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Party plans meeting to choose member

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
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Republican party leaders from across the 121st District will meet on Sunday, Dec. 19, to decide who will succeed state Rep. Jim Morrison. At least three candidates have stepped up to seek the seat.

The meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at 4 p.m. at Heartland Christian School. The district includes Thomas, Sherman and Sheridan counties and part of Graham County.

Newly elected Republican county chairman Josh Faber of Colby called the meeting as leader of the largest county in the district. Faber was elected chairman at a party meeting several weeks ago to succeed Steve Ziegelmeier of Colby, who resigned for family reasons.

Faber said a lot of the process is determined by Kansas law. When a state representative dies, he said, the Kansas secretary of state sends a letter to the party chairman of the largest county in his or her district. That chairman has 21 days to hold a meeting to elect a successor. Faber

said he got the letter last Thursday.

Faber said he sent letters on Wednesday to the other county chairmen, and they have three days to notify their precinct committee members of the meeting. Faber said there are about 90 members in the district. At least one third of the committee members must be present.

Faber said he appointed the other three county chairmen as a rules committee, which will meet before Dec. 19 to decide on the procedure for the meeting. He named Don Paxson, the Graham County chairman, to head the committee.

The precinct committee members will elect a chairman for the meeting and then nominate candidates. Candidates have to be nominated from the floor, Faber said, and there will be no candidate list drawn up beforehand. Candidates have to lobby precinct committee members before the meeting to get someone to nominate them and to get their votes.

Faber said he knew one person who is actively campaigning, Dave Voss, a Colby businessman and city council member. Sheridan County co-chair Cathy Broeckelman of Selden said she had been con-

tacted by Voss and by Rick Billinger of Goodland. Billinger is a long-time city commissioner there and a former mayor. Graham County chairman Don Paxson said he had been contacted by one person from Sherman County and one from Thomas County but did not know of any other candidates.

Voss and Billinger could not be reached for comment on Thursday.

Brenda McCants of Goodland, who lost to Morrison in the August primary

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Logan County body identified

The body of a Hispanic man found in southern Logan County last week has been identified and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation has arrested a man agents believe is responsible.

The body was that of Juan Edgar Hernandez-Jil, 23, of Commerce City, Colo., and Seward County, the agency said. The KBI has arrested Alfredo Brunete, who is charged with first-degree murder in Seward County District Court. Hernandez-Jil was found on

Monday, Nov. 29, near U.S. 83 about 26 miles south of Oakley. The area is mostly empty pastures. At the time, the death was called suspicious but the body could not be identified. The Logan County Sheriff's office and the KBI have been investigating.

The KBI released a statement Tuesday saying Hernandez-Jil's next of kin had not been located yet. They believe he is originally from the Puebla, Mexico, area.

Deer poachers caught in Oberlin

By Kimberly Davis

The Oberlin Herald
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A trailer piled with 12 bucks taken illegally this week stopped traffic Wednesday morning after it was parked across the street from the Oberlin post office.

Meantime, five members of a Wisconsin family lounged in the Decatur County Jail, upstairs in the courthouse across the street, accused of illegally running the deer with greyhound dogs and vehicles.

Men and women of all ages stopped to look at the trailer full of the 12 bucks, a mixture of white tail and mule deer, all allegedly poached in the northeast part of the county.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said Under-sheriff Allen Marcum was called out at 5:05 a.m. Wednesday to help Richard Kelly, the wildlife conservation officer stationed for this area with the Kansas De-

partment of Wildlife and Parks. Sheriff Badsky said Mr. Kelly has the power to arrest violators, but called for help because of the number of people involved.

The five men were arrested in the Lyle area, in the northeast corner of the county, and near the Nebraska line, Badsky said. Jail records identified them as John Jacobs III, 53; Joseph R. Jacobs, 28; John Jacobs IV, 30; Mark G. Jacobs, 45; and Paul J. Jacobs, 26. The family is from De Pere, Wis.

The sheriff said the investigation continues and two area men might have been involved with the poaching.

The Jacobses were booked into jail and bond was set at \$83,500 total. By Wednesday afternoon, they had made bond and been released.

Sheriff Badsky said it appeared none of the deer was tagged, as required by law. The men, he said,

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DEBBIE SCHWANKE/Colby Community College

'Splish, splash' and 'ho, ho, ho' at college pool

The water wasn't cold enough for Santa to take a dip, but was just right for the kids (above) and adults at the Colby Community College pool open house on Sunday. Santa did take the time to pose beside a lifeguard stand (right) before jetting back to the North Pole. Deb Schwanke, public information director at the college, said she counted about 60 people in the pool at one point. College officials and pool advisory board members are trying to market the indoor pool to families and groups as a place for parties and festivities.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press



FARM AND RANCH REALTY

A capacity crowd of bidders and spectators attended the auction of 15,892 acres of crop land Wednesday at the City Limits Convention Center.

Land tracts sell for \$21.6 million

By Vera Sloan

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Land auctions are not generally considered a spectator sport, but well over 300 spectators and serious bidders watched last Thursday as 15,892 acres of crop land in Thomas, Sherman, Wallace and Cheyenne counties went up for auction.

Broker Don Hazlett of Farm and Ranch Realty said Tuesday that when the dust cleared and the last gavel fell, the selling price had reached \$21,598,180, an average of \$1,359 an acre. The sale was held at the City Limits Convention Center.

"The auction started off lively," he said, "with opening bids averaging over \$1,100 for 50 single tracts, and then a combination of 'buyers choice' tracts. The winning bid went to an out-of-area investor."

Hazlett said the identity of the buyer was confidential. He noted that the land, sold by NW Ventures LLC, formerly known as Zwegardt Farms, was choice dry cropland. He added that the buyers' immediate plans are for renters to continue to lease the property.

Hazlett said he advertises land auctions in the area and nationwide via the Internet.

"Local farmers are aggressively acquir-

ing additional cropland and grass for their operations," he said, "and it was local buyers that pushed the bid."

He said now is a good time to both buy and sell land, citing two other sales that in the past two weeks have gone to local buyers. He said two irrigated quarters and one dryland quarter in the Lunsway sale sold for \$1,564,000 and the Jack Kriss Estate sale of 2,400 acres across western Kansas and eastern Colorado sold for \$3,784,190.

Hazlett said that the devaluation of the dollar plays a big role in people investing in land. Investors often see land as a hedge against that declining value.

Briefly

Library to close again Friday

The Pioneer Memorial Library will be closed Friday for staff training. It will be open regular hours Saturday and Sunday. For information, call 460-4470.

Piano students plan recital

Pat Ziegelmeier's piano students will hold a Christmas recital at 1:30 p.m. Sunday in the Colby United Methodist Church sanctuary. The program will feature solos and duets. For information, call Ziegelmeier at 462-7808.

Helpers needed to fill baskets

Genesis-Thomas County needs volunteers to fill Christmas food baskets at 7 p.m. Friday at the 4-H building on the Thomas County Fairgrounds. The baskets will be ready for families to pick up at 9 a.m.

Saturday at the 4-H building. For information, call 460-7930.

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. For information, call 462-6342.

Hill City artist featured at museum

Works by Hill City artist and teacher David Chalfant are on exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and History through the end of December. His sculptures and paintings have been shown in regional and national shows. For information, contact the museum at 460-4590 or museumed@st-tel.net.

Massage class needs clients

The Therapeutic Massage Program at Colby Community College is offering massages by students in the Massage Clinic I class from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays. For an appointment, call (785) 460-5427. The fee is \$5. Gratuities will be put into the Massage Therapy Club fund to help students pay for the National Certification Exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork, said Debra A. Waites, director of the program.

College pool open weekdays

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool is open for lap swimming from 5 to 7 a.m. Monday to Friday and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; from 5 to 9 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday; and from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday and Friday. Open swim is from 4 to 7 p.m. Monday and Thursday; 4 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday

and Friday; and 1 to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. General admission is \$3, but monthly and yearly passes are available. Call manager Kipp Nelson at 460-5476.

Sheriff can check vehicles

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office can check vehicle identification numbers for cars, light trucks and motorcycles. The office is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call Sheriff Rod Taylor at 460-4570 for information or to set up an appointment. Taylor said trailer inspections still have to go through the Kansas Highway Patrol office in Hays. The fee is \$10; the check is required to get tags on many vehicles.

