



6 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

Tuesday

May 21, 2002

50¢

Volume 113, Number 100
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Several surprises at Colby school board meeting

- Bullington resigns
- New coach reneges
- Parents complain

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

Colby High School's principal is moving to Arizona.

The school board, at its Monday night meeting, reluctantly accepted Bryan Bullington's resignation, prompting board member Bill Miller to declare, "I refuse to accept his resignation."

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen told the board that there were 19 applicants for the position. "I'll have something for you on this by the next meeting," Nielsen said.

Activities Director Jeff Quenzer reported to the board that Don Simmons had backed out of a verbal agreement to coach high school football.

There was general outrage expressed by the board, with Miller strongly suggesting that some kind of letter be written expressing disappointment. "Figuratively speaking, this guy really dropped the ball for us," Miller said. "We need to let people know what kind of person this is."

Quenzer told the board that the interview process would begin again.

"We have offers out, and should know something by the next board meeting," he said.

Nearly 30 parents confronted the board to protest the possible closing of the grade school cafeteria, which would send children in grades 1-5 to eat

with the middle-schoolers. Kris Kappenman, addressing the board as spokesman for the parents, told the board that there was concern for the safety of the smaller children. "Kids will be backed up on the stairs," he told the board. "That is a fire safety issue. Fire codes are in place for a reason, and they should be obeyed."

Kappenman continued, "There is also the issue of protecting our children's innocence. We should not expose our first through fifth grade children to the language, hormones, drugs, and other issues that come with middle school. I do not want my fourth or fifth-grade daughter to be in the same hall as seventh and eighth-grade boys. It is a matter of personal safety, both physical and emotional."

He then told the board, "Bullying exists at all grade levels in Colby. Combining lunchrooms would both exaggerate and accelerate this. Columbine High School and other schools throughout the country have proven that shootings were mostly the result of bullying. I do not believe that you can guarantee us as parents that the younger children will not come in contact with older students in an unsupervised manner."

"We trust you as a school board to provide our children with a safe environment. We need to remember that these are children, not animals, and



Career counselors Joni Clark-Leiker and Diana Wieland gave a curriculum presentation to the school board at Monday night's meeting. The

presentation was on Career Focused Learning Environments, and how students are being given a wide range of options to decide on.

DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

they shouldn't be herded around like they are. I do not feel that anyone here tonight thinks, deep down, that this is right for our children."

The board listened but took no action on the lunchroom issue as it wasn't on the meeting's agenda.

In other business, the board also

voted to accept Darwin Strutt's bid on district property insurance. Strutt was the only insurer who submitted a bid. The board voted to accept the bid of

\$110,093.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be Monday, June 3, at 7 p.m.

Drop-in center plans to move downtown

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Wings on the Prairie, a weekend drop-in center for people who suffer from mental illness, will soon have a new location and a van for transportation.

Pat Hartford, director of Wings, talked about the services to the Thomas County commissioners at their Monday meeting. "This is a weekend drop-in center for people who suffer from mental illness, by providing companionship, information and recreation. It is open to visitors and guests, and offers games, bingo, movies, and such," she said.

She said the center will be moving from 1980 W. 4th to the former site of Lady Taylor's, 485 N. Franklin, by July 1. Hours will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 5-8 p.m. and Sunday 2-8 p.m. The same days and hours are in place at the current location.

Hartford said Wings is funded by the state SRS and is in partnership with the self-help network of Kansas. The grant pays for rent, operating

costs, and such.

She asked the commissioners to allow Wings to use the old public transportation van to transport consumers throughout the county. "We have been using our own private cars to transport them," she said.

County Clerk Tracy Perkins said the old van had hardly been used since the new public transportation van was obtained four years ago, and it was parked at the Senior Progress Center. It had originally belonged to the state, but had been deeded over to the county.

The commissioners voted to allow Wings to use the old van, but Commission Chair Ron Evans said there was a problem with the transmission and it might need repair eventually.

"We're glad to put it to use, and worry about its being operable," said Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock.

Hartford said Wings would pay for gas and insurance, and furnish a copy of the van driver's drivers license as soon as they get a driver. Evans said she could pick up the keys to the van at that time.

Southerners are shivering

ATLANTA (AP) — With summer just a month away, Southerners fired up furnaces and dug out sweaters as a blast of Canadian air sent temperatures plunging to wintry lows.

Records fell from Mississippi to the Carolinas on Monday, flirting with the freezing mark in some places.

Forecasters said the chilly air would

stick around through at least the middle of the week.

They hope no longer than that..

The culprit is a cold front that crossed the region during the weekend. A Canadian air mass settled in behind it, combining with clear skies and calm winds that let the temperature plummet.

Briefly

Hold on...it's windy!

Strong, gusty winds will continue to blow through at least midnight tonight in the Colby area, the National Weather Service warns. South winds of 25-35 mph with gusts to near 45 will rearrange lawn furniture, shake trees, zap caps off heads, and offer a challenge to man and pets. The winds are expected to decrease to around 15 mph by the time Thomas Countians climb out of bed in the morning. Wednesday, mostly sunny, highs near 80 and west winds 10-20. Wednesday night, clear, lows 40-45 and Thursday, partly sunny, highs in the low to middle 70s. Colby's high Monday was 75 and the overnight low this morning was 49. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth continues to average

64 degrees. Precipitation remains at 0.55 inches. The records for May 21: 97 in 1934 and 29 in 1915. (*The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

No newspaper Monday

In observance of the Memorial Day holiday, the Colby Free Press will not publish a newspaper on Monday, May 27 and the office will be closed. Deadlines for advertising in the Tuesday, May 28 edition will be at noon on Friday (May 24) for word ads and Thursday (May 23) at 3 p.m. for display advertising. Banks and other state and federal offices will be closed, as well as many businesses in Colby.

Mental Health Branch busy, report shows

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Kermit George, Diane Stithem and Karen Beery of the High Plains Mental Health Center in Hays, and Gene Garrison of the Colby Branch made their annual visit to the Thomas County Commissioners at their Monday meeting.

George said the Colby branch has 28 employees, and it is the hub office for services in this area. He said in 2001, the center treated 276 clients in Thomas County. Of those, 27 were under age 10; 73 ages 10-19; 23 ages 20-24; 47 ages 25-34; 49 ages 35-44; 46 ages 45-59; four ages 60-64; seven ages 65 and older; consisting of 117 males and 159 females.

The 276 Thomas Countians were treated for disorders ranging from mood to eating, George said.

He said the center was asking for the same amount of money from the county as last year. He still did not know what the legislature was going to do budget-wise or how it will affect the center.

George said fees for clients are based on a sliding scale on family income. Clients pay part; third parties, such as insurance, pay part; and part is paid through tax dollars.

Commission Chair Ron Evans said the county plans to give the same dollar amount as last year (\$44,543)..

Stithem said tobacco fund money has made it possible for the center to help with younger children and with parenting skills. The therapeutic preschool works with children ages 2-5, and had 15 last year, he said. This program helps prepare the children for school.

Knight knights Glasscock as his running mate

TOPEKA (AP) — Kent Glasscock brings money — and his record as House Speaker — to Bob Knight's campaign for the Republican gubernatorial nomination.

Knight, Wichita's mayor, announced Monday that Glasscock would run as lieutenant governor on his ticket.

Glasscock began campaigning for governor last year but dropped out of the race to run with Attorney General Carla Stovall, who then became the choice of many moderates.

But Stovall quit the race in April, saying she didn't have the desire to run statewide.

When Stovall dropped out of the race, the Kansas Governmental Ethics

Commission ruled that Glasscock was entitled to keep a portion of the money the campaign raised.

Glasscock said Monday that he expected to transfer "a bunch" of money to the Knight campaign, declining to disclose an exact amount.

But Knight's choice of Glasscock quickly drew the fire of GOP conservative Tim Shallenburger's campaign.

"Bob Knight has, in effect, made Kent Glasscock's voting record and legislative priorities his gubernatorial platform," said Bob Murray, spokesman for Shallenburger. "That should concern all Republicans who oppose higher taxes and believe in fiscal discipline."

Knight said Glasscock's leadership

In other business:

• Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock reported Kathi Wright, the new EMS director, and Martin Rinehart, assistant director, had attended a Region 1 EMS meeting.

• The commissioners decided they did not need to implement a burn ban at this time, but reminded that people need to be careful about burning. Controlled burns are to be reported to the fire department.

• The commissioners signed the 2002 Noxious Weed Management Plan which was the same as last year.

• They appointed Daniel J. McKiski as clerk of East Hale Township. He is replacing Duane Tubbs who moved to Colby.

• Sheriff Tom Jones and Undersheriff Mike Baughn told the commissioners they had hired detention officers for

the jail.

The sheriff asked about doing lease purchase for two vehicles on three-year leases. He had a bid from Tubbs and Sons. He said he didn't request bids because Ford is the only company left that makes the full police package on vehicles. Part of the money will come from drug forfeiture money. The commissioners approved.

• Steve Shaw of Rural Fire District Board discussed the radio and pagers for the fire district which had been discussed at the previous meeting. The commissioners made no decision. He will get more information and report back.

The next regular meeting is at 9 a.m. Friday, May 31, the last business day of the month. All meetings are in the commissioners room of the courthouse and are open to the public.

no taxes. That's not the world we live in."

After Stovall left the race, aides said that Glasscock was inclined to "re-engage" in the governor's race, but the House Speaker then underwent an angioplasty to clear blockage in an artery to his heart.

Glasscock said Monday that his health was one reason for not being a "top-of-the-ticket" candidate.

"We were better off, and the state was better off, if we joined with a person who we think can make Kansas an outstanding governor," Glasscock said.

The Wichita mayor has tried to avoid labels, but his choice of Glasscock may have him identified with moderates.

Arena enrollment continues

Arena enrollment began today at Colby High School and continues Wednesday and Thursday, said Bryan Bullington, principal. Wednesday's schedule looks like this: incoming sophomores will enroll at 7:45 until 9 a.m. with classes for all other students starting at 9:10 a.m. At the middle school, incoming freshmen will enroll from 7:45 a.m. to 8:55 a.m. and incoming 8th grade students will enroll from 8:55 to 9:55 a.m. with classes starting at 10:05 a.m. For questions, call 465-5300.

Moran aide to Colby Wednesday

Congressman Jerry Moran has announced that a mem-

ber of his staff will be in Colby from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesday. Eric Depperschmidt, constituent services representative, will be in the Thomas County Courthouse to answer questions and concerns of area residents. Constituents with questions or concerns who are unable to attend can contact the Hays Congressional District Office for assistance.

Commodities distribution set

USDA commodities will be available on Thursday from 9-10 a.m. at the RSVP office in the Senior Progress Center. Distribution includes beef, sweet potatoes, peas, black-eyed peas, raisins, trail mix, cranberry juice, potato flakes, peanut butter and instant milk.

