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Class project captures friend's memory

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Thomas County Academy seventh and eighth graders made sure Teryn Haremza's spirit will remain part of Villa High Park for a long time.

On Friday, city workers bolted down three benches by the little pond at the park that were designed and built by seventh and eighth graders in Teresa Morgan's class at the Academy to honor Haremza.

Teryn died in an accident at home before what would have been his seventh-grade year, Morgan said. During his life, he loved building things and being outside. He had been a student at Thomas County Academy, which is a charter school that teaches alternative learning styles. The academy is housed at Colby

Middle School.

The students were able to build the benches because of a grant the class got from Walmart through the Thomas County Community Foundation. Morgan said her class tries to do a community service project every year.

Josh Barnhart and Justin Engel, both seventh graders, designed the benches, she said. Kaili Guy and Jonathan Corbett, seventh graders; Alyssa Goodheart and Jonathan Corbett, eighth graders, and Barnhart did the welding work. All the students volunteered to do the work, said Morgan.

"The project was very personal to the students," she said. "The kids were very engaged and really valued the project."

Teryn's father, Ron Haremza, helped the students with the project and allowed them to use the shop where he and Teryn used to

build race cars and repair farm tools. He also taught the students how to use the tools and build a solid park bench.

"They welded, they did everything," he said. "All the kids were phenomenal. It was a cool experience."

Morgan said one of the reasons the kids decided on the benches because they wanted people to have a nice place to sit while fishing.

The academy finished the benches on Dec. 20, Morgan said. She said they had contacted the city in September to get permission to install the benches at the park. The city offered to professionally install them in the concrete, she said, and agreed to maintain the benches.

"The city did a wonderful job," said Haremza. "The benches will be there for years to come."



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Ron Kogler (far left), street foreman for the city, inspected a bench at Villa High Park installed in memory of Teryn Haremza while city workers Steven Samuelson and Kyle Brogan bolted the bench to a concrete pad and Kevin Helus stood by.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Colby Fire Chief Robert McLemore showed off the new fire station, now occupied by the Colby Fire Department. There

will be an open house for the public next Wednesday for both the station and the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Firefighters to throw open doors

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Everyone will soon be able to get a look at the inside of the Colby Fire Department's new station out on Country Club Drive and the city's new Wastewater Treatment Plant east of town.

The fire department will hold an open house on from 3 to 7 p.m. next Wednesday at the station, 1125 S. Country Club. The wastewater plant, at 1945 County Rd. 21, north of U.S. 24 at the east edge of town, will be open for tours at the same time.

The fire station was finished last month, with the fire department moving in during the second week of April.

"We're all pretty happy with it," said Chief Robert McLemore.

The department had been housed in annexes north of the Colby City Hall. McLemore, said it had been moved there in the early 1950s after the old station, which had been downtown near the theatre, burned down. In December 2006, a snowstorm collapsed the roof of two of the

truck bays, he said. The department was able to move into the National Guard Armory on Range Avenue while the new station was being built.

McLemore said the department had already bought the land on Country Club when the roof caved in. A new station was in the planning stages and construction was moved forward.

The land is roughly seven acres, McLemore said. Although conventional wisdom is that a fire station should be in the middle of town, there was no space left near downtown Colby. He said he looked at response times from City Hall, where fire rigs might take as many as seven minutes to get to I-70, where many calls originate. The new station has better access to I-70, as well as roads leading into Colby and out to the county, the chief said.

McLemore said he does miss the old location.

"That was real convenient," he said, "but I think the benefits we have out here will be equally as important."

The main entrance of the station looks west out onto Country



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The six drive-through truck bays are large enough for the department to house all of their vehicles inside. At the former fire station and at the National Guard Armory, several vehicles had to be kept outside.

Club. Near the entry is the front desk area, where the on-duty firefighter can monitor calls. In the interior, where the restrooms are located, is a storm shelter that can house firefighters during an emergency. The building has a backup generator to power the truck bays and other vital areas during a power outage.

A hallway leads from the desk to the day room, with offices and a training library off the hall. The day room includes a kitchen, table and a television, with chairs and couches. McLemore said the volunteer firefighters raised money to pay for several of the

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Growth plan on agenda for alliance forum

The Thomas County Economic Development Alliance hopes to gather some ideas about growing our county's future at a public forum at 6 p.m. next Wednesday in the Little Theater of the Colby Community Building.

The forum is a step in updating the county's Economic Strategic Growth Plan, said Rick Patrick, the alliance's new director.

"This type of forum is held only once every three years," Patrick

said, "and is the best time for the general public to express their ideas and concerns."

Daniel Steffen and James Foster of the Kansas Department of Commerce Rural Development Division will lead the discussion and help field questions.

"There are no right or wrong ideas," Patrick said, "and the public is encouraged to attend... We hope to see you at the forum, and bring your best ideas."

First shovel dug on hospital project

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Threatening skies and a cool breeze didn't dampen spirits as a good crowd gathered for groundbreaking ceremonies for the Phase 1 expansion project at Citizens Medical Center on Tuesday morning.

Phase 1 expansion, which will cost \$4 million, will be in two parts, said Janice McCart, chief executive officer of the hospital. Part 1 will be the new financial services building south of the ambulance garage, expected to be completed by Dec. 26.

Part 2 will include a new mechanical unit, which will house the heating and air conditioning and all mechanical facilities, new laundry equipment and a new area for the rehab department, which includes physical and occupational therapy. This part will be added directly onto the northwest corner of the existing building, said McCart. Bids will be let sometime in August.

"We are excited the hospital's continuing growth has made this expansion necessary," McCart said.

Past major expansion occurred in 1993, with specialty clinic, emergency services and obstetrics additions in 1994 and a diagnostic services expansion in 2002.

Phase II plans include a new entrance, ancillary services and lab services expansion, a cardiopulmonary area, McCart said, and



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Janice McCart, administrator of Citizens Medical Center, and Bob Standage, hospital board president, shared a shovel to break ground for the first phase of planned hospital expansion plan on Tuesday. The building, south of the ambulance garage, will house financial services. Construction should begin at the end of May with Miller Construction of Goodland as general contractor.

linking the hospital to the medical clinic through a breezeway. Completion time is not yet set.

Briefly

College to hold spring concert

The Colby Community College vocal music department will have its spring concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center on campus. On stage will be the Concert Choir and Sunflower Singers under Vocal Music Director Dr. Phillip Shuman and accompanied by Pat Ziegelmeier. Everyone is invited to this free performance. For information, call Shuman at 460-5520.

'Wise Up' blood tests available

Wise Up, Count Down participants can get their wrap-up (fasting) blood test from 6 to 9 a.m. through Friday at Citizens Medical Center Lab. This is your chance to see how your hard work and healthier diet have "counted down" your numbers. For those who had blood work in January, this testing is free. If you did not get the blood test then, the fee is \$10. For questions, call Diann Gerstner at 460-4582.

City spring cleanup this week

The annual Colby spring cleanup will be today through Friday. Residents are urged to use this time to spruce up their yards. The city will remove items placed at the curb. (This does not include businesses or rental or commercial property.) Civic groups are asked to clean up along major streets. For information or to schedule a pickup, call 460-4410.

Gymnastics meet on Saturday

About 95 area students age 3 to 13 will compete in the Tumbleweed Tumblers Gymnastics competition from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the Community Building. Events will include bars, beam, vault, pommel and floor. For information, call Ashley Haines at 443-1601.

Legion has band for dance

The Colby American Legion will have a dance for

the public from 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday at the post hall, 1850 W. Fourth St. The Jacksons will be playing. Cost is \$5 per person at the door. There will be refreshments. For information, call Jim Griffin at (785) 269-7074.

Heartland play this week

Heartland Christian School's spring production, "Real Evidence," will be at 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the school. Donations will be accepted to help with drama class expenses. For information, call Tiffany Shaw at 460-6419.

Carriers collecting food

Colby letter carriers will be collecting nonperishable food donations along their routes Saturday for delivery to the Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank in the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" drive. The National Association of Letter Carriers, the carriers'

union, says this is the largest one-day food drive in the nation. Donations should be placed by the mailbox before mail is delivered. For questions, call Sharlene Scheck, 462-7904.

Last chance to see ceramics

A ceramics display at the Prairie Museum of Art and History will be open for a last-chance showing until artists have picked up their items. "Nontraditional" students who have been taking a ceramics class at Colby Community College have had their art on display for the past 30 days. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.



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