the day of the fair, healthcare providers will be

present to provide general explanations of the test results. Those presentations are scheduled at 9:30 and 10 a.m. and at 11:30 a.m. and noon.

In an effort to help participants understand the tests, the following information was made available by organizers. In addition to the cost for the blood tests, there is also a \$5 participation fee.

The Complete Blood Count (CBC) - Lipid Profile - Serum Glucose will cost \$15.

The blood count is a complete blood test in providing important information about the kinds and numbers of cells in the blood: red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. This test can help a health professional evaluate symptoms (such as weakness, fatigue, or bruising) and diagnose conditions (such as anemia, infection, and many other disorders).

• The Lipid Profile tests the level of cholesterol a type of fat (lipid) that the body uses to help build cells and produce certain hormones. However, too much cholesterol in the blood may increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and coronary artery disease. When there is too

much cholesterol in the blood, it and other substances may begin to build up along the inside of the artery walls, forming what is known as plaque. A large deposit of plaque may obstruct the flow of blood through the artery, affecting blood flow to the heart, brain, or other vital organs.

If unstable plaque tears open, it may trigger the formation of a blood clot in the artery, which can result in a heart attack or stroke.

Cholesterol travels through the blood attached to a protein. This cholesterol-protein package is called a lipoprotein. Lipoproteins are either high density or low density, depending on how much protein they have in relation to fat. Triglycerides are another type of fat that is measured along with the cholesterol.

The Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) will be \$18 is a substance released into a man's blood by his prostate gland. APSA test measures the amount of prostate-specific antigen in the blood. Low amounts of PSA may be found in the blood of healthy men. The amount of PSA in the blood normally increases as



Tracey King, one of the Wellness Fair coordinators, was having lab work done. Renee Lighthall (right), one of the medical lab technicians at Citizens Medical Center, administered the testing.

a man's prostate enlarges with age. A test for thyroid-stimulating hormone is \$12 (TSH) and is a new offering of this year's Wellness Fair. The TSH often used to detect a problem affecting the thyroid gland. An underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight gain, tiredness, dry skin, constipation, a feeling of

being too cold, or frequent menstrual periods. An overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight loss, rapid heart rate, nervousness, diarrhea, a feeling of being too hot, or irregular menstrual periods.

Wellness Fair participants may request any combination of these laboratory tests.

Briefly

Video Christmas concert

Bill Gaither Homecoming video "Christmas in the Country" will be held at the Colby Wesleyan Church Sunday night, Dec. 28 at 6 p.m. The 90-minute video concert on the big screen is open to the public free of charge. Refreshments will be served following the concert.

County offices closed for holiday

The Thomas County Courthouse will close at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 31. The Treasurer's office will be closed

to the public Wednesday and will close for the holiday at 2 p.m. People whose last names begin with U, X, Y and Z need to have their tags renewed by Dec. 30. Heavy trucks and trailer tags can't be sold until after Jan. 1, 2004. The courthouse will reopen for business on Monday, Jan. 5.

Public hearing planned

The Colby Public Schools Board of Education has scheduled a public hearing at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 13 in the board room of the administration building, 400 W. Third St. The purpose of the hearing is to allow the public an opportunity

to review the proposed petition to establish a charter school within the confines of the school district. Detailed information will be available at the hearing or by request from the district. For questions, call (785) 460-5000.

Landfill holiday hours

The Thomas County Landfill will close at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24 and will not reopen until Saturday, Dec. 27. The landfill will be open regular hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the 27th and 1 to 4 p.m. on the 28th. The landfill will be closed Thursday, Jan. 1 for the New Year's Day holiday.

