

# Food poisoning one present you don't want for Christmas

All I got for Christmas was food poisoning. We are bombarded with a variety of food options during our many holiday gatherings, with day-long food marathons where some foods may be set out prior to lunch and not returned to the refrigerator until late into the evening. Though this provides us with the opportunity to keep our stomachs continuously topped off it also provides the opportunity for bacteria to grow and cause food-borne illness.

Some people are at a higher risk of being affected by food-borne illness – individuals with weakened immune systems, including pregnant women, the elderly and children. These groups should be particularly mindful of potential food risks. As we are in the midst of the holiday season, I felt that this was a good opportunity to discuss food safety.

To ensure holiday food safety the Food and Drug Administration is providing several tips to reduce the risk of the most common food-borne illnesses.

**Clean.** Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, including knives, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next food. Wash produce. Because bacteria can grow well on the cut surface of fruit or vegetables, be careful not to contaminate these foods while slicing them up on the cutting board, and avoid leaving cut produce at room temperature for many hours.

**Separate.** Don't cross-contaminate one food with another. Avoid cross-contaminating foods by washing hands, utensils and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food. Put cooked meat on a clean platter, rather than



## Kasiah Rothchild

### • Healthy Happenings

back on one that held the raw meat.

**Cook** meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly. Using a thermometer to measure the internal temperature of meat is a good way to be sure that it is cooked sufficiently to kill bacteria. For example, ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F. Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm.

**Chill.** Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature, so refrigerate leftover foods if they are not going to be eaten within four hours. Large volumes of food will cool more quickly if they are divided into several shallow containers for refrigeration.

**Report.** Report suspected food-borne illnesses to your local health department. The local public health department is an important part of the food safety system. Often calls from concerned citizens are how outbreaks are first detected. If a public health official contacts you to find out more about an illness you had, your cooperation is important. In public health investigations, it can be as important to talk to healthy people as to ill people. Your cooperation may be needed even if you are not ill.

#### Holiday Beverage Safety

Traditional eggnog made with raw eggs presents the risk of salmonellosis to consumers. While cooking can destroy the disease-

causing bacteria, consumers can still become ill when the eggnog is left at room temperature for several hours before being consumed. Safe alternatives are pasteurized eggnog beverages sold in grocery dairy cases; these products should be kept refrigerated.

**Apple cider and other juices.** Apple cider is often served during the holiday season. Apple cider and most juices are pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Pasteurized juice can be found in the refrigerated or frozen sections of stores. Treated juice is shelf-stable and is normally found in the non-refrigerated juice section of stores. It's packaged in boxes, bottles or cans. Unpasteurized or untreated juice is normally found in the refrigerated sections of grocery stores, health-food stores, cider mills or farm markets. Such juices must have this on the label: "WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

If you can't tell whether a juice has been processed to destroy harmful bacteria, either don't use the product or boil it to kill any harmful bacteria.

Hopefully now you can navigate the holiday buffet lines, family gatherings and Christmas parties and make the right choices to avoid a holiday illness that could sideline you from the festivities. Have a merry and healthy Christmas.

*Kasiah Rothchild is administrator of the Thomas County Health Department. A native of Thomas County, she is a graduate of Fort Hays State University.*



Golden Plains varsity scholars bowl team members Andrew Luna, Macayla Easton, Kylie Jones, Leea Juenemann and Jacob Antholz waited for their next round of competition at the Colby Invitational on Dec. 3.

## Rexford scholars compete in Colby

By Shania Finlay

Golden Plains High School

Golden Plains High varsity and junior varsity scholars bowl teams traveled to Colby for an invitational meet.

Varsity team members were Jacob Antholz, Leea Juenemann, Kylie Jones, Macayla Easton and Andrew Luna. Junior varsity members included Koi and Kade Wessel, Kami Miller, Cole Ziegelmeyer and Lena Janke.

In the first round, the varsity team defeated Hays 60-30. They lost to Quinter, Thomas More

Prep-Marian of Hays, Oberlin, Goodland and Colby before defeating Oakley 70-50 in the final round Dec. 3.

"Most of the rounds were very close," Antholz said. "Our main problem is that we second guess ourselves and just don't answer. We need to work on having the confidence to answer the questions."

"We would encourage more students to participate to help widen our range of knowledge."

The junior varsity won four out of seven of its rounds. In the first round, they defeated Hays 50-40.

They then beat Quinter 50-20. In the third round, they lost 70-5 to Thomas More. Golden Plains made a comeback in round 4 against Goodland, 50-30. In the last two rounds, Golden Plains lost to Wheatland-Grinnell and Oakley.

With Thomas More, Golden Plains and Oberlin all with four wins, the placing had to go to tie-breaker rules. The Hays schools defeated both teams, so they got first place. Golden Plains lost to Thomas More but defeated Oberlin, so ended up in second place for the junior varsity meet.

## Deaths

### Eunice Pabst

Eunice Pabst, 89, Colby, died Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012, at the Prairie Senior Living Complex in Colby. Services are pending with Baal-mann Mortuary, 462-2331.

### Esther Wieland

Esther Wieland, 99, Colby, died Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012, at Colby Care Center. Services are pending with Baal-mann Mortuary, 462-2331.

## Meadow Lake Bridge Club

Meadow Lake bridge winners on Dec. 11 were: tied for first and second, Gladys Fischer and Bob Renner; third, Lyle Worthy; fourth, Sarah Jane Barrett; fifth, Larry Barrett; sixth, Gail Vacca;

seventh, Ken Ptacek. On Tuesday, the winners were: first, Sarah Jane Barrett; second, Margaret Denneker; third, Larry Barrett; fourth, Ken Ptacek; fifth, Gail Vacca.

## Christmas lights a reply

MARICOPA, Ariz. (AP) – An Arizona woman who couldn't compete with her neighbor's Christmas lights has put a creative spin on her response.

She put word "ditto" and an arrow in lights that points to her neighbor's home.

KNXV-TV reports (bit.ly/Uv8Qz9) that Kristina Green of Maricopa, Ariz., built the "ditto"

sign to put up in her own house and that her display is made of around 600 lights. Her neighbor's elaborate set-up has about 16,000 colorful lights.

Green says she knew she couldn't match her neighbor's decoration so she decided to do something else.

Green has created a Facebook page for her "ditto" sign.

## Corrections

The report for the Veteran's of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Nov. 14 meeting on Page 3 of the Dec. 3 Colby Free Press gave an e-mail address incorrectly. It is vfwaux6882@hotmail.com. This was an error in information given to the Free Press.

☆☆☆☆☆  
In a funeral announcement for Roberta Withers on Page 3 of the Monday, Dec. 17, Free Press, the time was incorrect. The service will be at 11 a.m., not 11 p.m. This was an editing error.

☆☆☆☆☆  
The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

## Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat (bushel)	\$8.00
Corn (bushel)	\$7.20
Milo (hundredweight)	\$12.41
Soybeans (bushel)	\$13.76

We want your local news: e-mail to colby.editor@nwkansas.com

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Verna Wiens

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The angel said to them "A Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord"

**In Loving Memory**

In honor of Theron Johnson, the Johnson Family is sponsoring a **LIVING NATIVITY** December 17-21, 2012

2626 Highway K25, Colby, Kansas

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Hot Cider and Fellowship will be provided.

A free-will offering may be made. All proceeds will benefit Genesis-Thomas County (local food bank)

While **Larry Oren** is in recovery from his stroke, please send letters and cards to: Spalding Rehab Hospital, 900 Potomac St., Room 205, Aurora, CO 80011

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