



COLBY FREE PRESS

14 pages

Colby to host district concert

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The signature event for the Colby Schools music department is Tuesday. The combined band and vocal programs will perform at 7 p.m. at the Colby Community Building.

Stacey Williams, fifth through eighth grade band instructor, said this is the third year for the mass performance.

"It's our biggest production of the year," she said. "It includes all the performing groups in our district."

The concert celebrates "Music in Our Schools Month" in March, and was started by the Kansas Music Educators Association.

Williams was the person who suggested the idea to the administration. She grew up in a school district where music was celebrated with a concert performance by all the bands.

She said the Colby administration liked the idea of all the teachers working together and including all of the bands and vocal groups.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said he liked the idea of collaboration, and coordinating all of the levels of the music program.

He said the concert is a "good program builder" because it gives younger students a chance to see what they can do with music.

"It gives them something to look forward to," Nielsen said.

The grade school's honor choir, the Soaring Singers, and grade school band; middle school band and choir; high school concert and girls choir and concert band will perform.

Williams said she has been working with her students for about a month to get ready for the concert.

The groups will all perform one piece each, and end with singing and playing "America the Beautiful."

She said the concert is the biggest draw for the community as a whole, and is probably the best attended performance the district has during the year.

Joey Nickols, who teaches vocal music for grades fifth through 12, said his students have pulled together to get ready for the performance.

Many are performing together for the first time, and are working to make sure they get their parts right.

Nickols is a product of the Colby music program — he graduated from Colby High School in 1998, and this is his first year teaching here.

He said it has been an enjoyable experience watching the growth of his students.

Nickols hopes many people come to the concert, and see how the district's music program has grown. "I'm excited for it," he said. "It's an amazing thing."

Jennifer Koel, kindergarten through second grade vocal teacher, said the Soaring Singers are ready for their performance.

They practice twice a week before school.

The group is made up of 50 students from first through fifth grade. Ten students from each grade were chosen.

She said the honor choir will represent the grade school.

That was a close one!



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Colby Eagles Paige Stephens, left, and Aubrette Stephens embraced after the double-overtime win over Columbus Thursday in the 4A state basketball tournament. Colby plays Tonganoxie in the semifinals at 6:30 p.m. today in Salina. For more about Thursday's game see page 10.

Animal weigh-in causes problems with fair board

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Responsibility over decisions about 4-H in the Thomas County Free Fair was at odds during the fair board meeting Thursday.

The issue came to a head after five cattle were weighed Feb. 23, a week after the official weigh-in date.

Extension agent Doug Musick said a couple of families did not attend Feb. 17 because of the weather or other reasons.

He said it was "reasonable" that some couldn't get there and it was right to work with them to get their animals weighed.

Jennifer Mazanec, whose sons have gone through the Thomas County 4-H program, read a letter she sent to the fair board.

Mazanec said rules should be followed and ethics were compromised by allowing the animals to be weighed after the fact. She asked that rules be upheld and animals should be weighed on one date only.

Ross Cranston said Musick told him an alternate date was available. Cranston was on the fair board 12 years and helps with fair events.

Cranston said he wasn't going to take a chance on an animal breaking its leg by sorting cattle in icy conditions and asked why the Thomas County date wasn't postponed. He said both Sherman and Rawlins



Anderson

"I think we will get things worked out."

Mark Anderson,
fair board president

counties postponed their weigh-in days.

The board went into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss the matter. Back in open session, board president Mark Anderson said the board would go by what was in the fair book, and that was to uphold the rules in it.

Anderson said board members and the extension council will decide who is responsible for 4-H decisions.

"I think we'll get things worked out," he said.

Musick read from the Kansas 4-H Policy and Guideline Handbook, which stated the extension board has authority over 4-H.

Board member Nancy Rundel suggested a new weigh-in day as a compromise.

"We don't want to distance ourselves from 4-H," Anderson said.

In other business, the board approved a theme for the 2007 fair and grand marshalls for the parade.

The theme is "Making new memories with old time traditions" and Gary and Linda Garrett were chosen for the parade.

Gary was on the fair board for many years, and served on the rodeo committee.

County to settle with former district attorney staff

OLATHE (AP) — The Johnson County Commission agreed Thursday to hold individual grievance hearings for the eight employees District Attorney Phill Kline fired in January.



Kline

Following a 30-minute closed-door session with

commissioners, Chief Counsel Dan Jarrett said in a statement that the employees won't receive any financial compensation and that the county isn't on the hook for any additional compensation.

But the hearings, expected to take place within the week and be held by the county's human resources department, solve two immediate problems — ending the legal quandary facing the county government over Kline's treatment of the eight and possibly making it easier for the workers to find new jobs.

"The settlement eliminates the county from liability," Jarrett said.

After taking office in January, Kline fired seven assistant district attorneys and the chief investigator so he could bring in his own workers.

He refused to participate in county grievance hearings, saying that while the county funds his office, he is a state official and not bound by county employment procedures.

He's not bound by the agreement and may still ignore the hearings.

But the employees are also not prevented from pursuing additional action against him and the state in court.

County officials initially refused to hold the hearings without Kline's participation, but a federal judge said they could hold the hearings without fears of putting county taxpayers in harm's way.

"The board firmly believes that the settlement is in the best interests of the county and its taxpayers," Jarrett said.

Commissioners voted 6-1 earlier

in the day to ask state lawmakers to step in and help mediate the dispute between Kline and the workers.

The county introduced legislation on Wednesday to change its Home Rule Charter and force the district attorney to follow county policies on hiring, firing, compensation, budget and finance.

"It's time for this to quit. The public is tired of this," said commission chairwoman Annabeth Surbaugh. "It's time to stop the madness. We don't play fun and games with politics."

Time to 'spring forward' three weeks early

By Free Press staff and Associated Press

Evenings will be longer beginning at 2 a.m. Sunday when Daylight Saving Time goes into effect three weeks earlier than normal.

Colby and Thomas County residents are reminded to "spring forward" one hour and encouraged to set their clocks ahead before going to bed Saturday night.

The decision to make Daylight Saving Time three weeks early this year came last year when Congress passed the date in an energy bill.

According to the Associated Press, one reason for the fall change in the bill was to allow Daylight Time to run past Halloween. For years, the change has left trick-or-treaters in the dark by just a few days.

The idea for the time change was suggested by Benjamin Franklin, while a minister to France, in an essay titled "An Economical Project for Diminishing the Cost of Light."

That essay was published in the Journal de Paris in April 1784. But it was more than a century before an Englishman, William Willett, suggested it again, in 1907.

Daylight saving will revert to standard time also on a new date: 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November (Nov. 4), and the new pattern



FILE PHOTO

It's time to spring forward with clocks Saturday as Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday.

will continue with the spring time change the second Sunday in March and standard time ending the first Sunday in November.

For children, the time change translates into more playing time

during the summer, but one of the most significant reasons for the change is saving energy.

The Associated Press reported energy use and the demand for electricity for lighting homes is directly

connected to when we go to bed and when we get up. Bedtime for most of us is late evening through the year. When we go to bed, we turn off the lights and television.

In the average home, 25 percent

of all the electricity used is for lighting and small appliances, such as televisions, VCRs and stereos. A good percentage of energy consumption for lighting and appliances occurs in the evening when families are home. By moving the clock ahead one hour, consumers cut the amount of electricity consumed each day.

On the reverse side, there are those who don't share the enthusiasm for daylight saving time. Frequent complaints are the inconvenience of changing many clocks and adjusting to a new sleep schedule, the Associated Press reported. For most people, this is a mere nuisance, but some people with sleep disorders find this transition very difficult.

Some people argue that the energy savings offered by Daylight Saving Time are offset by the energy used by those living in warm climates to cool homes during summer afternoons and evenings. Similarly, the argument can be made that more evening hours of light encourage people to run errands and visit friends, thus consuming more gasoline.

Studies done in the 1970s by the U.S. Department of Transportation projected possible savings in electricity usage of about one percent every day during daylight saving time.

**Good
luck
Eagles!**