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JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

**ABOVE:** Harold Sulzman holds a sample of one of the the new Christmas decorations for the city of Colby. The decorations were unveiled Saturday during the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet and meeting at City Limits. Sections of four streets in Colby are planned to have the decorations. **BELOW:** Banners with a snow-theme on a blue background are the other decorations. The city of Colby donated \$5,000 to the decorations.

## Holidays to have new look

**By John Van Nostrand**  
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Deck the halls with boughs of holly ... and plans are to deck Colby with decorations this year for Christmas.

Highlighting the annual banquet and meeting of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce held Saturday, were plans to improve the town's Christmas decorations

"Decorate 0-8 is underway," said Ted Hart, the incoming president of the Chamber. Hart is the manager of Colby Ag, the Case-IH implement dealer.

Plans are to replace the town's current Christmas decorations with new banners and winter-scenes to be hung from light poles. Samples of the new banner and winter-scenes were revealed during the meeting.

The new decorations are planned to be hung along Range Avenue, the town's main entryway from Interstate 70; along Fourth Street, a major east-west street of Colby, Franklin Avenue in downtown and Country Club Drive. Deco-



rating each street is estimated at \$15,000.

Colby Mayor Ken Bieber, who was in an attendance, started the funds for the decorations by announcing Colby City Council approved donating \$5,000 for decorations on Range.

Hart replaces Harold Sulzman as president of the chamber. Sulzman works at Peoples State Bank.

Hart's speech highlighted emphasizing the core purposes of a Chamber organization. Those purposes included maintaining and improving a town's economic stability.

"Future generations will judge what we do today," he said.

Todd Stramel's term on Chamber expired. Stramel runs his own law firm. Chamber members

elected Tom Chain, Randy Jones and Martha Brewer to the Chamber board. Chain is the manager of Dillons. Jones is Colby Police Chief and Brewer manages the Holiday Inn Express. Jones replaces Stramel.

In addition to the change of board members, the chamber announced winners of its annual awards.

The Community Service Award, given to a person or organization that has been the most effective and diverse with assisting with community projects was Colby Community College. College President Dr. Lynn Kreider accepted the award for the college.

The business person of the year award, given to a businessperson who has contributed the most to the town's business environment was Dr. Gary Slavens. Andy Rose, and Drs. Jeff Morrison and Mark Wahlmeier. The four health care providers collaborated on a new building which opened earlier this year at 1005 S. Range Ave. Slavens is a family physician and Rose is a physician assistant. Morrison and Wahlmeier are both in optometrists.

## College recognizes former dean

Joe Mildrexler, who retired in 2006 after serving 42 years at Colby Community College, was recently selected as the 2008 Honorary Associate Degree recipient.



Mildrexler

To honor this accomplishment, a public reception for him will be held at 3 p.m., Thursday, in the Multipurpose room located in the Robert Burnett Memorial Student Union on campus.

He has been linked to virtually every significant event at the school since 1964, said Dr. Lynn Kreider, president of Colby College.

Mildrexler began his career at Colby in 1964 as a math teacher. He was interim dean of instruction from 1975-77, dean of admissions and registrar from 1977-79 and was named dean of community service in the fall of 1979, a position he held until his retirement in 2006.

He was also active in the Kansas Adult Education Association, holding several offices with the state group including the presidency in 1980.

He was honored with the group's State Achievement Award in 1987.

In recognition of his commitment to adult education, Mildrexler was awarded the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association Founder's Award in 2000.

The award is the highest honor which the association can bestow on one of its members. The Missouri Valley Adult Education Association is the oldest regional adult education association in the United States.

"Although I did not have the pleasure of working with Joe Mildrexler, his legacy of leadership and innovation are very apparent at Colby College," Kreider said. "His unprecedented work in continuing education remains a model for affiliation agreements between technical schools and community

colleges through the area and the state. He was instrumental in the creation of the Telenet and ITV programs that allow classes to be delivered to 28 outreach centers located in our 14-county service area."

As dean of community services at the college, Mildrexler devoted many hours and traveled hundreds of thousands of miles to promote and encourage adult education in northwest Kansas.

"Each semester, he would drive to the 28 outreach centers to assist with enrollment, evaluate instructors and encourage students to be lifelong learners," Kreider said.

Mildrexler was instrumental in the development and supervision of several programs at the college. He was the supervisor for the nursing education program and served on the Kansas State Nursing Board.

He established the computer program and secured grants for the radio and television programs.

Mildrexler was instrumental in establishing the RSVP program. In addition, he assisted with the baseball program, established the audio/video program and was responsible for the locations and supervision of the college's 28 outreach centers.

Mildrexler received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Fort Hays State University. He also earned additional postgraduate hours from the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, University of California in San Jose and the University of Missouri at Rolla (now known as Missouri University of Science and Technology).

He and his wife Mella have two adult daughters and two grandsons. Donella, her husband David and sons Chase and Chris live in Oakdale, Calif. Janella and her husband Brian live in Stafford Springs, Conn.

In addition to his dedication to CCC, Mildrexler is a member of the Colby Lions Club.

The honorary degree will be conferred during commencement exercises on Saturday, May 10, at 2 p.m. in the Colby Community Building.

## Comedian says he has message among the laughs

**By John Van Nostrand**  
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Throughout the years, the Bible has been used as inspiration, motivation and during life-changing events.

One man has found the humor in those pages.

Comedian Mark Lowry will perform his routine 6 p.m. Sunday, at the Colby Community Building.

"There is humor in Jesus Christ's life," Lowry said. "I'm not making fun of it."

But Lowry said his act is not all

fun and giggles. "I'm never challenged," he said. "I know where the line is."

Even though Lowry wants people to laugh and giggle, he said he will also tell the audience a message.

But the jokes come first.

"God gave Jesus lousy parents," he said. "Have you ever lost your kid for

days?"

Lowry, 50, was referring to the story in the Bible where Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, took Jesus to Jerusalem. Two days into the trip, the Bible states Mary and Joseph left Jesus behind.

"They were entrusted with God's kid and you lost him? People feel bad losing their kid in Wal-Mart. So they had to high-tail it to Jerusalem. He didn't bathe for four days."

Stories like that have been the result of what Lowry has turned into since he was a child. He remembers singing in church which



Lowry

eventually turned into a recording contract at the age of 11 with Heartwarming Records in Nashville, Tenn. He said his parents took him to a music festival and was offered the contract. Before comedy, Lowry spent about 13 years singing for Bill Gaither, a gospel performer.

"It was a wonderful 13 years, but I ran out of jokes making fun of Bill's hair. That's another life," he chuckled.

His interest in comedy developed during his college days at Liberty University in Virginia.

"I was the cut-up in class and

I loved to to hear great storytellers like Bill Cosby," he said. "I would tell stories about my life and I didn't have to exaggerate. I was an ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder) kid before they knew how to acronym it."

Using the ability to tell stories, Lowry found humor in the Bible. During a celebration, the wine ran out and Jesus was asked to provide more through a miracle

"Woman, what am I going to do with you," Lowry said Jesus told his mother at the time.

"If you call your mother woman, you better be God."

Lowry said several things happen during that story. Lowry gets the impression Jesus was asked of that previously and turning water into wine was his first miracle.

"His first miracle was just to keep the party going. It was Southern Baptists who turned it into grape juice."

Lowry wants his audience to remember something about him other than the laughs.

Although Lowry said he likes the work of comedians Bill Cosby and Jerry Seinfeld.

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## Briefly

### Second half of taxes due

The Thomas County Treasurer's office is reminding taxpayers the second half of 2007 personal property and real estate taxes are due May 10, said Donita Applebury, treasurer. Since May 10 falls on a Saturday, taxpayers have until Monday, May 12 to pay the final half. For questions, call 460-4520.

### School board meets today

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m., tonight, in the board room of the administration building, 600 W. Third St. Agenda items include reviewing the general fund budget for 2007-08; curriculum presentation on forensics; reports from

principals, superintendent, and board members. All meetings are open to the public.

### Reporter, author to speak

Investigative reporter and author Ted Gup will be speaking at 7 p.m., Tuesday, on the Colby Community College campus. Gup, who has written two books about intelligence and the culture of secrecy in America will be the featured speaker for The Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series held in the Cultural Arts Center. A Pulitzer Prize finalist, Gup is a former staff writer for the *Washington Post* and *Time Magazine* and has written for a wide range of other publications. The public is encouraged to attend and admission is free.

### College meets today

The Colby College Board of Trustees will hold their regular meeting at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room at Thomas Hall on campus. Agenda items include food service bids; contracts; agreements; resolutions; feedlot certification program approval; resignations; budget discussion and other reports. The meeting is open to the public.

### Band concert May 1

A spring band concert will be held at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 1, at the Frahm Theater on the campus of Colby Community College. Director for the instrumental concert is Bradley Herndon. Everyone

is welcome and admission is free.

### 'Aprilfest' planned

The Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Organization is sponsoring "Aprilfest," from 2 to 5 p.m., Sunday, in the school's gymnasium. The event, said Susan McLemore, one of the coordinators, will be a "fun afternoon of polka dancing and bingo." Music will be provided by the *Wes Windholtz Polka Band* from Hays, which features accordion, guitar, clavivova and saxophone. Homemade pies and goodies, and nonalcoholic beverages will be available, she said, and an admission fee will be charged for entry into the polka dance or bingo, or both. For costs, call McLemore 443-3042.