



COLBY FREE PRESS

Singspiration



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND
/Colby Free Press

TOP: The Isaacs were one of three acts to perform in a gospel concert Sunday at Colby High School. From left are John Bowman, Rebecca Bowman, Ben Isaacs, Sonya Isaacs and Jesse Stockman. The Isaacs performed in Colby in December 2004. LEFT: Jessy Dixon sang to the audience. RIGHT: Ivan Parker was the last performer before all three acts joined together to conclude the show.



Snow means overtime

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Last week's snowstorm meant time to remove snow from city streets and county roads. For the city, it meant spending more on overtime and fuel.

Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the city doesn't have a budget for snow removal, but do figure it will happen a some point over the winter. Instead, she figures on having to pay for extra hours worked.

"We watch our overtime very carefully," she said.

Public Works Secretary Jenny Call said today estimates so far are about \$1,500 each total for overtime and diesel costs.

Armstrong said the snow was the main issue city employees dealt with. A sewer problem last week also resulted in more overtime.

She knows of at least one employee who had 30 hours of overtime.

City hall wasn't closed last Monday even after the city issued an emergency bulletin.

Armstrong said it was necessary to get cars off the streets so city crews could clear emergency routes, then work on clearing other streets. They also had to remove snow from the runways at the airport.

"The crews did a marvelous job," she said.

Even after the initial snow removal, they had to work on clearing piles of snow from the middle of streets and other places where it was piled

For Thomas County, commissioner Ron Evans said no provisions are made in the road department budget for snow removal.

Last week's storm didn't result in any overtime or extra fuel costs because the fuel costs are already built into the budget.

He said the road department employees would working on grading roads regardless of what the weather is like.

"I don't see it as a major expense for us," Evans said. "The roads out in the county weren't near as bad as in Colby."

Legislators deal with cloning issue

TOPEKA (AP) — In Greek mythology, a chimera is a fire-breathing beast with a lion's head, a goat's body and a serpent's tail.

For Kansas legislators, a chimera (pronounced ky-MEER-uh) is something else, equally repulsive to some of them. It's a human-animal hybrid, either a cell or an embryo.

Chimeras are part of a larger debate over embryonic stem cell research and human cloning. The thought of all three inspired conservative legislators last week to offer various proposals.

Legislators didn't start worrying seriously about cloning and related issues until the latest millennium arrived, and their interest has been sporadic.

But the subjects inspire the same passion — and pit some of the same people against each other — as abortion.

"The issue is one that really poses some extraordinary ethical questions," Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, said during a Senate debate on his proposal to ban taxpayer-funded research with embryonic stem cells.

Huelskamp attempted to amend his proposal Wednesday to an \$11.7 billion state budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. His effort failed after some senators argued they didn't know enough about the science involved.

The next day, Rep. Mary Pilcher Cook, R-Shawnee, won approval of a proposal for encouraging research with adult stem cells or umbilical cord blood, viewed as alternatives to using embryonic stem cells. But she failed the next day to add a proposal to make it a felony to create

or attempt to create human-animal hybrids.

Both Huelskamp and Pilcher Cook are stalwart abortion opponents, and their ideas have the support of Kansans for Life, the state's largest anti-abortion group.

And such proposals worry other legislators, who fear anti-cloning legislation could be written so broadly as to damage what state officials hope is a fledgling biosciences industry in the Kansas City area.

Two years ago, the state created a Biosciences Authority to lead efforts to recruit promising scholars and leading researchers.

The authority also can issue bonds to finance the development of research centers and provide financial help to fledgling companies.

"There is considerable interest and considerable hope being pinned on the research into the life sciences," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence.

Stem cell and cloning issues aren't new this year, of course, because President Bush wrestled with them early in his first term.

The House approved bans on human cloning research in 2001 and 2002 at the urging of Pilcher Cook. Attorney General Phill Kline raised cloning as an issue during his GOP primary race in 2002. Pilcher Cook backed another cloning ban last year.

There appears to be a broad legislative consensus that cloning human beings is abhorrent.

Its immorality is such a given that people involved in the debate

don't usually bother to explain why.

Thus, the fight is over what constitutes cloning and a process known as somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Researchers replace the nucleus of an unfertilized human egg with the nucleus of another cell, stimulate growth in a lab dish and harvest the resulting stem cells and destroy what's left. Stem cells form early in an embryo's development and can mature into various cells to form organs and other body parts.

Supporters of such research argue that it's not cloning because it cannot result in the birth of a baby. Some also contend there's a distinction between using cloning to create a baby and using cloning to create a mass of cells that can be used for medical treatments.

Critics of the research argue that the process represents cloning, because an egg with 23 human chromosomes ends up with the full complement of 46. (Normally, the other half is supplied by the sperm.)

They also argue that whatever its future, what emerges from somatic cell nuclear transfer is an embryo, making it an individual.

There's also a passionate debate about whether embryonic stem cell research has much promise, with critics saying repeatedly that the use of adult stem cells or umbilical cord blood already is providing cures.

Opponents of embryonic stem cell research also see chimeras as an emerging issue.

Last year, the National Academies of Sciences issued guidelines on research that involves mixing human and non-human genetic material.

Free fun



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Shawna Kersenbrock, left, gave balloons to Rachel and Jacob Gengler Saturday during the Better Home and Living Show at the S&T Communications booth. Rachel and Jacob are the children of Tamara Gengler of Lawrence and the grandchildren of Tom and Carol Wallsmith of Levant.