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# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

January 25, 2012  
Volume 123, Number 13  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

## Navy drops in, rescues hostages

By Abdi Guled  
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — The same U.S. Navy Seal unit that killed Osama bin Laden parachuted into Somalia under cover of darkness early today and crept up to an outdoor pirate camp where an American woman and Danish man were being held hostage. A lightning raid left nine kidnappers dead and both hostages free. President Barack Obama authorized the mission by Seal Team 6 two days earlier, and minutes after he gave his State of the Union address to Congress he was on the

phone with the American's father to tell him his daughter was safe. The Danish Refugee Council confirmed the two aid workers, American Jessica Buchanan and Poul Hagen Thisted, a Dane, were "on their way to be reunited with their families." Buchanan, 32, and Thisted, 60, were working with a mining-clearing unit of the Danish Refugee Council when gunmen kidnapped the two in October. The raiders came in quickly, catching the guards as they were sleeping after having chewed the narcotic leaf qat for much of the evening, a pirate who gave his name as Bile Hussein told the As-

sociated Press by phone. Hussein said he was not present at the site but had spoken with other pirates who were, and that they told him nine pirates had been killed in the raid and three were "taken away." The hostage rescue was carried out by the same Seal unit behind the operation in Pakistan last May that killed bin Laden, two U.S. officials said on condition of anonymity to discuss the operation. The unit is the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, also known as Seal Team 6. One official said that the team parachuted into the area before moving on

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## Counter on street

Rance Biesecker of the Kansas Department of Transportation was setting out traffic counters around Colby on Tuesday, including this one on West Fifth Street. The department is doing a count of traffic on Colby streets, he said. The information is used in several ways, including determining distribution of state fuel-tax money for city use. He said street traffic is counted every few years.

## Bank here hits 125th

Farmers and Merchants Bank of Colby will have Business after Five on Thursday and an open house on Friday to celebrate its 125th anniversary. "We're extremely excited to be celebrating our 125th anniversary when the bank has gone through a lot of changes," said Vice President Velma Goodheart. "We hope everyone can come to Business after Five and our open house on Friday." Business after Five will be from 5 to 8 p.m. with drinks and appetizers served. The open house will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday at the main location and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Dillon's.

## Hospital sends survey to town

By Christina Beringer  
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Colby's hospital and the county health department hope to gauge the overall quality of health care being delivered here with a survey to be mailed to 800 randomly selected residents in Thomas County. Kevan Trenkle, chief executive officer at Citizens Medical Center, said the purpose is two-fold. "A new state mandate was passed," he said, "and so every three years we are required by law to take assessment of the health care in the county, since we are a nonprofit hospital. Secondly, we

need to set a basis for comparison so we can determine any issues that need to be improved upon." Trenkle said that the survey will be mailed starting this week and needs to be returned by Friday, Feb. 10. Anyone who doesn't receive a paper copy and would like to participate can get one from the hospital administration office or online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/BXV7CDC](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BXV7CDC). "The comprehensive survey will measure Thomas County residents' views regarding health care perceptions of delivery, access and health practices," Trenkle said. "Participants who choose to

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## Standing up (to the wind) for life



GERI LANDRY

Despite cold weather and a sharp wind, members of Colby-area churches came together on the corner of West Fourth Street and North Range Avenue this Sunday to pray for an

end to abortion. The demonstration marked the 39th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in the Roe v. Wade case, which made abortion legal in all states.

## Council ups ante for computer job

By Kayla Cornett  
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The Colby City Council has decided to change the salary range for the position of assistant technology director it is having trouble trying to fill. City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the city can't find someone qualified for the job who is willing to work for \$36,000 a year. She said they have an applicant who's interested, but not at that price. Councilman Mark Beringer asked why the city is going through so many technicians, and Technology Director Mike Albers listed various reasons technicians have left, including a divorce and moving away. He said they had three techs last a year each. Councilman Tim Hutfles then

asked where the city has been advertising the job, and Armstrong said they sent the ad to the technical colleges, listed it with all the colleges in the state and advertised with the newspaper. Hutfles suggested the city should expand the search to Colorado and Nebraska and advertise within in a 300-mile radius. Another councilman said a person whose gone through the vocational-technician program might not have the proper training to do this job. Hutfles then asked Albers how much he learned on the job compared to in college. Albers replied that this type of program didn't exist when he went to college. "We didn't have computers then," he said. Hutfles said it is just an assistant

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## Girl Scouts out with cookie-order forms

By Christina Beringer  
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The order forms are hot off the press and your neighborhood Girl Scout is ready to fill your cupboards with boxes and boxes of cookies. With only six weeks in the selling season, you have only until Sunday, March 11, to put your order in. Girl Scout cookies are \$3.50 per box and all of the proceeds support Girl Scouting in this area, said Colby cookie coordinator Mint Culver. Flavors in-

clude Caramel deLites, Peanut Butter Patties, Thanks-A-Lots, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Lemonades, Shout Outs, Shortbreads and the most-popular selling cookie, Thin Mints. "There aren't any new cookies out this year, but the box for Shortbread cookies is getting a new look to highlight Girl Scouts' 100th year anniversary," Culver said. "Homemade shortbreads were the first cookies ever sold by Girl Scouters." Culver said that in addition to earning badges and pins, the girls learn five essential skills by participating in the cookie fund raiser. "They learn goal setting, decision making, money management, people

skills and business ethics," she said, "and they use these skills throughout their entire lives. "Then, the older they get, the more they are encouraged to get more involved. Not only do they sell cookies and take orders, but they'll also learn how to be responsible for the money by taking deposits and counting money." For the centennial, Colby Scouts are planning events during Girl Scout Week, the week following the due date for cookie orders. They'll have an awards ceremony that Sunday, a birthday party on Thursday, March 15, and a special surprise honoring the first girl baby of the Girl Scout year. "To celebrate the 100th anniversary,

the first female baby born to Thomas County residents after March 11th will receive hand-crafted gifts made by area Girl Scouters," said Culver. "We'll also be participating in a special gathering in Greensburg in April doing service projects." Culver said all of the girls in Colby's 10 troops, along with their families, are invited to the service project. "The service day will help build on the girls' healthy leadership development," she said. Culver said girls can register any time to be a Girl Scout. Enrollment is \$12. Contact Penny Cline, cookie coordinator, at 460-2929 for registration information or a cookie order.

## Tickets available for Brass in Blue

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Thursday for the Brass in Blue concert at Colby High School, sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association and the Colby Free Press. Free advance tickets are available at the front desk of the Free Press. The performance will begin at 7:30 p.m., and guests are asked to be in their seats by 7:20. The 12-member group, formed in 2007, is a part of the Air Force Heartland of America Band, which performed in Colby several years ago. Pat Ziegelmeier of Western Plains said the group contacted her about performing here last fall. "It's a nice bonus," she said.

