

Oberlin candidate respects Colby

By **Joey Falkoff**
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Duane Dorshorst may have been the last of six candidates to interview for the Colby school district superintendent position Monday, but for several district employees Dorshorst needed no introduction.

Through his 25 years as a teacher, administrator and coach in the Oberlin school district, Dorshorst has become acquainted with many Colby school district personnel, including superintendent Kirk Nielsen, who is vacating the position June 30.

“After you’ve coached and played ball here for so many years, you can’t help but get to know people,” said Dorshorst. “I’ve also been in the Colby school district several times working the staff here on school improvement programs.”

A few of Dorshorst’s acquaintances were on hand Monday for his reception at the administration building, including Colby Elementary School teacher Robin Schwanke, who Dorshorst taught with in Oberlin for several years, and district patron Donna Juenemann, who was a former student of Dorshorst’s.

“I talked with each building principal principal individually, and if I’m not someone they would want, then I shouldn’t be here,” said Dorshorst.

Dorshorst has been a building principal himself at Oberlin Elementary School for the last 13 years. Prior his 13-year stint, Dor-

shorst was an assistant principal/athletic director and high school science teacher for three years.

“This is the only district in western Kansas I’d be interested in coming to,” said Dorshorst. “The challenge of leading a district like Colby is very exciting. Education is changing all the time, and the Colby school district is educationally sound enough to improve all the time.”

During his building tours, Dorshorst said he was most impressed with the attitudes of the staff and students.

“The way the teachers interact with the students was the most impressive thing I saw,” said Dorshorst. “All the administrators know the students by name and ask them how they’re doing. It’s really neat. It felt like being back in the 60’s, the students were so well-behaved.”

Dorshorst has been a jack-of-all-trades in his time in Oberlin, but unlike the other three outside candidates, he has never been a superintendent.

But he says the strength of the district shouldn’t make the transition a problem.

“I think in some school districts it would be an issue. There’s some districts I wouldn’t even apply to,” said Dorshorst. “If I had to take over the budget, I wouldn’t



Dorshorst

apply because I’m not qualified to do it. They already have people in place to take care of that. My job is set to the tone and vision for the future and I’m very qualified to do that.”

Dorshorst’s qualifications have been garnered in many different arenas.

Last year, Dorshorst was elected as the president of the Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals. Were he to stay on as principal at Oberlin Elementary, he would have the opportunity to earn a position at the national level, but says he’d willing to give that up if he were offered the job here.

Dorshorst also coached football at the junior high and high school levels for for years, coached varsity girls basketball for 10 years and was the varsity track coach for 13 years.

He led the Red Devils to three state tournament appearances in basketball and track.

“Probably the biggest thing I’m proud of is building a staff and an elementary school that cares about all of its students and works hard to make sure all students are achieving,” said Dorshorst.

The board held an executive session after Dorshorst’s interview and no action was taken.

The board has until Jan. 25 to make a final decision, and deputy board clerk Janel Andrews said it’s likely the board will come to a decision at its next scheduled meeting Monday.

For information on the superintendent search, contact the administration building at 460-5000.

Cold weather returns



KEVIN JOHNSON/Colby Free Press

Visibility at Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue in downtown Colby earlier today was limited due to the blowing snow. Winds whipped through the city at more than 35 mph with a blowing snow advisory remaining in effect until 10 p.m. tonight. The extended forecast is calling for cold temperatures with highs in the 20s and 30s and lows in the single-digits. Warmer temperatures are not expected back in the forecast for at least the next 10 days, weather officials said.

Orange and Black Classic boost to Colby economy

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Glendale, Arizona will reap the economic benefits from hosting the Super Bowl in a couple of weeks, and this weekend Colby hopes to do the same thing as the 23rd Annual Paul Wintz Orange and Black Classic gets underway 3 p.m. Thursday.

No one would confuse the Orange and Black with the Super Bowl, but for Colby it might as well be.

“Everybody looks forward to it,” said Colby High secretary Tanya Staats. “The whole town benefits. People by fuel, eat their meals here and stay in our hotels.”

“It’s a huge economic benefit for Colby with everyone staying in hotels and eating in our restaurants,” said Leilani Thomas, director of the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau. “The Orange and Black is a great source of pride for Colby.”

The five teams scheduled to stay in Colby are a welcome site for local businesses like Quality



FILE PHOTO

Hundreds of people will be in Colby for the 23rd Annual Paul Wintz Orange and Black Classic, which starts at 3 p.m., Thursday. In addition, to the huge economic boost to the local economy, basketball teams from across the state will be vying for a championship spot.

Inn, especially at this time of the year.

“It’s usually really slow from January to April, so a sporting event like this is nice,” said Quality Inn general manager Jay Hawk.

“I’ve got 60 rooms reserved just for the Orange and Black. That’s

60 rooms I normally wouldn’t have.”

Hawk sends out a brochure and letter to each school months in advance and says this year Beloit and Ulysses are staying at his hotel.

Taco John’s owner Jeff Krzycki is hoping Quality Inn’s additional business will lead to more cus-

tomers traffic for his restaurant.

“This is probably the biggest high school event just because it’s Thursday through Saturday,” said Krzycki. “People have to eat, so you just hope they pick your establishment. There’s enough places here that everyone will get their fair share.”

Hawk and Krzycki believe it’s just as important they make their guests feel welcomed.

Hawk gives a special rate for teams and parents and allows them late check out should they reach Saturday’s tournament final.

“I don’t think we should be trying to jab these kids,” said Hawk. “I try to help ‘em out, because it’s an enjoyment to the community to see teams from Wichita and Kansas City.”

Once they are settled into their rooms, Hawk provides a free continental breakfast for the teams, sets up a video game system in the lounge and puts out oranges in the lobby, though he says he refuses to paint them black.

“They told me to paint them black, but I’m not going to spend all that time painting oranges,” joked Hawk.

“Last year, Montbello, Colo., thought it was so cool that somebody would take the time to provide oranges for them. You have to do the little things.”

Krzycki also works with teams on discounts, and say showing these teams good hospitality will pay not only in the short term, but

in the long-term as well.

“We’re showcasing Colby this weekend,” said Krzycki. “A lot of towns have reputations we don’t want to have.”

“It’s a chance to make people feel welcomed. The next time they pass through, when it’s not for a sporting event, they’ll stop here again just because they liked the way they were treated here.”

The opportunity businesses like Quality Inn and Taco John’s have to make money and showcase their company wouldn’t be possible without the work put into this event by the Colby High staff and several other community members.

Even before the last team bus departed Colby after last year’s tournament, the school was already busy planning this year’s event.

“The contracts for this year went out Jan. 20, 2007 (the last day of last year’s tournament),” said Staats.

“It’s not an everyday thing, but it has been hit and miss,” said Colby athletic director Larry Gabel.

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Briefly

Benefit planned March 9

The Thomas County 4-H Council is holding a benefit for Whitney Schultz who is a Brewster Prairie Gem 4-H member. Whitney was diagnosed with cancer Labor Day weekend and the 4-Hers wanted to do something for her on March 9. All Thomas County 4-Hers are holding a soup and raffle benefit at the 4-H building here in Colby. Raffle tickets are available from any Thomas County 4-H member or at the Thomas County Extension office, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. For questions, call 460-4582.

Auditions Jan. 21-22

Auditions for the Colby Community College drama department’s spring play will be held from 7 to 9 p.m., Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 21-22, in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center. No experience or advance preparation is necessary, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer, and participants are also needed to work on technical

elements of the play. Audition scenes are from the comedies: “The Imaginary Invalid” and “The Play-boy of the Western World.” Depending on auditions, the college may perform one of these plays. A copy of each play is on reserve at the college library desk. Rehearsals will begin Sunday, Feb. 10.

Performances are scheduled for April 10-12. Those who audition are asked to bring a schedule of potential evening conflicts. For questions, call Deb Bickner, (785) 460-4783 or email her at deb.bickner@colbycc.edu.

College meets Monday

The Colby Community College board of trustees will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room of Thomas Hall. Agenda items include reports from the administrative council; an audit report; changes in February board meeting date; approval of college president’s contract and three executive sessions. In addition, the board will be presented with a learning

program developed through Kansas State University, known as Axio and the board could take action on collecting from Miles Ladenburger, golf coach, through a judgment. The board will also look at computer system switches and the funding formula. All meetings are open to the public. For an agenda, call 462-3984.

Blood drive Thursday

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is holding a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m., Thursday, at the Colby United Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. To schedule an appointment or questions, call toll-free (800) 448-3545. Walk-ins will also be welcome.

Charitable event planned

Reservations for the first American Cancer Society Charity Ball planned Saturday, Feb. 23, are being accepted. This is the first time the society has sched-

uled this type of fundraising event in Colby, said Jennifer Van Eaton, community manager of development for the High Plains Division of the American Cancer Society. The event will include a sit-down dinner, auction and dance with the Jimmy Dee Band. For questions, call Van Eaton at 462-2183.

Clothes wanted

Gambino’s of Colby is sponsoring a clothing drive to help the Children’s Orphanage in Honduras. Items sought include new or like new clothing for ages 1 to 18 years of age. Organizers prefer items cleaned and boxed. For questions, call 443-1673 for questions.

Music, comedy scheduled

“The Cartwright Brothers” will be playing at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 26, at The Gateway in Oberlin. The family-style show is an Oberlin Arts and Humanities season ticket event or admission is \$10 for adults, and \$5 for students at the door.