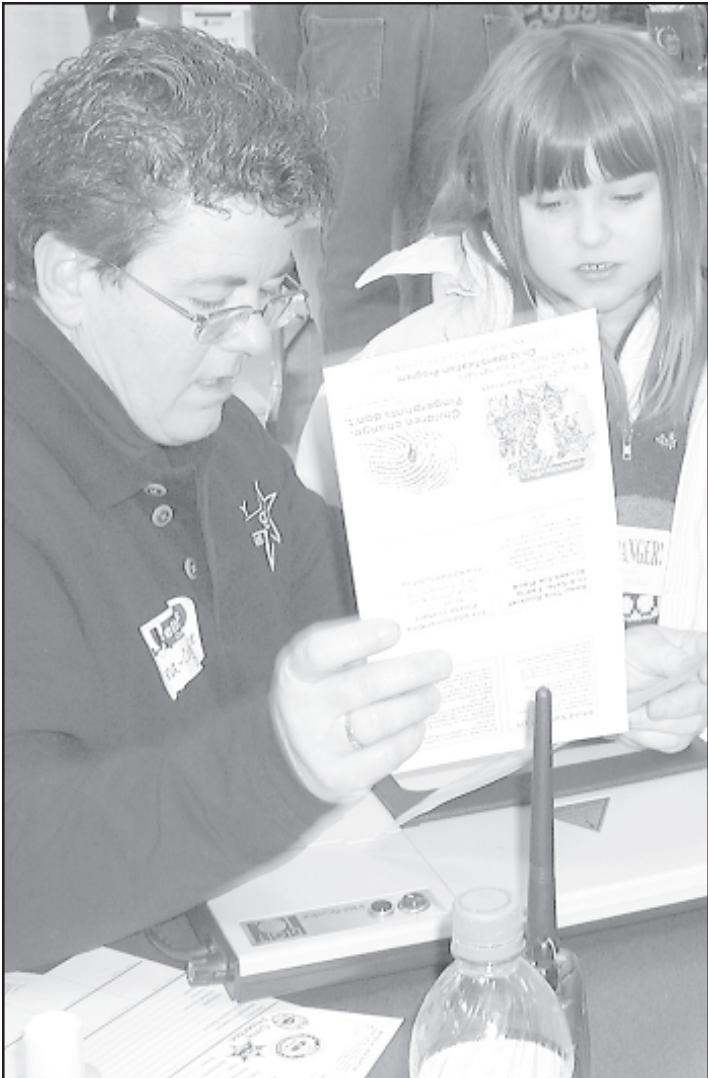


Jdent-a-kid



Colby Free Press file photo

Keyna Baalman (left) with the Colby Police Department has been taking part in the Thomas County Wellness Fair for many years promoting the "Ident-A-Kid" program. This year, the program continues, but instead of Baalman handling the files, Colby's newest police officer, Brant Bear, will be filling in. The wellness fair is 9 a.m. -1p.m., Saturday, at the Colby College Student Union and open to everyone.

Garage bands finding worldwide fans online

WICHITA (AP) — In this online universe, the folk singer who calls himself "Both You and the Awful Sky" is an established musician. He has more than 1,000 fans on the social networking site MySpace.com; his listeners have played his songs about 20,000 times, and they created a fan site to chat about his music. In his everyday incarnation, Both You and the Awful Sky is Josh White, 16, a shy high school junior who started writing songs this summer and played his first gig a few months ago. "I didn't know how big it was when I started the MySpace (page)," White said. "It just connected everything together." White is one of many local acts using MySpace to promote their music in Wichita, across the county and around the globe. The free site has helped Wichita-based bands book shows, sell CDs and increase attendance when they go on tour. Some have caught the eye of record labels purely on the quality of their online recordings. By now, MySpace, an online community similar to Xanga or Friendster, has become ubiquitous with the under-30 set. The site started in 2003 as a place for indie musicians to get the word out about their music. It has since grown into a worldwide phenomenon with about 40 million users.

This fall, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. bought MySpace's parent company for \$580 million, banking on its popularity with young people. An affiliated record label, MySpace Records, soon followed. While local teens compete with each other to see how many friends they can make through MySpace, Wichita bands are using the site for what it was originally designed to do: match musicians with potential fans.

About 40 Wichita acts have MySpace pages. The most popular groups have been listened to more than 70,000 times.

"We definitely have more people at our shows and more people who know our songs because of MySpace," said Craig Hull, of the band Nutsnack.

Hull's band started its MySpace account more than a year ago. Nutsnack had operated its own Web site, but the traffic was mainly local fans who had seen the group perform.

"Now we have fans everywhere," he said.

One of the toughest aspects of starting a band used to be that in order to get noticed, artists had to have money — for equipment, promotion and merchandise. If they didn't, they generally wouldn't be heard.

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Resolutions and books go hand-in-hand

So, are you still successfully living up to that New Year's Resolution you made a couple of weeks ago?

I'm sure that most Colby citizens probably made a vow not to rack-up any library fines in 2006.

On a broader scale however, I'd hazard a guess that a fair percentage of resolutions every year revolve around food. My resolution for 2006 also revolves around food. But, I've decided to take it one step at a time so this year I'm completely nixing brussels sprouts from my diet. So far, so good.

When it comes to dieting, celebrities are no exception.

I remember *Saturday Night Live* skits that centered on Oprah Winfrey's eating habits. Another celebrity that comes to mind when thinking of eating is Kirstie Alley.

If you weren't aware Kirstie Alley was born in Wichita where eating is considered a favorite pastime. (I can say that since I grew up in Wichita)

Her latest book *How to Lose You're A** and Regain Your Life:*



Jeff Friesen

• Library Link

Reluctant Confessions of a Big-Butted Star is really, really funny. This book is part biography, part diary and part just plain hilarious.

Quotes like her diary entry on April 20, 2004 that reads, "Decide to do documentary on self being fat and self getting back to self. Decide to get honest and straight with self. No more lies to self. Self sick of lies. Have to eat big cake to get over self-sickness."

Then again, eating doesn't have to be all bad — especially when carefully planned around the reading of a book.

Sarah Gardner has come up with a "novel" idea in her book *Read It and Eat: A Month-by-Month Guide to Scintillating Book Club Selections and Mouthwatering Menus.*

Now, in fact would be a good time to read this book as it takes the reader through each month of the year. Each month has a theme. January for example, is appropriately themed *Change Your World.*

An overview of four books is given in each month along with two recipes that celebrate the theme of the book being read.

In February the theme is Be My Valentine, one of the recommended books is *Gone with the Wind* and the recipe given with the book is a ham recipe named *Frankly My Dear, I Don't Give a Ham.* (Nyuk, nyuk)

For something a little more low-fat read *Sunday Brunch* by Norma Jarrett.

Five female attorneys meet each week for brunch to discuss their

love lives, law firms, and the Lord.

The tradition of brunch each Sunday carried over from their days of law school. All of the women seem to be taking a different track in life but religion is the tie that binds. Every Sunday they meet to converse and console each other about the latest developments in their lives. This book is the antidote for a quick, easy read.

For a high calorie approach to life (if dieting wasn't on your list of resolutions this year) grab some popcorn add some extra butter and salt and pick up a movie from the library.

Just in are the DVDs *Crash*, *Wedding Crashers*, *American Wedding* and *Must Love Dogs*.

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 W. 4th St. and open seven days a week. Winter hours are as follows: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. For information call the library at 460-4470.

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Former park ranger switches focus to buffalo

HAVEN (AP) — In the middle of a pasture, sporting blue jeans, boots and a black cowboy hat pulled down on his forehead, Jerry Schmidt was in the middle of a management job.

Just last month he retired from another one, as longtime manager of Cheney and Sand Hills State Parks.

"I never thought I'd be there that long," he admitted, or in Kansas for that matter. Schmidt, 55, always figured he'd drift west after graduating from Kansas State University in 1974 with a parks and administration degree.

But his attention these days isn't on managing a 2,000-acre state park or the half-million people who frequent it every year.

Standing on the bed of his flatbed pickup, Schmidt turned toward a herd of 53 buffalo, or bison, as scientists have officially labeled them.

"I'm ready to focus on something else," the Haven man said.

In an era before pioneers and barbed wire, there were an estimated 30 million to 70 million bison roaming North America. Today, there are about 350,000, with between 10,000 and 12,000 in Kansas.

Schmidt was introduced to the

burly mammals by helping with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' annual buffalo auction at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge in McPherson County.

In 1989, he decided to buy some himself.

Buffalo were far from his mind when he took a job after college as a summer season ranger, later being promoted to park ranger.

In 1982, he took the job as manager of the park. At the time, he managed several parks across west-

ern Kansas, include state parks in Meade and Scott counties.

Back then he had no intentions of staying in Kansas. Now he's glad he never left.

Since 1990, Schmidt has helped oversee \$6 million in Cheney State Park capital improvements, including projects to stabilize the shoreline, build and renovate campgrounds and replace restrooms.

"There is a lot of gratification in the past 15 years on everything we've accomplished," he said.

Noteverything was as gratifying, though, he said. In 2005, he had to clean up from a January ice storm and then a July 4 holiday storm that injured six people and killed one.

By December, he was ready for retirement and to spend more time with his wife, Linda, and their children and grandchildren.

And his buffalo.

"He'll be missed," said Cheney Park Manager Jody Schwartz, who worked under Schmidt for more than 20 years.

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