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COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

May 6, 2010
Volume 121, Number 71
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Colby kids take second at robot event

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

Teams from the Thomas County Academy won second place at the Western Kansas Lego Robotics Competition at Fort Hays State University on April 9.

Josh Lemman, Jory Koon, Bridget Bickner, Dakota Smull, Olivia Wetter, Randee Skiles, James Rebarchek, Kaili Guy, Sterling Miller, Matt Minchow, Hayden Miller and Evan Olson competed at the event. Their overall score won them second place.

The students are broken up into teams of two to four. They have to program their Lego robots to act in a variety of situations without any further input from the students. There are several kinds of sensors that can detect walls, obstacles and even color changes on the ground that the robots use to "see" where they are going.

The students were allowed to modify the robots any way they wanted, as long as they still met size requirements. Minchow said he found out his robot was too long two days before the event and had to make some modifications.

Teacher Teresa Morgan said there were 54 teams from 19 schools. The Colby teams practiced for three weeks. Morgan said many of the students came in early and stayed after school working on their robots.

Morgan said the programming is difficult work, and the students

have to make different programs for their robot for each competition.

In "There and Back," the students have to program a robot to follow a three-quarter inch black line through several curves as fast as possible and then turn around and run the course in reverse.

Koon said the teams use a color sensor pointed at the ground, which can be set to different sensitivities, to let the robot know when it needs to go around a corner. Minchow said some of the robots got going so fast they ran right off the track.

In "Maze Solver," the students have to program a robot to find its way through a four-by-four-foot maze in under three minutes.

Morgan said the organizers were more purposeful this year. At previous competitions, competitors could just download programs from the Internet that would match the mazes at the event. This year, the organizers did not release the maze dimensions until one week before, encouraging the students to come up with their own programs.

In "Speed Limit," the students have to program a robot to move in a straight line over a three-meter track painted with a series of black and white lines, all while matching a target speed. The robot that completes the track closest to the target speed will win.

Sterling Miller and Matt Minchow said their robot went too fast,

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Home schoolers to graduate Saturday

The Christian Family Educators of Northwest Kansas will hold a graduation for home-schooled seniors at 2 p.m. Saturday at the First Christian Church, Fourth and Hudson, in Oakley.

The speaker will be Pastor Kyle Evans of the First Baptist Church of Scott City. Music will be provided by the Akers Family of

Weskan. A reception will follow.

Students are from Gem, Gove, Oakley, Weskan, Oberlin, Colby and St. Francis.

Deanna Oesterreich, a home school parent, said this is the largest group to graduate since 1999, when there were seven.

Oesterreich said everyone is invited.

Brewster alumni plan all-school reunion, parade on May 29

By Vera Sloan
Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansan.com

The Brewster Schools will hold their second every-five-years all-school reunion on Saturday May 29.

The district has come a long way since its beginnings in October 1888. Its history has been an anchor in this rural center of cattle country and grain production through good times and bad.

The fact that the school still stands – sending students off to become doctors, professors and engineers, and young men and women back to their roots in farm-

ing – is a credit to the town and to the schools.

This year, the organizers have extended an invitation to alumni of the nearby Brownville and Levant school districts to be a part of the celebration.

Early registration will be from 3 to 8 p.m. on Friday, May 28, at the Brewster School. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning, May 29, at the school, followed by a parade at 10.

There is no theme for the parade and no prizes, but anyone and everyone is encouraged to show pride in their school by joining in.

Entry forms for the parade can be

picked up at S&T Communications offices in Goodland, Colby or Brewster. They should be sent to Lila Mayer at Box 35, Brewster, Kan., 67732, by Friday, May 21.

Following the parade, a general assembly will be held at 11 a.m. in the school auditorium. Lunch will be served at 12:30 by the Brewster Lions Club for a donation; the money will be used for community projects.

After the success of the melodrama at the last reunion, homecoming visitors will enjoy another round this year at 3 p.m. in the auditorium, starring many alumni and directed by Lynn Fulwider.

To round out the day, a social hour will begin at 6 p.m. at the Goodland Elks Club, 1523 Arcade Ave. in Goodland, followed by dinner at 7 p.m., and a dance.

Reservations for the dinner and dance need to be made no later than Monday, May 10. Call Lila Mayer at (785) 694-2715. Cost is \$15 per person.

"Activities are open to all alumni, families, the community and friends," said volunteer Lesa Juenemann. "Classes are encouraged to use Friday or Sunday for class gatherings. Some are already scheduled, and visitors are welcome."

According to the Brewster history book, four school buildings have occu-

ried the same location in Brewster since 1889, with the present structure completed in 1923.

Three graduates made up the first class in 1922, Bertha Parker Bowen, Bernice Eicher Oldham and Hazel Peacock Tucker.

The oldest living graduate is Wilma (Guise) Thomas, class of 1927. After graduating, she later taught at the school. She now lives near her son Garth in Loveland, Colo.

Thomas recalled at her 100th birthday celebration last year that when she and

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Nine-year-old Nicole Griffin, a member of the Colby Angels, was a busy girl at the Special Olympics track meet in Colby on Saturday. She took time out after winning taking first in the 100-meter dash to admire her collection of winning medals for

the tennis-ball throw, the standing long jump and the 50-meter and 100-meter runs. She was one of 180 athletes to compete in Saturday's games.

Olympic athletes take the field

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansan.com

Special Olympics athletes, about 180 strong along with 20 of their coaches rolled into Colby Saturday morning to take in a warm sun drenched day of competition in the Kansas Western Region annual athletic event.

The well known motto the athletes follow is, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Six athletes took part in a torch run for the opening ceremonies at 11 a.m., around the track at Dennen Field preceding the field events, standing long jump, running long jump, shot put, softball throw, and tennis ball throw.

After a lunch break, served by the Colby Retired and Seniors Volunteer Program, 16

track events took up the remainder of the day in front of a crowd of parents, friends and supporters.

"The Special Olympics is supported entirely by donations," said Tim Rehder, vice president of sports and competition from the state office in Shawnee. "Hawker-Beechcraft used to fly the group, but the economy has affected that support. But in spite of the economy, we are still okay. It's tight, but we are making it."

"We will be taking a delegation of 60 athletes and 17 coaches from Kansas to Lincoln, Neb., in June for the national summer games. They will participate in basketball, soccer, track, bowling, power lifting, tennis and bocce."

Rehder said bocce is popular with the older athletes who find it more difficult to compete in high-paced activity, so the lawn bowling game is a much better fit for their level of

activity.

Rehder added that it is always difficult to make the decision which athletes to take to the national competition.

One of the athletes at Saturday's games was Matthew Perez from Ulysses, who received two golds, one in the 30-meter manual wheelchair slalom and the manual wheelchair 25-meter race.

Perez said he has been participating for 23 years in the Special Olympics, and was chosen to compete in the World Games in 1999, in Raleigh Durham, Chapel Hill, N.C., where he placed second in power lifting.

He had the honor of being inducted into the Kansas Special Olympic Hall of Fame in 2005, something he's very proud of, he said.

Jane Mentlick, Colby, one of the organizers of Saturday's event, said the organizers

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Briefly

Clean up yards all week

Colby's 2010 Spring Cleanup is this week. The city urges everyone to use the week to clean and spruce up their yards and have the city remove debris placed at the curb. To schedule a day for your items to be picked up or to volunteer to help others, call Jo Strange at the city office, 460-4410.

Pay property taxes by Monday

The second half of 2009 property taxes is due to the county treasurer's office by next Monday. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Mailed taxes must be postmarked by Monday. For information, call Treasurer Donita Applebury at 460-4520.

Visit planned at kindergarten

Colby Grade School will have open visitation for next year's kindergartners from 9 to 11 a.m. Friday.

Parents who did not receive an invitation should call the school office at 460-5100.

Food signup open until Friday

Prairie Land Food sign up is open until Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, May 22, in the Sacred Heart School gym. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Group plans friendship day

Church Women United plans a May Friendship Day at noon Friday at the First Presbyterian Church in Colby. A salad lunch will be provided. For information, call Joyce Gatlin at 460-3656.

Beef program to hold clinic

The Colby Community College beef program will

hold a cattle-handling demonstration with National Cattlemen's Beef Association clinician Curt Pate at 6:30 p.m. Friday at the Oakley Arena. The beef-program students will provide dinner. For information, call Marcy Ward at 462-5060.

Postal carriers collecting food

The National Association of Letter Carriers will hold a food drive Saturday. Leave nonperishable food items on or by your mailbox and carriers will pick them up. All of the items will go to Genesis-Thomas County food bank. For information, call Eileen Harris at the Colby post office, 462-7904.

Gem Lions to dish spaghetti

The Gem Lions Club plans a spaghetti supper from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday to raise money for Bill Dewey of rural Gem who lost his wife Jennilee in a home fire early March 29. The Lions ask everyone

to come help.

Junior golfers to gather Monday

The Colby junior golf program will have registration and a parents meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Meadow Lake Golf Course. The meeting will end with the program's first practice. For information, call Miles Ladenburger at 460-7687.

Red Cross needs your blood

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. next Thursday at the Community Building. To schedule an appointment, call (800) 733-2767.

