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Father's talents pay off



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

It was truly a 'Star Spangled' affair on Saturday night with more than 400 people attending the annual Sacred Heart Church auction at the Colby Community Building. Preliminary figures indicate that the auction brought in about \$40,000 before expenses, said Jennifer Van Eaton, parish secretary. "The numbers of people attending were down slightly," she said today, "but the total amount of money received was higher than last year." Among the many items for sale was a two-story dollhouse made by Father Galen Long, which ended up going for \$3,000. Pictured is Ceanne Rinehart (foreground) and Diann Gerstner looking at the intricate details to include a real brick fireplace in the living room and tiny shingles on the roof.

November 15 is important date for county's foundation

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Everyone in Thomas County is being asked to step forward and pledge monetary support to an organization with the potential for limitless benefits — but there is a deadline — and it's fast approaching.

The Thomas County Community Foundation, which was formed in February of 2001, got its start when the Kansas Health Foundation, a statewide philanthropic organization, made a grant offering.

The original grant was for Thomas Countians, through their local foundation, to raise \$300,000 by Dec. 31, 2001.

In turn, the Kansas Health Foundation would match that amount and pay their portion in \$100,000 increments over the next three years.

There's been a new twist in the Kansas Health Foundation grant, however, said Becky Donelan, executive director of the local foundation.

"If we can raise \$300,000 by Thursday, Nov. 15, 2001," she said today, "the Kansas Health Foundation will give the entire \$300,000 grant match this year, which would give us the running start we need."

Once the local foundation has its \$600,000 in operating money, which would sustain the organization for many years to come, Donelan said, the board of directors would then look at setting up funds to reflect donor direction and evaluating community needs.

As an added plus, the Kansas Health Foundation has already given the local foundation \$100,000 that has been endowed specifically for leadership and youth activities.

To date, the community foundation has raised over \$60,000 toward the \$300,000 needed for the matching grant.

Although, Donelan added that if we don't meet the match by Nov. 15, we still have the Dec. 31 option for receiving the incremental payments from the Kansas Health Foundation.

Donelan said that raising the needed operating funds for the matching grant

Foundation offers many benefits

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

There are about 1,000 community foundations nationwide, said Becky Donelan, executive director of the Thomas County Community Foundation. In Kansas, 17 communities are in varying stages of the grant offering by the Kansas Health Foundation.

"The idea behind community foundations is in providing a way to operate and collect endowed funds for the long-term benefit of defined geographic areas," she said. In helping to explain how a foundation can work, DeWayne Bryan, who has been involved with a community foundation in Pratt for the past six years, said the benefits are only limited by the imagination of the people the foundation serves. On the economic development side, Bryan said

a foundation is like getting a new business in town. "For \$300,000, your community will have something that will live on forever — it's a small investment for a business that will last.."

In addition, he said, as the foundation grows, so will the staff, which is again good for small towns.

Another plus to the foundation concept, he said, is that it can include smaller charitable organizations like sororities, clubs and other non-profit groups.

"The community foundation can pool money better than having all these little pots laying out there thus providing a better return for everybody," he said. "Some not-for-profit groups don't have funding sources and the foundation can do that too."

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might at first glance appear to be an aggressive and overwhelming undertaking.

Yet putting \$300,000 into perspective could translate into 300 people committing to \$333 per year, or 600 people giving \$500 for one year, she said.

Another option the grant allows is pledges over a three-year period. An example would be to pledge \$1,000 and pay about \$28 monthly, Donelan said.

"Our board of directors," Donelan said, "envision this foundation as inclusive. It's for the future of the whole county and it will take everyone to make it happen."

Cindy Black, chair of the board, said last week that with about 8,500 people in the county there's enough room for everyone to take ownership in this foundation.

"Imagine being able to sit back and smile knowing that you were a part of this effort," she said, "that you were a

founder in something that will last for generations to come."

During the next several days and weeks, foundation board members will be visiting businesses and individuals in the community to further the charitable goals of the organization by asking for their support.

Additionally, the foundation members plan to update everyone on how the fund-raising effort is going by displaying a graph that will be visible on Fourth and Franklin.

"Our only existence is to improve the quality of life in Thomas County and we need your help," Donelan said.

Board members include Cindy Black, chair; Cathy Harrison, treasurer; Rick Dickman, vice-chair; along with Junelle Hills, Jessica Vaughn, Jennifer Woofter and Carl Gilbert.

For information or questions, call (785) 465-9152 or send pledges or contributions to the Thomas County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 174 Colby, Kan., 67701.

Busy four days for county's Silver Haired Legislature representative

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Services for the elderly, public education and law enforcement will be expanded if bills recommended to the Kansas Legislature by the Silver Haired Legislature are adopted, said Rosalie Seemann of Levant who served as Thomas County's representative. The Silver Haired Legislature met Oct. 9-12 in Topeka.

The organization is a unicameral legislature composed of 125 representatives. All are over 60 and are elected from their county of residence. Wyandotte, Johnson, Shawnee and

Sedgwick counties have five additional delegates. The legislature provides an educational experience in the political process and provides an opportunity to identify priority concerns of Kansas senior citizens. The Silver Haired Legislature develops bills and resolutions which are presented to the state legislature and the governor as recommendations for state policy. Seemann said representatives gathered on the Tuesday, Oct. 9 in separate sessions for training and discussions on proposed bills.

The Legislative session started Wednesday, Oct. 10, with Wayne Comer of Moscow as

president, Chris Sigsbee-Jost of Garden City Speaker of the House, Marge Zecaro Vaughn of Wichita speaker pro-tem and Jim Feister of Syracuse as floor leader. Guest speakers were Connie Hubbel, Secretary on Aging, and Gov. Graves.

After the swearing in of the new legislators and the first reading of 10 bills and seven resolutions, the legislators recessed to their respective committee assignments to discuss the measures.

Seemann served on the Judicial Committee, where bills concerned the tobacco money and

appraisal caps.

Each committee had persons there to explain, protest or support their bills. Joyce Cussimanio, Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services, was in attendance to protest action that would remove any tobacco money from current children's programs.

The legislators then returned to session to vote on the bills that had been considered in committees.

"We had a speaker explain the merger of Kansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield and a Blue Cross/Blue Shield Company in Indiana,"

Seemann said. "The merger is not a done deal until it goes through all of them — the Kansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield policy holders have to vote in favor of the merger along with the approval of the Insurance Commissioner (Kathleen Sebelius) and the Kansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield board."

"When we returned to the Capitol on Thursday, Oct. 11 we were down to five bills and seven resolutions. Each bill and resolution was debated just as the Kansas Legislators do; all

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Briefly

Weather: Cool down coming

Enjoy today and Tuesday because come Wednesday it will turn sharply cooler, although no moisture is anticipated, according to the National Weather Service forecast issued this morning for the Colby area. Tonight, clear, lows in the upper 30s and north winds 5-10 mph, turning to the southwest. Tuesday, sunny, continued warm, breezy, with highs in the middle 70s and southwest winds up to 20 mph. Tuesday night, cloudy, breezy, lows in the 30s. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, partly cloudy throughout the period, lows in the middle 20s and highs in the lower to middle 50s, perhaps reaching 60 on Friday. Colby's weekend temperatures: highs, 69 Friday, 69 Saturday and 66 Sunday; lows 35 Saturday, 35 Sunday and 39 this morning. No additional precipitation to report, leaving the month's total at 0.45 inches. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 56 degrees. The records for Oct. 22: 87 in 1899 and 12 in 1905. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

Special council meeting Tuesday

There will be a special meeting of the Colby City Council Tuesday at 7:45 a.m. to discuss plat changes for White Outlet additions one and two for Tuffy Taylor in the council chamber at City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

Field check meeting Wednesday

There will be field check meeting concerning the viaduct between officials from the City of Colby and the Kansas Department of Transportation at 8 a.m., Wednesday, in the council chamber at City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

Water tower cleaning postponed

Colby Public Works Director Gerry Bieker announced

today that the cleaning of the Colby water tower, scheduled for the next two weeks, has been postponed due to scheduling conflicts with the contractor. Bieker said the work will be rescheduled in the spring.

College board to meet

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. today in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building. They will discuss a battery back-up for the phone system — a decision that was postponed at the last meeting; a bus lease; capital outlay items; payment of claims; and any other item any members wishes to discuss. The board is expected to go into executive session to discuss negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

Genesis gears up for holiday project

Genesis-Thomas County, which is the area food bank, is again planning to help families during the holiday season, said Marcy Wasson, chairperson of the Christmas basket project. Families in need and who are interested in receiving food and services during this special time are asked to pick up forms at the Genesis-Thomas County office, 350 S. Range, Colby, or call, (785) 462-7930 for information or questions. All applications must be returned to the office by Friday, Nov. 2.

Fort Hays reps here Tuesday

Fort Hays State University admission counselors and faculty will visit Colby Community College from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesday. The purpose of the visit, officials said, will be to offer information on degree programs, residential life, campus organizations, activities and more. Luci Williams, degree analyst with the university's registrar's office, will be on hand to assess students' transcripts and discuss transferability of college courses.

Scouting for food



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby Girl Scouts, along with youth group volunteers from Sacred Heart and the Colby United Methodist Church, scurried around town for more than two hours on Sunday collecting food for the Thomas County Genesis food bank. After the food was picked up, it was taken to the Thomas County Office Complex and sorted. Rosalie Seemann, president of Genesis, said she was very pleased with the response. Pictured are Krisstal Carlson (background) and Kessa Wright, Girl Scout Troop 167, unloading canned goods.

