



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

One hundred years and looking ahead

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

For one Colby woman, reaching her 100th birthday doesn't come as much of a surprise since she said her family has a history of longevity.

Emma Louise (Plante) Hamel turned 100 earlier this week and said she is looking forward to many more years.

In honor of her birthday on Monday, her family has also planned a special open house celebration on Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. at the American Legion Club in Colby, 1850 W. 4th St., and everyone is welcome.

Born on May 24, 1904 to George and Mary Plante in Damar, Emma said there were 14 children in her family and she was the 9th.

"There were seven brothers and seven sisters," she said, "and I was the first girl after five boys."

Her parents homesteaded northwest of Damar and lived in a sod house for many years. Within a few years after Emma's birth, the family then moved to another homestead southwest of Damar.

At that time, the family of eight lived in a dugout awaiting the completion of their quarry stone house.

The new home had a large room that served as the living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms on the first floor and five bedrooms upstairs. There was also a dug out pantry for potatoes, cabbage and other perishables.

It was a lot of work getting into the new home since the stones needed to be hauled from across the draw, she said.

As for school life, Emma said she completed the eighth grade at 13 years old.

"I wanted to be a teacher very much," she said, "but I was needed at home to help raise chickens, wash



Emma Louise (Plante) Hamel

clothes, and other chores."

There weren't any motor-driven washers in those days, she said, and there were 12 people to wash for using only scrub boards and by hand.

"I don't regret staying home (instead of teaching)," she said, "there was a lot to do there."

Among her many chores, Emma said she learned to sew and crochet.

"We didn't throw any rags away," she said. "Rags could be used for making rugs and other things."

She met her husband, Tobie, at a baseball game some 10 to 12 miles away from her home.

"It was a community baseball game and every Sunday the family would go," Emma said.

Dating wasn't the same as it is today. For Emma, she and her future husband dated maybe once or twice a week.

"We would go to silent movies," she said, "and on Tuesdays, there was always a dance at the big hall."

She also remembered the dust

bowl years and how sometimes the sky would be filled with "black" clouds from all the dirt.

"We didn't have storm windows," she said. Consequently, the house would be full of dirt that blew in through the windowsill cracks and other crevices. One way to keep the dust down in the house, she said, was to put wet cloths along the window cracks and doorways.

In spite of those difficult times, to include the "Dirty 30s," and the Great Depression, Emma and her husband had a dairy farm in Palco and made the most of their circumstances. The couple would have had five children, but they lost one early on. They included Betty, Norma Jean, Leo and Cleo.

By the spring of 1946, Emma and her husband bought a piece of land near Colby (west of Levant) and in 1980 her husband died. Then about 16 years ago, Emma moved to Colby.

During her life with her husband, Emma said they loved square dancing, and "jitterbugging." Some may even remember Emma blowing into a coffee pot in one of the local bands. She did work outside the home too, as a dietician with St. Thomas Hospital until retiring at 65.

Emma said she also has a lot to be grateful for — her health has been fairly good all these years.

"I did break my leg in 1997 and sometimes one of the screws (from the broken leg) bothers me." She also went through knee replacement surgery at 85 and other than a few aches and pains that occur now and then, she still enjoys her family.

Her secret for living a long life? Emma suggests staying close to family and friends and go out often.

Finally, she said, "Stay close to God."

Checking it over



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Teresa MacDonald and Santos Nunez, faculty members at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, explored the herb garden at the Prairie Museum of Art and History today. Members of the KU faculty and staff were touring places in western Kansas as part of the "Wheat State Whirlwind Tour" to familiarize them with other parts of Kansas.

Thomas County sheriff, deputy earn top recognition

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Two members of the Thomas County Sheriff's Office received the highest award given by Kansas law enforcement agencies Friday in Wichita. Sheriff Tom Jones and Deputy Rod Taylor received the

Gold Award for their actions during a car chase in September that ended in a shoot-out. The award was given at the Kansas Joint Law Enforcement Spring Conference in Wichita.

Jones said Logan County Sheriff Pat Parsons and Undersheriff Jason Moses, and Kansas Highway Patrol

Lt. Greg Jirak and Trooper Mitch Nolette also received the award for their actions during the ordeal. He said the award was given for "uncommon valor in the line of duty."

Jones, Taylor, along with others from the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, Colby Police Department,

highway patrol and deputies and policemen from Logan and Gove counties were involved in the September chase that ended with Gerald N. Bryant, II, of Inyokern, Calif. being shot on I-70 in Thomas County near Oakley.

Jones said he and his deputy

earned the award for doing nothing more than their job, adding they did nothing "grandiose or heroic."

"It was one of those days that happened and it had to be dealt with," he said. "We did what we had to do."

Jones said he and Taylor were

nominated and had to go through a selection process.

"I was kind of surprised that we were nominated and actually became recipients," he said, adding it's the highest award given out by law enforcement agencies in Kansas.

United Parcel Service not closing

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Rumors apparently had no basis as United Parcel Service in Colby isn't transferring any employees or closing its doors in the community, said company spokesman Bob Godlewski from Atlanta, Ga. this morning.

Godlewski said the only change in store is that drivers will be pick-

ing up packages from satellite locations on their delivery routes, eliminating extra time and mileage.

"They're going to have a little less driving to do," he said.

"There will continue to be 10 drivers in Colby today, tomorrow, next week.

"They're all going to continue driving for us."

Godlewski said the drivers were

having to drive an hour out of their way to return to Colby to pick up packages for delivery.

"By having satellite locations around the area, it will help make their work more efficient," he said.

He said the Colby operation isn't being closed or moved and no drivers will be lost or transferred. Only mileage is being eliminated, Godlewski said.

A salute to:

Eagle Spring Sports State Participants

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Briefly

No trash collection Monday

The City of Colby Sanitation Department will not be operating Monday due to the Memorial Day Holiday. Yard waste and trash will not be picked up on Monday, but will be picked up Tuesday, June 1, along with the regular Tuesday route. For questions please call the Public Works Dept. at 452-4420.

College pool opens next week

The Colby Community College swimming pool will open on Wednesday, June 2. Lap Swimming is from Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Open Swimming will be Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m.

Fair board special meeting set

The Thomas County Fair Board will hold a special meeting at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds to discuss equipment bids. The meeting is open to the public.

Landfill closed for holiday

The Thomas County Landfill will be closed Sunday, May 30 and Monday, May 31 for the Memorial Day holiday. The

landfill will be open its regular hours Saturday and the rest of the week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Meal delivery available

The Senior Progress Center in Colby delivers meals to the homebound. If you have a physical or social disability and are certified by the Homestead Nutrition project qualified assessor, you will be eligible.

Call Donna at 460-2901 or you may call the Homestead director at 1-800-432-7422.

Monument reunion Sunday

The Monument Alumni School Reunion will be Sunday with a potluck dinner at 1 p.m. at the Monument School. All graduates and their families, teachers and those who attended Monument School are encouraged to come and renew old friendships, organizer said.

Vendors wanted for Chautauqua

Food vendors are needed in June during Chautauqua, said Leilani Thomas, one of the committee members. Any groups or organizations looking for a fundraising event might want to consider this opportunity during the week of June 11 through June 15.

Food service is needed each evening from 5 to 7 p.m. with beverages and sandwiches offered. Other volunteers are also

needed. To see how to help during this event, call the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643 or write to 350 S. Range #10.

Municipal pool opens Saturday

The Colby pool will be open for the first day of the season Saturday to kick off the Memorial Day weekend. The pool hours will be 1-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 2-8 p.m. Sunday.

Pool Manager Lane Carpenter said the pool has 10 lifeguards that are preparing the pool for opening day.

Soybean referendum deadline Friday

From now through Friday producers can receive a form requesting a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order, said Ross Sloan, Farm Service Agency director. Producers, he said, must certify and provide documentation that shows they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2002 through Dec. 21, 2003.

Mail-in requests must be postmarked no later than Friday and received in the Farm Service Agency office by Monday, June 7.

All other requests made by facsimile or in person, must be received in the county Farm Service Agency office by Friday. For questions, call Sloan at 462-7671, or stop by at 915 E. Walnut, Colby.

Warm and windy

Colby-Oakley-Hoxie Friday...Partly cloudy. Windy. Highs around 90. South winds 15 to 25 mph increasing to 25 to 30 mph in the afternoon. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Windy. Lows in the lower 60s. South winds 20 to 30 mph. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. A slight chance of thunderstorm. Highs around 90. South winds 15 to 20 mph shifting to the west in the afternoon. Gusts up to 35 mph. Chance of thunderstorms 40 percent. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms. Windy. Lows in the lower 50s. **Sunday...**Highs in the 70s. **Memorial Day...**Highs in the 70s.

The numbers: Wednesday's high, 88; Low this morning, 50; Records for May 27, 100 in 1895 and 22 in 1907; Year ago today, 84 and 50; Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00; May total, 0.95; Soil temperature, 71

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.

