



Arts and Inspiration



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Rhonda Riedel, outreach coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association in Kansas, held an open house celebration Thursday at the First Presbyterian Church in Colby. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the Arts and Inspiration Center of Colby, which is the first of its kind here and across the state to help people with Alzheimer's disease by focusing on "arts and inspiration." **LEFT:** Riedel (standing) along with Marsha Hills of Wichita strummed a guitar, which will be one of the activities at the center. Riedel said experts say playing an instrument can postpone Alzheimer's disease by five years. **ABOVE:** Riedel listened as Donna Haffner, Park, (under the umbrella) told a story about the umbrella. Seated at her left is her husband, George, and behind her is Tillie Deperschiedt of Colby. For questions about the new center opening, call Riedel at (785) 673-3149 or (800) 487-2585.



School board member seeks changing break

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Changing the date of next year's spring break is one of the items on the agenda for the Colby School Board at its Monday meeting. The board will meet at 7 p.m. at the new administration building, 600 W. Third.

"They're looking (the board) to maybe change break to coincide with the college's," said Marilynn Reed, board secretary.

At the last board meeting on April 5, member John Cranston expressed an interest in looking at making the district's break the same week as Colby Community College's spring break. He said it

was that way in the past and would like to see it that way again.

Cranston said he also thinks it would benefit the community.

Activities Director Jeff Quenzer said there are several activities scheduled for that week, including the Colby High School Invitational Forensics Tournament and an all-school concert featuring students from the grade school, middle school and high school.

He said the contracts for the tournament have already been sent out and turned back in and it involves more than 20 schools and the Community Building has already been reserved for the concert.

The week break is held now,

Quenzer said, before spring activities start and right after winter activities finish up.

"It's a great time to have the break," he said. "You definitely don't want to have activities going on during spring break."

Also on the agenda is an emergency substitute license. Reed said there are no other personnel issues on the agenda.

Other items on the agenda include a special presentations including a sportsmanship award to the high school cheerleaders and their sponsors; a curriculum presentation on the reading academy; administrative reports; and Chamber of Commerce membership dues.

County extension agent plans May departure

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Extension office is losing one of its agents.

D'Ette Scholtz, who has been the county's family, consumer science and 4-H agent for the past four years, is leaving in May.

Scholtz said she and her family are moving back to Nebraska, where she has accepted a position as a youth education director with the Hall County Extension office in Grand Island.

"It's a great opportunity for my family and myself," she said, adding her family has loved living in Colby but the move back to Nebraska offers the chance to be closer to relatives.

She and her husband Jeff and children Kayla and Ryan are all from Nebraska.

They moved to Colby so she could work for Kansas State Cooperative Extension, which was her first job in the field.

"I wanted to work for extension," Scholtz said. "It's been a great county to work in."

While here, she said putting on educational programs for youth and adults were what she enjoyed most. "By far that's my favorite part of the job," Scholtz said.

She is looking forward to going back to Nebraska but will miss the friends the family is leaving behind. In Grand Island she'll be working on youth programming but isn't sure yet how big of an area she will cover or the specifics of the projects she'll help with.

Scholtz will be leaving the Thomas County office with one agent, Joe Leibbrandt, who is filling in for

Doug Musick who is currently deployed with the Army National Guard in Kuwait.

She said Musick won't be back until August, 2005. Leibbrandt is the county's agricultural extension agent.

There is a temporary hiring freeze on her position but Scholtz said the county extension board will be looking at other hiring options until the freeze is lifted.

One of the projects Scholtz helped build interest in this spring was the "Walk Kansas Program," where teams try to walk the distance between Kansas' eastern and western borders.

More than 300 people signed up in Thomas County. She said people in Denver and Westminster, Colo., and in California are also participating.

Scholtz said she's proud of that and all the other programs she's helped with in the county.



D. Scholtz

Farm Service Agency has new executive director

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Farm Service Agency has a new county executive director — Ross Sloan.

"I was in Hays at the Ellis County office," he said.

"It was an opportunity to get back home. I grew up here. I'm glad to be back."

He had held the same position in Hays since January, 1991.

The offices are comparable,

Sloan said, but Thomas County administers more programs but has fewer participants.

The reason is because the county has fewer farmers but they have bigger farms.

Sloan said 98 percent of the coun-



R. Sloan

ty's producers are enrolled in programs. "We have a pretty high participation rate," he said.

Sloan said more program dollars are spent in this county than any other in the northwest part of the state.

The agency provides crop subsidies which are administered through crop payments, he said.

They also provide commodity loans and conservation reserve programs but the Natural Resources

Conservation Service provides the technical information in that area, he said.

"I oversee the administration of these programs," Sloan said.

He said the farm service helps "stabilize" and supplement net farm income.

"We assure an abundant, high-quality food supply to consumers," Sloan said.

"We have the easiest access to food in the world, also the lowest

price."

He is a graduate of Kansas State University and Colby Community College with a degree in agricultural economics.

He and his wife Jeanne have two children, Kayla, a seventh grader and Kurtis, a third grader.

Sloane said he and Jeanne both graduated from Colby High School and she will be starting next week as the new business manager at Citizens Medical Center.

Fort Riley sees 36th soldier killed

FORT RILEY (AP) — A sergeant from Texas is the 36th soldier from Fort Riley to die in the Iraq war, Army officials said Thursday.

Sgt. Christopher Ramirez, 34, of Edinburg, Texas, died Wednesday in fighting in the Al Anbar Province near Fallujah, west of Baghdad. He was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which has been in Iraq since September. Fort Riley spokeswoman Deb

Skidmore said Ramirez was single and is survived by his parents.

Ramirez was the first Fort Riley death since five soldiers of the 1st Engineer Battalion were killed on March 31 by a bomb exploding beneath their M113 armored personnel carrier.

Ramirez is the sixth member of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry to die in Iraq. He joined the Army in August 1991 and had been stationed at Fort Riley since December 2001,

his second tour at the post.

The fighting in and around Fallujah has intensified in recent weeks as U.S. forces have battled insurgents in the area.

As of Wednesday, at least 88 U.S. soldiers had died in Iraq, the deadliest month of fighting since the war began in March 2003.

About 3,700 Fort Riley soldiers are in Iraq, including the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and part of the 937th Engineer Group.

Briefly

Red Cross offers courses

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is offering Adult, Infant and Child CPR classes on Saturday, April 24, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Red Cross officials are reminding those planning to register that those re-certifying will need to bring their books and skill cards. First Aid, is scheduled for Monday, April 26, from 6 to 10 p.m. For questions or to register, call 462-7161.

Colby author to review his book

In honor of National Library Week, Keith Coplin, an instructor at Colby Community College and an author, will be reviewing his novel "Crofton's Fire" on Monday at 12:15 p.m. The review will be held at Pioneer Memorial Library.

College board to meet

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will

meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of the Administration Building. Items on the agenda include a wellness center proposal, approval of contracts and agreements, program review, policies manual, and negotiations.

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include county road director Clair Schrock and opening bids for motor graders; Bruce Hardesty and Bruce Schneider with RS Digital on geographic information systems; Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong; Walt Hill of High Plains Mental Health; Rex Jamison of the Brewster Fire Department; and Martin Rinehart and Kathi Wright with Thomas County Emergency Medical Services.

Heartland SHARE

Heartland SHARE delivery will be at 10:30 a.m. on Sat-

urday, April 24 at Sacred Heart School gym. Meats in this month's share are ground beef patties, chicken drums, jumbo franks, chicken breasts, ham steaks and a surprise, plus vegetables and fruits. A share is \$17.50 plus two volunteer hours of your choice. If interested call Gene Griffin at 460-3579 to order.

Arbor Day

... and more

- see -

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Supplement to the Colby Free Press - Friday, April 16, 2004

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