



PATTY DECKER/Free Press Editor

Colby Boy Scout Troop 140 visited the *Colby Free Press* Tuesday in order to meet their requirement for a communication merit badge. (Left to right): Chance Sherman, Connor Schwanke, Dylan Slavens, Tisha Cox (*Free Press* reporter), Jordan Hartwell, Chase Hartwell, Billy Selley, Irene Hartwell (assistant scout leader), and Colby Minchow watched some

of the ways a newspaper is published. Evan Barnum, technology director, showed the scouts what a computer looks like from the inside and other staff members talked about circulation, advertising, and bookkeeping. The *Free Press* provides tours to groups interested in familiarizing themselves with their community newspaper.

Bush reaffirms pre-emptive war doctrine

WASHINGTON (AP) — Undaunted by the difficult war in Iraq, President Bush reaffirmed his strike-first policy against terrorists and enemy nations on Thursday and said Iran may pose the biggest challenge for America.

In a 49-page national security report, the president said diplomacy is the U.S. preference in halting the spread of nuclear and other heinous weapons.

“If necessary, however, under long-standing principles of self defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur — even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack,” Bush wrote.

Titled “National Security Strategy,” the report summarizes Bush’s plan for protecting America and directing U.S. relations with other nations. It is an updated version of a report Bush issued in 2002.

In the earlier report a year after the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush underscored his administration’s adoption of a pre-emptive policy, marking the end of a deterrent military strategy that dominated the Cold War.

The latest report makes it clear Bush hasn’t changed his mind, even though no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq.

“When the consequences of an attack with weapons of mass destruction are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. ... The place of pre-emption in our national security strategy remains the same,” Bush wrote.

The report had harsh words for Iran. It accused the regime of supporting terrorists, threatening Israel and disrupting democratic reform in Iraq. Bush said diplomacy to halt Tehran’s suspected nuclear weapons work must prevail to avert a

conflict.

“This diplomatic effort must succeed if confrontation is to be avoided,” Bush said.

He did not say what would happen if international negotiations with Iran failed. The Bush administration currently is working to persuade Russia and China to support a proposed U.N. Security Council resolution demanding that Iran end its uranium enrichment program.

Bush had similar words for North Korea, which he said poses a serious nuclear proliferation challenge, counterfeits U.S. currency, traffics in narcotics, threatens its neighbors and starves its people.

“The North Korean regime needs to change these policies, open up its political system and afford freedom to its people,” Bush said. “In the interim, we will continue to take all necessary measures to protect our national and economic security against the adverse effects of their bad conduct.”

Bush issued rebukes to Russia and China and called Syria a tyranny that harbors terrorists and sponsors terrorist activity.

On Russia, Bush said recent trends show a waning commitment to democratic freedoms and institutions. “Strengthening our relationship will depend on the policies, foreign and domestic, that Russia adopts,” he said.

The United States also is nudging China down a road of reform and openness.

“China’s leaders must realize, however, that they cannot stay on this peaceful path while holding on to old ways of thinking and acting that exacerbate concerns throughout the region and the world,” Bush wrote.

He said these “old ways” include enlarging China’s military in a non-

transparent way, expanding trade, yet seeking to direct markets rather than opening them up, and supporting energy-rich nations without regard to their misrule or misbehavior at home or abroad.

In 2002, when he sent his first report to Congress, Bush was struggling to persuade U.S. allies to join an offensive to topple Saddam Hussein.

Since then, the oppressive Taliban regime in Afghanistan was replaced by a freely elected government. In Iraq, citizens voted in the nation’s first free election, a constitution was passed by referendum and nearly 12 million Iraqis elected a permanent government.

Challenges remain in Iraq, where sectarian violence threatens the fragile government and the U.S. death toll has topped 2,300. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said Iraq’s political transition will take a couple of years. Earlier this week, the Pentagon announced it was moving about 700 additional U.S. troops into Iraq from Kuwait because of the escalating killings there and fears that a Shiite holiday would spark even more violence.

“When the Iraqi government, supported by the coalition, defeats the terrorists, terrorism will be dealt a critical blow,” Bush said, acknowledging that the fight against terrorism was far from over.

The report is laden with strategies for advancing democracy across the globe, a theme of Bush’s second inaugural address.

The president said his administration was advancing this goal by holding high-level meetings at the White House with democratic reformers in repressive nations; using foreign aid to support fair elections, women’s rights and religious freedom; and pushing to abolish human trafficking.

Area students win scholarships

Elaine Lamm, a senior at Colby High School, was awarded Kansas State University’s \$5,300 Putnam Scholarship during ceremonies Feb. 27 at KSU.

Several northwest Kansas high school students were awarded Hansen Scholarships. The Dane G. Hansen Foundation of Logan named 205 high school seniors winners.

Students are considered based on verbal and writing skills, academic records and community service.

Ten students won Hansen Leader of Tomorrow scholarships. Those scholarships are valued at \$5,000 renewable for three years.

Winners are Steve Kelly, Oakley; Loren Cressler, Hoxie and Danica

May, Decatur Community.

Thirty-five Hansen Scholars were selected. The stipend valued at \$3,000 is granted for one year and may be renewed for one additional year.

Winners include Lisa Taylor and Karen Honeyman, Oakley; Josh Morgan and Tanner Popp, Hoxie.

Nine community college scholarships were awarded to students who plan to continue at a four-year Kansas college or university.

Those awards are valued at \$2,000 and may be renewed for one year.

Winners include Amy Burris, Shannon Lowry and Andrea Sis, Atwood; and Matthew Coplin and Joshua Houtz, Colby.

Reservations concern Census Bureau

EAGLE BUTTE, S.D. (AP) — American Indians living on reservations often pose a multitude of problems for census takers: They live in sparsely populated rural areas without regular addresses and often mistrust government officials.

As a result, the head count of Indians had some of the highest error rates for any minority group in the country. The Census Bureau wants to change that by the 2010 count — by making it personal.

The new methods include lobbying from tribal leaders and an emphasis on door-to-door visits by enumerators, rather than the mail form sent to most Americans.

“We know there was a huge undercount on the reservations, mainly because when they came to the reservations they didn’t ask to come. They showed up uninvited,” said Don Loudner, a member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe.

“If the Indian people don’t know who you are, they aren’t going to tell you nothing. They don’t trust you.”

Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon arrived Wednesday on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation for the formal kickoff of a project that will test the new counting methods for use on reservations across the nation.

Annual St. Patrick’s Day Dinner

At Immaculate Conception Church

Grinnell, KS ~ Sunday, March 19

Serving from 11:00 to 1:00

Chances are being sold for a beautiful handmade quilt and many prizes. There will be a Country Store with homemade food items and some crafts for sale.

Wylie
Coffee
Talk
3x10.5
place 85%

Lightning blamed for blast at West Virginia coal mine

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — Within hours of the Jan. 2 explosion at the Sago Mine that trapped and killed 12 men, some already believed lightning was the likely cause.

Powerful winds had peppered nearby Buckhannon that morning, some striking close to the underground coal mine where two 13-man crews were just starting the day shift.

Two-and-a-half months later, the mine’s owner said Tuesday it has evidence to prove the theory. Although it cannot fully explain how, International Coal Group Inc. officials said they believe electricity from above found some conduit into the earth, sparking methane gas that had accumulated in a worked-out, sealed-off chamber.

It was “unpredictable and highly unusual” and ordinarily hard to prove, said CEO Ben Hatfield.

ICG’s investigation of the blast found what Hatfield believes is compelling evidence from three

different clocks in three different locations.

At 6:26 a.m., professional weather watchers confirmed an unusually large lightning strike near the mine, he said. Some 70 miles away in Morgantown, a U.S. Geological Survey station confirmed a seismic event at Sago. And deep inside the mine, atmospheric alarms sounded, signaling the carbon monoxide that comes with fires and explosions.

One crew escaped the blast, but another was trapped some 260 feet underground for more than 41 hours. By the time rescue teams reached them, all but one had perished in the poisoned air. Survivor Randal L. McCloy Jr. is still recovering from brain damage, but was well enough Tuesday to leave his Morgantown rehabilitation hospital for a trip to his home in Simpson, where he spent three hours visiting with family.

Fox Theater Auction Tuesday, March 28 - 5:00pm



1202 Main St - Hays, KS

Real estate will be auctioned by
Leana Garrett - broker
785.743.5508

Kisner’s Auction and Appraisal
Roger Kisner - auctioneer
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