



10 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Friday

February 5, 2010

Volume 121, Number 20

Serving Thomas County since 1888

Reunion to include biking and basketball

By Vera Sloan
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It has been five years since the last high school reunion in Colby, and Colby High School Alumni Association committee members Amanda Wahlmeier, chairman, and Jada Tubbs, co-chairman, say the 2010 all school reunion registrations are ready to be put in the mail within the next few days.

"The big thing about this year's reunion," said Tubbs, "is that the date has changed to June 17, 18, and 19 – over the Father's Day week-end – and we're hoping to get a wider span of people who are unable to attend in August."

She said the reason for the change is that many schools across the country start in the middle of August, and it's hard for families to get away when they are busy getting ready for school.

She emphasized that if local families have family members living out of town who have changed addresses, they are asked to contact the committee as soon as possible with the change.

As for the reunion itself, the committee has switched gears a little and have added two new features, Tubbs said. The "Tour de Thomas County," a bike ride and road race, will be held on Saturday, June 19, beginning at 7:45 a.m. in Fike Park. The second addition is a three-on-three basketball tournament on the Fike Park basketball courts beginning at 1 p.m. Both events require preregistration.

Also new this year will be the "Flight of the Eagles" book, a history of athletics since the beginning of organized sports in Colby High School. Order forms will be available soon. Sales are anticipated to be high since this is the last year Colby will be a member of the Northwest Kansas High School Athletic League.

Tubbs said the price of the all-school reunion registration this year is \$50. It includes admittance to class parties on Friday, admittance to the general assembly and barbecue tickets on Saturday, dances on Saturday night, registration packet, mailers and updates, and a five-year membership to the alumni association. Non-alumni registration is \$25.

Directories are being printed on pre-order only, to save on printing costs. They are available for \$10. An up to date alumni class directory list can be found on the website at www.eaglesalumni.org.

Wahlmeier and Tubbs said they are encouraging local residents planning on attending the reunion to register early to

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Let the puzzle-making begin



Christian Schmid, public relations coordinator for the Thomas County Community Foundation, gave a set of four community puzzle pieces to Sacred Heart School fourth grade teacher Elsie Rietcheck and her students Rachel Van Eaton, Jordan

Hartwell and Hayden Reinert. The class, along with 17 other Thomas County grade school classes, will decorate their pieces and put them together with others from all over the county when the community puzzle is assembled in October.

KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Kansas Knights to convene here

By Kevin Bottrell
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One weekend in late April, two to three years from now, Colby will see several hundred Knights of Columbus come in from councils around Kansas.

Dick Parnell of the Colby council said the Knights will be holding their annual state convention here sometime in the next several years. Parnell said he expects 800 to 900 people – including members and their families – from around the state to attend.

Many of the details haven't been worked out yet, he said, but the conference will probably be the last weekend in April. Knights members would arrive on Thursday, have meetings Friday and Saturday, a mass on Sunday and leave Monday. Much of the event

will be at the Colby Community Building, he said. Some parts of the conference, such as the women's breakfast, will be held at other venues around town.

Parnell said the meetings will be for members only, but some other events might be open to the public.

The convention rotates among locations in east, central and western Kansas. Parnell said the Colby council had thought about having the convention here several years ago, but decided not to since there were not enough motels for that many people. But with two new motels being built, Parnell said there will be enough beds when the convention comes to town.

"If this goes as well as I think it will we'll probably have another one," Parnell said. "It might set a precedent for Kiwanis, Rotary to have their conventions here."

Lawmakers look to lighten liquor laws

TOPEKA (AP) — Liquor stores that hold the monopoly on strong beers are fighting for the exclusive right to keep the tap flowing.

Lawmakers are considering a bill that would push open the door to allow convenience stores and grocery stores to sell stronger beer. Currently, those cereal malt beverage vendors are capped at selling 3.2 beer, but the bill would allow the sale of beer with 4 percent alcohol by weight. The bill also would put Alcoholic Beverage Control in charge of cereal malt beverage vendors.

For proponents, the bill is about fairness. They say they need help overcoming a perception that 3.2 beers are inferior and argue they took a hit in business when the drinking age was raised to 21.

Brenda Ellsworth, owner of Pump'n Pete's in Parsons, argued that liquor stores are able to profit from their advantage and charge higher prices for a product she said customers perceive to be superior. Raising the level to 4 percent would allow cereal malt beverage vendors to sell most major domestic brands at regular strength, just as they are sold in liquor stores.

"What customers want is competition, they want choice, and they want convenience," she said.

Rep. Scott Schwab argued the bill was about allowing the free market to operate without constraints.

"As you listen today," he said in testimony, "I ask you to consider the same question as our founding fathers: How can we free the marketplace and encourage free enterprise?"

Liquor store owners said it wouldn't be fair to change the law. Owners argued that they were in a better position to ensure stronger beers were only sold to of-age customers since the law requires that their workers be 21 or older. Hiring workers who are 21 or older, they said, is just one requirement they face that they said cereal malt beverage vendors wouldn't have to comply with.

Rodney Robson, who owns Jo's Liquor Store in Caney, said convenience stores could sell beer at far lower rates that would drive an estimated 200 liquor stores out of business.

"Kansas cannot afford the loss of jobs, and we cannot afford to change the liquor laws that have withstood the test of time for years," he said. "It is not time for change. It is time to realize that the regulated role of state-licensed liquor stores has value."

City's officials say keep off the ice at park

By Kevin Bottrell
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Ice skating is a popular winter past time, and although the ice on Villa High Pond might look inviting after during a cold snap, the city of Colby says stay off.

There have been several recent incidents where police had to warn people to stay off the ice, including one on Jan. 16 when two juveniles were biking across the pond.

Police Chief Randy Jones said people should be aware that the ice may look thick, but that doesn't mean it is and few people bother to check. Jones said in his time with the Colby Police Department they have pulled out many people

and pets who have fallen through the ice.

Public Works Director Chris Bieker said no one had contacted his department asking about the ice. The department sends someone out to check the restrooms at Villa High Park, but does not regularly look at the ice. City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the ice is supposed to be off limits at all times.

Information about the pond is hard to come by. The pond is artificial, dug out in the 1960s. Armstrong said she didn't know exactly how deep the pond is, but it may reach 10 feet in places. Bieker said he knew the east end is very shallow, however, people should still not go out on the ice.



It may not always look half-thawed like this, but even after a cold snap, city officials are warning residents to stay off the ice at Villa High Pond for their own safety.

KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Briefly

Dance planned for Saturday

There will be a singles and couples dance from 7:30 to 11 p.m. Saturday at Casa De Burritos. Gary Phipps will provide entertainment. For information, call Lue Duffey at (785) 855-2341.

Lions club feed Saturday

The Colby High Plains Lions Club is planning a ham and bean feed at Orscheln's Farm and Home Store from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Donations will be accepted to help send two area band students to the State Lions Band Camp and Convention this summer. For information, call club secretary Sheryl Brenn at (785) 586-2384.

Archeology group plans meeting

The first 2010 quarterly meeting of the High Plains Archeology Group, a chapter of the Kansas Anthropological Association, will be at 2 p.m. Sunday at the

Prairie Museum of Art and History. Guest speaker will be Kathy Murray, an Apache who was raised on the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico. For information, call (785) 462-0933 or (785) 460-6653.

Commodities distribution here

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodity distribution will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Any eligible person can get these commodities, which will include peanut butter, corn flakes, vegetable mix, apricots, instant milk, orange juice and cherries. They will be distributed according to income guidelines on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, call the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office at 462-6744.

Flu clinic Tuesday

The Thomas County Health Department will hold an H1N1 flu clinic from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at

the department's office, 350 S. Range. The vaccine is available to all residents. This is a walk-in clinic and no appointment is necessary and there will be no charge. For information, call the flu line at 460-4599 or the office at 460-4596.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. The building is handicapped accessible by an elevator by the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

Service group to serve soup

Kappa Upsilon, a service organization, will hold a soup supper from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Colby

Community Building during the Colby-Garden City basketball game. There will be chili, chicken noodle and vegetable beef soups with cinnamon rolls, cookies and vegetables. Donations will be accepted to benefit the Puddle Duck preschool. For information, call Amy Jennings 460-2603.

Low income tax help at library

The AARP will have a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed to help low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those age 60 or older. For more information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.



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