

KEVIN BOTTRELL/The Goodland Star-News

Brewster High School graduates Daymond Hanley (left above) and Shane Rice walked out of the school gym at the end of commencement Saturday. Jessica House gave Amber Barrie a hug (below) after handing her a diploma. Barrie and Courtney Doxon (below right) walked toward the front of the gym at the beginning of the ceremony.

Brewster graduates 12

By Kevin Bottrell

Twelve students received diplomas from Brewster High School at commencement ceremonies Saturday. Class President Michael Schmidt welcomed everyone to the ceremony, held in the Brewster school gym, then Vice President Benjamin Baird introduced the speaker, kindergarten teacher Chris Hoyt.

Hoyt said it was a pleasure to be asked to speak on the class' final day in school, since she, as a kindergarten teacher, had been there for many of the graduates' first day and had known them throughout their time in Brewster. 'These students have gone through a lot,' she said, 'but in spite of adversities, here you are.' Hoyt said she always started off each

day by putting a different quote up in her classroom, and one of her favorites was 'I could get a lot more done if I didn't have Facebook,' by Brewster student Nathan Jorgensen. She offered some words of wisdom to the graduates. 'You were made on purpose, for a purpose,' she said. 'Some of you may already

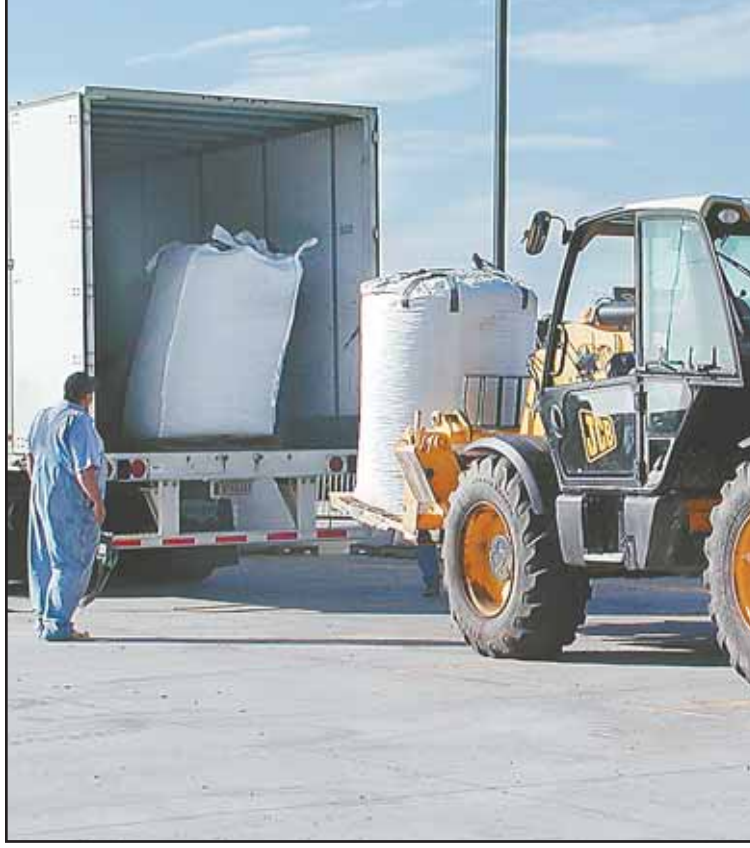
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Get pork sandwich for giving blood in May

The American Red Cross will hold a community blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday and 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday at the Colby Community Building. Coordinator Bev Vaughn said the agency was about six donors short of its goal during the March drive, likely because some donors did not get their reminder cards until after the drive had taken place. During summer months, she said, donations tend to decline when schools are out and regular donors are on vacation. The goal for the May drive is to collect at least 110 pints of blood, potentially saving up to 330 lives, she said. The Red Cross may have to borrow from surrounding areas or hold additional drives if it doesn't meet its goals, said Vaughn. The Kansas Pork Association is donating pulled pork for donors at the Colby drive, Vaughn said, along with pig-shaped stress balls for everyone who donates. This is part of the association's 2013 'Be

Inspired to Make a Difference community program, providing support to organizations that help build stronger communities. 'I don't think we can do enough to thank these great people who donate their blood to help our community have a safe and reliable blood supply,' said Jason Hall, a pork farmer from Elkhart who plans to be on hand to thank donors. 'They are real heroes because they help save so many lives. We're happy to provide a healthy food for these donors, who are a shining example for all of us.' Donors can also enter for a chance to win one of five \$1,000 American Express gift cards to be given away in this Red Cross region and one of two \$25 gift cards to Dillons that will be given away in Colby. To schedule an appointment, call Vaughn at 462-3861 or 443-1467 or e-mail her at getmoredirt@att.net. Walk-ins are always welcome.



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

One-ton bags of rubber mulch were unloaded Friday morning to be spread at the newly built playground next to the Colby Aquatic Park. Students from Heartland Christian School and their families plan to spread the mulch this Thursday as a fund raiser.

Area soldier drowns in combat

By Steve Haynes
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An Army reservist who had lived in Oakley, and whose parents still live in this area, died Friday in Kandahar, Afghanistan, after apparently drowning while crossing a body of water during combat operations, the Defense Department said. Sgt. 1st Class Trenton L. Rhea, 33, was a member of the 603rd Military Police Company, an Army Reserve unit based in Belton, Mo., south of Kansas City in Cass County. Jeff Wingo, a public affairs officer at Fort Leavenworth, said Sergeant Rhea leaves his wife, Leah

Reid Rhea, and three daughters, Autumn, 12; Joanna, 5; and Abigail, 3. The family lives in Kansas City, Mo., north of the Missouri River and attends the First Baptist Church in nearby Platte City. The Army said his father, Marshall Rhea, is a farmer near Oakley, and his mother, Rebecca Rhea, lives in Colby. 'He was a very, very awesome person who cared a lot about people,' his mother said today. 'He had a very strong faith and was very honored to serve his country.' 'We are so proud of him, and we will miss him very much, but I know he is in a better place now.' She said Trent attended grade

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Hail, little rain come from storm

Thunderstorms that blew across western Kansas this weekend dropped some hail around Selden in Sheridan County, but little rain. The biggest storms near Colby went through Saturday night. Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist for the Goodland office of the National Weather Service, said some hail was reported east of town. 'Seemed like there were only a few big storms that produced,' he added. The office got reports of one-inch and 1 1/4-inch hail near Gem and Selden and golf-ball sized hail near Jennings, Floyd said. A meteorologist found one-inch hail in a ditch near the Nine Mile junction

east of Colby that afternoon. Rain was scarce though, Floyd said. An observer near Colby did not report any rain all weekend. Other reported .53 of an inch in Oberlin, .36 in Dresden, .3 in Atwood and a trace in Oakley. 'There was one good storm in Gove County (on Sunday),' Floyd said. That day, .4 of an inch of rain was reported in Quinter, .2 in Grainfield and .57 about four miles west of Brewster. Workers at Frontier Ag in Rexford said they had heard of .15 of an inch of rain in the area, but no damage to crops. High-Plains Co-op in Selden reported 1.10 inches there.

Talks on taxes stall

TOPEKA (AP) - Negotiations are at a standstill between the Kansas House and Senate over the state's sales tax rate and proposals to cut individual income taxes. Three senators and three House members appointed to reconcile the differences between the chambers on tax issues had no meetings scheduled today. Republican Gov. Sam Brownback and GOP leaders in the Republican-dominated Legislature

want to follow up on individual income tax cuts enacted this year with more cuts. But the two chambers disagree over Brownback's proposal to stabilize the budget by keeping the sales tax at 6.3 percent, rather than letting it drop to 5.7 percent in July, as scheduled by state law. The Senate approved Brownback's sales-tax plan, but House GOP leaders have proposed dropping the rate to 6 percent.

Heartland students work on playground

Students at Heartland Christian School plan to put the mulch in for a new playground near the Colby Aquatic Park on Thursday, May 23 to earn money for their school. Most of the school's students will be at the new playground with their parents, Heartland President Renee Schmeiser said. They will be laying down black felt and rubber mulch for the playground to raise money for the school. The effort will take the place of the '100 Holes for Heartland' golf event the school usually does, Schmeiser said. 'Instead of golfing, we're just doing a community service project,' she said. The kids and their families plan to show up at 9 a.m.. They school is sending out letters asking people to sponsor a family for any amount they choose. Schmeiser said the school plans to provide tools such as shovels and wheelbarrows. Brent Wiede-

man, president of Farmers and Merchants Bank, said Woofter Construction and the city will provide big equipment, such as a crane to lift the 2,000-pound sacks of mulch. The playground will be done after the kids clean the equipment and add warning stickers, he said. The playground was started in November with money and labor donated by the bank, Woofter and the city and county. Most of the work was finished in about a week, Wiedeman said; other projects were done over the winter. Wiedeman said Jenny Niblock, a parent at Heartland, approached him several weeks ago about the mulching project. To sponsor a family, talk to Deena Bandy or Kim Schriener at 460-6419.

