

Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 14. Southeast wind around 15 mph.
Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 38. Southeast wind around 15 mph.
Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 21. South wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Friday: A slight chance of snow showers before noon, then a slight chance of rain showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. North wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.
Friday Night: A slight chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 22. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.
Saturday: A 20 percent chance of snow before 1 pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 51.
Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 28.
Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 58.
Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 26.
Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 55.
Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 25.
Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 63.
 Monday: High, 49; Low 3
 Tuesday: High, 35; Low 6
 Precip: Monday .Trace
 Tuesday .Trace
 Month: 0.00 inches
 Year: 0.64 inches
 Normal: 2.15 inches
 (K-State Experiment Station)

Woman learns about trade, coffee

From "COFFEE," Page 1

wet-mill process and that covering is made into a spray that is used as an insect repellent for protection for the trees. They do every thing organically — no artificial chemicals are used. Then the beans are sacked up and taken to the Tierra Nueva Co-op, where they are piled out on the cement to dry. While drying, they have to be constantly raked and turned.

"There is a hard covering over the bean that has to be removed next. This covering is a sort of a husk that is given to the residents of the area to burn in their stoves. It is such a hard fiber that it burns much longer than regular wood. "After the husk is removed, the bean is white like a peanut. Next they have to be roasted until they turn brown."

In the past, she said, life was hard for the coffee farmers. In 2001, coffee went from \$1.40 a pound to 45 cents. This was devastating to the people of Nicaragua, where coffee is the leading export, she said. The farmers usually sell their coffee through middlemen, and with world prices constantly fluctuating and the middle men offering the lowest prices possible, farmers never knew how much they would get for their beans.

"Without a stable income, they can't afford to invest in their farms, can't pay for their children's education, can't afford medicine and can't plan for their future," said Susan Sklar, an Equal Exchange Interfaith Program representative on the trip.

In Colby, the First Presbyterian Church is promoting an alternative to the world coffee market, Fair Trade Certified Coffee. The coffee is imported by Equal Exchange, a worker-owned cooperative, to create a more equitable model of trade with small-scale farmers.

In 1991, Equal Exchange says, it became the first coffee trader in the U.S. to adopt internationally recognized fair trade standards. By trading directly with farmer co-ops, the agency cuts out middlemen, ensuring that more money reaches those who do the work of growing and harvesting coffee.

Equal Exchange says it pays the farmer a fair price, including guaranteeing a minimum of \$1.56 per pound for the organic coffee. This helps small farmers build a better future for themselves and their communities, the group says.

"The farmers who are a part of the Tierra Nueva Co-op are now able to improve their homes with cement floors and flush toilets, pay for medications and educate their children," Draper said. "Until the fair trade areas were started, there was no place for women to earn a living except the sweat shops, where they had to work long hours with no rest periods and with very little pay.

"We were told about a woman who caught her hand in a machine, and while she was trying to get her hand out, a man stood there with a watch and timed her, then made her go right back to work or risk losing her job. The time she took to get her hand out of the machine was docked from her pay.

"These people are so resilient. They came back from the horror of the civil war that ended in 1990, only to be devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 when 10,000 people were killed and 40,000 homes were damaged or destroyed and bridges and roads were washed away."

The tour included more than just coffee.

"I was so impressed when we

Agency extends grant deadline

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service has extended the application period for 2009 Conservation Innovation Grants to Friday, March 20.

The grants aim to promote innovation in water quality, energy, and pollinator habitat.

Applications should be sent to: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Innovation Grants Program, Financial Assistance Programs Division, Room 5239-S, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250. For information, go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/. To apply electronically, go to www.grants.gov.

visited Nueva Vida," Draper said. "This co-op ... was formed after Hurricane Mitch. Fifty women who had lost their homes gathered together to form a sewing cooperative. The group was assisted by the Center for Development in Central America, Maggie's Clean Clothing Co. and the Presbyterian Church. This allowed the women to actually do manual labor and build their factory, purchase their own machines and learn how to use them at a technical institute.

"Their numbers decreased during their organization; now they have 11 of the original members with six more joining soon. They will all be equal partners in the co-op. The Presbyterians started with an order of 5,000 Sweat Free t-shirts in 2003 and last year ordered 53,000 for congregations.

"This trip helped me to better understand fair trade and open my mind to a new perspective of the world. I am excited to share with others the benefits of fair trade and the Nicaraguan culture."

The Colby church sells "Fair Trade" Nicaraguan organic coffee, chocolate, tea and snacks and can provide information on purchasing Sweat Free Ts for businesses or organizations. Call (785) 462-6342 for information.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Workers swarmed over a new building for the CHS Brewster Agronomy Center earlier this month. The building is nearly done, with work continuing inside this week on concrete flooring, mechanical systems and finishing.

Ag service to open in Brewster

From "BREWSTER," Page 1

companies in the United States," he said, "and they are an extremely diversified company. Western Kansas is a likely location for the fertilizer and chemical portion of their company."

CHS also offers service to farmers in Goodland, Winona, McDonald, Burlington, Selden and

Quinter in this area "We're excited to be doing business here," Jamison said, "to be on the tax rolls in Thomas County, and we have already made plans to get involved in the community by joining the Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce."

Jamison, a former manager of the Frontier Ag operation in Brewster, said he was born and

raised in Colby and has lived in Brewster since 1979. His wife Joan is director of nursing at Prairie Senior Living Center in Colby. Their son Justin lives in Parker, Colo., working with fitness equipment, and daughter Kristy lives in Alma, where she is a dispatcher for the Wabaunsee County Sheriff's Office.

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Three of Clubs

The Three of Clubs held its regular meeting Jan. 9 at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The meeting was opened with the collect, followed by informative talks and a tour led by Sue Taylor, museum administrator. Shakespeare Club hosted and provided refreshments.

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