



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

Monday

April 12, 2004

50¢

Volume 115, Number 58
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Swinging into spring



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Brent Menges shoveled snow off the sidewalk in front of Colby Automotive this morning. Colby received three inches of snow overnight. The calendar may show spring, but Mother Nature has her very own agenda. Total precipitation for April to date is 1.29 inches.

Colby's librarian plans June retirement

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

After 27 years with the Colby library, JoAnne Sunderman told the council at its meeting last week that she is planning to retire in June.

In addition to making her retirement announcement, Sunderman, accompanied by Patrick Toth, president of the library board, gave the annual library report.

"Pioneer Memorial Library has great success in the year 2003," Sunderman said.

Circulation was up to 104,537 and there were 7,469 registered card holders borrowing materials from the library instead of purchasing them, she said.

In substantiating the amount of savings to the borrower, Sunderman offered the following breakdown.

She said that taking the 104,537 books and other materials for the year, which is almost 21 items per card holder, and figuring \$25 per item, the cost for buying these books and such would have been



JoAnne Sunderman, librarian

more than \$2.6 million.

In separating out the items loaned from the library, she said, 35,700 books were lent, as well as 113 magazine titles, 3,408 CDs and audio cassettes, 1,933 videos and DVDs, 102 cake pans and 24 puzzles. The library also loans out some items that many people may not be aware of. For instance, available for check out is a DVD player, 30-cup coffee percolator, 18-quart electric roaster and overhead projector.

The staff provides answers to more than 7,000 reference questions from clients who called or dropped by and needed help quick-

ly, she said.

As for the technological services, she said that more than 13,326 people made use of the computers. She said there are 14 computers for the public and of those 8 provided free Internet service.

Each year the city appropriates about \$171,300 to the library through taxes. Other funding for the library comes from donations and other fundraising events.

Since 1980, the Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library have held an auction each year to raise money to benefit the facility.

In her report, Sunderman said that 2003 saw the most money over the auction's history at \$3,667. Prior to last year, income from the auction has seen ups and downs. For example in 2002 the amount was \$3,598 and in 2001 was \$2,935.

Among its many achievements, Sunderman said, the Colby library remains the strongest and largest library in northwest Kansas and in the Northwest Kansas Library System.

County approves Internet switch

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners approved a change in Internet service for the county at their meeting this morning.

The commissioners voted to switch from Carroll's Web to S&T Communications.

County Clerk Tracey Perkins said it could cost approximately \$400-\$500 to make the switch but said County Attorney Allan Taylor was willing to pay for the switch with money from the attorney forfeiture fund, which is comes from drug money that is seized in the

county.

Perkins said the fee covers DSL lines but didn't know if modems will be included. She added there's been talk of switching the county's telephone provider also but said if that ever happens, it would be after January, 2005 because that's when the county's contract with SBC expires.

The commissioners also briefly discussed the new carpeting at the Thomas County Office Complex and the courthouse.

At their meeting last week they approved a bid of \$15,123 from Office Works in Colby for the

project. It will include new carpeting in the courthouse basement and all of the office complex but after visiting the Chamber of Commerce, Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock thought it should also get new carpet. Commissioner Duane Dawes said they also wanted to do some painting.

The group also talked about carpet coloring for the office complex but Perkins said she wants a consensus among the office tenants but they haven't had much of a chance to look at the samples.

"I think it should be a group decision out there," she said.

Thomas County fairgrounds getting improvements

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Thing are happening at the Thomas County fairgrounds. Not only are some of the barns getting face-lifts but other work is slated for the near future, said fair board President Stan Strange.

Strange said the work to put up metal siding on the sheep, poultry and horse barns is nearing completion. He said the beef barn is also getting some work done with two new windows being installed on the

north side, which should improve ventilation.

Come fair time, Strange said the grounds will also have a little more room.

The queen's barn by the pavilion where the barbecue is held is coming down. Fixing up the barn was cost-prohibitive, he said, and that's why it's being torn down.

Also, he said the board approved up to \$6,000 in electrical work to be done by Bickner Electric. Strange said it's mostly upgrades to install

ground fault interrupters which kill power to a circuit if there's a short. He said it's a safety issue and will make the fairgrounds safer.

More electrical outlets are also being installed in the barns, and some work will be done on the camping spaces, including the addition of eight new electrical-only sites.

"A lot of that's going to help 'Pickin' on the Plains," Strange said, adding it will mean more camping spots for people during

that event and others.

The electrical work will also mean more lighting.

He said more lights are being installed on the ends of the barns to improve visibility.

Strange said new concrete has been poured at the east and west barn entryways to improve accessibility. With bigger areas around the doorways, he said they'll probably put in benches also.

"We're trying to make it look a lot nicer," Strange said.

They also plan on painting the cables and fences.

He said some dead trees have been taken out, which has helped improve the fairground appearance.

Strange also said board member Mark Bredemeier is working with the county's Master Gardener program to improve the area where the old caretaker's trailer was. It will be converted into a picnic area and Strange is hoping it will be a chance for the gardeners to showcase their work.

Faith a sustaining force for many in Iraq, chaplain says

FORT RILEY (AP) — Easter came twice for Maj. Jim Paulson this year.

On a January morning in Baghdad, as he fought his own anger while preparing the message he would deliver for a fallen soldier's memorial service, the Army chaplain found the right words in the biblical story of rebirth and resurrection.

"Iraq peeled me back," said Paulson, who served a support battalion of 1,300 soldiers in Baghdad

from August 2003 until returning to Fort Riley in February. "We never knew when mortars were going to fall out of the sky, so the question became, 'How are you going to deal with that?' I said, 'Lord, you are my foundation.'" "And that gives me peace."

He needed that peace as he awoke Jan. 8, the morning after a mortar round had killed a soldier.

"I didn't know it was possible to feel so raw and feel so much pain. The tears and the bitter prayers, I remember that well," he said.

Suddenly fearful for himself, he wondered whether there was reason for hope. That was when he turned to the Bible for the message he would deliver for the dead soldier — and would deliver again, back at Fort Riley, on Easter Sunday.

"The key is that regardless of what happens here, God says, 'I will be with you and you will be with me, because when this life ends, it's not the end,'" Paulson said. "And that's my hope. I believe it."

Paulson believes also that a message of hope is especially vital now at Fort Riley, which last week mourned the deaths of five soldiers from one explosion on March 31. Those deaths brought to 35 the number of Fort Riley soldiers who have died since the war began.

Briefly

Kindergarten performance set

The Colby Grade School kindergarten class will perform "A Day on the Farm" at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Colby Grade School auditorium. The performance is open to the public. There is no admission charge.

Preschool open house Thursday

Heartland Christian School will hold its preschool "Open House" on Thursday for parents wanting to start their 3-4 year-old child for the 2004-2005 school year. It begins at 9 a.m. with an informational meeting with classroom participation to follow in the preschool classroom. For questions or information, call the school at 460-6419.

Voter registration open

Voter registration books are now open for anyone who has changed their name, address or who will turn 18 before the next statewide general election. You may stop in at the County

Clerk's office to pick up a registration card or call (785) 462-4500 with questions.

Farm Service open house Friday

The Thomas County Farm Service Agency will host an open house from 1-3 p.m. Friday at the office, 915 E. Walnut in Colby to welcome Ross Sloan, county executive director. Refreshments will be served.

Vendors wanted for Chautauqua

Food vendors are needed in June during Chautauqua, said Leilani Thomas, one of the committee members. Any groups or organizations looking for a fundraising event might want to consider this opportunity during the week of June 11 through June 15. Food service is needed each evening from 5 to 7 p.m. with beverages and sandwiches offered. Some suggestions for a food booth might include sloppy joes, hamburgers, polish sausages, bierock or casserole items. Dessert items such as pie, brownies or cookies can also be served.

Groups interested in being a Chautauqua vendor are asked to call Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

Senior dance approaching

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program annual recognition night will be from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 21 at the American Legion in Colby. The theme is "RSVP Jungle Jam-boree."

The dance is open to all seniors and the Ramblin' Andy Family Band will provide entertainment. Tickets are available at the RSVP Office, P.O. Box 803, Colby, Kan. 67701 or call (785) 462-6744. Tickets may also be purchased at the door.

Class reunion scheduled

The Colby High School Class of 1984 has scheduled its 20th reunion for July 2, 3, and 4, coordinators of the event said. In an effort to communicate with others in that class, a website has been set up for registration and other information. The address is: www.colbyhigh-1984.com



Colby receives 3 inches snow

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area
Colby received 3 inches of snow overnight, bringing the moisture total for the month to 1.29 inches. The snowfall contained 0.20 inches of precipitation. Here is the forecast: **Tonight...**Mostly clear. Lows around 30. Northeast winds around 5 mph, shifting to the southwest 5 to 10 mph after midnight. **Tuesday...**Partly cloudy in the morning then clearing. Much warmer. Highs in the lower 60s. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph shifting to the south around 5 mph in the afternoon. **Tuesday night...**Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 30s to around 40. South winds 5 to 15 mph. **Wednesday...**Mostly sunny. Warmer still. Highs in the upper 70s. South winds 15 to 20 mph. **Wednesday night and Thursday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 70s. Lows in the mid 40s.

The numbers

Sunday's high, 56
Low this morning, 23
Records for April 12, 89 in 1899 and 11 in 1940
Year ago today, 84 and 36
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.20
April total, 1.29
April snowfall, 3 inches
Soil temperature, 47

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.

