



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Excitement grows Somebody is going to pocket \$2,500

By TOM (TD) DREILING

Free Press Publisher

The third annual Colby *Christmas on Us!* retail promotion is winding down and by sundown Saturday somebody will be \$2,500 richer. Also, eight Colby area people have been declared \$50 instant winners and the hunt is on for the final two.

Some ads in the *Christmas on Us!* section (pages 9-10-11 today) will carry numbers and if you have a coupon that matches a printed number, simply bring it to your Colby Free Press for verification and pick up your \$50 gift certificate. In all, 10 instant winners will have been named during the promotion.

The 8 winners so far of instant cash are Cindy Cersovsky, Terry Rasmussen, Dan Fetzer, Jack Johnson, Lyman Goetsch, Vida Toburen, Jay Black and Diane Williams.

The last day to pick up coupons from businesses participating in the *Christmas on Us!* promotion is the close of business on Thursday of this week. Coupons are available per rules on page 9.

As of Friday, 23, 689 tickets have been given to shoppers. And if each ticket represents a \$10 purchase, the promotion has kept in excess of \$230,000 worth of Christmas business in the Colby community this holiday season. It would be expected that some businesses might have given tickets for less than a \$10 purchase, thus that figure could be less. And because, per state law, no purchase is necessary to



participate — as clearly established in the rules on page 9 — there may be other coupons that do not represent a purchase. But the promotion does remain a barometer of the impact it has on the retail community.

The drawing for the \$2,500 grand prize and the \$500 second prize will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday in the comfort of the gymnasium of the Colby Community Building. Ample seating is assured, unlike past drawings where standing was the order of the day.

Merchants involved in this year's promotion are: Colby Implement, Colby Ag Center, Beringer Hardware, First National Bank, Stephens Construction Inc., Amy Fashions and Anx, Someplace Special, Tri-Central Office Supply Inc., Colby Photo, Golden Hardware, Dillons, Bankwest, Colby Glass Company, City Limits, Great Western Tire, Tubbs & Sons Ford, Office Works & Home Furnishings, Hot Topics/Oo-Oz Spas/Computer Solutions, Dougherty Implement Co. Inc., The Sports Shoppe, Colby True Value, Northwest Kansas Decorating Center, CK Lumber & Supply Co., Colby Bowl & Fun Center, Stan's Automotive, Sears, T.O. Haas Tire, and your Colby Free Press.

## Report card shows improvement here

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The grades have been received statewide in the fourth annual Kansas Children's Report Card and Thomas County's have improved, said Janet Worthy, with the Regional Prevention Center in Colby.

Last year's grade was a B- in Thomas County and this year it's an A-, she said. As part of the celebration, a program is planned on Monday, Dec. 17, from 3 to 4:30 p.m., sponsored by the Community Awareness Team, Kansas Action for Children and the Regional Prevention Center.

"This program will feature youth and adults who are active in our community and will also serve as a kickoff for the 2001 Kansas Children's Report Card," she said.

Another reason for this meeting is that the county needs to benchmark where it stands in ensuring that children become healthy and contributing adults, Worthy said. "Everyone has a role in making a difference for children," she said.

The report card is useful in that it provides a regular and consistent measure of how the state and its children are progressing in five categories. Those are: safety and security, health, education, teen years and child care.

"Kansas received a C+ on its 2001 report card," said Gary Brunk, executive director of the state's Action for Children. The overall grade reflects a slight decline in the health status for children."

Scheduled guests at the local event include Mayor Warren Hixson welcoming everyone to the event; Worthy

who will introduce the report card and the awareness team's involvement; and Sue Evans, director of the Prevention Center, talking more about the report card, prevention center, and the awareness team's partnership with the state's initiative.

In addition, there will be presentations by Carol Wilson on the importance of youth involvement and teen birth rate; Travis Siebert on youth involvement statewide; Randy Nordstrom talking about the need for all people to work together and for business people to view community work as part of the equation for a successful business; Taylor Miller, representing Colby High School's *Supporting Our Students* group and what that means; and Jeanne Thyfault on child care issues in the county and Smart Start's impact. Also, Becky Shuman will look at activities that help students make healthy decisions; Reed Hartford on the importance of volunteering and the impact of Big Brothers and Big Sisters; Kali Strickler and Lacy Struckmeyer on what is gained when youth become involved in the community; Kathy Ryan on health issues; Carla Sloan will outline the Youth Summit goals and working with *Youth On Board*; and Becky Donelan will discuss the impact on children via the Thomas County Community Foundation. Colby Police Chief Randy Jones will highlight areas of safety and security, along with teen violent death in the report card; Colby Superintendent Kirk Nielsen and Dr. Roger Baskerville of Rexford will talk about education.

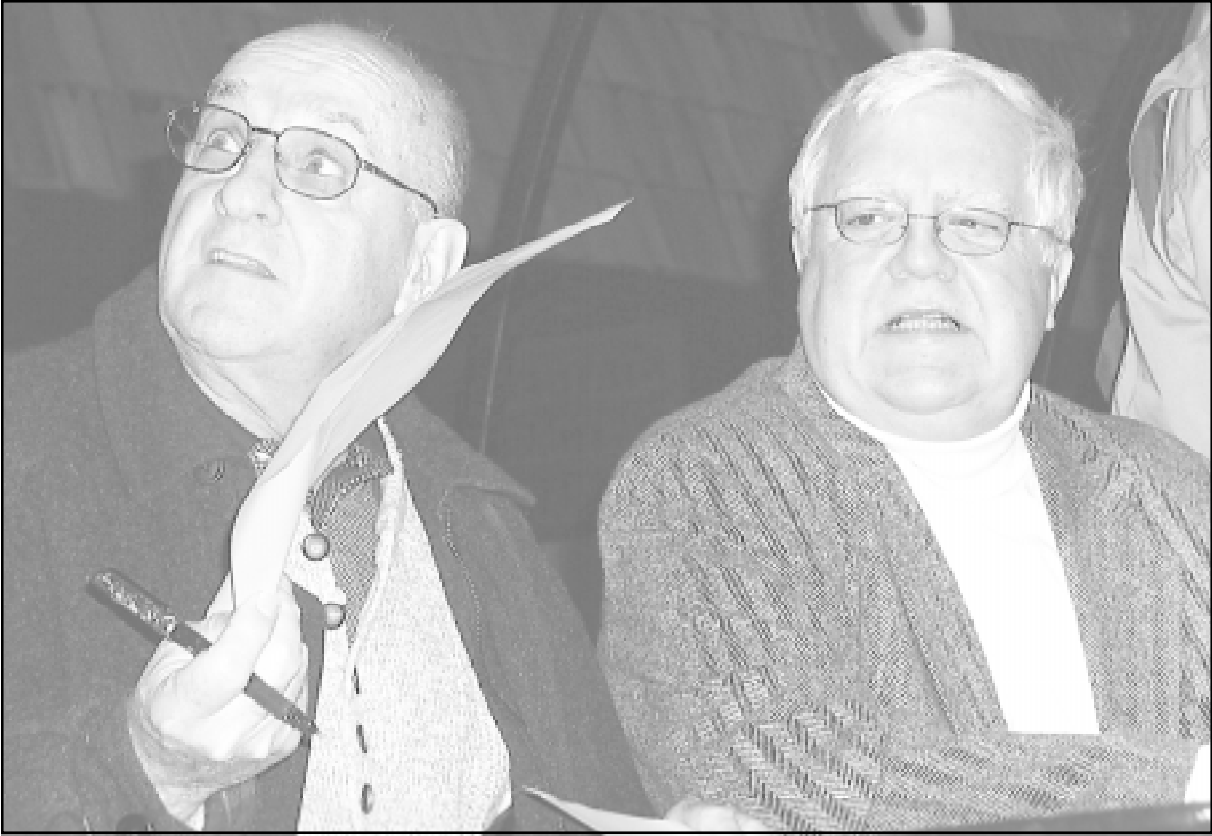
For questions, call Worthy or Evans at 462-8152.

## Santa arrives in class



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby's Christmas parade was well attended with more than 30 individuals, businesses and organizations participating, said Jon Eicher, chairperson. **ABOVE:** Kay Weston chauffeured Santa Claus in a 1948 Jeep owned by her and husband, Dick Weston. **AT RIGHT:** Colby Free Press Publisher Tom Dreiling (left) and Mayor Warren Hixson, this year's parade judges contemplated winners. The results of their findings will appear in a photo page on Tuesday highlighting many of the entries. Rich Epp, not pictured, was the announcer, and other parade committee members were Pat and Deanna Mallory, Greg Schafer and Leilani Thomas.



## Bin Laden hunt now main focus of conflict

TORABORA, Afghanistan (AP) — With the hunt for Osama bin Laden now the main focus of the Afghan conflict, U.S. Marines moved closer to Kandahar on Monday to search for al-Qaida fighters. In the east, tribal fighters launched a three-pronged assault on pro-bin Laden warriors defending a mountain hide-out.

U.S. and Afghan officials regard both areas as likely bin Laden hiding places.

Marines also secured the abandoned grounds of the U.S. Embassy in the heart of Kabul — the first time American troops have been seen in the capital since the Taliban fled last month.

In the south, a column of Marines with heavy weaponry and helicopters left their Camp Rhino in the desert southwest of Kandahar. They moved north to what a spokesman said are "key pieces of terrain" near the city, now under tribal control.

Kandahar, Afghanistan's second-largest city, had been the Taliban's last stronghold before a chaotic surrender

Friday, when hundreds of pro-bin Laden fighters fled. The Marines have been trying to choke off their escape routes.

The Marines were blocking "roads and avenues of exit to capture al-Qaida and enemy forces," said spokesman Capt. Stewart Upton. "If the Taliban hold their weapons, they will die." He said the Marines would not enter Kandahar.

Another spokesman, Capt. David Romley, said Marines were being wary of unmarked minefields in the sandy and rocky landscape. "The closer you get to Kandahar the more dangerous it gets," he said.

Just after dawn in the east, U.S. airstrikes hit Tora Bora, a vast network of caverns and tunnels carved deep into the White Mountains.

After the bombardment, fighters from bin Laden's al-Qaida organization surfaced from their caves and fired mortars at tribal forces trying to move their aging Soviet-built T-55 tanks forward.

Hours later, small squads of tribal fighters launched an attack and advanced along mountain trails under the cover of tank fire.

Hafta Gul, a senior officer in the Eastern Shura's militia, said tribal forces were "attacking from three sides," while U.S. bombing paused to avoid hitting the fighters.

For days, more than 1,000 al-Qaida fighters have been defending two valleys and adjacent ridges with 82mm mortars and heavy machine guns.

Gul said Monday's objective was to capture the Milawa valley and a ridge overlooking the Tora Bora valley — areas riddled with caves where the mainly Arab al-Qaida fighters shelter from bombs dropped by high-flying B-52s and other U.S. warplanes.

Meanwhile, Pakistani forces were deployed along the border near Tora Bora on Monday to stop al-Qaida forces from entering the country. Helicopters deployed personnel on mountain ridges to monitor the movement of the Islamic militants, witnesses said.

In Kabul, a Marine contingent swept the grounds of the U.S. Embassy while a State Department team went to work inside, in the first steps toward eventually re-establishing an American diplomatic presence in Afghanistan.

The United States closed the embassy in 1989, citing security concerns after the occupying Soviets left Afghanistan and feuding Afghan factions took over the capital.

Citing intelligence reports, U.S. officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, and some Afghan commanders think bin Laden may be hiding somewhere near Tora Bora.

However, other Afghan officials say he has probably fled to mountains near Kandahar. Another fugitive, Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar is also thought to be on the run in the south.

On Sunday, Cheney said a videotape of bin Laden obtained by U.S. officials in Afghanistan makes clear that the al-Qaida leader was behind the terrorist attacks in the United States.

## Briefly

### Weather: More like December

It'll seem more like December around here the rest of the week, according to the National Weather Service forecast issued at mid-morning today. Tonight, clear, lows in the middle 20s and winds out of the south 15-20 mph. Hold onto your hats Tuesday, because the winds will be blowing out of the southwest 20-30 mph with gusts up to 40, under sunny skies and highs in the lower 50s. Tuesday night, cloudy, lows in the upper teens. Wednesday, cloudy, highs in the lower 30s. Wednesday night and Thursday, partly cloudy, lows in the middle teens and highs around 40. Friday and Saturday, expect lows in the teens and highs in the

30s. Colby's high Sunday was 60 and the overnight low this morning was 17. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 36 degrees. Still no precipitation 10 days into the month. Colby's records for Dec. 10: 67 in 1957 and -17 in 1972. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Special concert scheduled

Tom Laskey, a contemporary Christian singer/songwriter will present a special Christmas concert at 7 p.m. on Wednesday at Trinity Lutheran Church in Colby. There is

no charge for admission. A free-will offering will be gathered. Laskey is from Divide, Colo., and has released a solo, and three recording projects.

### Genesis soliciting assistance

The Genesis Thomas County Food Bank board will be working to get ready for baskets on Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 4 p.m. at the Jaycee building. On Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. they will fill baskets and will need help from any interested person. Baskets will be available on Dec. 15.

### 'All you can eat' event set

The Gem Lions Club is sponsoring 'all you can eat' sau-

sage and eggs, and pie from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. on Wednesday at the Gem Community Building. A free will donation will be accepted.

Net proceeds will go to community betterment, sight conservation and education. The club also recycles used eyeglasses and hearing aids. Everyone is welcome.

### Recycling center takes phone books

The Thomas County Recycling Center is taking old telephone books at its collection site, 720 E. College Dr. in Colby. Those wanting to drop off the books should use the magazine bins, coordinators said.

