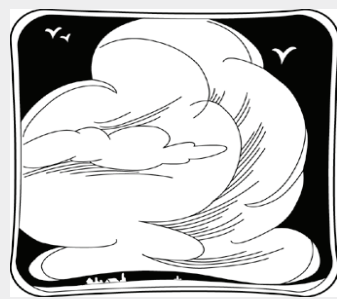


Weather Corner



Tonight...Mostly cloudy in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s. South winds around 10 mph shifting to the northwest after midnight.

Thursday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 50s. North winds 10 to 15 mph. Thursday night...Mostly cloudy. Colder. Lows in the upper 20s. North winds 15 to 20 mph.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s.

Saturday and Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Warmer... Breezy. Highs in the upper 60s. Lows in the lower 30s.

Sunday...Mostly sunny. Cooler. Highs in the upper 50s. Sunday night...Partly cloudy in the evening then becoming mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of light rain and light snow. Lows in the mid 30s.

Monday...Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of light rain. Highs in the lower 50s. Monday night and Tuesday... Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Highs in the lower 50s.

Tuesday's low, high: 28, 60. Monday's low, high: 24, 76.

Cadet speaks in hometown

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
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Now in his third year at the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., Cadet Michael Sprigg is on a speaking tour in his hometown.

Cadet Sprigg said upper classmen with good enough grades could qualify to make these public appearances. He graduated from Norton Community High School in 2005 where he had been a two-time state wrestling champion for the Norton Blue Jays. He is the son of Dave and Charla Sprigg.

Monday he spoke to students at Almena, the Norton Rotary Club and Norton junior and senior high students. He also planned to speak to Norton's Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Cadet Sprigg said he had no military background and did not know anything about West Point until he was contacted about wrestling for the academy. He said he had a lot of learning to do. He said the first summer after his enrollment was basic training. "That was the worst part. They break you down, then build you back up," he said.

He said the first year at West Point is probably the hardest. Cadets are restricted to campus and allowed few privileges.

Cadet Sprigg said the food at West Point is okay, except for breakfast which is always cereal or oatmeal. He spoke slightly better for lunch and dinner.

His second summer, he took advanced training and was sent to Fort Knox, Ky., where he spent a week working with armored tanks.

Cadet Sprigg said his third summer was spent at Fort Sill, Okla.,



Michael Sprigg

working with real soldiers and the real Army.

In his junior year, he is taking a heavy class schedule of 18 credit hours. His emphasis is in business. He is a third year letterman on the wrestling team, but injury last season and illness at the beginning of this season have kept him from his peak performance. He is, however, looking forward to his senior year.

He said each year's class has a nickname. Freshmen are called "Plebes"; sophomores are "Yuks"; juniors are "Cows"; and seniors are "Firsties".

After he graduates, he will be commissioned a second lieutenant and be obligated to serve in the regular Army for five years

and three in the Army Reserve. He said he would like to be in field artillery.

Cadet Sprigg said about 1,200 men and women begin as "Plebes" each year. He said about 200 either drop out or are asked to leave during the next four years so that each class graduates about 1,000. He said the student population is about 85 percent male and 15 percent female. He said he had a great deal of admiration for his female counterparts who, for the most part, have to do everything the men do, including carrying 100 pounds of equipment during forced marches.

Cadet Sprigg said he is glad he chose to attend the military academy. "It's not the worst decision I ever made," he said.

House, Senate debate who gets help

TOPEKA (AP) — Legislators are committed to modest health care improvements, but the House and Senate disagree about which uninsured Kansans should get help from the state.

The House approved a bill Tuesday on a 103-20 vote to provide a year's worth of state aid to help poor parents buy private insurance. Supporters believe about 8,500 individuals who don't have coverage could get it.

Senators approved their bill last week. Instead of providing insurance subsidies, it would expand a state program that depends on federal funds to cover children's medical expenses. About 5,500 additional children in middle-class families would become eligible.

Another proposal before the Senate would increase spending on 33 "safety net" clinics by \$1.5 million, allowing them to serve an additional 5,200 people at little or no cost.

The Senate refused to include the insurance subsidies in its bill. House members rejected

the Senate's proposal to expand the state's medical coverage for children.

"It'll be on the table with all of the House's moving parts when we sit down to negotiate," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, an Independence Republican.

Three senators and three House members will draft the final version of the health care legislation. Neither chamber has embraced a sweeping, 21-point plan proposed by the Kansas Health Policy Authority and endorsed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

Legislators created the authority in 2005 to review health care issues and administer some social services programs. Its plan would phase in a \$330 million increase in spending on health programs over five years.

That plan depended on higher tobacco taxes for part of its funding, initially raising the tax on a pack of cigarettes by 50 cents, to \$1.29. But legislators never seriously considered the idea.

Colby school board reviews spectrum of academy

From "ACADEMY," Page 1

Board member Kevan Taylor agreed some of that money could best be spent in other ways.

"I'd love to give every student a laptop," said Taylor. "It's going to cost \$200,000-250,000 a year to do that. A lot of people want to do this, this and this. At some point, we can't do everything. That's why I was against hiring an extra administrator."

On the other hand, if the board does cut the academy program they would lose charter money from the state.

"As long as a small core of students receives care in the charter, we can receive charter money," said Thomas County Academy principal Diana Wieland. "If we discontinue the program, we have to tell the state we closed it down and we won't have the grants or state and federal funding."

Rather than the financial concerns, it's the idea that only 22 students are reaping the benefits of this program that bothers some, including Colby Elementary School principal and superintendent-elect Terrel Harrison.

"I believe in the concept," said Harrison. "My frustration is helping only 20-22 kids, when 300 need more technology and project-based learning. Other students would love to say some of the things we've heard from these

students tonight. How can we expand this to include more than 20 students?"

That's the question no one had a clear answer to.

Trying to get every teacher to accept project-based learning is a difficult task, and one middle school principal Rob Ross knows it's not going to happen overnight.

"How many years ago did we insert cooperative learning?" asked Ross. "It was a big change for teachers. If you give us five years and a blank check and expect to come in and see kids working at their own pace, it's not going to happen. You need a mindset change."

Even if the district did implement project-based learning in all of its classrooms, DeYoung says expanding it would likely cost more.

That would seem to defeat the purpose of getting rid of the academy in the first place.

So in the next two weeks, the board must decide whether to stay the course with TCA, scrap the program altogether or come up with a feasible plan to implement the academy principles into all of its classrooms.

"You've got a curriculum director that's very passionate about her school, a board that is unsure and an administration with no plan B," said DeYoung. "We're trying to change education the way it's been for the last 100 years."

Committee approves smoking bill

TOPEKA (AP) — Just when about everybody thought an effort to ban smoking in most public places was dead, it's back.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee approved a bill Monday that bans smoking in most public venues, including bars, casinos, restaurants and workplaces.

The vote came after a similar bill by Sen. David Wyson was heavily amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee. So many exemptions were added that he said it would make the state a laughingstock. That bill remains in the Judiciary Committee.

Unlike the first bill, the new one doesn't mandate a vote Nov. 4 giving each county a chance to decide whether to adopt the state restrictions. The Mission Hills Republican included that in the first bill in hopes of garnering support.

"It's just another step," Wyson said. "Because it passed a major committee, the public will treat this as one of the two or three issues in the election cycle. Legislators need to understand this is a health issue."

All House and Senate members stand for re-election this year.

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