



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

## A winning weekend



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School girls head basketball coach Derek Bissitt yelled directions at his players during the championship game of the Orange and Black Classic Saturday at the Colby Community Building. See sports, page 8.

## A few words can help out

By John Van Nostrand  
Free Press Publisher

In the game of football, the hail Mary play is when the quarterback throws a desperation pass to the endzone with the hopes it will be caught for a score.

In the game of life, according to Sherdeill Breathett, another act that can be used in desperation can help someone win.

Breathett, who played college football at the University of Oklahoma and in the United States Football League, was the featured speaker Saturday during Colby High School's Fellowship of Christian Athletes breakfast. The breakfast and speaker is part of the annual Orange and Black Classic basketball tournament.

"Prayer changes things," Breathett said to the audience at the Colby Community Building. "Prayer changed my life."

Breathett said he came from a dysfunctional family. His mother had an eighth-grade education. His father, who was abusive and an alcoholic, only had a sixth-grade education. Breathett was one of eight children.

"What I saw was not necessarily good things," he said.

It just was not at home either. Breathett said he hung around with people who eventually had a bad influence on him; substance abuse, gang-like lifestyles. Breathett was building a criminal record and ended up in jail when he was 15.

"I learned quickly that I was not where I wanted to be," he said. "I had some bad surroundings. If I did not have Christ in my life, I'd be dead or in prison."

Breathett realized his life's struggles were the result of not having a positive influence from his father and friends. Entering his senior year in high school, Breathett played football for the first time. While he was hitting hard as a linebacker, he noticed the encouragement and support from his coach was what he needed most of all.

"My dad was not there for me. My coach was there for me — my role model."

Breathett said his coach continually told him to get rid of those friends who were poison and to "find someone who will believe in you."

At home, he said his mother was praying for he and his siblings.

His coach was an answer to his mother's prayers.

Breathett knows of people who graduate from high school magna cum laude or with other academic honors.

"I graduated 'thank you Lord,'" he said. Another answer to prayer.

After high school, he first played college football at Northeast Okla-

**“Prayer changes things. Prayer changed my life.”**

Sherdeill Breathett, featured O & B speaker



Breathett

homa Junior College. He later transferred to the University of Oklahoma where he played with 1978 Hesiman Trophy winner Billy Sims, a running back.

After college ball, the New Jersey Generals in the USFL asked Breathett to play. The league only lasted three seasons. Breathett was then out of football and "kicked to curb" after his girlfriend broke up with him.

Breathett was proud of his football years from high school where he hit 14 player hard enough to make them unconscious, to college where he also took out Texas' star running back during a game.

But now, he had nothing.

Again relying on his Christian faith, Breathett used Biblical scripture to make his point. Philippians 1:6 states whoever has begun good work with the Lord, will also finish it until the return of Jesus Christ. Breathett is continuing his Christian work.

Breathett works in economic development for Sedgwick County and is on staff at a Wichita United Methodist Church. He is also the team chaplain for the Wichita State University women's basketball team. He also keeps up with Oklahoma football.

Despite the points and prayers, Breathett knows some people are still in need. Sims went on to have a wealthy, successful career with Detroit in the National Football League before a severe knee injury ended his playing days. Breathett said Sims continued a life of addictions, impregnated several women and sold his Heisman Trophy to support his addictions.

Breathett said Sims ended up in a courtroom on various charges with only \$50 to his name. Breathett said Sims realized his lifestyle and made changes.

"He's been humbled," Breathett said.

Breathett emphasized to the students in the audience to be more aware of the kind of friends they have. He told them to realize if they are good or bad influence.

"Find people who trust in you. Stop allowing them to pull you down," he said.

He also said to rely upon a Christian faith.

"If you don't have Jesus, you still have a problem," he said.

Breathett said he still sees people with problems including his own siblings. One of his brothers operated a crack house and was shot in the neck. He survived the shooting.

"I'm still praying God will save him," he said.

## Weekend snow ties up area traffic

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

The fourth winter storm in a row on Saturday caused hazardous driving conditions which resulted in a tractor trailer accident south of Hoxie.

According to a Kansas Highway Patrol report, Ed Bohl, 56, of Hays, was southbound on Kansas 23 about 11 miles south of Hoxie when the truck he was driving rolled into the west ditch.

Bohl was slowing to the side of the highway to scrape ice from his windshield and was almost stopped when the trailer started to slide. As a result, the entire rig ended up in the ditch on its side. The truck, owned by Hoxie Feed Yard, Inc., had 42 cattle inside.

In order to get the cattle out of the

trailer, Hoxie resident Vitus Meir was called to the scene, where he used a plasma cutter to cut holes in the trailer's top, center and rear to allow uninjured cattle to exit.

Scott Foote, owner of the feed yard, said this morning he does not have a final count of cattle that died in the accident but estimated between 15 and 20.

Foote said after several area residents learned of the overturned truck, they took livestock panels to the scene and set them up adjacent to the truck so cattle could be corralled away from the highway.

"I hate that it happened," Foote said, "but we had good help and are very fortunate no one was injured. I want to thank everyone who helped."

Foote said the four storms since Christmas have taken an economic

toll on the estimated 50,000 cattle at the feed lot.

"The biggest problem is weight loss," Foote said.

"We've had about 100 cattle die, but the average weight loss is about 70 pounds. With high corn costs, it's going to be expensive to regain the weight."

Sheridan County Sheriff Brian Fenner said besides the truck accident, four reports of vehicles sliding off the road were reported. One incident was of a tractor trailer hauling steel. The driver was able to drive the truck after sliding off the road.

Meier said while he was working on the cattle truck call, emergency crews told the driver of a truck to pull to the entrance of the solid waste landfill about five miles south of Hoxie on Kansas 23 and wait out

the storm. The driver did not follow instructions and after a short while continued driving.

Despite nearly 10 inches of new snow Saturday and early Sunday, Fenner his office did not receive any calls regarding stranded motorists or people needing help because of the storm.

The same is true in Logan County.

Logan County Sheriff Pat Parsons said this morning the storm caused no accidents.

"We had two reports of slide offs, but there was not damage to vehicles and no injuries," Parsons said.

"We got through this storm in pretty good shape."

Interstate 70 was temporarily closed westbound from Goodland Sunday because of the weather.

## Storm contributes to six traffic deaths

HUTCHINSON — Another winter storm has blanketed Kansas with snow, leaving roads slick and contributing to six traffic deaths.

The deadliest crash happened Saturday in Reno County when Jesus Manuel Garcia lost control of his car on U.S. 50, slid sideways and was struck by a jeep traveling in the opposite direction. A third vehicle then slid into the wreck.

Garcia, 25, his wife Jessica, 22, and a daughter, Aubrianna, 20-months, were killed in the crash. Another daughter, Lorena, 6, was taken to a Wichita hospital with head injuries.

Three others were killed in three separate crashes Saturday. In Butler County, a northbound pickup with two occupants slid out of control and collided with a southbound

pickup truck. The passenger in the northbound truck was dead at the scene, and the driver was taken to a Wichita hospital. No one was injured in the second truck.

In Pottawatomie County, the driver of a southbound minivan lost control on Kansas 99 and collided with a northbound pickup truck. A passenger in the truck, Elaine Robinson, 68, of Westmoreland,

was killed, and the drivers of both vehicles were injured.

In Marion County, an 18-year-old driver lost control of his truck on an icy stretch of Kansas 15, colliding head-on with another truck. The teen driver was not injured, but the driver of the other truck, Don L. Burgett Jr., 55, of Junction City, was killed and his passenger, also 18, was hurt.

## State looks at nuke plant

TOPEKA (AP) — Although no one currently is planning to build a nuclear plant in Kansas, state lawmakers will consider making that possibility more attractive as part of a package of energy-related issues.

The bill, which is scheduled for a public hearing Tuesday, would provide incentives for building a nuclear power plant in the state.

The bill "is a recognition that as we look at energy independence for the state, nuclear, renewable energy and coal all have a place," said State Rep. Tom Sloan, R-Lawrence, a member of the House Energy and Utilities Committee.

The legislation would exempt any new nuclear generation or new construction at the Wolf Creek nuclear plant near Burlington from property taxes.

Sloan said the proposed bill simply would lay the groundwork for expanding nuclear power, if it ever becomes economically and politically feasible.

The owners of Wolf Creek are not planning to build any additional capacity at the plant, which has been operating since 1985.

"The capital costs are just too large for a utility our size," said Gina Penzig, a spokeswoman for Westar Energy, which owns 47 percent of the plant. The plant owners have recently applied for a license extension to operate the plant until 2045. Nuclear energy development in the United States has been essentially stalled since a 1979 accident at Three Mile Island Nuclear Plant in Pennsylvania and because of a lack of space to store high-level nuclear waste.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Seven  
more inches  
of snow

A Colby public works employee was busy earlier today clearing snow off Fourth Street and Franklin. Depending on what part of Colby, reports indicated snowfall ranging from five to seven inches over the weekend.