



12 pages

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## Kennedy attracts big Colby crowd

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

Creating communities for children was one of many messages that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. carried with him during his presentation Thursday at Colby Community College.

In his introduction, Kennedy said his first impression of the Colby area is that there is a strong sense of rootedness, which is very similar to what environmental activists are all about as well.

Although non-partisan on environmental issues, Kennedy had much to say about the current administration and its efforts to dismantle the many progressive steps taken in 1970 to ensure environmental rights were protected.

"It's almost like a science fiction nightmare," he said about the environmental climate today, "with no one being able to breathe because some company gave contributions to politicians (to look the other way)."

Tough words, but necessary ones, since Kennedy said he has no doubt in his mind that had the United States not enacted laws more than 30 years ago to protect the environment, we too could be facing an economic catastrophe like many other countries in the world today.

Citing some examples, Kennedy spoke of Russia and that one-fifth of its land is unusable now thanks to radiation fallout or in Bangkok where people are wearing gas masks to protect themselves from airborne lead contamination.

"It could happen here too if not

for the laws shielding us from the reckless White House and foolhardy Congress," he said.

Closer to home, Kennedy spoke about the damage already attributed to polluters and representative of giant corporations.

In Montana, for example, he said there are some 11,000 toxic waste sites that the taxpayer will be paying for to clean up.

"There is no stronger advocate (than myself) for free market capitalism," he said.

In a free market system; however, giant corporations need to have both expenses and profits as it relates to the environment.

Kennedy cited the shorelines in New Jersey and how corporations promised to bring jobs and prosperity to these places.

Instead, the jobs dried up when the corporations were finished and the prosperity left behind was poisoned groundwater, ammonia in the air and property values at 30 percent or more less than before the corporations came in.

Kennedy said he believes in enrichment for everyone and that does not mean to make the "polluters" rich and make the others poor.

"These giant corporations need to pay for production costs and not with subsidies, which are there in almost every case," he said.

The lumber industry is a good example of the inefficiency of subsidies. As these companies cut and run with the timber, they leave behind a debt to the rest of us in upwards of \$250 million when talking about Alaska Pulp and Paper.

Mining companies dealing with gold and silver are given 16 percent or more in royalties to mine it.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. spoke to more than 500 attending the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series in the Cultural Arts Center on the campus of Colby Community College Thursday night. Following his remarks, Kennedy found time for questions and one-on-one comments or introductions.

Take for example in Culver City, Nev. where the Bureau of Land Management will sell land to mining companies at \$2.50 an acre. This deal is only for the mining companies due to waivers and grants written into the law.

"Can you imagine an individual walking in and asking to mine land for \$2.50 an acre?" he queried. It wouldn't happen because the law is only for companies.

Yet once these companies are finished, they again leave behind arsenic, cyanide and mercury — with

no cost to them

In looking at the laws from another aspect, Kennedy talked about the family hog farms and how for years and how the law allows these small farms the ability to spread manure for future crops.

"With 300 sows on a section of land and spreading that manure out to grow corn, is what the intentions were," he said. "Now take a corporate hog farm with 50,000 sows on a section of land with the intention to dump the waste.

"It's no longer spreading manure

to grow crops on the land," he said, "it's now using the land as a dump for waste."

Even after taking these corporations to court it will still be another five to six years to beat them, he said, and another five to six years for the Environmental Protection Agency to issue new regulations.

For our sake and that of our children, we need to protect the environment," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said he believes that if we allow nature to be destroyed,

## Barbecue bid gets the okay

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

The free fair barbecue and a request to use the fairground were just two of the items on the agenda at the Thomas County Fair Board meeting Thursday night.

The board accepted the bid from the McDonald Lions Club for the free barbecue this year.

"That was the only bid we received," said board president Stan Strange.

He added the board will provide the barbecue recipe for the fair this year so people can expect something different than what was served last year.

The board also approved a request for Atwood Baptist Church to use the fairgrounds for a tent revival July 4-9. Pastor David Jones and Richard Wallace from the church were at the meeting to continue the discussion that started at last month's meeting.

Jones said they'll need a "good, grassy site" for the tent.

There was also some concern over where the tent will be placed because of the fireworks at the fairgrounds on July 4. The pyrotechnics are set off from the center of the race track. Jones said they have a 40 by 80 fireproof vinyl tent.

Jones asked if they will have access to the fairgrounds restrooms during the week because in addition to the revival, they will be holding vacation bible school in the mornings.

In other business, the board approved the rules for the rodeo queen and princess contest and also added a junior princess contest for girls 10- to 12-years-old.

"Do we want a statewide contest or do we want a local contest?" said board member Marty Crampton, adding he would prefer to see candidates from Thomas and the surrounding three or four counties in the queen contest.

The board also approved the rules for this year's demolition derby.

## For presidential caucus

# Colby to welcome crowd of Democrats Saturday

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

Kansas' Presidential Democratic Caucus on Saturday still means something despite the fact Sen. John Kerry is the party's unofficial nominee.

Judith Sears, a member of the Thomas County Democratic Party, said the caucus will be used to help pick delegates for the state and national conventions.

She said Kansas used to have caucuses in every county instead of the multi-county format in use this year.

"We haven't had one since Gary Hart was running," she said. "We had a wonderful turnout for that one. I hope we have a good turnout tomorrow."

Thomas County Democrats will meet at noon Saturday at City Lim-

its Convention Center. Registration starts at noon and the caucus will follow at 2 p.m.

The state Democratic Party's Web site outlines the procedures for the caucus.

At 2 p.m., people will get into groups based on their choice for a candidate, which counts as a vote. That number is then used to calculate how many delegates the candi-

dates get.

Kansas will send 41 delegates to the Democratic National Convention July 26-29 in Boston. That is when the party will officially decide its nominee for president.

The Colby gathering will cover the 18 counties in northwest Kansas including Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Graham, Greeley, Lane, Logan, Ness, Norton, Rawlins, Rooks,

Scott, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

County Clerk Tracey Perkins said there are 1,104 registered Democrats in the county.

However, with 18 counties being represented, Sears said she had no idea how many people to expect for the event.

For information visit on Web at <http://www.ksdp.org/caucuses>.

# House Republicans working on school finance plans

TOPEKA (AP)—House Republicans say they will present proposals next week to address school districts' short-term financial needs.

Speaker Doug Mays, R-Topeka, said Thursday that the plan would contain no general tax increase. But he declined to describe any details,

such as whether the plan would propose targeted tax increases — for example, on alcohol.

"The process begins Monday," Mays told the House, asking Democrats to join in the search for solutions. Mays' statements followed a 79-42 vote against a proposal,

drafted by a Shawnee Mission school administrator, to change the way Kansas distributes about \$2.6 billion in aid each year to its 302 school districts.

Mays said the GOP plan would be significantly smaller than Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' proposal to raise

school funding by \$304 million over three years through higher state taxes on sales, individual income and property taxes.

Sebelius said she didn't know what Republicans would offer.

On Wednesday, the House defeated a bill that would have imple-

mented the first year of Sebelius' plan but did not specify the source of the \$137 million in fresh state aid. The bill also contained greater flexibility for local districts to raise property taxes, but was weighted down by a \$387.7 million income tax break for married couples.

## Briefly

### Food vendors wanted

The Chautauqua Committee is looking for groups or organizations who would like to be a food vendor during Chautauqua week. "This could be an excellent fund raiser," said Leilani Thomas, with the committee. Food service is needed each evening from June 11-15 from 5 to 7 p.m. Beverages and sandwiches such as sloppy joes, hamburgers, Polish sausages, bierocks or casserole items would be suggested. Dessert items such as pie, brownies or cookies could also be served. Groups interested in being a Chautauqua vendor, call the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

### College board to meet

The Colby Community College board of trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room in the Administration Building on the college campus. Items on the agenda include a Policies Manual report, a resignation, approval of contracts and agreements, Chartwells amendment, dorm rates for the

2004-2005 school year, the Wellness Center, negotiations and payment of claims. The meeting is open to the public.

### Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include Connie Walden from the health department, Marlene Pfeifer on a 911 grant, computer update bid opening and bid opening for the county landfill excavation project.

### Hydrant maintenance scheduled

The Colby Fire Department is reminding residents that beginning Monday maintenance and flowing work on fire hydrants will take place around the city. The hydrant work is expected to take about one week, weather permitting, said Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief. Call 462-4454.

### Early childhood screenings planned

The Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center staff

will be assisting Brewster Public Schools with free early childhood screenings on Thursday, March 25. The screenings will be offered to children with special needs. For an appointment, call Sheri Horney, (785) 694-2236.

### Share sign up this week

Sign up for Share started Monday and will continue through Friday at the State Farm Insurance Office, 905 E. 4th St., Colby. This month's delivery is Saturday, March 27 at the Sacred Heart School gymnasium. For questions about the Share program or how to participate, call 460-3579.

### Walk Kansas program begins

Those registered for the Walk Kansas program need to begin recording their miles walked on Sunday (March 14). Any aerobic activity may be used in place of walking using the formula of fifteen minutes of activity equals one mile. For those who planned on participating and missed the registration deadline, call 462-4582.



## Winds to linger

**Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the 30s. Southwest winds 10 to 20 mph. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Northwest winds 15 to 20 mph. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Cooler. Highs in the upper 40s. Northwest winds 15 to 25 mph becoming southwest 10 to 20 mph late. **Sunday night...**Mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s.

### The numbers

Thursday's high, 58  
Low this morning, 24  
Records for March 12, 84 in 1972 and -3 in 1969  
Year ago today, 74 and 26  
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00  
March total, 0.74  
March snowfall, 1 inch  
Soil temperature, 44  
**The sources:**  
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

