

### Weather Corner



**The forecast**  
**Tonight** — Partly cloudy with a low around 19. South wind 5 to 10 mph becoming west. **Tuesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 42. North wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Tuesday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 16. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming east. **Wednesday** — A chance of freezing drizzle. Mostly cloudy with a high near 28. East wind around 10 mph. **Wednesday night** — A chance of snow and freezing drizzle. Cloudy with a low around 14. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent. **Thursday** — Cloudy with a high near 30.  
**Temperatures**  
Records for this date, 77 in 1904, -22 in 1899  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
February's precipitation, 0.00  
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

## K-State coach to speak in Colby Tuesday

Kansas State University football coach Ron Prince will be the first speaker of the year for the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College.  
Prince, a native of Junction City, will speak at 2 p.m. Feb. 6 in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center located on the southeast corner of the campus.

A voracious reader and a student of history as well as American business, Prince's talk will focus on his experiences as a young African-American athlete, an assistant coach and head coach at the Division I level.

Prince has developed a reputation as one of the nation's top young coaching talents.

He is currently the second youngest NCAA Division I-A head coach in the country and one of just five African-Americans in all of Division I.

A 1968 graduate of Junction City High School, Prince played two seasons at Dodge City Community College where he earned All-Conference honors as an offensive tackle on the field and Academic All-American and National Dean's List honors for his performance in the classroom.

In 1990, Prince transferred to Appalachian State in Boone, N.C. He played two seasons for the Mountaineers and earned a bachelor's degree in history from the institution in 1992.

Prince and his wife have four children, Deuce, 6, James, 4, Grace, 3 and John, 1.

There is no charge to attend the lecture series. It is funded annually by anonymous donors.

Prince will talk for approximately 45 minutes.

There will be time for questions and answers.

For more information, contact Lecture Series Chair Tom Moorhous at (785) 460-5534.

 Please Recycle

## MOVIE PASSES

Watch for your name in the Wednesday movie listings for 2 free passes.

*(Passes must be used within 7 days.)*

Pick up your passes at your:



## Briefly

### School book fair next this week

The Colby Grade School P.T.O. will host a Scholastic Book Fair from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday at Colby Grade School, 210 N. Grant. Families, teachers and the community are invited to attend the fair.

The theme is "Catch the Reading Wave on Book Fair Beach."

The fair will offer specially priced books and educational products, including new releases, award-winning titles, children's classics, interactive software, adult books and current best-sellers from more than 150 publishers.

### Fair Board to meet Thursday

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include approval of Jan. 11 meeting minutes; Thomas County extension agent report; bills and financial report; reports on the buildings and grounds, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and adver-

tising expenses and income; a discussion on the bluegrass festival contract; a drip irrigation system; committee for map of vendor sites; profit-loss report for the end of 2006 and the 2006 audit. The meeting is open to the public.

### Families wanted

High Plains Mental Health Center is searching for families to help with its new program Homeward Bound. The program will serve children with emotional and behavioral problems and their families in crisis situations. Participating families will provide a home and daily needs for children from overnight to several weeks. Single people are also asked to help with such children. Interested people will take a seven-week training course. Participating people will be reimbursed.

"Colby is a hot sport for this service," said program manager Audrey Harper Schoenberger. She can be reached at (785) 628-2871 or aschoen@hpmhc.com. Also, Becky Kirchhoff, a program social worker, can help interested people. Kirchhoff can be reached at (785)

346-2184 or rebecca@hpmhc.com

### Pride of the Prairie to play

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra is celebrating 25 years of Music on the Plains. The second performance of the season "The Blue Jeans Concert" will be held 3:30 p.m., Feb. 11, in the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. The 36 member volunteer orchestra will play a variety of selections in an informal atmosphere.

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra is under the direction of Andrew Salvador, Burlington High School band director. Tickets are available at the door.

### Tax help available

Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, will be the location on Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and until April 15 assisting with tax returns for the elderly or low to middle income families and individuals. Alvin Volk is coordinating the project in Colby and will help in tax preparation at no charge. For information, call 460-2645.

## Free food under fire in Topeka

TOPEKA (AP) — A small ethics reform intended to lessen opportunities for influence-peddling in the executive branch appears headed toward a quiet extinction, a decade after Gov. Bill Graves engineered its enactment.

His reform, a 1997 law, limited the ability of executive branch employees — including the governor — to accept free food, snacks and drinks from outsiders.

Now, legislators worry the law changed the Governmental Ethics Commission into the state's "food police," and the commission believes it is hard to enforce. Last week, the House passed unanimously and with almost no debate a bill eliminating most meaningful restrictions.

Perhaps the history of the food rules illustrates how ethics reforms can go awry, as some lawmakers contend. Or perhaps legislators, operating under their own rules, are receptive to changes because they're awash in lobbyist-provided hospitality each session.

"Things have to be sensible," said Senate Elections and Local Government Committee Chairman Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler. "The whole idea is to make sure there's no undue influence, and this is probably a case where there isn't."

Graves, governor in 1995-2003, saw restrictions on executive branch officials' ability to accept free meals as a commonsense change that would make Kansans more confident that their government was operating on the up-and-up.

He first imposed his rules as an executive order, then sought a law.

The resulting law said executive branch employees — even the governor and the governor's spouse — couldn't solicit or accept anything of value in their official positions.

But it also contained a number of exemptions that make enforcing it more difficult. For example, an official can accept gifts, other than meals, worth less than \$40, if they were accepted during an official function, or if they were given by relatives or friends. Meals were acceptable during official business or "widely attended" events.

While legislators are limited in the gifts they can accept, the food, snacks and drinks provided by lobbyists don't fall under those restrictions, meaning lawmakers swallow as much as their stomachs can handle.

Lobbyists do have to report individual meals with legislators, and the ethics commission compiles

detailed reports six times a year. It appears to be not much a disincentive for hooking up with a corporation or interest group's representative, given how often it happens.

There's even longtime legislative slang — "pigeon" — for a lobbyist who's been roped into buying.

Legislators have been finding flocks of pigeons for years, though the value of their largess varies. In 2004, lobbyists reported spending less than \$329,000 on food, snacks and drinks; in 1999, the total was nearly \$498,000.

For the first four months of 2006 — the bulk of the legislative session — lobbyists provided about \$350,000 in yummys. To put that in perspective, it was enough to provide every legislator with six cheeseburger Happy Meals each of the 93 days they were in session last year, with money left over for a few hot apple pies.

And such a comparison is actually a good way to think of the scale of the influence — small perks that don't appear to amount to much individually but which in total add up to a tidal wave of freebies.

Some of it is dispensed one-on-one, some of it in receptions and dinners. There are enough of the latter for legislators that their staffs — at taxpayer expense — keep an official social calendar.

So why didn't Graves tackle that issue? Governors are generally reluctant to propose rules for either the legislative or judicial branches, though legislators often don't share similar qualms.

And, although legislators enshrined Graves' policy in law, many of them were dubious about its value.

"Governor Graves decided to prove he was more ethical than anybody in history," said House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls.

Passage of the law did lead to some small discussions among ethics commission members about

canisters of popcorn given to state agencies and the like.

In 2005, 11 employees of the Department of Education were fined a dollar apiece for taking free meals from hotels, even though they had been sent by supervisors to check out the food and accommodations to see whether the agency could save money on conferences.


Such results have always been the perceived downside of banning hospitality for state employees and legislators, something that seemingly would be easier to enforce than the current tangle of rules. Does the state want its ethics commission to busy itself with small fines for people who've accepted pencils, pins and cups of coffee?

The House bill could have given executive branch employees the same rules as legislators, but chairman Mike Burgess said his Elections and Governmental Organization Committee didn't feel comfortable having individual meals reported, viewing it as potentially burdensome. Thus, the bill would limit the value of the meal an executive branch employee can accept to \$25.


Practically, there aren't many meals that \$25 won't buy in Topeka or most Kansas cities, unless someone wants wine or mixed drinks.

Meanwhile, legislators' grazing won't be touched. Their official social calendar already is getting crowded, with more than 60 events scheduled between now and the end of February.

GIVE BLOOD.  
SHARE LIFE!



For more information on donating blood, please call 1-888-719-8929 or in the Wichita area, 268-0834

 American Red Cross

## EAT HEARTY.....

## STEAK FRY

Wednesday - 6:30 p.m.

*Your choice of Potato and Salad*

## COLBY VFW

MEMBERS & GUESTS WELCOME!

**Faced with a Drinking Problem?**  
Perhaps  
**Alcoholics Anonymous Can Help**  
Meetings are Open to the Public  
City Hall Basement  
Mondays & Thursdays - 8:30 p.m.

**NOW SHOWING**  
*Feb. 2nd - Feb. 8th*  
**THIS WEEK ONLY**


**WE ARE MARSHALL**  
PG 2 hours, 10 min.  
Friday 7:00 & 9:15  
Saturday 4:00 & 7:00 & 9:15  
Sunday 4:00 & 7:00  
Monday - Thursday 7:00

**FREEDOM WRITERS**  
PG-13 2 hours, 5 min.  
Friday 7:00 & 9:15  
Saturday 4:00 & 7:00 & 9:15  
Sunday 4:00 & 7:00  
Monday - Thursday 7:00



Colby Cinema  
1233 S. 4th  
460-9600 • colbycinema.com

## Bowling for a cause



COLBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Colby Community College assistant baseball coach Matt Dickson was one of more than 75 people who competed in the annual Try-Athlon fundraiser Saturday sponsored by the baseball team. The event, which included competing in a variety of games, was won by the team of Mitch Kane, Mark Brier, Doug Giles, Dave Arnberger and Bill Murray. Second place team was Derek Elliott, Andy Fikan, Travis Powell and Aaron Kaiser.

## FILTER SALE

February 8-9, 2007



UP TO 70% OFF ALL CARQUEST PREMIUM BLUE FILTERS

## 70% OFF ALL OIL - AIR - FUEL FILTERS

Right now all the quality CARQUEST filters you need are on sale! So stock up to keep your equipment going strong and lasting long. But hurry — this sale is for a limited time only!

**SALE DAYS: Feb. 8 & 9**  
BBQ Sandwiches served  
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

**SPECIALS ON TOOLS!**  
1st 50 Filter orders over \$25, gets **FREE Gloves!!**

*Check our irrigation batteries, drip oil and other lubricant prices!*

**Filter Rep in Store!**



**COLBY AUTOMOTIVE**  
590 N. Franklin, Colby • 462-3349

