



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

## School board gets update on 2006-07 scheduling process

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

The creation of the 2006-2007 master schedule at Colby High School is under way.

The Colby School Board heard a presentation at its Monday meeting on how the schedule is made.



K. Nielsen

Counselor Joni Clark-Leiker gave a curriculum presentation on the process, which takes several months.

She said it starts in October with a call for courses and staff and departments fill out new course applications.

The first half of the applications then go on to the coordinating council, who then reviews it. In November, they look at the second half of applications and give final approval for courses in December.

Clark-Leiker said in January, they're then sent on to the school board for approval.

Once approved, they go into the course catalog, which the staff reviews and revises course descriptions.

She said after that, in February, they meet with students to go over graduation requirements, what credits they need and career planning. The course catalogs are also printed.

Pre-enrollment begins in March, and that's when they get an idea of what interest in different courses is like and the number of students that might enroll in the various offerings.

"This is a very critical stage for us," Clark-Leiker said. "Staff then begins marketing their programs, letting student know what the classes are."

They do this by putting up dis-

play panels in the school to generate interest.

In April, the scheduling team looks at numbers and actually starts to build the master schedule for the next school year. PowerSchool is used to generate the master schedule based on the pre-enrollment numbers.

Students actually get four examples in May of their possible school schedule. If there are any conflicts with classes they want, they have several options to choose from to make sure they get the classes they want and need.

"The idea is they leave school in the spring with the schedule in hand of what they're going to take in the fall," she said.

And just because the students head for summer vacation with their schedules doesn't mean the work is done. Clark-Leiker said she cleans up the schedules in June, and all the information is entered into PowerSchool.

The final step is the three-day drop/add period when school starts in August.

She said students have only three days to make changes to their schedules.

The board also discussed a request from J and R Marketing of Colby to use district buses on New Year's Eve. However, the proposal was not approved by the board.

Rich Epp made the request because he is sponsoring a concert on Dec. 31, which will feature youth activities around the community from 1-6 a.m.

He said they wanted to know if they could use buses to transport youth from the Colby Community Building to the bowling alley and other venues.

Board member Dewey Augustine said he agreed with Epp that the buses would be the easiest way to transport kids.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said such a request isn't allowed under state policy, but he suggested there



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School counselor Joni Clark-Leiker gave a presentation on how the high school's master schedule is created during the board meeting Monday.

are times an exception could be made. He said it shouldn't be done, but a school board can make such a choice.

"I feel it is a board decision because it's going against board policy," Nielsen said.

Board member Stan Molstad asked where they should draw the line.

Joel Powell, board member, said it could be something to consider, and to leave board policy as it is and to consider requests on a case by

case basis.

"I would be embarrassed if another school bus showed up," he said.

Board member Janice Frahm said if they allowed the buses to be used, they would have to change their policy.

Board president Tracy Rogers said Epp's idea was a good one, but he balked at it.

"It's a good plan but I don't want to break policy to do it," he said.

## Fire chief recommends heating tips

By Patty Decker  
Free Press Editor

With energy costs on the rise, many homeowners are considering alternative forms of heating systems to reduce their bills this winter.

Alternative heating may help cut down on energy costs, but it could also present a higher safety risk, said Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore.

For example, statistics from the National Fire Protection Association state fireplace and chimney fires contributed to 43 percent of home heating equipment fires from 1999 through 2002. Portable space heaters caused 46 percent of fire deaths.

"Most of these heating devices require the user to take a more active role in maintaining and correctly using this equipment," McLemore said.

The main danger of portable space heaters, he said, is the ignition of combustibles too close to the heater. To remedy the situation, McLemore suggests keeping flammable items at least three feet away.

Fireplaces require maintenance and chimney cleaning and the association recommends chimneys have no more than one inch of build up before cleaning.

It is also suggested to allow ashes to cool before disposing of them.

Another safety risk involves kerosene heaters and refueling. "These should be fueled in a well-ventilated area free of flame and heat sources," McLemore said.

The association and McLemore urge all residents to turn off portable heaters every time someone leaves the room or goes to bed.

"Do not use portable propane heater which use a self-contained fuel supply in your home," he said. "You risk having a propane leak that

could cause a fire or explosion."

Another popular item for home heating this year is the pellet or corn stove.

"Please follow the manufacturer instructions on installation if you are not having the unit professionally installed," he said. These instructions will address required clearance from walls, proper floor covering, stove pipes/chimneys and maintenance.

The same is true for the more traditional wood burning appliances, according to information from the fire protection association.

"With the exception of electrical heating devices all wood, corn, kerosene or natural gas-fired heaters will produce carbon monoxide and can be fatal to home occupants if the heating equipment is not vented or operating properly," officials said.

Be sure to change filters and inspect furnaces too, McLemore added.

"It's also a good idea to install a carbon monoxide detector to warn household members should this odorless toxic gas become present in the home and also be sure to have operating smoke detectors on each level to provide early warning and allow escape in the event of fire," he said.

Looking at ways to save on heating costs during the winter can be a good idea; however, when trying different alternative forms of heat, McLemore urges residents to read instruction and if there are questions, to call the Colby Fire Department, (785) 460-4454 or stop by the office, 585 N. Franklin Ave.



B. McLemore

## Health department offers advice on lessening holiday stress

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

The official start of the holidays is this week with Thanksgiving and the Christmas shopping season.

Stress related to both holidays can start at the same time.

Connie Walden, clinic nurse at the Thomas County Health Department, offered a few tips on how to make the holidays more pleasant.

Starting with Thanksgiving, Walden said, "Trying to do as much ahead of time will help make the day easier to deal with." She recommended finding what foods can be prepared the day before, storing them in

the refrigerator or freezer and then reheating them before the meal.

House cleaning could be done ahead of time and getting help is a good idea, especially for people who have full-time jobs.

And what happens after the big meal can be another stressful moment. Walden said to avoid overeating. Taking a walk after the meal can help too.

Another holiday pitfall to avoid is overdoing it.

"Don't try to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas at the same time," Walden said. "Try to enjoy one at a time."

Both holidays have their issues with family and expectations. She said to try not to

over extend with parties and people. Spend a little time with one family member at a time during gatherings and try to keep things on an even keel.

Going to one place for each holiday instead of trying to spend time at each relative's home can also make things easier, as can keeping regular routines for children.

Avoiding feuds was another suggestion. "Choose your battles," Walden said. "It's just one day."

Expectations can also be unrealistic, or demanding. Decreasing expectations, or just saying "no" can help.

Some things can be left out of the holiday, and it's OK to no include some tradi-

tions if they seem tired or cost too much money.

"Choose things that are important to you," Walden said. One example is sending e-cards online for free instead having to spend postage on sending Christmas cards.

For Christmas, she said there are many things people can do to make the holiday brighter.

For example, going Christmas shopping without the kids will help the task get done faster.

For the children, she offered a suggestion.

"Tell your children to make lists,"

Walden said. "Then Santa will have to choose. Having them write down all their Christmas wishes gives them a chance to tell Mom and Dad everything they want without having to deal with kids pointing out everything they want in the store."

Another suggestion is borrowing things instead of buying.

"If you need a certain dish or other item for the holidays, ask a neighbor or relative," she said. "That can help people stay on budget."

She also said people should keep an eye on the weather if they're going to be traveling, and to allow plenty of time for reaching destinations.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

## Sounds of Bach and Rock

(From left to right) Haley Kistler and Kevin Seymour of Colby and Birkley Barnes, Goodland, and Eileen Jones, Burlington, Colo., practiced Sunday afternoon at the Colby High School auditorium. The four, members of the Pride of the Prairie Orchestra, were getting ready for their evening performance, "From Bach to Rock." The orchestra also paid tribute to veterans with selections to include *Armed Forces Salute*, followed by a "Salute to the Big Bands," said Sharon Kriss, one of the members and publicity chair.

## Smelly Hays Residents say city stinks

HAYS (AP) — Hays residents and officials say their city smells, and they place most of the blame on Kansas State University, which has nearly 1,000 cattle at its research center here.

Mayor Kent Steward said he first raised the issue of the bad smell in 2003 and is running out of patience with the research centers' efforts.

Steward acknowledges that several sources contribute to Hays' smell, including the Hays Agricultural Research Center, the Fort Hays State University farm, the city's compost site and the wastewater treatment plant.

"(Kansas State) is not the only source of bad smell, but they're the worst," Steward told The Hays Daily News for a story Sunday. "Hays stinks, and Hays needs to quit stinking. The solution may be complicated, but the problem is real simple." Hays City Mercantile co-

owner Sunell Koerner said complaints from her customers, as well as her concerns for local business, prompted her to complain to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State University and the Kansas Animal Health Department.

"If anything, I think the smell has gotten a lot worse instead of better through the years," she said.

But Pat Coyne, head of the Kansas State University Western Kansas Agricultural Research Centers, said the facility follows all state and federal regulations. Coyne said when the issue was raised in 2003, the facility took steps to reduce odor. "I warned them anything we could do might have incremental reductions in odor, but it would probably not be detectable downtown," he said. "We know we'll have to find a solution that is satisfactory to our neighbors."