



14 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

Friday

August 26, 2005

50¢

Volume 116, Number 136  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

## 100th birthday Lula Thieler enjoying a full life

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Lula Thieler will be 100 years old on Thursday, Sept. 1, and she's still going strong.

In her lifetime, she has done a lot of different things ranging from teaching and volunteer work to traveling all across the country and writing about other people.

For more than 40 years, she has been involved in the happenings of events in Rexford and more recently Fairview Estates, which appear in the *Colby Free Press* on a weekly basis.

"I started (writing) because I thought that would be fun to do," she said. "It was interesting work to do."

She hadn't written anything like that before but decided to give it a try and also because there wasn't anyone else at the time who wanted to do it.

She took over the column from Anna Shaw.

Almost three years ago she moved from her home in Rexford to Fairview Estates, where she started writing about the happenings there.

Writing has been a way to find out about what's going on around her and what people are up to. Thieler said it's been a chance to talk to more people than she thought possible.

"Some people wanted their name in the paper every week, some didn't," she said.

Through her writing, she knows all 34 residents at Fairview and most of them are willing to share their news with others.

Thieler is a Rexford native, born on a farm outside of town on Sept. 1, 1905.

She was married, her first husband having died in 1948 at the age of 44.

She married her second husband, Earl, in 1950. Between the two of them, they had six children and Thieler said she's got so many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Lula Thieler took time out on Thursday to relax at her Fairview Estates residence. Close by are lots of photographs of her many grandchildren.

grandchildren it's hard to keep track. She taught school 26 years, 19 of those spent at Oberlin, one in Selden and the rest in country schools.

Thieler said after retirement, she and Earl traveled with their fifth wheel trailer and she's been to all 50 states.

She said she's lived a full life and has been active in Rexford and is also a member of Rexford Community Church.

Her family will be honoring her with a birthday dinner on Sunday, Sept. 4. She said most of them are coming into town for the event.

Her birthday hasn't gone unno-

ticed either. She's already gotten several 100th birthday cards, including birthday greetings from President George W. Bush and his First Lady Laura Bush.

For those who would like to send birthday wishes, write Thieler at: 1630 Sewell Ave. (B-3), Colby, Kan. 67701.

## Soldier leaves her children in Hoxie's care

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

HOXIE — Hoxie has become the home to two young children while their mother is involved in a war in Iraq.

"Shannon and Kaden gave up almost everything that was familiar to them.

"They gave up their house, their friends, and their community. Shannon and Kaden both started a new school, but worst of all, they gave up their mommy.

Most adults would have difficulty dealing with that much change all at once," said the children's grandmother and caregiver, Rhonda Farber.

Farber, along with her husband, Rodger, are caring for Shannon Seeger, 9, and Kaden Flavin, 6, the children of Rhonda's daughter, Sergeant Carrie Seeger, who was deployed to Iraq in 2004.

Both Seeger and Flavin will start their second year of school in Hoxie on Aug. 19.

Flavin, who turned six on Aug. 13, said his mom being in Iraq had made him aware you shouldn't "kill anybody."

He said the best part about living in Hoxie was spending time with his family and learning not to "do anything bad."

A first grader, Flavin said he likes reading about dinosaurs and is having fun at his grandmother's and Rodger's home.

Seeger too said she's enjoying living in Hoxie while her mother is in Iraq.

She said she's met other children in her situation through the Northwest Kansas Military Family Support Group.

The group organized to give families an outlet to express their feelings about having loved ones involved in the war.

"Being here has taught me how other kids feel if they don't have any parents," Seeger said.

"If other people have to live with

### Part two in a three-part series

their grandparents, I know how they feel."

Farber said the military needs to do a better job of helping school districts learn how to work with children whose parents are involved in the war.

"The school has had to adjust to children with a deployed parent also. That is not something that is incorporated into the system.

"The school has done what it can by allowing time with a staff member on a regular basis to talk about how they feel about their mom being gone.

They need that time, and they both connected well with that person. She helped them a lot, and I am very thankful for that," Farber said.

Rodger Farber knows first-hand what his wife is going through. His oldest son, Jesse, was sent to Iraq when the war had just started, he's now a student at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

"I'm glad Jesse went to Iraq and got through all he did.

"I'm proud of him and for him for all he did. He learned a lot, any which way you look at it," Rodger said.

Despite challenges of helping the children adjust to having their mother away, Rhonda Farber said the joys outweigh the difficulties.

"They are both very lovable kids and we get hugs and kisses all the time.

"It is nice to see the world through their eyes again too. Kids can be so funny too.

"I am going to baseball again and teaching Kaden how to bat. It brings back memories of doing that with my kids. I am again learning what a 9-year-old considers "cool," and having sleep-overs. They are both good kids," she said.

## Doctor's resignation requested by governor

TOPEKA (AP) — At Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' request, Dr. Howard Ellis resigned Wednesday from the Kansas Board of Healing Arts amid controversy over retiring his Missouri medical license rather than facing a disciplinary hearing in that state.

But Larry Buening, the board's executive director, said Ellis' resignation won't stop an investigation by the panel into what led to Ellis retiring his Missouri license. Before Ellis' resignation, Buening had said he would appoint a special investigator to look into the matter.

"We would be investigating him whether he was a board member or not," Buening said. "It doesn't matter where it occurred, it's what occurred that could be a violation of the Healing Arts Act."

Ellis, 52, of Leawood, served three previous terms on the board and was its president from 1996-97 and 2002-03. The board is responsible for licensing, enforcing state regulations and investigating allegations of professional misconduct.

Announcement of Ellis' resignation was made in a brief e-mail from Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran that said the governor asked for his resignation and he no longer was on the board.

Asked what led to the request, Corcoran said, "Dr. Ellis accepted appointment to the Kansas board at nearly the same time he relinquished his license in Missouri. Under the circumstances, Gov. Sebelius asked for Dr. Ellis's resig-

nation and he gave it."

Ellis declined to comment when contacted at his office by The Associated Press. Later, he issued a statement saying, "Recent events have placed me in the spotlight and it is best for all parties to move ahead without such distraction."

He also said he was "humbled by the outpouring of support" from colleagues, patients and friends and won't make any further comments.

The Missouri State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts alleged in a 2003 complaint that Ellis tried to convince another doctor to alter records and submitted erroneous medical records to investigators in another case.

The Missouri board also has reported the settlement — which lists the license retirement as non-disciplinary — to databanks that track formal disciplinary actions against physicians. That was not done before Ellis was appointed to the Kansas board.

When news of the Missouri situation first was reported recently, Corcoran said the governor was unaware of Ellis' license issues when she appointed him last month to a term due to expire in 2009.

"What this situation has brought forth is the need for communication across state lines," Corcoran said at the time. She said the governor "was alarmed to find out something could be happening just across the state line in Missouri and the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts was not informed."

## Meet and greet for new doctor



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Katherine Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer and her daughter Christin Ostmeyer visited with Dr. Darren Matchell and his wife Sherri during a welcome reception for the Matchells at Colby Country

Club Thursday. Matchell is a new doctor joining the staff at Citizens Medical Center and will be employed through the Family Center for Healthcare facility.



