



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Colby students enjoy book fair

Twins Courtney (below left) and Caitlin Tinkham sat down to read at the book fair Tuesday in the Colby Middle School library, while Alexis Carney (right) looked over her little sister Calista's shoulder at the same table. In the grade school library, Pam Geishler (above left) got help checking books out from her son, Collin, and daughter, Reagan.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



## County OKs raises for two areas

By Christina Beringer

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Two department heads got permission from county commissioners Monday to give pay increases beyond the 2 percent cost-of-living raise which all county employees got beginning Jan. 1.

Emergency Medical Services Director Joe Hickert got approval to increase his total for staff wages by \$1 per hour and allowed to forego his cost of living increase so the money could be divided between two of his employees who had finished advanced training.

Hickert's proposal to reject the 2 percent increase was met with surprise, but was accepted.

"I love it here, guys," he said. "I believe I am already adequately compensated and will not accept an increase. This will save Thomas County \$1,500 of the \$2,080 requested.

"...My reason for the request: Don Morton advanced to the next certification level (advanced emergency medical technician) in August 2012.

"Candy Bryant drove between Colby, Garden City, Dodge City and Wichita through 2012 for her paramedic program.... She has successfully passed her boards and is now a nationally registered paramedic.

"The 2 percent increase, while very fair, will not compensate these two for their efforts or the benefits the citizens of our county will receive from their additional training and abilities."

Hickert said he will remain within his 2013 budget after giving the two raises. In addition to their cost-of-living increase, Morton will get 30 cents an hour for an annual salary of \$33,218. Bryant's rate will be increased 70 cents per hour, giving her \$37,190 per year. Hickert makes \$75,000 per year.

Sheriff Rod Taylor got permission to increase pay for some of his people, although commissioners noted that elected officials may give raises without approval if they stay within their budget. With hesitation and some confusion

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## Police chief sees odd rabbit

By Sam Dieter

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That was one weird-looking rabbit in Randy Jones' back yard last month.

"I first thought it had been mauled by something," said Jones, Colby chief of police.

The chief said he spotted the rabbit in his backyard on Jan. 5 and, after some checking, determined that it probably had rabbit papilloma virus. Jones has not seen it since, but took several pictures.

"It was moving all right and it was eating," he said, "but I noticed it had growths. I think it had

one on its head that was larger than its ears."

The rabbit had to tilt its head to the right to eat because of a growth on the right side of its head, Jones said. He looked up animal diseases and forwarded his pictures to area veterinarians and to the state Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism for advice.

Dr. Russell Bowers, a veterinarian at Colby Animal Clinic, agreed that the rabbit appeared to have papilloma virus, adding that humans do not have to worry about it.

"It's a papilloma virus and it's self-limiting pretty much in rabbits, so no big deal," Bowers said.

## Brewster scholars headed to state

By Michele Werth

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The Brewster High School scholars bowl team qualified to compete at the state level by capturing first place in the regional tournament held at Wilson High School last Thursday.

Coach Kathy Banister said this is the first time for Brewster to go to state.

Team members at regionals were seniors Will Allen, Ben Baird, Amber Barrie and Dan Brown and juniors Ashley Barrie and Justin Culwell. Other team members who competed during the season included senior Christian Kramer (German foreign exchange student), sophomore Alicia Barrie and freshman Rachel Friess.

Banister said two seniors have been on the team since they were freshmen.

During the season, the varsity team placed at several meets: at

Golden Plains the team took second, at Goodland third, at Triplains second and at home second. The junior varsity placed fourth at Wheatland-Grinnell and second at Triplains.

In its pool play at regionals, Brewster won over Natoma, 20-10; defeated Wilson 20-10; crushed Sylvan-Lucas 50-5; lost to Wheatland-Grinnell 40-30; and lost to Cheylin 40-30.

There was a three-way tie for second place in the round among Brewster, Cheylin and Sylvan-Lucas. Going by total points scored, Brewster and Cheylin both had 150 points and Sylvan-Lucas had 130. Cheylin had won the round with Brewster and therefore they took second and Brewster third. The top three teams of each pool advanced into the championship round: Wheatland-Grinnell, Cheylin and Brewster. Pool B advanced were Triplains, Northern Valley and Tipton.

In the championship round, Brewster went 5-0 with 230



From left, Amber Barrie, Ben Baird, Will Allen and Justin Culwell listened intently last Thursday during the regional scholars bowl tournament at Wilson High School. The Brewster team took first

place at regionals and headed for the state competition Saturday in Natoma.

ASHLEY BARRIE/Brewster High School

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