



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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CYNTHIA HAYNES/Colby Free Press

## College auction nets over \$84,000

Colby Community College student Ryan Boldt (above) sat atop a miniature John Deere tractor, one of many items auctioned off at the college foundation's annual scholarship benefit Saturday. Boldt and Emily Harry (left), along with several other students from the livestock judging team, helped show people each item up for bid, such as this still life donated by The Loft. The banquet included a dinner as well as silent and live auctions. Foundation Director Nick Wells said the auction raised about \$84,000 for college scholarships.



## State music festival here on Thursday

By Kevin Bottrell  
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Bands and choirs from around northwest Kansas will gather at Colby High School on Thursday for the northwest section of the state Large Group Music Festival. Colby High will be the host for all the schools in the northwest area, from St. Francis to Scott City, including all the schools from Thomas County. Colby band and choir director Joey Nichols

said this is the only statewide festival for large music groups since Kansas does not do a final competition. The Colby band will perform at 3:55 p.m. in the gym. The women's choir and concert choir will perform at 2:15 and 3 p.m. in the auditorium. Performances are open to the public. Bands are rated by three judges in several categories including tone, rhythmic accuracy and technique. Choirs are rated for diction and expression as well. Both are

scored on a scale of I-V. V is an ineffective score, III is average and I is outstanding. Judges also provide comments and suggestions for each band. Nichols said choirs prepare four songs. The judges pick two and the director picks the final one. Bands have to prepare two songs and perform both. Principal Don Krebs said high school students will have the day off since the festival will use al-

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## Alumni recognize grads

In 2005, the Colby High reunion committee created the Alumni Wall of Honor to recognize graduates and teachers who have made noteworthy contributions to mankind, great sacrifices in their lives, acts of heroism, great accomplishments or high honors. "We are seeking nominations for the Wall of Honor for the 2010 reunion," said Sue Taylor, class of 1971, now director of the Prairie Museum of Art and History. Nominations need to be in by April 30, she said. "Last reunion, we honored 23 individuals," Taylor said. "It was so interesting and gratifying to work on the project and to learn about the meaningful lives of

our Colby Eagles." Nominees may be teachers or alumni, she said, and may be posthumous. The Thomas County Historical Society and the museum will be taking the nominations, information and copies of photographs until the end of April. Nominees will be featured in an exhibit, "High Flying Eagles: CHS Wall of Honor" in the education room in the museum at 1905 S. Franklin. They will be honored at a reception at 2 p.m. on Friday, June 18, at the museum. Honorees from the last reunion

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## Talking about energy



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Stan Slaughter of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment spoke to Colby High School students in an afternoon assembly Friday. Slaughter uses computer presentations, activities and songs to teach students about energy conservation.

## Network aims to stop theft

OLMITZ (AP) — Rural residents know that with warmer weather, thieves are more likely to steal high-priced farm equipment, cattle, copper wire and fertilizer chemicals used to make methamphetamine. These thefts cost farmers and other rural residents thousands of dollars every year. A program based in Sedgwick County is trying to stem the problem. The Agriculture Livestock Information Network, which began last year, sends e-mails to residents in 26 counties informing them about thefts and reporting suspicious activity. Sedgwick County Sheriff's Deputy Travis Clinesmith, who is in charge of the program, said more than a thousand people receive his alerts, and he is trying to get other counties interested. "If there are suspicious characters around their farm," he said, "they can send an e-mail and describe what it was so people can look for the same sort of things." Clinesmith, who grew up on a farm near Yates Center, says keeping people informed is key to thwarting thefts in rural areas. E-mails this spring have already reported on thefts of irrigation equipment parts and tractor batteries. Last week, information came from Oklahoma about the theft of 26 head of rodeo cattle. Reno County Sheriff's Capt. Steve Lutz notes that thieves also like to hit construction sites. Reno County deputies got reports on 300 property crimes in rural towns

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## Mail census forms by May 1

It's not too late to turn in your 2010 Census forms. The official count day was April 1, but people can still send them in up to May 1. After then, census takers will be going to any home where forms were not mailed back. The latest information from the U.S. Census Bureau says Thomas County has a 66 percent return rate so far, compared to 75 percent in 2000. The bureau also breaks down return rates by township: Wendell, 46 percent; North Randall, 60 percent; South Randall, 75 percent; Kingery, 49 percent; Barrett,

53 percent; Menlo, 45 percent; East Hale, 65 percent; West Hale, 60 percent; Rovohl, 66 percent; Lacey, 55 percent; Summers, 66 percent; Smith, 48 percent; and Morgan, 67 percent. The bureau has a map showing return rates at 2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map/. The bureau recently released a map of estimated population decline from 2000 to 2009, based on estimates the it calculates each year. Thomas County showed the smallest population decrease of the nine northwest counties at 10.2 percent. Wallace and Gove

counties had the largest estimated decline at 19.1 percent each. The bureau is still hiring census takers, with several dates and places to take the employment test. In Colby, those include 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21, and 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 28 at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services building, 1135 S. Country Club Dr; and 11:30 p.m. Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21, and 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 28 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, go to www.2010censusjobs.gov.

## Briefly

**Kindergarten screenings coming**  
The Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center and the Colby School District is holding kindergarten screenings from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. today and Tuesday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Parents of next year's kindergartners are encouraged to take advantage of the screenings, which include speech, sight, hearing and learning tests. For information, call school nurse Amy Hutfles, 460-5111.

**Dance tryouts Friday, Saturday**  
The Colby High dance team will hold tryouts for next year Friday and Saturday, with a clinic at 6:30 p.m. Friday in the school gym and tryouts 8:45 a.m. Saturday at the Community Building. Current students and incoming freshmen may try out. Information packets are available at the middle and high school offices. For information, call coach Denita Rodgers at 460-1325.

**Agent will detail recycling rules**  
A lesson on recycling will be given by Melinda Daily, Extension agent from Wallace County, at noon Tuesday at the Thomas County Office Complex. Bring a brown bag lunch. For information, call Diann Gerstner at 460-4582.

**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 accessible by an elevator near the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

**Transit van to take Tax Day off**  
The Thomas County transportation van will not

run Thursday because the driver will be attending a meeting in Hays. For information, call the county clerk's office at 460-4500.

**Low-income tax help at library**  
Thursday will be the last day for tax help by the American Association of Retired Persons from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The service 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.

**Trooper to teach self defense**  
Colby Community College is offering a women's self defense class at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 21, in Room 106 of the Student Union, taught by Trooper Tod Hileman of the Kansas Highway Patrol. The Thomas County Farm Bureau will provide refreshments and door prizes. For information, call Shanda

Mattix at 460-5464.

**City to start grass route**  
The Colby Public Works Department will begin picking up grass clippings on Monday, April 26, said Public Works Secretary Anita Powell. Clippings must be at curbside by 8 a.m. on your regular trash day, in a separate tipper can from your household trash. Clippings should be placed in the tipper can loose, without plastic bags. For information, call the department at 460-4420.

