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COLBY FREE PRESS

Wednesday

August 15, 2012
Volume 123, Number 127
Serving Thomas County since 1888

10 pages

County finalizes fall ballot

By Christina Beringer
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County commissioners canvassed the primary election votes for Thomas County on Monday, finalizing the results and setting the ballot for the fall general election. Results were tallied by County Clerk Shelly Harms, County Commission Chairman Ken Christiansen, Commissioner Paul Steele, Deputy Clerk Susan Guill and Assistant Deputy Clerk Ashley Schriener. Harms said 1,689 of Thomas County's 4,334 registered voters showed up at the polls last week. She and her staff were impressed

with the 39 percent turnout, saying they usually expect about 15 to 19 percent to vote in the primary. Harms said of the 1,689 ballots, 195 people voted Democrat and 1,503 Republican. "We had a very high turnout this year," said Guill. "Probably because of the contested races," added Harms. "And we didn't have many issues with people upset with having to produce their ID to vote. Most people were really receptive and said we should have done it a long time ago." However, Harms said there were a few people who showed up but didn't vote because they didn't

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College OKs budget, coach

The Colby Community College trustees held a special meeting Monday morning for a public hearing on the 2012-13 budget. Dr. Xuemei Yang, new dean of institutional effectiveness, and Pat Erickson, a faculty member, were introduced as guests at the meeting, held in Thomas Hall at the college. Chairman Arlen Leiker opened the hearing at 7:31 a.m. Hearing no comments, he closed the hearing a minute later. The budget was then approved as presented, with trustee Bill Shields making the motion and trustee Kenton Krehbiel seconding. For the next item, the board accepted the resignation of Dustin

Pfeifer as men's basketball coach. Treasurer Nick Wells made the motion and Vice Chair Cindy Black seconded. After a "brief internal search," Dr. Stephen Vacik, college president, recommended hiring assistant coach Rusty Grafel for the job at a salary meeting the terms of the faculty master agreement. Black made a motion to approve the contract for Grafel as men's basketball coach and Krehbiel seconded. Krehbiel made a motion to meet in a closed session for 10 minutes to discuss nonelected personnel and requested the presence of John Gatz, college attorney, and Vacik. No action was taken afterward.



County officials note election results

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms (above left) and Deputy Clerk Susan Guill recorded official election results from the 2012 primary election into the books during the canvass of votes Monday. Both were listed as winners in the records, Harms winning the Republican nomination for clerk against Cindi Kriss and for Ward 4 Republican committeewoman. Guill was nominated for Menlo Township treasurer and Republican committeewoman. At left, Harms and Commission Chairman Ken Christiansen counted election results received from townships. Christiansen did not run for another term.

CHRISTINA BERINGER/Colby Free Press

Romney says Obama just trying to 'hang onto power'

By Julie Pace
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican Mitt Romney dug in today on his charge that President Barack Obama's campaign is driven by "division and attack and hatred," criticism aimed at cutting into Obama's likeability and personal appeal with voters.

In some of his harshest words yet against the president, Romney said Obama was "running just to hang onto power, and I think he would do anything in his power" to remain in office. Romney's comments escalated an already acrimonious campaign fueled by negative and sometimes false advertisements, as well as personal insults from the candidates and their surrogates.

Obama's campaign said Romney's fresh assertions seemed "unhinged." Romney replied: "I think unhinged would have to characterize what we've seen from the president's campaign." The latest rhetorical scuffle erupted Tuesday after Vice President Joe Biden told a largely black audience in Danville, Va., that Republicans would seek to "un-chain Wall Street" and "put y'all back in

chains" by loosening Wall Street regulations. Biden later said he had meant to use the term "unshackled." But he did not apologize, and he mocked the Romney campaign for showing outrage. In his interview today on "CBS This Morning," Romney said: "I can't speak for anybody else, but I can say that I think the comments of the vice president were one more example of a divisive effort to keep from talking about the issues." Romney's onslaught comes as polls show Obama with a narrow lead over his Republican rival less than three months before the Nov. 6 election. On Saturday, Romney named Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan as his running mate, a pick aimed at

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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press
April Swartz placed stuffed dogs in the cages at Swartz Animal Hospital (above) to represent the real dogs up for adoption that could not make it from the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter in Goodland. She and her friends wore dog ears, noses and painted-on whiskers while working at their lemonade stand (right) Tuesday. All proceeds went to the shelter.



Colby girl raises money for animals

By Sam Dieter
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April Swartz and her friends normally have dogs up for adoption at their lemonade stand, brought over from the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter in Goodland. But this year's puppies were too small to leave the shelter, president Kathy Schermerhorn said. Instead, April and her friends had pictures of the dogs and put stuffed animals in cages to represent them. April is a real admirer of the shelter. "She gives away about one for every day all year," April said. The 10-year-old's mother, veterinarian Tammy Swartz, said that this estimate is close; she said the all-volunteer, no-kill shelter sends between 200 and 300 dogs and

cats to families or rescue homes each year. This year, April had the dogs' pictures posted in front of the windows of her mother's business, Swartz Animal Hospital, and some stuffed ones in the cages inside. April was running the lemonade stand with her friends for the fourth year on Tuesday. She said she got the idea for a lemonade stand after the shelter in Goodland sent its dogs to the hospital for veterinary care. All the money raised goes to the shelter. "April came up with it," said her mother. "She said, 'I want to raise money, I want to help the shelter.'" Despite the low prices — 25 cents for a cookie, brownie or cup

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