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Sheridan's fair starts Saturday

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

HOXIE – It's fair time in Sheridan County.

Fair activities get under full swing this weekend with a horse show at 9 a.m. on Saturday at the outdoor arena. A livestock judging contest will take place at 6 p.m. on Sunday, and on Monday, fair participants will spend the day setting up booths which will open them to the public at 8 a.m. on Tuesday. All 4-H participants will spend Tuesday getting ready to check in their livestock at 5 p.m.

Wednesday through Saturday, fairgoers can view exhibits throughout the day in the 4-H building which will open at 8 a.m.

Poultry and rabbits will be judged at 10 a.m., followed by sheep judging at 1 p.m. A food auction is scheduled for 4 p.m., and swine judging will begin at 6 p.m. These events will take place under the covered arena located on the fairgrounds.

At 10 a.m. on Thursday, 4-H beef, bucket calf and dairy judging will take place under the covered arena. The round robin competition will begin at 2 p.m., followed by a public style revue at 5 p.m. during which time the fair king and queen will be crowned.

The public is invited to participate in a watermelon eating contest, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. outside the 4-H building, and Hoxie's home-owned carnival will open its gates at 7 p.m. Carnival organizers will celebrate its 25th anniversary, and

the carnival will run through Saturday night.

Friday will be a busy day for fair participants and fairgoers. At 10 a.m., an open class small pet and dog show will take place at Sheridan County Health Complex. The show is held at the complex so long-term care and assisted living residents may enjoy the activities and view the pets.

Children attending the fair are invited to participate in a barnyard Olympics at 2 p.m. under the covered arena.

Games named after farm associated activities or livestock will be played.

The annual fair parade will start at 6:30 p.m. Line up for the parade will be at the Hoxie High School and the parade will follow Sheridan Avenue to Main Street, where it will turn right and end at the fairgrounds.

A rodeo will start at 8 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday nights.

The 4-H livestock sale will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday morning under the covered arena, and Saturday evening, the public is invited to a free community barbecue from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the 4-H building.

The annual demolition derby will follow the fair by two weeks. It will take place on Saturday, Aug. 13, and will start at 3 p.m. at the rodeo arena.

For more information about upcoming Sheridan County fair activities, contact the K-State Research and Extension office at (785) 675-3268, or fair board member Julie Roberts at 675-2213.

Pajama party fun



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Amy Wildeman helped her son Thane make a crown during a pajama party at Pioneer Memorial Library Thursday. The evening included stories, crafts and snacks. Judy Kleinsorge, children's

librarian, said the theme for the evening was "A Midsummer's Night Dream." It was the last pajama party of the summer at the library.

Colby students complete four years of space camp

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Two Colby High School students got a close look at what it takes to go to the final frontier this summer. Alex Kleinsorge and Hanna Zimmerman have gone through all four years of space camp at the Kansas CosmoSphere in Hutchinson, and both will be seniors this fall.

Teresa Sindelar, camp programs manager at the CosmoSphere, said this was the first year Level 4 was offered, and the group Zimmerman and Kleinsorge were part of was the first group to go through all four levels offered.

She said it's not unusual for students to come back once they go through the first level because they make friends and keep in contact.



Zimmerman



Kleinsorge

"Once we get them here they come back," Sindelar said.

The idea behind the fourth level was to go a step beyond level three and the Houston trip. She said there students see the place where astronauts work and the new level will give them the chance to see where NASA houses its launch vehicles

and operation.

And, Sindelar said, the students joked Level 5 would be to "send them into orbit."

She added the students were "wonderful" to work with and even bought staff souvenirs before graduation.

"I'm sure they'll all do great things," Sindelar said.

Alex said his older brother Theo went to camp and that's how he got interested.

Zimmerman's interest began differently.

"I was obsessed with the movie 'Apollo 13,'" she said.

Both got to indulge their interest in last space camp session.

The summer session at Kennedy Space Center in Florida was the last

for both. The two were part of a group of 30 kids who made up the level four space camp class.

They toured Kennedy Space Center, took part in activities planned by the Florida Space Authority and also had a little downtime to experience some of what the area had to offer.

First and second year sessions were both at the CosmoSphere. Level three was a three-day trip to Johnson Space Center in Houston.

The first year at Hutchinson culminated in a simulated shuttle mission. They also went through many briefings and other simulations. Year two was more in-depth, Kleinsorge said, including a trip to Wichita to do buoyancy training under water and more hands-on ac-

tivities. Year three was the trip to Houston where they took a tour and got a behind the scenes look that most people never get. They saw many of the simulators used by astronauts.

In Florida, they saw the space shuttle Discovery sitting on the launch pad before its scrubbed July 13 launch, and the other launch facilities at Cape Canaveral.

A typical day was get up, get on the bus then a 20-minute drive to the Florida Space Authority. The second day they split into two groups for activities at Kennedy. The third day they launched weather balloons, toured various launch sites at Cape Canaveral and spent time at the beach.

They were on the same team for

the weather balloon project. Zimmerman said they had only a couple of hours over two days to build theirs. They were given Styrofoam and duct tape to work with, and had to build a payload.

"It was a complete fiasco but it was fun though," she said.

They included a note with theirs, signed by everyone. They also added their counselors' phone numbers in case the balloon was found.

"We had a lot of fun with that," Zimmerman said.

Both enjoyed their Florida trip and they were able to sample some of the local activities, like the beach and shopping, and the chance to relax, along with a dolphin tour. It was the first trip to Florida and the beach for both.

Huge American flag bit hit in Colby

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The stars and stripes are flying high in Colby. And it's not like anyone's going to miss it because the flag is visible from several miles away, including I-70 and Highways 24 and 25.

The giant American flag whipping in the breeze at the Comfort Inn was first flown during the Kansas Army National Guard Enlisted Conference in March, said Julie Saddler, convention services director at the Comfort Inn.

She said the flag is a joint effort between the Comfort Inn, Village Inn and Oasis Travel Center.

The flag is 30 feet high, 50 feet long and flies on a pole that is 120 feet high.

Owner Mike Woofter said the sign pole was originally an old sign post from the Total station that once stood on the site.

They had Commercial Sign come out and work on the post, converting it into a flag pole.

"We just put it up because we like it and it's good looking," he said. "We think it's cool."

The only time the flag comes down is for repair, or when winds

get up over 40 miles per hour. Saddler said if the wind speed goes over that, the flag starts to get damaged.

It's already had two feet cut off the bottom because of wind.

Also, the American flag is so large it requires loops to hold it in place instead of the traditional two loops, one at the top and one at the bottom. It has a series of loops from top to bottom that anchor it to the pole.

"Two wouldn't be enough to hold it," she said.

Attracting business wasn't the main reason behind the flag.

Saddler said it was to honor those in Colby who are or who have served their country in the military.

However, it has caught the attention of passing motorists.

She works at the convention center at City Limits and sees people at the hotel or getting gas at the Oasis looking at the flag.

People at the convention hall also peek out the windows at the giant star-spangled banner.

Saddler said people comment all the time about the flag.

"I hope everyone enjoys it as much as we do," Saddler said recently.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The giant flag on the grounds of the Colby Comfort Inn attracts a lot of attention. The 30- by 50-foot flag is a joint effort among the Comfort Inn, Oasis Travel Center and Village Inn.

Disabled boy wins fight to play baseball

WASHINGTON (AP) — Matthew Whaley just wanted to play baseball with his friends. But it took a federal lawsuit before the 8-year-old with cerebral palsy could join the lineup on his summer baseball team in Scott City, Kan.

Whaley and his legal victory was honored Thursday night in Washington by a national disability rights group celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

His mother, Jennifer Berends, said she is proud to share Matthew's story if it can help make a difference for other people with disabilities.

"All along, it was about Matthew just getting to do what the other kids were doing," Berends said.

Last summer, Matthew told his mother he wanted to play baseball with his older brother — who is not disabled — on a youth team for boys ages 7 to 9. He uses a walker for mobility, bracing himself with one hand and swinging the bat with the other.

But the Scott City Recreation Commission said he couldn't join the team because of concerns he might get hurt or hurt other players. They also claimed it would force them to alter the rules and make the

game less competitive, even though Matthew requested no changes.

His family finally sued the commission in federal district court in Wichita. It didn't take long for U.S. District Judge J. Thomas Marten to rule the league could not discriminate against him under the ADA. Marten issued a preliminary injunction ordering the commission to let Matthew play.

"There are other kids out there who can't hit the ball," Berends said. "Just because Matthew has a walker it's unfair to exclude him from playing."

Matthew is now playing his second season of baseball. He's hit three balls this year, and his most recent hit scored two RBIs, his mother said. The legal advocacy group sponsored the Washington reception honoring Matthew and other special guests. Decker said organizers wanted to show how the ADA has helped gain access for people in a variety of settings.

"The satisfaction came the first time I saw Matthew on the bench smiling because he got to play ball with his brother," Berends said.

"I'm happy that he's been afforded the right just to get on the field and play."

