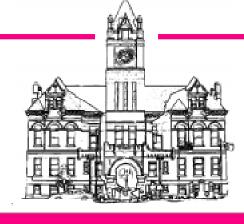
# Thursday

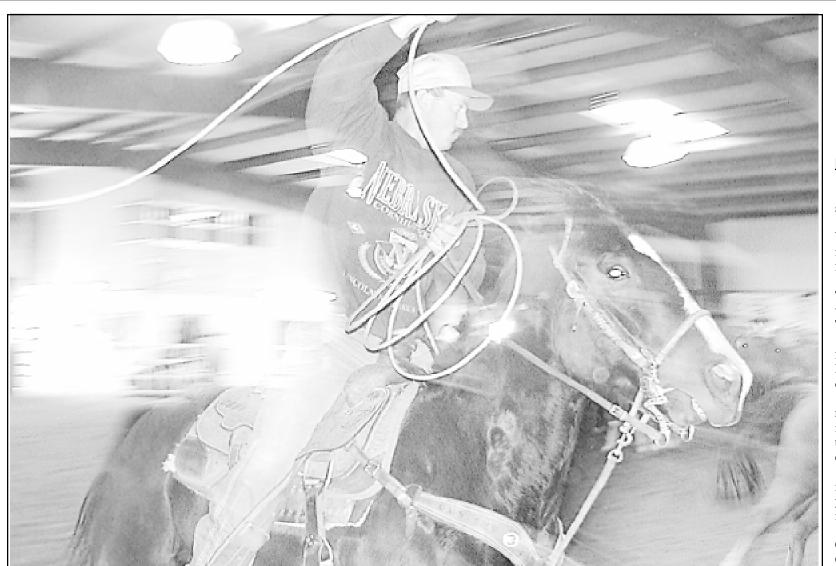
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CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Alan Jones of Gem got ready to rope a steer on Wednesday at the professional roper, was on hand to offer tips and his expertise to more

# **Secret of sorts** finally roped in

### **By PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor Until now, it's been somewhat of a secret.

But for the past four years, two Winona men have been bringing professional ropers to the area each spring for a two-day clinic.

The most recent event was held Tuesday and Wednesday in Oakley with Rickey Green of Stephenville, Tex., teaching a variety of roping skills.

George Collins and J.C. McHatton formed the Western Kansas Team Ropers to help others hone their skills or to learn the right way to rope.

"There's a lot of people who enjoy roping either as a way to relax or to roping," he said, "we had maybe 50 improve their ability in more competitive events later on," Collins said today.

"There are no other clinics like this in our area," he said, "and over the years the school has continued to grow in numbers."

More than 20 people from Oakley, Colby, Winona, Brewster, Levant and Gem turned out for the two-day clinic with the furthest students from northwest Nebraska and eastern Kansas.

There were participants as young as 10 years old and the oldest roper was in his mid-60s, he said.

Green told ropers that the way a person approaches cattle can make or break the run.

He offered tips on a roper's swing, heading out of the box, balance and focus

Although a champion, Green said he decided a few years ago to shift his emphasis from the hectic rodeo schedule to more on teaching others the art of roping.

In addition to the annual school, Collins said that he and McHatton also have jackpot roping events during the summer through the team roping organization.

'When we first started the jackpot to 60 teams.

Now we have more than 300 participating-it's becoming popular."

As for the recent school, Collins said he and McHatton were grateful for the good turnout.

"We had a lots of fun and we appreciate our local people supporting this event, because without them, we couldn't do it," Collins said.

For information on roping clinics or the summer roping contest, Collins said to call him at (785) 846-7725 or McHatton at (785) 846-7444.

# Dick Farmer arena in Oakley during a special clinic sponsored by than 20 people from around the area, Nebraska and Oklahoma, who Western Kansas Team Ropers. Rickey Green, Stephenville, Tex., a attened the two-day event.

# House struggles to eliminate \$700 million budget shortfall

#### **By JOHN HANNA**

Associated Press Writer TOPEKA (AP) — Beset by members' doubts about deep spending cuts and besieged by protesters, the House struggled Wednesday to write a plan for eliminating a projected \$700 million budget shortfall.

In a series of votes, members reservices spending.

Members debated budget issues for

But the big issue is the budget for fiscal 2003, which starts July 1.

The debate centers on a plan by the House Appropriations Committee to balance expected revenues and required spending over the next 15 months without increasing taxes.

But that plan required deep spendstored money to the proposed budget ing cuts in education and social serfor the next fiscal year to lessen the vices, including a \$303 per pupil repotential cuts in education and social duction in aid to public schools that

that avoids tax increases and some cuts in education and social services. It would cover the shortfall partly by dipping into cash reserves and utilizing extra federal funds.

They approved four parts of the conservatives' proposal to restore \$13 million to the higher education system and another \$18.1 million for social services

"What it appears that comes out of House members deemed unpalatable. this is that there isn't anybody who's On a voice vote Tuesday, they restored willing to cut their way out of this situfour hours before adjourning Tuesday \$175 million that the plan would cut, ation," said State Budget Director from treasury reserves was approved into the next fiscal year's budget. The reversing itself on tax issues later. evening and resumed their work to keep aid per pupil at the current Duane Goossen, who watched the debate inside the House chamber. "There

abled Kansans and activists to the Statehouse, where they chanted outside the House chamber.

House Speaker Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan, said Tuesday night that members so far appear unwilling to cut the budget sufficiently to cover the shortfall.

revisit the issue of tax increases," he said in a brief interview.

current fiscal year, which ends June 30. offered by conservative Republicans cial services brought about 100 dis- cent of spending. The conservatives' plan would leave just 5 percent—only for the fiscal year starting July 1.

Critics said the state shouldn't use a one-time source of money to pay for ongoing government programs. They noted the extra money won't be there next year for legislators to tap.

Supporters said the idea was more "Ultimately, we're going to have to responsible than raising taxes.

Another part of the conservatives' plan was voted down Tuesday, as the series of test votes two weeks ago. The GOP conservatives' proposal to House rejected 68-52 a measure to Their budget proposal was intended as avoid some cuts by using \$104 million pack \$83 million in extra federal funds state isn't guaranteed to get all of those

said Appropriations Committee Chairman Kenny Wilk, R-Lansing. "Now, we're going to American Express."

Gov. Bill Graves last week outlined a budget proposal that would balance spending cuts with \$364 million worth of increases in sales, cigarette, income and estate taxes.

The authors of the House conservatives' plan had helped defeat numerous proposals for tax increases during a an alternative to keep the House from "If you don't start thinking outside the box here, you're headed for a major tax increase," said Rep. Doug Mays, R-Topeka.

Wednesday.

They did approve, 71-52, a bill mak-

\$3,870.

On Wednesday, House members has to be new revenues." ng minor changes in the budget for the continued to consider an alternative

The possibility of reductions in so-

on a 65-56 vote Tuesday.

By law, legislators must approve a funds — something critics noted. budget that leaves a balance at the end

"We've punched the Visa card and of a given fiscal year equal to 7.5 per- the MasterCard—they're maxed out,"

# **One-lane traffic in effect**



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Kansas Department of Transportation crews were painting white lines yellow on Wednesday afternoon in preparation for road reconstruction in the eastbound lanes of Interstate 70 from Colby to Levant, said transportation officials in Norton. Much of the lane closing work is nearly complete with visual signs and markings starting just after exit 53. The one-lane traffic for eastbound vehicles is expected to continue until October.

# Israel considers next step after bombing

Thursday it would exercise its right to lamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' self defense, but stopped short of for- Brigade, a militia linked to his Fatah estinian security officials said. The atmally abandoning U.S.-backed truce movement. efforts following a Palestinian suicide bombing in a hotel banquet hall. It killed 20 diners and wounded more than 130 during a festive Passover Seder, the ritual meal ushering in the weeklong Jewish holiday.

It was one of the deadliest Palestinian attacks in the current round of fighting. Several Cabinet ministers called for massive retaliation, including ousting Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, toppling his government and reconquering large parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Despite the new bloodshed, U.S. truce envoy Anthony Zinni was to remain in the region for now, U.S. Embassy officials said. Zinni had aborted two previous visits because of spiraling violence.

The Palestinian Authority said it Abdel Baset Odeh, a Hamas member, of the darkened lobby, while others "strongly condemned" Wednesday night's bombing at the hotel in the Mediterranean resort of Netanya, carried out by a member of the Islamic militant Hamas group. Arafat met with his security chiefs and ordered the ar-

However, the militias have become increasingly powerful in recent months, and many of their leaders were in hiding Thursday. Local security officials said they received lists of suspects to be arrested, but that no efforts had been made yet to find the wanted men. Nasser Awais, leader of the Al Aqsa militia in the West Bank, said he had no plans to surrender to Palestinian police.

Israel said Arafat has done nothing to prevent terror attacks, and held him responsible for what government spokesman Gideon Meir called a "Passover massacre." Secretary of State Colin Powell demanded that the about 10 to 12 years old, lying dead on Palestinian leader deliver a televised anti-terror speech to his people.

In Wednesday's attack, 25-year-old walked into the Park Hotel in Netanya at about 7:15 p.m., just as about 250 guests dressed in their holiday best mask pressed to his face. Alkayef said were sitting down in the banquet hall for the Passover Seder.

Odeh knew the area well; before he women from Sweden, were in the hall.

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel said rests of key militants from Hamas, Is- became wanted by Israel, he had worked in several Netanya hotels, Paltacker got past an armed security guard posted in the lobby, walked into the banquet hall and detonated explosives strapped to his body that were packed with nails and ball bearings for greater deadliness.

The blast blew out windows and walls, overturned tables and cut electricity, plunging the hotel into eerie darkness. "In the first few seconds, I couldn't comprehend it ... when you see the people, the blood, the screams," said Maxim Alkayef, manager of the dining hall.

History teacher Nechama Donenhirsch, 52, said that as she and her family fled the hall, they saw a girl, the ground, her eyes wide open as if in surprise.

Some of the wounded staggered out were carried out on stretchers, including a young boy who had an oxygen many of the guests were elderly, and that several tourists, including two

# Briefly Weather: Continued nice

#### March is going to go out on the dry side, if the National Weather Service forecast for the Colby region holds true. Tonight, mostly clear, lows in the middle 30s with variable winds 5-10 mph. Friday, sunny, highs near 60 and north winds 10-15 mph. Friday night, clear with lows in the lower 30s. Saturday, sunny, highs in the upper 50s. Saturday night, partly cloudy, lows in the upper 20s. And Easter Sunday, sunny, a good day for anything you've got planned with a forecast highs of 70.

The next shot for moisture comes on Monday (and we all know what Monday is). Colby's high Wednesday was 74 (nowhere near the record high for the date of 82) and the overnight low this morning was 27. The soil temperature

at the 4-inch depth is averaging 43 degrees. Precipitation for the month remains at only 0.16 inches. The records for March 28: 88 in 1988 and 0 in 1899. (The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

# **Blood drive next week**

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive in Colby from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 4, at the American Legion, 1850 W. 4th St. Eligibility requires only that people be in general good health, at least 17 years of age and weigh 110 lbs. or more. For questions or to make an appointment, call Stephens at 462-8122, Frahm at 462-2082, or 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

# Corn growers to gather in Colby

The Northwest Kansas Corn Growers' 9th annual informational meeting will be Thursday, April 4, 7 p.m. at the Ramada Inn in Colby. Registration starts at 6:30. The meeting topic will be "Ethanol Production in Western Kansas." The supper is sponsored by area agricultural business supporters. For information contact Julie Saddler, 462-2237, or at the Ramada Inn, 462-3933.

# Commissioners to meet Friday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Friday in their meeting room in the courthouse. Roads supervisor Chris Bieker will open pickup bids at 9 a.m., and bids on stripping the overlay from Dave Tole's sandpit at

9:30. Sheriff Tom Jones is on the agenda at 10. The meeting is open to the public.

# Landfill to close Easter Sunday

The Thomas County landfill will be closed Easter Sunday, said Larry Jumper, landfill director.

# Commodity distribution announced

USDA Commodity distribution will be held Monday from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Senior Progress Center in Colby. Expected commodities include cranberry juice, potato flakes, peanut butter, cherries, apricots, plums, navy beans and canned potatoes. For questions, contact the RSVP office at 462-6744.

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