



COLBY FREE PRESS

Works of art



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Joan Schwarz, left, Colby High School art teacher Donna Roberts, center, and Jeanette Poore, right, looked at student art on display in the high school commons area Tuesday. The art projects were completed by students throughout the school year.

Golden Plains approves new superintendent

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A Hoxie native has been hired as superintendent for the Golden Plains School District. Mary Ellen Welshhon said she is excited about “coming home to northwest Kansas.”

Golden Plains’ board approved her April 25.

She replaces Dr. Roger Baskerville, who for the past seven years served Golden Plains Schools as superintendent and kindergarten through eighth-grade principal. Welshhon will assume the same duties for a salary of \$80,000 plus a paid health insurance plan.

Director of special education at the Learning Cooperative of North Central Kansas in Concordia since 2003, Welshhon’s experience in education started after she graduated from the University of Missouri in 1968.

“I was a dental hygienist to start with,” Welshhon said, “and then was the federal consultant for HeadStart in the dental component at the Head Start regional office in Kansas City, Missouri, from 1975 to 1980.”

Welshhon then taught third and fourth grade in Park, from 1980 to 1981, then she taught third grade in Hoxie from 1981 to 1990.

From 1990 to 1998, still at Hoxie, Welshhon taught special education in kindergarten through eighth, along with duties of being the At-Risk Coordinator, supervisor and grant writer for the At-Risk program.

In July 1998, Welshhon accepted the position of assistant director of special education program at the Northwest Kansas



Mary Ellen Welshhon

Educational Service Center in Oakley.

She worked in the field of special education, managerial duties and a team leader for a traumatic brain injury team.

“When I left northwest Kansas to become the director of special education for the learning co-op in north central Kansas, I had hopes of becoming a superintendent in a small school in northwest Kansas,” Welshhon said.

She is looking forward to the school setting.

“I’m extremely excited about having contact with the kids, teachers, curriculum and activities,” Welshhon said. “I have a lot of ideas for the elementary school.”

“Welshhon said leaving the education cooperative is bittersweet.

“It’s been a great experience here, especially this third year because we’ve made a lot of progress,” she said.

“But, when I found out I was coming home, I was so happy to be back.”

Librarian resigns; prescription bus coming

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Colby’s Pioneer Memorial Library director is leaving at the end of July, according to information presented at Tuesday’s council meeting.

Jeff Friesen, who replaced JoAnne Sunderman in June 2004, told City Manager Carolyn Armstrong he accepted a position in the Lewistown, Mont., school system.

“I have enjoyed working with

Jeff at the library and he leaves a big pair of shoes to fill in all ways,” Armstrong said.

For the last three years, Friesen continued certain traditions following Sunderman’s retirement, such as the weekly column “Library



Friesen

Link” and other programs.

Friesen and his wife, Amie, have two children: Josephine, 5; and Abram, 3.

He was born and raised in Wichita and Amie is from Montana.

Prescription assistance comes to town

Armstrong reminded everyone the nationally-recognized “Partnership for Prescription Assistance” bus will be in Colby from 2 to 3:30 p.m., June 13.

A location has not been con-

firmed yet; however, Fike Park is one possible place.

Rochelle Dodge, public relations officer, said the bus has been traveling across the country since April 2005 and assisted more than 3.7 million people with prescription needs.

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance program is the largest private-sector program to help patients in need, she said, and who

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Memorial Day concert will erase New Year’s Eve memory

John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press Publisher

Roads are open. The snow has melted. The temperatures have warmed up and the party in Colby will continue.

Middle school, high school and college kids looking for a way to celebrate the unofficial beginning of summer can look no further than to New Year’s Eve Rewind Sunday, May 27, in Colby.

Hip-hop artist Jon Reuben headlines the event that includes a variety of other bands and games that begins at 4 p.m. at the Tho-

mas County Fairgrounds in Colby.

Reuben’s concert, along with dozens of other events across Colby, were originally scheduled New Year’s Eve but were canceled because of a blizzard that shut down Northwest Kansas for days.

“Reuben still wants to come to Colby,” said Rich Epp of J&R Marketing, organizing the event. “He said, ‘I want to reschedule.’”

After the snow cleared, New Year’s Eve party organizers regrouped and rescheduled the festivities to Memorial Day weekend. Those who had purchased a ticket for

the New Year’s Eve can use the same ticket to get in.

“What a great start to summer,” Epp said. “This will be a fun time with food and other events and games.”

In addition to the music, those in attendance can try their skills at a climbing wall, have fun with goofy golf, inflatables, volleyball, video game room, dodge ball and food.

Epp said this is a great way to start the summer.

“You can spend money on Memorial Day and go to the lake, but the water is still go-

ing to be cold. It’s not a lot of fun freezing to death in the lake,” Epp said.

Gates open at 3 p.m. Reuben takes the stage at 9 p.m. According to his entry on Myspace.com, Reuben’s interest in music started at home.

“The son of a Christian Death Metal Record Label owner and a Messianic Jewish father, John Reuben was raised in a trailer park on a farm that doubled as a church/outreach program for troubled youth. John spent his formative years writing poetry, daydreaming and turning a profit with his older brother on their base-

ball card collection.

All of this played into his love for hip-hop and an entrepreneurial spirit that prompted him to leave high school early to focus on his musical pursuits.

By the age of 18 he had started his own Indie Label, and released several eps recorded by himself and other artists. He also ran a hip-hop night with his brother at a local club on Ohio State campus.

Just before his 19th birthday, John packed up his recording gear and moved to

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Spring brings wildlife inside Colby’s borders

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

When it comes to wildlife, “look but don’t touch” applies. Chris Berens, wildlife biologist with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, said it is the best policy when dealing with wildlife.

Wildlife are not an uncommon sight around Colby, especially in warmer months.

Everything from songbirds to squirrels to foxes and possums live in town.

Wildlife common to Colby is songbirds, dove species, robins, squirrels, snakes, cottontail rabbits, turtles, frogs, possums, skunks, raccoons and foxes.

During the past two years, foxes have been sighted more than usual. “They’re pretty common around towns,” Berens said.

As Colby expands outward, foxes will become more common as the town encroaches on their territory.

If anyone finds a wounded ani-

mal or bird, they should call the Parks and Wildlife office.

“Usually we’ll come and see if it needs to be rehabilitated,” he said. “They should not pick them up and try to care for them themselves.”

The same also goes for baby animals.

Deer and rabbits leave their young to forage. Berens said people sometimes find the animals are abandoned, which is not the case.

The best course of action with most is to just leave them alone if they are sighted. But with skunks, they should call Wildlife and Parks or the police.

“Most of the time we leave the critters alone,” he said. “Some of them thrive very well in town.”

The concern is habitat infringement. Expansion provides a new food source, and incursions with humans.

The best way to keep them from coming back repeatedly is to keep pet food away from animals like

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TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Loads of help

Duane Vollbracht of Grinnell, left, and Holly and Kirk Young, center and right, checked to make sure a truck load was tied down today. The Youngs, owners of Truck Town in Colby, and Vollbracht, were leaving for Greensburg to help with the cleanup efforts there. Kirk said they were volunteering equipment and manpower, which are needed most right now.