



A little green before the storm



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

A few flowers, like these in a planter on Third Street, have begun to push their way through the soil, just in time for a winter storm. Thomas County and all of northwest Kansas is under

a winter weather advisory. The National Weather Service in Goodland is predicting 2 to 5 inches of snow.

Brewster Grocery plans fish fry benefit

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Grocery stores are an important part of the infrastructure in a small town, right alongside schools and post offices, and it leaves a huge hole for young families and the elderly when they close up shop. Brewster Grocery would be no exception, and the town is rallying the support of their surrounding rural community to keep the store going. The Brewster community is inviting the public to come to their small town from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27, at Hunter Hall, 216 Main Street, for a fish fry to benefit Brewster Grocery. Advance ticket prices for the fish fry are \$10 for adults and \$6 for children six to eleven. Children under six eat for free. The price at the door is \$12 for adults. There will also be an opportunity to win a beautiful quilt, made by Erma Palmgren. Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$2 each or three for \$5. Colby residents can get advance tickets at Leroy's Printing, at 560 North Franklin (785) 460-2211. For the past three years, farmers and townspeople alike have purchased memberships to help keep the market going. The only benefit of membership is the right to vote plus, like the rest of the community, the convenience of

not having to drive 20 miles for a loaf of bread or a few eggs at the last minute. Shoppers can buy everything from canned goods to fresh produce, frozen items and fresh meat. Volunteers go each week to Bird City to meet a grocery supply truck from Affiliated Foods, Midwest, out of Norfolk, Neb. The truck brings grocery supplies for stores in St. Francis, Bird City, Stratton, Neb., and Brewster. "We have compared prices to Walmart and Dillon grocery stores in Colby," said Doris Quenzer, store clerk, "and we were 11 percent higher than Walmart prices on like items." Twenty-five dollars worth of groceries at Walmart would cost \$27.75 at the Brewster store, well worth the difference for having the local convenience. Eighty-two grocery stores in Kansas have closed in communities of less than 2,000 population in the last three years. To try to help deal with the problem, Kansas State University is holding a rural grocery summit June 14-15 at the K-State alumni Center, located on the university campus in Manhattan. The Brewster community wants to remind the public to save the date of March 27, to drive to Brewster for fresh catfish prepared by Bob Stewart, who is well known for his talent of frying up a bunch of catfish.

Flight of the Eagles



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Gary Adrian, co-author of "Flight of the Eagles," spoke to a group of longtime Colby Eagles fans during the *Booked for Lunch* program at Prairie Museum of Art and History on Thursday. He told just enough about the research and some of the books highlights to make people want to order on the spot. He said the book will be ready for this year's high school reunion the middle of June, but all the blanks can't be filled in until the spring sports season finishes at the end of May.

High speed chase ends at Colby exit

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A high-speed chase on I-70 that began Thursday morning in Colorado ended abruptly when the vehicle crashed in Colby. Tod Hileman, public resource officer with the Kansas Highway Patrol, said a Colorado state trooper stopped Justin Ford, 25, and Michael Dickens, 18, in a 1994 Buick Regal on a routine traffic stop in eastern Colorado Thursday morning. The two men took off east on I-70. Hileman said the trooper chased them toward the border and called the Kansas Highway Patrol when it was clear he couldn't stop them before they crossed over. Hileman said trooper Jason Duffey picked the car up again near mile marker 50, just outside of Colby. The car was still going well over the speed limit, Duffey reported going 108 mph in pursuit. Several officers from the

Colby Police Department and Thomas County Sheriff's Office also assisted as the car entered the county. At 12:45 p.m., officers reported the car crashed by the overpass at Exit 53 in Colby. Hileman said the car went into the south ditch and rolled at least once. The two men tried to escape on foot but were caught within minutes. One was taken to Citizens Medical Center with minor injuries. Hileman said they have both been charged with fleeing and attempting to elude officers and with possession of stolen property. When dispatch looked up the car's license plate, it turned up as stolen from a woman in El Paso County, Colo. Hileman said the dispatcher called the woman's home and had begun to leave a message when a sheriff's deputy picked up the phone. The deputy was at the house taking a report on the stolen car, which the dispatcher told them had just been recovered.

City council in the market for sound system

By Andy Heintz
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In response to some complaints by basketball fans, the Colby City Council is considering a new sound system for the community building gym. Brad Johnson of Sound Innovations gave a presentation Tuesday on the strengths of his company's sound system. Sound Innovations is a division of Midwest Music based in Salina. City manager Carolyn Armstrong said she requested this proposal after receiving complaints about the quality of sound during the Orange and Black Classic basketball tournament in January. The company's sound system would cost \$52,758 with city workers running some of the wiring. The city is also considering an almost two-year-old bid from local Dan Keller Audio Systems for \$69,322 without the help of city staff. Armstrong said the city recently got \$82,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency after they should have gotten after the heavy snowstorm in December 2006. The snowstorm caused the roof on the bay to collapse at the old fire station at City Hall, said Armstrong. Thomas County was declared a natural disaster area during the snowstorm and Colby was eligible for federal aid. She

said the federal government found out they still owed Colby money while auditing their own accounts this year. The council did not take any action on the sound system. In other news, the council: • Approved getting bids from all gas stations to supply the city's fuel for three years beginning on July 1. The city is taking the bids because its contract with the Oasis Travel Center ends June 30. • Approved raising city wages by three percent to adjust for the rise in cost of living. • Heard from Armstrong that the water treatment plant on Fourth Street near Rasure Lumber has been dumping water into Prairie Dog Creek. She said the plant has been shut down over the past couple of days while valves were being replaced. She said it should be done by today or Monday. • Heard Armstrong would be meeting with representatives of Meadow Lake Golf Course to discuss water rights issues in a lease agreement. Colby Country Club (today, Meadow Lake Golf Course) installed a well that waters the entire golf course, but the well is located on property owned by the city. Armstrong said the city needs to reach a lease agreement with Meadow Lake, but in order to have a lease agreement the two

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Briefly

County offices close for lunch

Because employees will be training for a yearlong conversion to new computer software, the Thomas County treasurer, clerk and Road and Bridge offices will close for the noon hour. County Clerk Shelly Harms said these departments will continue to do business during normal hours. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has one 4-month-old male chocolate-colored Chesapeake Bay retriever available for adoption. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Series highlights Lent season

The Thomas County Ministerial Association is

offering *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* programs at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent with the theme, "The Prodigal Son." Speakers will be Larry Booth Wednesday and Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, March 31. Come to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. Bring your own lunch; beverage and dessert will be provided. Call 462-6342 for information.

Pizza sales to help Red Cross

Hungry for pizza? Order any regularly priced menu item at Pizza Hut on Tuesday and 20 percent of the proceeds will be donated to the Northwest Kansas Red Cross. For information, call Sherry White at 462-7161.

Grant deadline March 31

The Thomas County Community Foundation is taking grant applications for the first quarter. Public

Relations Coordinator Christina Schmid said proposals can be for any type of project, as long as it is not to benefit an individual, political activity or operating expenses. Nonprofit organizations, public agencies and religious institutions may apply. The deadline is Wednesday, March 31. For information or applications, call (785) 460-9152.

Barbershop event March 27

The Colby Tumbleweed Barbershop Chorus will perform two shows at 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27, in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. The show will include the Acoustix quartet and the Prairie Rose Harmony ladies' chorus. For information, call Tom McNutt at 462-2936.

Swim Club plans April event

The Colby Swim Club will hold a parent meeting

and fun swim at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 11, in room 809 of the Health Science Building at Colby Community College. The fun swim will follow at the college pool. For information, call Sondra Finley at 460-2955.

Low-income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons is offering offer 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 for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60 or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

