



COLBY FREE PRESS



Greatest show on earth

The Tumbleweed Chorus, above, performed many songs relating to its theme, 'When the Circus Came to Town,' Saturday at the Cultural Arts Center on the Colby Community College campus. "We had good attendance at both shows," said Bruce Bandy, show chairperson. In addition to the circus costumes worn by the singers, the Tumbleweed Tumblers, directed by Ashley Haines, right, participated at both performances. The 2007 show was billed as being the best show yet and, according to many attending.



KRISTI POWELL/Colby Free Press

Four city candidates have no opposition

By **Patty Decker**
Editor Free Press

Four of the eight Colby City Council members are running unopposed in Tuesday's election. They include Patrick Mallory, Ward I; Beverly Eicher, Ward II; Jim Brown, Ward III; and Jim Tubbs, Ward IV.

Mallory was appointed to the council in February 2006 to fill the unexpired term of Ken Bieber, who replaced Warren Hixson as mayor. Hixson moved to Hutchinson.

Bieber is hoping to keep his position as mayor, but will have opposition from Jim Smith also vying for the seat.

Eicher is seeking a second four-year term after being voted on the council in April 2003.

"I feel that my first term was a learning experience and that I am now very informed and knowledgeable about many of the matters that come before council, making me a considerably better representative of my constituents than I was back when I started," she said.

In addition, Eicher said there are

goals the council is pursuing — such as making Colby as attractive a place to live as possible and getting the new water treatment plant underway.

Eicher also spoke about the strengths of Colby to include having good volunteers who help in making the quality of life pleasant.

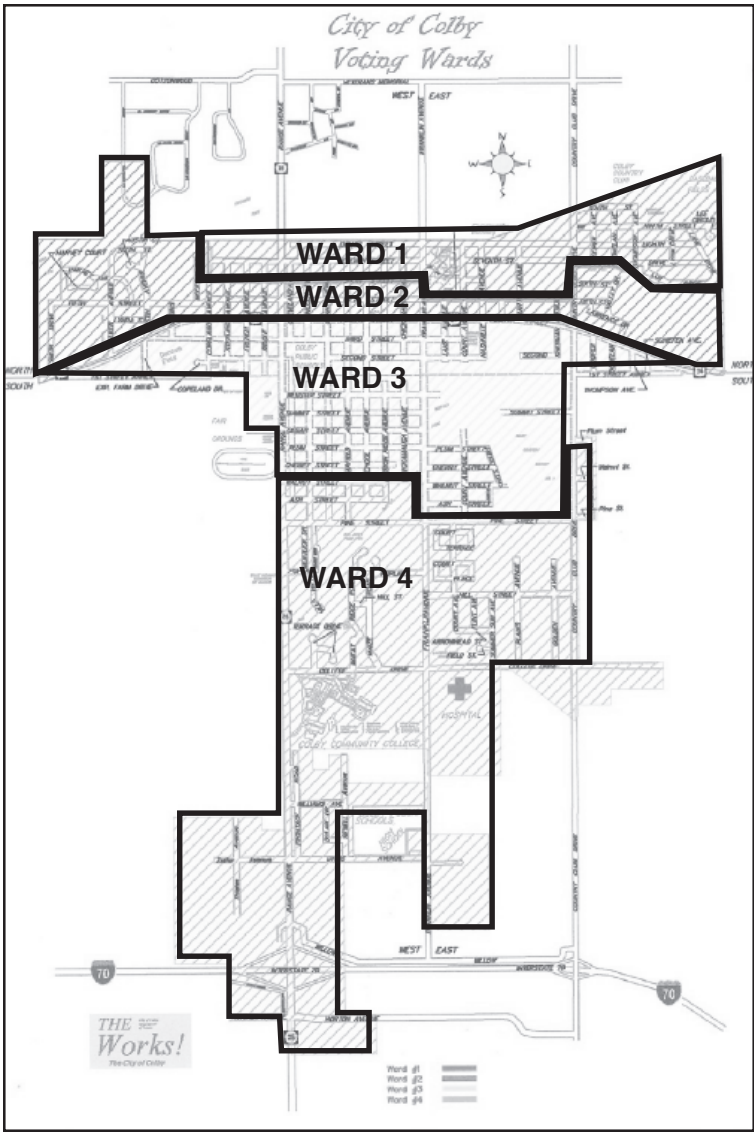
Brown is also seeking a second term having been elected in 2003 after defeating Monti Montgomery in that election.

Brown is no stranger to council boards, having served on the Colby Municipal Airport Advisory Board for 10 years and also on the Convention and Tourism Board.

Tubbs was appointed in December 2003 after Todd Barrows, who held that position for less than a year, moved out of the area.

The council positions are four-year terms with an election held every two years. In 2009, Phil DeYoung, Ward I; Tom Waldschmidt, Ward II; Tim Hutfles, Ward III; and Mark Beringer, Ward IV will expire.

Editor's note: The location of each Ward is located on the map at right.



Gambling shows bill process is quicker

TOPEKA (AP) — Two weeks ago, if someone wanted to read the casino-and-slots bill that would pass the Legislature and make perhaps the biggest social and political change in Kansas in the past 20 years, its sponsors didn't have a copy to share.

Even some supporters didn't see the text of the 98-page gambling proposal until the House began debating it March 22. Six days and 10 hours later, it was on its way to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who'll sign it and make Kansas the only state to

operate its own casino resorts.

Opponents were angered that such a big bill could fly through the Legislature so quickly. Supporters took advantage of long-term changes in how the Legislature operates, accomplishing something that would have seemed inconceivable two decades ago.

That process — looser, far less predictable and less controlled from the top — has flaws that gambling opponents were quick to note, such as the ability to pass such a big proposal with a minimum of fly-speck-

ing. But there's an advantage, too: It's far more difficult for one person or a small group to thwart the will of legislative majorities, if those majorities are determined and spend some time on strategy.

"That's not unique to Kansas. That's a national trend that's true at the federal level as well," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, who voted for the bill. "It's the democratization of the legislative process."

Passage of the gambling bill

turned a session known mostly for low productivity into one likely to be memorable.

Large, casino-and-hotel complexes will be permitted in Ford County, Wyandotte County, either Cherokee or Crawford county and either Sedgwick or Sumner county. The Wichita Greyhound Park, the Woodlands in Kansas City and the now-closed Camptown Greyhound Park in Frontenac, will share 2,200 slots at first, then get 600 more once the state signs casino contracts with private developers.

Commission chair admits to poisoning

WINONA (AP) — The chairman of the Logan County Commission admitted to a newspaper that he illegally set out prairie dog poison on land he farms.

Commissioner Doug Mackley told The Hays Daily News he used the poison Rozol early last week, 11 days after the federal cutoff date. He was not repentant, though.

"I screwed up. That's all there is to it," Mackley said. "They won't take care of their damn prairie dogs, and they invaded my field."

Mackley was referring to Lillian and Donald J. Becker, whose pasture is next to the field where Mackley placed the poison.

The Beckers are among the defendants in a lawsuit filed by the County Commission, which is seeking to force some landowners to move cattle off pasturelands so prairie dogs can be poisoned.

Two complaints were filed last week with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. One deals with Mackley's use of Rozol past the allowable date, and the other with allegations of illegal above-ground bait stations in Logan County.

The Beckers filed the complaint against Mackley on Wednesday, two days after they saw him in the field on an all-terrain vehicle. They said they did not notice that Rozol had been set out until the next day, when they were putting out phostoxin — another prairie dog poison — on their own land.

Mackley said he plans to plant corn on the field and does not want the crop attacked by prairie dogs.

"I'm just like every other farm out here fighting prairie dogs," he said. "Everybody thinks they're

"I screwed up. That's all there is to it. They won't take care of their damn prairie dogs, and they invaded my field."

Doug Mackley
Logan County Commissioner

cute. They're a prairie rat, that's all they amount to."

The Beckers also called Logan County Sheriff Pat Parsons, who said he would turn the case over to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation to avoid a conflict of interest.

Lillian Becker said there was not much Rozol on the field treated by Mackley, "but one kernel is illegal."

Mackley said that besides the lawsuit over prairie dog control, he has tense relations with the Beckers.

"They're mad at me," he said. "They fenced in a county road, and we made them move it. They've been mad at me ever since."

The Beckers said the fence did not impede traffic on the road.

Editor's note: A hearing in the battle over prairie dogs in Logan County has been postponed by District Judge Jack Lively of Coffeyville. The judge appointed Chief Justice Kay McFarland of Topeka to the case. The hearing which was set for 9 a.m., Wednesday, has been postponed, said Logan County Court Clerk Nancy Gladin, and a new date has not been set.

Five decades doesn't slow Brewster teacher

By **Tisha Cox**
Colby Free Press

When most people retire they intend to stay that way.

But Willis Crabtree, 78, of Brewster, enjoyed teaching so much he left retirement to come back to it. He has taught for 51 years and now teaches freshman algebra I for the Brewster School District. He is also the district's technology director.

"I started that this semester," Crabtree said. "I spend most of my time keeping the computers and Web site going."

Crabtree started teaching in 1954.

"I retired two years," he said.

His first year teaching was in Beeler, between Ness City and Dighton. Crabtree taught there a half-year before being drafted and spending two years in the Army. After the service, he earned his master's degree then returned to teaching in Brewster.

He split his time between Golden Plains in Rexford and Brewster before returning to Brewster in 2005.

"I started teaching because I had an interest in promoting math education," he said.

He taught math and science until 1979, then developed an interest in computers.

"The biggest change is technology," Crabtree said. "There wasn't much technology in 1954."

Brewster's school received its first computer in 1979. He taught basic programming, two years before the first word processors and keyboarding were taught.

Technology has changed things for the better, he said.

Time has brought an other interesting aspect to his teaching career.

One of the five students in his algebra class is a third-generation student, T.J. Preston.

Crabtree taught his mother, Michelle (Eicher) Preston and also taught his grandparents, Jon and Reva Eicher of Brewster. Reva said Crabtree was a good teacher to learn from.

"As a teacher he made learning fun," she said. "Yet at times you could get kind of scared. He enjoyed teaching and you could see that." One memory both she and Jon remember is how he explained the concept of infinity.

"He ran around the room with a piece of chalk writing on everything — the walls, doors, window, until finally he stopped and threw the chalk out the window," Jon said.

"He used vivid illustrations to get the point across," Reva said.

She had classes with Crabtree during her freshman and sophomore years in 1962 and 1963. All three of Jon and Reva's children also had Crabtree as a teacher.

Once, on a test, their son, Crabtree asked their son Rick if he wanted to know what his sister got on the test. He also asked about his parents, and Crabtree said jokingly if he asked one more time, he was going to get an "F."

Crabtree had an impact on him. He became an engineer.

"He was interested in helping kids get what they needed to have a good experience in furthering their education," Reva said.

Jon had Crabtree all four years of high school for algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, physics and chemistry. He graduated from Brewster in 1965.

"I enjoyed his classes because math was my favorite subject," he