



COLBY FREE PRESS

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TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Fashion was the feature of the Colby Diplomats spring luncheon Wednesday at the Colby Country Club. Diann Gerstner, left, showed off a cow-print "moo-moo"; Anita Porter, center, modeled her dress made from copies of the *Colby Free Press*; and Bev Biel, right, was exhibiting her "bridle" dress, "bow-quet" and beehive hairdo to end the event.

Colby Diplomats have flair for words in fashion

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

A fashion show that wasn't about fashion was the feature at the Colby Diplomats ladies spring luncheon Wednesday at the Colby Country Club.

Diplomats president Janet Harper said the show was a literal take on fashion.

For example, bell bottom pants actually had bells around the bottom of the legs, and a plunging neck line dress had an actual plunger on the front.

"Instead of having a speaker, we wanted to do something fun and entertaining instead," Harper said.

Narrator Peggy Saddler received the script from a friend several years ago, and

Harper got it from her.

"It turned out awesome," Harper said. The women each picked their parts, and the script came with directions on how to make the various outfits.

Attendance was 139 women plus the diplomats.

"I am happy with the turnout," she said. Harper said the Diplomats are affiliated

with the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, and help promote Colby, the county and membership in the chamber.

The group also helps with events such as welcoming people to town and assisting with ribbon-cuttings

Those participating in the fashion show were: Janet Harper, cords on pants; Bette Albers, slip dress; Holly Stephens, bells on

pants; Peg Tole, sack dress; Diann Gerstner, cow print dress; Shawna Kersenbrock, cap sleeves; Kathy Britton, Chex dress; Susan Orr, pill box hat; Anita Porter, newspaper dress; Linda Murray, tea dress; Sue Kistler, bag lady; Leilani Thomas, security; Lana Johnson, silverware dress; Kathy Harrison, plunger dress; Bev Biel, bridal dress.

Red Cross needs volunteers

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Thomas County is celebrating March as Red Cross Month to raise awareness for the need for volunteers and preparing for disasters.

"We have plenty of need for volunteers," said Sherry White, director of Red Cross in Thomas County. "And there are so many ways someone can make a difference right here in northwest Kansas."

Some of those ways people can assist their local chapter is participating in the blood drive, attending a CPR and first aid class, donating or volunteering to serve in one of many different capacities. For those interested in donating blood, the next drive is from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, at Colby High School.

"We will have an information table set up for people wanting to

find out more about volunteering," White said.

"This is a great opportunity to show their leadership skills, earn volunteer hours for college entry or make a positive impact."

The local chapter has scheduled first aid and CPR classes.

The community first aid/CPR class is from 6 to 10 p.m., Tuesday, at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range Ave.

Child care providers will also be able to get first aid certified March 28 and infant and child CPR certified, March 29, both from 6 to 10 p.m., at the Thomas County Office Complex.

Another way Thomas County residents can acknowledge this

month is by getting prepared for disasters.

"Everyone can take action next week March 12-16 during Severe Weather Awareness Week by taking time to know what to do in the event of tornadoes or other major disasters," White said.

"Chapters across Kansas are coming together in times of disaster and working with local and state emergency management, the government and other relief organizations."

White said she hopes everyone will consider some way they can assist the local chapter in making Kansas safe and comforted when needed.

For questions about the blood drive or to make an appointment, call (800) 448-4543.

Anyone interested in helping the Thomas County Red Cross or to participate in one of the classes, call White at (785) 462-7161.



White

Storm damage costs reviewed

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Damage done during December storms in Sheridan County highlighted the commissioners meeting.

County Road and Bridge Director Bob Schwarz told Commissioners Keith Kennedy and Ron Schamberger since claims were made to FEMA on each of the county's 11 grader districts.

Schwarz said the estimated amount of damage totaled \$451,463.08, or which the county stands to get \$338,597.31 in reimbursements. The state could kick in another \$45,146.31, but Schwarz said he is not counting on that.

"We have 18 months to complete the projects," Schwarz said.

"And we can get an extension if necessary."

Schwarz said after talking with representatives from FEMA,

He decided to file for the 11 small projects instead of one large project.

"We don't have to send any paperwork in, we just have to keep it in

our files," he said.

A total of 340 miles of sand roads and a total of 94 dirt roads will be repaired with money from the federal government. Damage done by freezing rain, heavy snow, high winds and ice formations during storms which took place Dec. 28-31 in 44 counties was estimated at more than \$362 million. Of that, \$352 million was damage to electric utilities, principally rural electric cooperatives which are eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The counties eligible for the additional disaster aid are Cheyenne, Clark, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kearny, Kiowa, Lane, Logan, Meade, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Pawnee, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stanton, Stevens, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

Schwarz said although the county is divided by townships, when it

comes to road maintenance the county is divided into grader districts. Each grader district has a grader operator who is responsible for between 108 and 120 miles of roadway, of which parts of a township may be covered by an operator.

The commissioners and Schwarz also talked about culverts which need repaired.

Schwarz said he is trying to evaluate whether certain areas of the county would benefit from round culverts or C-shaped ones which would be placed on concrete footings or pads, but that he has not made a decision about which type culvert will go where.

In other commissioner action ...

The commissioners approved the purchase of 1,000 gallons of unleaded gas from Bainter Oil of Hoxie at \$2.20 per gallon and the purchase of 7,000 dyed diesel at \$2.18 cents per gallon.

A bid from Co-Ag of Seguin for \$2.31 and \$2.21 respectively was declined.

County deny request by emergency management director

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners denied a request for the county's emergency management director to be part of a team to help in disasters.

County emergency management director Jim Engel's request Monday was to take part of an incident management team.

"The training will benefit everybody," he said. However, the commissioners thought differently.

"We didn't think it would benefit Thomas County," said chairman Ken Christiansen.

He said it is an issue that could come up again in the future.

The 12-person teams are self-sus-



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms watched while Commissioner Ken Christiansen reviewed the primary election results.

taining for 72 hours and sent to help with disasters or other needs. Engel said there are seven regions in Kansas, each with its own team. The northwest region has 18 counties. Engel said his priority is Thomas County.

Organizers of the region teams want a pool of people to draw from.

"We need people from all walks of life no matter their expertise," Engel said.

People are assigned and trained in certain capacities. Christiansen asked if deployed, if Engel could come back to Thomas County if there was an emergency.

"When we have a really big inci-

dent we are going to be taxed," he said. "We will be overwhelmed but we can deal with it."

Commissioner Byron Sowers asked about money for training.

Engel said the region has \$100,000 for training and no money comes from the county.

In other commissioner news ...

A report and budget request from High Plains Mental Health in Hays was on the agenda. Walt Hill, director of the Hays office, gave the presentation.

More than 300 Thomas County residents used their services last year.

Hill said they see many young

adults and children, and depression is the biggest issue.

"Depression is the number 1 problem in the country," he said.

Anxiety disorders are the second most common.

Hill said 30 to 40 percent of the people they counsel return and sometimes need long-term help.

Hill asked the commissioners to consider giving the same amount they provided last year, \$39,705.

The commissioners took no action on the budget request.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved the primary election results for Rexford mayor after canvassing the votes. The candidates were Dennis Allison, William Dible and Michael Johnson. Allison had 16 votes and Dible received 15.

Johnson had 13.

The mayoral race was the only contested race in the election.

Allison and Dible will advance to the April 3 general election.

- Heard a proposal for a county Web site from Bill Turman of Nextech. No action was taken.