



Celebrities waiter crew entertains at big benefit

Wearing poodle skirts, Megan Reitcheck (above left) and Michelle Quint showed off some dance moves Thursday at the Celebrity Waiter dinner, sponsored by Farmers and Merchants Bank at the Colby American Legion Hall. Marilyn Bailey (left) had fun when Reitcheck and Quint brought out hula hoops to play with. Christina Jaeger (right) played Sister Mary Claire at the dinner, which raised \$4,603 for Heartland Christian School and Sacred Heart School, said Laura Krejci, principal at Sacred Heart. She said bank's staff ran the dinner, while the two school provided the waiters, including a group impersonating the cast of the show "Duck Dynasty" (below).

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Trustees wrestle over budget

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Colby Community College trustees discussed how to balance the college budget for next year at their monthly meeting Monday evening.

Alan Waites, vice president of business affairs, told trustees the budget for next year includes an expected shortfall of about \$420,000. Expenditures are expected to come to \$14,260,000, or \$380,000 more than last year, he said, but money is drying up. The college's share of state money, for instance, is expected to be down about \$80,000 this year.

"Cash flow is now and for a long time will be very tough and very, very critical," he added.

Several ideas were discussed for trimming the budget. Waites pointed out that salaries, wages and benefits account for about \$8 million of the total.

"We won't move the needle unless we do something with people," he said.

Dr. Stephen Vacik, college president, pointed out that enrollment is shrinking.

"It's darn impossible to keep up yearly numbers when the pool you're going to draw from is declining," he said, referring to the continual decline in area school enrollment.

Board President Arlen Leiker suggested finding ways to get more kids here, but Vacik pointed out that forces the college to spend more money on recruiting.

"The days of there being 800 students in Colby, 400 on campus, those days are gone," he said.

Dean to retire

The Colby Community College trustees accepted a resignation from the college's longtime physical plant chief at a special meeting Monday.

Officials said Dean of External Affairs Barry Kaaz plans to retire as of Aug. 31. Kaaz, who has worked at the college about 13 years, is in charge of the physical plant, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer. He directed several major projects, including installation of a windmill on campus and other energy-saving moves, and teaches a wind-energy class.

The trustees accepted the resignation after spending 15 minutes in closed session to discuss nonelected personnel. They also voted to "non-renew" an instructor's contract after the session.

"They're not coming back."

Waites suggested raising the college's property-tax levy. Based on preliminary evaluations, he said, the assessed valuation in the county will be up about \$7.6 million next year. An increase of three mills in the tax levy should provide the college with about \$610,000.

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Saturday fire here destroys garage, cars

A fire broke out in Steve and Jari Skiles's garage at 685 W. Seventh early Saturday morning, destroying the structure, along with two cars inside.

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore said the call came in at 2:09 a.m., and fire fighters wrapped up by 4:34 a.m. He said Tuesday the fire appeared to have started in one of the cars, but was not sure what ignited it.

The couple's son, Sean, was vis-

iting a friend nearby and noticed the fire about 2 a.m. while his parents were asleep in the house.

"I walked out the back door, smelled smoke and saw smoke coming out the garage door," he said.

Sean Skiles added that he didn't know the cause of the fire either. He said his 1994 Ford Crown Victoria and his father's 1990 Dodge Dynasty were destroyed.

National historic register lists Oakley High stadium

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The Oakley High School stadium has been added to the National Register of Historic Places after being nominated with the help of some students.

The stadium was one of 14 sites nominated for the register Feb. 9 by the Kansas Historical Society, which added the building to the state register. Kyndal Maurath, Jerrik Keller and Levi Hefner, then students at Oakley High, spent about a year doing

the research on the stadium for the nomination.

Sarah Martin, national register coordinator for the society, said the building was constructed in 1938 and '39. It was financed through the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, using local unskilled workers and local materials such as limestone. The stadium was one of many structures built during the era of the "New Deal," when the "WPA" was created to spend money on public works projects.

Maurath, now a senior, was a junior when she worked on the project. Keller goes to Colorado State University and Hefner goes to Kansas State; both were se-

niors. Valerie Brown-Kuchera, a gifted facilitator for the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, helped them prepare the nomination, and said after it was added to the register that they spent a lot of time on interviews.

One detail the students never worked out, though, was what happened to a bell which was later removed from the stadium.

"When they changed the bell tower over to the press box," she said, "the bell disappeared."

The research showed that the first football game was played at the stadium Oct. 6, 1939, between the Oakley Plainsmen and the Colby Eagles. Colby won.



Completed in 1939, the Oakley High School stadium has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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