



COLBY FREE PRESS

The great performers



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Second-grade students at Colby Grade School performed the show “No Turkey For Perky” Wednesday for their grandparents. The students are in Mrs. Vicki Nickols class and were performing during “Grandparents Day.”

Township road transfer consumes bulk of commissioners’ meeting

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

It was a busy day for the Thomas County Commissioners for their Wednesday end-of-month meeting. The main topic of discussion was the turning over of Rovohl township roads to Thomas County.

Chris Bieker, roads supervisor, was on hand as well as the township board members John Schroeder, treasurer, Arnold Wehkamp, clerk and Wilbur Henry, trustee. Also present to join the discussion were Ron Kaus, former clerk, Larry Heier, and Thomas County Attorney Allen Taylor.

The change will occur on Jan. 13, 2003, and comes about as a result of the Nov. 5 election by the township. From that date for a period of five years, per the question on the ballot, Thomas County will take over road maintenance, repair and construction for the township. The funding for the work is still provided by the budget of the township and will only be done according to what that budget allows.

One of the main items discussed was the private driveways of residents that are currently being maintained by the township. Bieker said several of these roads are not on section lines and are not “straight through” roads.

They are only used by the residents who live on them. In other townships that the county has taken over, people in similar situations are not having their drives maintained. Nothing was settled in the issue and will be discussed further by Bieker and the commissioners at the Dec. 2 meeting.

Discussion was also held about equipment that is owned by the township. According to a document written by Taylor when the last two townships were turned over, there are three options.

Any equipment that the county feels can be used in the township the machinery is turned over to the county. If the county chooses not to use it, then it can be either “warehoused” or sold. The question by the township board

was where the funds from the sale of the equipment will go, the general fund or specifically in a fund for Rovohl.

In Taylor’s letter he said, “If the machinery and equipment are sold, it would be my opinion that the proceeds would be paid to the commissioners just like any other road fund.”

The township board members agreed that after the five-year time period when the vote would come up again, if the township agreed to take back control of their roads, there would be no funds available to purchase new equipment without an increase of taxes.

The other issue raised was if Bieker could hire them (Schroeder, Henry and Wehkamp) to maintain the roads as they have been currently doing. Their argument was that they would be able to make the funds stretch farther if they were doing the work. Discussion was held as to how that would work.

The commissioners said that they were unsure as to how the county hiring them would be perceived by the members of the township.

When the idea was purposed to Heier, he said, “I wouldn’t be in favor of that.” He said that the vote was passed and it was the desire of the township for the county to control the roads.

Other guests of the morning included Rosalie Seemann, Kathy Ryan and Kathi Wright.

Seemann, a representative to the Silver Haired Legislature, thanked the commissioners for their financial contribution to the Silver Haired Legislature and said she wanted to inform them on the activities of the group. Seemann said she has enjoyed being a representative for the group and plans on running for another term in March.

She gave information about several bills by the Silver Haired Legislature that promotes seniors in the state of Kansas.

Ryan, the Thomas County Health Nurse, was on hand to sign the regionalization agreement among sev-

eral northwest Kansas counties. There are eight counties which are coming together to work on bio-terrorism projects.

Thomas County received \$10,000 in regionalization grant funds, but to get the money, we have to work in conjunction with at least three contiguous counties on the project, Ryan said. “We have joined with seven other counties for a total of \$80,000 in grant money,” she said.

Ryan said they are planning to use the money to contract a person to assist in writing bio-terrorism policies and procedures for the counties, but that person has not yet been hired. Norton County will be the lead county on the project.

Wright, director of Thomas County EMS, addressed the fact that there are some of the 911 signs in the county that are missing.

This could be a problem if an ambulance call is heading out into the county and cannot find the exact location, she said.

Bieker said they had replaced all the signs that they were aware of, but would make sure all were in place.

Commissioner Ron Evan said that they encourage anyone who knows of a 911 post that doesn’t have a sign on it to contact Bieker so it can be fixed.

“This is in the interest of public health. You never know if you are going to be the next person whom the ambulance is trying to assist,” said Evans.

In other business:

- The landfill meeting will be on Dec. 9, at 7 p.m. at the Thomas County Office Complex. County Clerk Tracey Perkins said that all members of the landfill committee have been sent letters about the meeting.
- The commissioners accepted the resignation of Rosalie Seemann from the Thomas County Landfill Committee.
- The date for the water wells to be tested at the landfill has been set for Dec. 3.

It’s a matter of Leadership

By TOM (TD) DREILING
Free Press Publisher

If Leadership Thomas County ever looks for a poster boy, they’ve got one in Carl Gilbert.

The 28-year-old Colby native became the youngest graduate of the program to date when the 2001-2002 class completed its studies and involvement last spring.

His enthusiasm for and dedication to this organization is unconditional. He credits it for moving him from the back of the room to the front and, whenever the occasion presents itself, to even take charge.

“It’s all about leadership,” Gilbert said during an interview with the Free Press a couple of evenings ago.

“It has instilled confidence in me, something I lacked,” he said.

“I can now get up in front of groups and talk. I wasn’t able to do that before joining Leadership Thomas County,” he said.

Gilbert said that after going through the program each person is a leader in his or her own right.

He said the program is so designed to enable candidates to get a better handle on Thomas County and in the process prepare them to move into positions of leadership, be it at their place of employment or even in the community itself.

He couldn’t say enough about the other nine members of the class. “We bonded so well... We worked hard... We are now very close and continue communicating with one another.”

Each class — and the one currently underway is the 12th — picks out a common project to work on. Gilbert’s class took on as its responsibility providing sets of 12 hard cover books to all schools and libraries in the county.

Funds for their project came in part from the Kansas Health Foundation which recognized Leadership Thomas County in 1999 as a program of excellence. The Thomas County program was given \$10,000 to fund class projects over a period of four years,

thus a portion of those moneys went toward the current book project, which was just recently completed.

He said the project was the key to success. “It was something we all had to agree on, and had to work on... it allowed us to make a difference.”

Gilbert said the program not only allows participants the opportunity to learn more about Thomas County, but also to learn about yourself. “I have grown — I really have — thanks to the leadership skills I was able to develop, and the new friends I made.”

Those new friends/classmates are Cindy Cersovsky, Howard Culver, Becky Donelan, Donna Finley, Becky Dickman, Kathi Hapke, Judy Kleinsorge, E’Ette Scholtz and Bill Shields.

Gilbert said he is currently working on his master’s degree at Fort Hays State University and credits his decision to join Leadership Thomas County as helping him make the decision to continue his education.

He has been working at the Wal-Mart store for 10 years and looked upon that employment as a sort of “security blanket” — having a job, having a responsibility. But he said he knew that in the back of his mind he wanted to pursue something beyond what he was currently doing. “Don’t get me wrong — my job at Wal-Mart helped me a lot, it really did,” he said.

In a brochure put out by Leadership Thomas County, Gilbert, community involvement coordinator at Wal-Mart, is quoted as saying, “Leadership Thomas County has allowed me to revisit my passions and refocus my energies. It has opened up a new world to me by allowing me to see that I can change the world, one person at a time.”



Carl Gilbert

One person at a time. That’s was the theme of the conversation.

He now moves to another job — responsibility — in Hays, which allows him to further engage in his field of study, accounting, as well as place him right next door to the university campus.

Leadership Thomas County, he agrees, will serve him well in his new endeavor.

The objectives of Leadership Thomas County are:

- seek leadership potential
- provide opportunities to develop leadership skills
- allow participants to gain a greater knowledge of Thomas County
- stimulate interest in taking leadership positions

Candidates are required to attend all sessions and will be asked to sign an attendance policy. Candidates must have a minimum of one-year residency in Thomas County at time of application.

The program consists of seven sessions held monthly, with the sessions beginning in October and ending with graduation in April.

Applicants need not apply if their schedule will not allow them to attend all sessions in their entirety, but are encouraged to apply the following year.

The program combines leadership capacities, panel discussion, increased community and county awareness, dialogue between participants and community decision makers, and tours, including a trip to Topeka.

Social opportunities will foster a mutual interest in working together to find solutions to problems of a progressive, growing community.

More information about Leadership Thomas County is available from the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, 350 S. Range Suite #10, (785) 462-3401.

One-on-One is a periodic conversation with people in our community, area.

One-on-One

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council will be discussing aspects of its sanitation ordinance, along with other items when it convenes for its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 3 in council chambers.

Among the issues with household trash, Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, will be asking the council for clarification with regard to landlords who use the city’s sanitation service as a “clean-up” service. This matter came to her attention recently after learning that in some instances when a tenant moves out, landlords will stack broken furniture, mattresses and other large items in front yards to be picked up as part of the regular sanitation service.

It will be up to the council to determine whether or not those types of items are part of the normal household waste and if an additional fee should be

charged in this situation. However, Armstrong noted that if the council considers any actual changes to the ordinance, those would not be proposed until after the first of the year.

In addition, Armstrong will be bringing to the council’s attention the placement of dumpsters in commercial areas and specifically the latest business that opened in the Wal-Mart Plaza, which does not have a back door. According to information provided, the new business is unwilling to use the dumpsters on the east side of the plaza and since there is no dumpster located between the former Grocery Kart and the Cellular One phone store, the sanitation vehicle is having to maneuver the parking lot area to pick up the trash.

The question that council could be expected to answer is whether or not the ordinance should be changed to provide that sanitation service in a

commercial area should be in the same area that other services are located.

Another item on next week’s agenda includes a request by a resident on Terrace Drive requesting that he remain disconnected from city water service entirely since he has a private well.

The council will need to decide whether to issue him grandfather status since there is an ordinance in place violating residents from entire service through private domestic wells.

The council will also consider a special use permit for Dr. Karen Thummel’s dental office, which is located at 480 W. 4th St. Currently, Armstrong said, the facility is located in a residential neighborhood and Thummel is wanting to build a 20’ x 25’ addition to the office.

In a previous Planning Commission meeting, that board is recommending the council approve the special use permit.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers
Thursday’s high, n/a
Low this morning, n/a
Year ago today, 43 and 4
Temperature at 11:50 a.m. today, 58
Soil temperature, 35
Records for Nov. 29: 71 in 1960, -7 in 1896

The forecast
Tonight, clear, lows in the mid 20s. Saturday, sunny, highs in the mid 40s to around 50. Saturday night, clear, lows in the lower 20s. Sunday and Monday, partly cloudy to cloudy, lows in the upper 20s and highs 50-55.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet Monday, Dec. 2, at 9 a.m. in the commissioners room of the Thomas County Courthouse. The only scheduled guest is Chris Beiker, county road supervisor, to discuss the turnover of Rovohl township road to the county.

Request for early lighting

Prairie Senior Living Complex is planning two evening tours so that residents at the facility can see the various Christmas lighting displays throughout Colby. In order to make the excursion enjoyable, officials are asking that anyone with displays turn their lights on early the evenings of Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 17 and 18.

Women’s league sponsors brunch

The Colby Women’s League is sponsoring a holiday brunch from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Colby Coun-

try Club. The purpose of the event is to start the holiday season off by celebrating with friends, organizers said. The cost of the brunch is free-will donation with proceeds donated to the Thomas County Home-Owned Carnival. Organizers of the brunch include Pat Criss, Jan Haigler, Anita Hills, Sandy Kriss, Nancy Saddler, Judith Sears, Kay Weston, Becky White and Esther Woofert.

College board to meet Monday

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Colby Community College will be held on Monday, Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. in the board room of Thomas Hall. Items on the agenda include a program review and approval of contracts and agreements. The meeting is open to the public.

Harmony Chorus to perform

The Hi-Plains Harmony Chorus of Sweet Adelines International, will be performing in the Barn Loft on Sunday, Dec. 1 at

Old Town in Burlington, Colo. for their Christmas opening, reports Sheila Krehbiel, Colby, publicity chair. Other musical entertainment will be singing of Christmas carols ce by the Sunshine Generation, a children’s chorus.

The program begins at 1:30 p.m. (MST), followed by refreshments and a Live Nativity in The Barn by the Burlington Christian Church.

Vocal concert is Dec. 2

The Colby Middle School and Colby High School vocal departments will be presenting their winter concert starting at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 2, in the high school auditorium. Jennifer Wassemiller, vocal instructor for both programs, is also reminding everyone that this date has changed from the school calendar. In addition, the Colby Music Booster Club will sponsor a drawing for tickets to the Western Plains Arts Association concert, “The Duttons.”

A reception sponsored by the Music Boosters will also be held in the commons area after the concert.

