



# COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

## Colby school's activities are OK for now

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Even though Colby High School is still without an activities director/assistant principal for next year, athletics and activities have been taken care of said Superintendent Kirk Nielsen.

Activities Director Jeff Quenzer is under contract through June 30, and is finalizing the calendar for the next school year. Quenzer's contract was not renewed in December and he eventually resigned.

The job involves scheduling all of the activities and events as well as lining up workers, facilities, and transportation.

Assistant principal duties are mostly with discipline at the high school.

Nielsen said activities director's responsibilities are usually done well in advance.

"They're scheduled a year ahead

of time," he said. Game referees and contest judges are scheduled long before the events.

That's not to say people don't cancel at the last minute, but most of the details are already taken care of.

"Whoever is hired will be able to step in and just fine tune after Quenzer's contract is up, because he will have most of the work for next year completed," Nielsen said.

For example, the district already knows what teams are playing in next year's Orange and Black Classic basketball tournament.

Nielsen said after Monday's school board meeting, he didn't come away with a feel of what direction the board wants to take with the open position.

He said the next move will be to talk to board president Tracy Rogers to see what direction the board wants to take next.

At the Monday, April 17 board meeting, a search committee for the position recommended high school social studies teacher and head wrestling coach Mitch Beims.

However, a motion to approve Beims died when no one made a second to Stan Molstad's motion.



K. Nielsen



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Dr. Jason Scott Robert, left, the featured speaker at the last Max Pickerill Lecture of the year, visited with Colby Community College students Jesse Colson, center, and Jason Rall, right. Robert, a bioethicist, discussed the ethics of stem cell research.

## Stem cell ethics focus of lecture

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

When does research to save lives actually hurt lives?

An audience in Colby got closer to that answer.

The last speaker in the Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College Tuesday informed the audience about the ethics of stem cell research and cloning. Dr. Jason Scott Robert, a bioethicist at Arizona State University, gave lecture titled "Cloning, Chimeras and the Stem Cell Circus: Under the Big Top."

He is a member of the Stem Cell Network in Canada and is on the Institute Advisory Board for the Institute of Population and Public Health, which is part of the Canadian Institutes of Health and Research.

"I'm a philosopher by training," he said, adding he has a "weird gig" because he has a lab, but doesn't do any research in it.

Robert said cloning, chimeras and stem cell research are all separate entities, but the intersection of the three is "fantastical."

"That is where the moral and scientific issues come to light," he said.

Stem cells are cells that have potential to become almost any tissue or organ in the body.

Robert explained the basic scientific principal of where stem cells originate.

He said he wasn't going to offer answers, but create a "good moral discussion."

In developmental biology, cells in a fertilized egg start to take on different characteristics after

### Committee researches latest issues, matches speakers

John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

Stay tuned to the news because somebody who knows something about it may be in Colby soon.

Tuesday was the last speaker of the 2005-2006 Colby Community College's Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series. For the past 10 years, a committee has invited people from across the country to comment on the latest issues in the news. The original chairman of the committee was Vic Oelke. He taught history and political science at the college for many years and is now deceased.

It was originally known as the CCC Speakers Bureau. In 1998, Pickerill was celebrating his 50th year as a teacher. In honor of that achievement and his dedication to students and the field of education, Oelke suggested renaming the series "The Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series."

But even though the series is done for another school year, it does not mean the committee is finished with its work.

"We try to do a whole year in advance. Some people take a

long time to get," said Cathy Gordon. She serves on the selection committee and teaches art at the college.

In addition to Gordon, the committee has two residents, one college faculty member and two students. The committee meets four times a year to review issues and schedule speakers.

"We look at the topics that are timely or big," Gordon said. "In the past, we try and get one political person. We like to get different areas, like history and science.

"This year we did both."

For example, Gordon said the committee is interested in the use of steroids by athletes. For months now, steroid use by Major League Baseball players has been in the headlines. The committee is searching for the right person to comment about steroid use, including use at the college level.

The committee is also keeping up with other current issues like immigration and oil production. Committee members research various people on one topic.

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about four days' growth. At this stage, there is an inner cell mass that gives rise to stem cells.

"Maybe we can harness the potential of these cells and use them to make some advances in medicine," Robert said.

At week two, the cell mass implants itself in the uterine wall; at week six, brain waves are detectable; weeks 12-16, what he called "quickening," or the first time a

mother feels her child move.

At week 20, viability and the capacity of awareness exist and at week 40, birth.

"These are the aspects of the biology," he said, adding the political debate emerges when people start to talk about moral "personhood" at week 20.

"That's the root of controversy on abortion, the moral status of the embryo," Robert said.

Stem cells are a separate issue from abortion. In 1997, scientist Jamie Thomson cultured stem cells from frozen embryos.

A year later, another research at Johns Hopkins created stem cells using an aborted fetus.

After that, then President Bill Clinton had some concerns about the research.

Robert said at the same time, scientists began to see the potential in the research — drug and toxicity testing, and more importantly, tissues or cells for transplantation to treat illness like bone marrow disease, Parkinson's, or diabetes.

"We're still not there yet," he said.

Since the research began, the ethical issues have arisen.

The source of stem cells has received the most attention because blastocysts stop developing. Other issues are the devaluation of human life, sources of eggs and informed choices.

"Eggs are hard to come buy because they're not easy to get from women, and there are concerns about coercion," Robert said. There are also issues about the physical and psychological risks of donation and privacy.

Robert said there are people who don't want to see embryos created and then destroyed to get cells.

"Some people get very, very concerned that this is a very inappropriate way for scientists to be behaving," he said.

Another moral objection is using frozen embryos from fertility treatments for infertile couples.

Robert estimated there are up to 500,000 embryos in cryogenic suspension. If the embryos are

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## House moves closer to Senate stance on school finance

TOPEKA (AP) — House leaders will find out today whether they convinced enough Republicans to stay on board and send the Senate a \$532.7 million, three-year school finance plan.

On a 63-62 vote early Tuesday evening, the bill advanced to final action. Passage on Wednesday would return it to the Senate, modified heavily with policy provisions but smaller than the \$541 million approved by senators last week. Negotiations on a final version could begin later in the day.

Both plans include additional money for all school districts, money for students at risk of academic failure, increases in special education and \$75 million in tea-

cher pension contributions.

House Speaker Doug Mays said he expected the bill to pass Wednesday by the same margin, and said it's better than the \$633 million plan passed by a coalition of moderate Republicans and Democrats in March and reinserted temporarily into the bill Tuesday.

"It's a stronger position because leadership's behind it," Mays, R-Topeka, said of the bill. "It's not that far from the Senate plan. I still hope we have support for a bipartisan plan."

The bill's final contents reflected an amendment from Rep. Mike O'Neal, R-Hutchinson. A similar version, with the same money as the Senate plan, failed on a 62-62 vote.

However, Rep. Mario Goico, R-Wichita, returned later in the day from out of state and cast the deciding vote for O'Neal's amendment, making fellow conservative Republicans cheer.

The House bill also gives schools the authority to raise additional property taxes up to 33 percent of their general fund budgets to supplement their operations. That provision helped pull in Johnson County Republicans, who have sought greater taxing author-

ity. The Senate measure raises the rate to no more than 30 percent.

Because both chambers had previously passed a school bill, Tuesday's debate wasn't necessary and negotiations already could have started. However, Mays said he went forward in hopes of finding a bill that could garner more support.

"We're trying to be fair," Mays said.

The coalition held together for most of the day on its \$633 million position until the vote on O'Neal's amendment. Rep. Deena Horst, R-Salina, voted with GOP leaders for the plan, surprising coalition members who thought she was in their camp.

"I have supported the Senate plan

all along. It's reasonable financially. The only thing missing was a lot of the policy," Horst said. "To some extent, I realize that I see things a little differently than some of them."

Rep. Ward Loyd, a coalition leader, said he liked the Senate plan, too, but that members wanted to see greater increases in programs for at-risk students and to make a good-faith effort to satisfy the 2005 Kansas Supreme Court order to increase spending. "This isn't about having to win so that someone else doesn't win. What this is about is developing a school finance plan that benefits the entire state," said Loyd, R-Garden City.

He said many of the policy pieces

that went in the bill that Horst and others sought would face opposition from Senate negotiators.

Rep. Kathe Decker, R-Clay Center, lead House negotiator, predicted working on the final education bill with senators would be easier.

Both chambers would rely on existing state revenues to fund their proposals, though budget projections show the third year could cause the state to exhaust all available revenues and be faced with a deficit, something prohibited by state law. Last year, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that the state wasn't spending enough on its public schools or distributing the dollars fairly.



M. O'Neal