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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Stephen Vacik (above) – presiding over his first graduation ceremony as Colby Community College president – presented former dean Gracemary Melvin with an honorary degree on Saturday. Colby High School graduates Austin Scheideman, Kelsey Voss and Spencer Tubbs (left) walked into the Colby Community Building during the processional at Sunday's graduation ceremony.

College, high school celebrate graduation

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
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Hundreds of students at four Thomas County schools received their diplomas, degrees and certificates this weekend.

Colby Community College began the packed weekend with the nurses' pinning ceremony Saturday morning and commencement in the afternoon. President Stephen Vacik began graduation with a moment of silence for Professor Emeritus Max Pickerrill and former college board member Dr. Floyd Smith, both of whom died last week.

Dr. Keegan Nichols presented the Ary Award to veterinary technology graduate Anna Schurter of Valley Center. Schurter was on the President's Honor roll each semester at Colby, was a member of the Phi



Brittany Bange, one of 13 Colby High School valedictorians, spoke at the school's graduation Sunday.

See "GRADUATION," Page 3

Coming in Wednesday's *Colby Free Press*
Photos and details of **Brewster**
and Heartland Christian School graduation ceremonies

Area students to graduate from Tech College Friday

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
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Northwest Technical College will celebrate the 46th annual commencement at 1:30 p.m. on Friday at Max Jones Fieldhouse where 155 students – including some from Thomas County – will receive technical certificates and associate degrees.

The commencement program will include opening remarks by College President Dr. Ed. Mills, and a welcome by Dick Short, vice-chairman of the area board of control.

Frank Otter, chairman of the

board of control, will introduce the commencement speaker, Mark Smith of Wallace County.

Smith served on the Northwest Technical College board for 30 years, and was chairman of the board for 10 of those years.

He is a farmer and rancher in the Wallace County and Greeley County area, as well as owner-operator of the famous Pleasant Valley Ranch near Sharon Springs. He is a member of Kansas Livestock Association, and was past president of Kansas Livestock Association. As member of National Cattleman's Beef Association, he was asked to be on the association's executive committee.

Following the speaker will be a song "The Climb" by cosmetology students Amber Beougher of Oakley, Vanessa Jaynes, Canon City, Colo., and Kamisha Nona-maker, Goodland.

College Counselor Paul Chaffin will present the Students of the Year nominees and announce the winner. About a dozen students have been nominated, including Jance McKee of Brewster, a diesel technology student.

The alumni speaker will be Christine Smith, associate director of development and career service.

State denied No Child waiver

TOPEKA (AP) – Kansas won't be able to avoid the toughest years of the federal No Child Left Behind law.

The U.S. Department of Education denied the state's request for a waiver Friday.

The law says 100 percent of students are supposed to fare

well on state tests by 2014. Some states have been phasing in higher targets gradually, with districts facing the highest benchmarks in the next few years.

Kansas wanted to hold the annual targets for state tests in reading and math at 2009-2010 levels until it can implement

new national education standards. Tests based on those new standards aren't expected to start until the 2014-2015 school year in Kansas.

State Board of Education Chairman David Dennis says he's disappointed by rejection of the waiver.

Unusual tactics used on abortion bill

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA – Tactics used by Kansas lawmakers to impose new restrictions on private health insurance coverage for abortions are prompting threats of a legal challenge and talk of rewriting the Legislature's rules.

Even legislators defending those tactics acknowl-

edge they stretched or bent their rules – interpreting an important provision as loosely as possible – to get the bill passed. They took a measure that had died without passing either chamber, folded it into another bill and overcame resistance to a questionable move with legislative trading.

The resulting bill will ban insurance companies

See "TACTICS," Page 3

Briefly

Get in free with kids at museum

The Prairie Museum of Art and History is offering free admission to parents who accompany their preschoolers aged 5 and under to the museum today through Friday. They will have the chance to explore the museum at their leisure and participate in self-directed activities, including dressing up as cowboys, Native Americans, train engineers or pioneer settlers, riding the mechanical horse or stick horses, holding a tea party, helping with "chores" in the garden and around the houses, playing with toy agricultural machinery, and more. Museum hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call 460-4590 or email museumed@st-tel.net.

Sign up for summer program

Colby United Methodist Church will have open enrollment for its Summer Youth Program from 4-6 p.m. today and Tuesday at the church. The program is for children age 3 through sixth grade. It runs

Monday to Wednesday each week from June 6 to July 6. For information, call 460-2761.

Kids can fish on May 21

Colby Community College and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will hold a Kids Fishing Derby from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday at Villa High Pond. There is no charge, but parents should register by Wednesday. Officials from KDWP will be assisting and providing information on fishing topics. The college will provide bait. A drawing will be held for several prizes. For information, call Barry Kaaz at 460-5429 or Kathy Britton at 460-5550.

Relay committee plans breakfast

The Thomas County Relay for Life committee will have a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to noon on Saturday in the Colby Community Building. Tickets can be purchased in advance from any committee member or at the door. The Relay for Life will be from 7 p.m.

to 7 a.m. on Friday, June 17, at Dennen Field. For information, call Irene Hartwell at 443-0974.

Church plans potluck, conference

The Colby Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' will hold a branch conference Sunday. District representatives will be here to conduct business and a potluck dinner at noon. Anyone is welcome to attend. For information, contact Maxine Nelson at (785) 462-3571.

Red Cross wants your blood

The American Red Cross will have blood drives from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 25, and from 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 26, at the Colby Community Building. Go to redcrossblood.org or call (800) 733-2767, to make an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome. Donors will be entered to win one of 12 sets of tickets to the Country Stampede on Sunday, June 26, and will be entered in the national

drawing to win two passes and backstage tours to the Grand Ole Opry. For questions or to volunteer as a helper, call (785) 462-3861.

Selden car show coming in June

The Selden Community Foundation will have its 17th annual Selden Antique Tractor and Classic Car Show starting at 10 a.m. Sunday, June 5. Admission is free. Classic motorcycles and small engines are welcome. Bring your own lawn chairs. For information call Judy Rogers at (785) 386-4231.

