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Benefit dance planned

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

A benefit dance and auction is planned for Dianne (Merrell) Homm, Colby, on Saturday, Oct. 22, at the City Limits Convention Center, Colby.

Dianne, who was a registered nurse for more than a decade at Citizens Medical Center in Colby, has been fighting cancer for the last three years — and now organizers of the benefit/auction are hoping others will help in her time of need.

Dianne's husband, Richard, is a crop insurance adjuster and, many may know him for his work as a PRCA rodeo announcer.

The idea of the dance started when a group of the couple's friends banded together to coordinate the event, said Carolyn Miller, one of the organizers.

In addition to the dance, Miller is asking others to help with the auction by donating items.

Those wanting to contribute cash may also do so by making checks payable to Dianne Homm

Benefit and sending those to the First National Bank, 1195 S. Range, Colby, Kan. 67701.

The dance will feature "Shadow Riders," a country western band with admission \$8 per person.

More information about the dance and auction will appear in future editions.

For questions about how to help with either the auction or dance, call Miller at 460-6896.

To donate miscellaneous items for the benefit, call Sherry Barrett, 462-6095.

Specific location for the items has not been identified as yet.

Slithering fun



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Stacy Kirby with the Colby High School Service Club held a king snake from the Sternberg Museum of Natural History during the second annual Kids for Safety event held Wednesday at the Colby Community Building. Museum staff brought several kinds of snakes and other natural history items for children to look at during the event. More information will follow in next week's *Colby Free Press*.

County hears disagreement on road issue

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A public hearing on vacating a road in Sunflower Acres near Colby Airport was resolved the issue at the Thomas County commissioners end of month meeting this morning. The commissioners voted in favor of not vacating Heather Lane.

Sherry McDonald, Tuffy and Linda Taylor and Brandon and Kami Booi were at the hearing to discuss the matter.

McDonald had requested at the Wednesday, Aug. 31 meeting Heather Lane be vacated but the Taylors and Boois wanted the street to remain open so they could have direct access to their lots.

Chairman Ron Evans read a letter from Gene and Pat Kriss saying they would prefer to have the lane vacated. They said the street wasn't graded or maintained, but was planted and they used it as an alley of sorts.

"That road was direct access to the land," Booi said, and without access, it would be "useless."

He said it was the most "meaningful" way to get to the property and they haven't been able to do anything yet because they've been waiting on a resolution of the road issue.

McDonald said at one point she and her husband Larry had a verbal agreement with Linda Taylor and her first husband to buy the land, so they planted it with buffalo grass and mowed it for three years, and



Tuffy Taylor spoke about the road problem earlier today.

also planted trees, which are in the middle of the platted street.

She said they thought the land was going to be theirs and added there is no reason to have a road on Heather Lane.

After the road matter was settled, the issue of the trees in the middle was left. Evans said he and his fellow commissioners weren't going to get involved with that. However, commissioner Paul Steele suggested the McDonalds be given 30 days to move the three trees.

In other business, the commissioners approved:

- Minutes for the Monday, Sept. 19 meeting.

- Accounts payable and payroll.

The commissioners also went into executive session twice to discuss personnel issues. No action was taken when they came back into open session.

Colby High School welcomes three exchange students

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Colby High School has a few new faces this year. Three members of the student body have come from around the globe this year to experience life in another country.

Dang King, Gillian Zambrana Anez and Jae Woo Jeong are exchange students at the school this year.

The three hail from different corners of the world, King is from Zhengzhou, Henen Province in China; Gillian is from Santa Cruz dela Sierra, Bolivia and Jae is from Seoul, South Korea.

King and Gillian are both seniors; Jae is a sophomore.

The two seniors have had time to settle in and adjust to new surroundings and a new school, but Jae has had little chance to become acquainted with his home for the next year.

Jae's first day of school in Colby was Thursday, Sept. 29. Bernadine Samson, science teacher at the school, said he shadowed a student on Wednesday.

She said Jae was supposed to go to either Texas or Louisiana but when schools were shut down there because of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he came to Colby instead.

He will probably play winter or spring sport. Samson said he hasn't had a chance



Gillian Anez



Jae Jeong



Dang King

yet to learn about all the club and athletic opportunities available to him.

All three are enjoying their experiences and all came to Colby through different programs.

King said it was a coincidence he heard of the American Field Service exchange program. He told his mother about it, but she was surprised and indifferent.

"I was very interested in it," he said. "She thought I was kidding."

He discussed it with both his parents and eventually took a series of exams, in which he placed first, and was able to become an exchange student.

"This is a very great experience for me," King said, adding it's an opportunity to learn, practice skills and experience life in a different country and improve his English fluency.

Gillian said the principal of her school talked with her mother and eventually sent her to Rotary International. She said she interviewed and was selected as an exchange student.

She was asked where she wanted to go and had a friend who had gone to Beloit, and said Kansas was a "nice place." Gillian had the opportunity to go to Mississippi or Ohio also, but chose Beloit. However, she wasn't able to go there and chose Colby instead.

"It's a really nice place," she said.

She's found the people to be "amazing" and very trusting and friendly, more so than in the city, and people also know one another and their neighborhoods.

For Gillian, becoming an exchange student is preparation for the future. She said it's a taste of what it will be like when she is finally on her own — no parents, a chance to mature and become more independent.

Jae came to the States for the culture and experience, and also to improve his English, and is in the United States through EduKorea. Being an exchange student is

important, King said, because it's a chance to show others what China is really like.

"This is why we need exchange students," he said.

King described the differences between China and Kansas.

"School here is quite different," King said.

In China, students don't choose what classes they take. They also start at 6 a.m. and end at 10 p.m. and also attend school every other weekend.

He said it was "boring and stressful" with no time to play.

The biggest difference between his home and Kansas is people. He said here at night, there aren't many people out. In China, if no one was out, King said it would mean something had happened or people were in hiding.

Gillian said at her school, all the members of the same class would study the same subjects each day. She was in a class of 78 juniors last year, which was divided into two groups.

The biggest difference she's experienced at school is the number in her classes in Colby. She is enjoying the smaller class sizes and also the opportunity to choose subjects.

Jae said he also stayed with the same stu-

dents each day and studied the same subjects together.

Classes aren't all that's filling up their time.

King and Gillian are both out for fall sports. Gillian is playing tennis for the Lady Eagles and earned a gold medal at the Goodland tournament. This winter, she plans to play basketball and next spring, softball. King is running cross country and plans to play tennis in the spring.

Gillian has one more adjustment to make than her fellow exchange students. It was winter when she left Bolivia and right now it's spring there. She said the winters aren't cold there and is looking forward to her first northern hemisphere winter because she has never seen snow before.

King said he's getting "happier and happier" as time goes on. He has improved in physics and is very happy about it.

Gillian, on the other hand, is ahead of the students in her chemistry class. She said school in Bolivia starts in February and ends in October. Before leaving, she had one week in which to cram three months of learning.

They are all staying with families in Colby. Gillian is staying with Nick Wells; King's host family is the Patrick Toth family and Jae is staying with Brenda Minor.

Leadership Thomas County members named

Colby, Brewster high school youth included in class

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Now in its 15th year, the Thomas County Leadership board of directors chose its newest class members for the 2005-06 year, said Leilani Thomas, one of the program coordinators.

In addition to its traditional adult class participants, three high school students were again selected, she said.

Last year was the first time students were involved in the process.

At Colby High School, Katie Strange and Paige Pfeifer, both sophomores, and Tim Knox, a jun-

ior at Brewster High School, will all be attending alongside their adult counterparts.

The three high school students, Thomas said, also had all expenses covered by a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation, which was administered through the Thomas County Community Foundation.

Other members of this year's class include Joletta Cheney, United Methodist Church; Mary Ann Downing, executive director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce; Sean Hankin, Colby Fire Department; Roger Herren, director of the Thomas County American Red Cross; Margaret Kummer, Citizens Medical Center; Sherry McDonald, owner of Sears; Karen O'Neal, owner and operator of Personal Touch; Tanya Staats at Colby High School; and Jennifer Van

Eaton, Farm Bureau agent. Each of the class members were notified earlier this month, Thomas said, and their first session will be a retreat on Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 18 and 19, at the City Limits Convention Center in Colby.

The idea of continuing to add high school students to the leadership program, she said, is so that they can share what they are learning and experiencing with other classmates and become even more involved in school events and activities.

"The purpose of the leadership classes," she said, "is to help individuals learn skills and increase their awareness of issues in Thomas County."

"We are once again excited with class participants," Thomas said. "They represent a wide spectrum

of occupations." Last year's members, who graduated during the latter part of spring, included Daniel Crotinger, ADAC Counselor; Becky Felthoelter, Comfort Inn assistant manager; Timothy Hutfles, self-employed business owner; Denise Leakey, KXXX-KQLS advertising representative; Shelly Myers, self-employed Mary Kay consultant; and Terry Starns, Hi-Plains Co-op.

Peg Tole, Farmers and Merchants Bank and Shannon Wells, First National Bank loan officer were also graduates. The students last year were sophomores Jennifer McMahan, Colby High School and Ryan Edmundson, Brewster High School, Thomas said.

For questions about the program or how to get involved, call Thomas at 460-3401.

New Orleans residents invited to return home

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Mayor Ray Nagin invited residents of some of the city's most popular neighborhoods to return at their own risk beginning Friday, a move that could bring back about one-third of New Orleans' half-million inhabitants.

The newly opened areas, including the French Quarter and Garden District, all escaped major flooding in a city that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina a month ago before receiving a second blow from Hurricane Rita last week. Business owners began showing up Thursday, some saying they were pulling out and others vowing to rebuild.

"We are lucky. I was expecting much worse than this," said Germame Kassa, whose Ethiopian grocery and deli was relatively unscathed, although the stink of rotting food permeated through the locked doors. "One way or the other, we'll be back in business."

The mayor was pushing aggressively to reopen the city despite concerns raised by state and federal officials. Serious health hazards remain because of bacteria-laden floodwaters, a lack of drinkable water and a sewage system that still does not work, said Stephen L. Johnson, chief of the EPA.