



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Hunting course planned

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Kansans wanting a chance to bag their limits won't have a chance unless they pass the hunter education course offered by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. For those in Thomas County and surrounding areas, the next set of classes begins Tuesday, Nov. 1 and Thursday, Nov. 3 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., said Benny Young, one of the coordinators. All indoor classes are planned at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. 5th. Outdoor range courses will also be held on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 2 to 4 p.m., weather permitting. "This will be the last class offered in Colby this year," Young said. Anyone born on or after July 1, 1957 must take and pass a hunter education course before they can hunt in Kansas, he said. One exception involves youth under 16 years of age, who may hunt under the direct supervision of an adult 18 years old or older. However, students must be 11 years of age by Nov. 5, he said, in order to receive a certificate. Assisting to make the hunter education course possible include Colby volunteer instructors and the Colby Recreation Department. "All student must pre-enroll at The Pirates Den, 1115 S. Franklin, Colby, and if there are not enough students pre-enrolling for the course, the class will be canceled," he said. Thus far, Young said that there are plenty of openings left. To register or for general information, call (785) 460-6631, (785) 462-7602, or (785) 462-3367.

## Young artists



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School student Allison Leavitt worked on her project during art class today at the school. Leavitt and other students in the class spend time each week expressing their creativity and learning more about art.

## Consolidation no longer a 'go'

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

A federal plan to consolidate 29 Farm Service Agency offices has come to a screeching halt. According to Darin Slack, Logan County Farm Service Executive Director, the FSA Tomorrow plan has been put on hold "indefinitely." "The FSA Tomorrow plan has been halted and we are being told it's indefinite," Slack said Wednesday afternoon. "Maybe there are some offices out there where the plan would make sense, but for not it's on hold." Slack said State Executive Director Bill Fuller, Manhattan, notified him the plan of downsizing the state's 103 farm service offices to a total of 74 is being reconsidered from the federal level. "I have received very limited information and now reading news stories coming out at this time concerning FSA Tomorrow," Fuller said in an email to Slack and other executive directors about noon on Wednesday. "Reports indicate Undersecretary J.B. Penn has sent a letter to Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Saxby Chambliss that due to opposition, United States Department of Agriculture is prepared to set aside the FSA Tomorrow approach and timetable." Offices in northwest Kansas being considered for consolidation in the now defunct FSA Tomorrow plan are located in Thomas, Logan, Wallace, and Trego counties. Offices in Phillips, Republic, Rooks, Cloud, Ellsworth, Trego and Ottawa counties are also potentially on the chopping block. From the plan's announcement earlier this month, Slack has been concerned about the effect modernization will have on farmers and

ranchers.

His concern stems from the fact fuel costs over \$2.50, and recently being over \$3, would put a hardship on small farmers and ranchers utilizing agency offices. "If customers have to drive 48 to 80 miles on \$3 per gallon gas they may feel it's not worth participating," Slack said earlier. "Small producers who receive less than \$1,000 in benefits might believe it's not worth their time and effort." Now that the Nov. 15 deadline set aside, state and federal farm service agency people will have an opportunity to talk about options. Three key areas being used to decide which office would have closed and which wouldn't were the number of farmers services, the number of programs an office manages and the amount of money distributed to producers out of an office. According to Fuller, Thomas County was being looked at because it's 21.6 miles to Logan County. Logan County was being reviewed because it's distance to the nearest county and because its workload is lower than a number of other counties. According to information listed on the federal website, FSA Tomorrow had four key components as its foundation. Those were to restructure headquarter staffing levels and functions, including the St. Louis and Kansas City centers; restructure county offices; reorganize state offices; and modernize agency information technology resources and business processes. A conference call which took place at Wednesday afternoon was the first of many in which Slack will participate to learn the direction federal people will take with the plan.

## Commissioners continue discussion on polling locations

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Consolidating voting locations in Thomas County was discussed at Tuesday's commissioners meeting, and the group found out the county will be getting money to purchase voting machines. Assistant deputy county clerk Barb Hopper

said the county will have to submit their needs to the state by Monday, Oct. 31, and \$44,000 in state and federal money has been allocated to Thomas County for the purchase of up to seven voting machines. And, she said, two to three of those have to be American Disabilities Act compliant. Hopper said the money should be avail-

able by mid-November or the beginning of December. They have already received proposals from voting machine companies that have been approved by the state. County Clerk Shelly Harms is still seriously looking at consolidating polling places in the county to one centralized location, probably the Colby Community

Building, Hopper said.

Chairman Ron Evans said he would like Harms to give them a presentation on what's going on with the voting situation before the end of the month. He also said he hopes the government comes up with the promised money. "The state and federal government bet-

ter come through on this," Evans said.

The idea of consolidation first came up during preliminary county budget discussions in August. Harms said two months ago the disabilities act compliant equipment is a state requirement and getting equipment for all of the voting locations in the county would be expensive.

## Aw shucks!



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Lester Lohman, Potter, watched an ear of corn fly into a wagon during Saturday's Kansas State Corn Husking competition in Oakley. Lohman, along with Robert Held, Wichita, and Charles Wagner, Atchison, competed together during the team class of the contest. Timing for the three-man team was Mark Watkins, and cleaning for them was Jody Kruse, both of Oakley. Thirty-eight cornhuskers from Kansas and Nebraska shucked corn in a field just west of Oakley's year-old Buffalo Bill statue. Land for the statue, as well as the contest, were furnished by Gary and Raelene Keller.

## Pro-evolution leader seeking seat on state's education board

TOPEKA (AP) — A pro-evolution leader will run next year for the State Board of Education, hoping to unseat a conservative who favors proposed science standards criticized as promoting creationism. Harry McDonald, a retired biology teacher, announced Wednesday he will challenge John Bacon in the Aug. 1 Republican primary, making him the second conservative to face GOP opposition. Both are from Olathe. McDonald has become visible as president of Kansas Citizens for Science, which wants public school science standards to continue treating the theory of evolution as long-established science, crucial for students to learn. The board's 6-4 conservative majority wants to rewrite the science standards to include language sought by intelligent design advocates reflecting skepticism of evolutionary theory. While the standards don't mandate how courses

are taught, they determine what's on statewide tests measuring how well students learn science. State law requires the board to update all academic standards regularly, and the board expects to vote later this year on new science standards. However, McDonald said Wednesday that evolution won't be the only issue in his race. He said he's notified other Kansas Citizens for Science leaders that he's giving up the group's presidency. "The evolution debate is just a symptom of what's wrong with the State Board of Education," McDonald said during an interview. "My campaign is going to revolve around larger issues." McDonald plans to kick off his campaign at 9 a.m. Tuesday outside the Johnson County election commissioner's office in Olathe. He is a 57-year-old who retired last year after 32 years teaching science, most of them at Blue Valley High

School. Because of the debate over the science standards, evolution already was likely to be a key issue in board races next year. Board conservatives contend they're trying to give students a balanced view of evolution, not promote intelligent design, which says some natural features are best explained by an intelligent cause. Opponents argue intelligent design is repackaged creationism, which the U.S. Supreme Court has banned from classrooms. Bacon hasn't said whether he'll seek another term representing the 3rd District, which includes most of Johnson County, Linn and Miami counties and parts of Anderson and Franklin counties. An accountant, he was elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2002. Bacon wasn't available for comment Wednesday. There was no answer at his home, and he didn't return an e-mail message or a phone message left at his office.

## Kansas soldier dies in Iraq at age 22

TONGANOXIE (AP) — The wife of a Kansas soldier killed in Iraq on his 22nd birthday was glad she was able to wave goodbye and blow kisses to her husband just last week on a Web camera. Army Spc. Lucas A. Frantz was killed Tuesday during a mission in Mosul, Iraq, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

"It was fate we were meant to see each other one last time," his wife, Kelly Frantz, told Kansas City television station WDAF. "I'm happy I got to tell him I love him and he said he loved me." Frantz, of Tonganoxie, had left for Iraq two months ago. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 172nd

Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Kelly, still wearing her husband's wedding ring around her neck, said the military told her a sniper shot him in the head. "I've worn it by my heart the whole time he was gone," she told the television station on Wednesday.



