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Relaxing to the music



LEFT: From left to right: Marie Skolout, daughter Samantha, son Tucker and mother Linda Pabst enjoyed their lunch during this summer's first Picnic in the Park event Wednesday at Fike Park. Picnic in the Park will begin at noon every Wednesday until July 30. The event is sponsored by the Colby/Thomas



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

County Chamber of Commerce and the Colby Convention and Visitor's Bureau. RIGHT: Colby native Larry Booth played the guitar for those on hand at Wednesday's featured entertainer. Pieces of Pieces of Eight is next week's scheduled entertainment.

Moving Wall display on tour

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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American veterans and their supporters will have an opportunity to visit one of the county's famous memorials, the Moving Wall, June 12 -16 in Hoxie.

"A local resident asked if we wanted to make an application for the Moving Wall and we were told we'd have to take our turn and there would be about a five year waiting period," said Clara Lou Spillman, a member of the Hoxie Area Chamber of Commerce. "We got a call in about a year and one-half that we could display it."

Starting with an opening ceremonies at 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 12, the Moving Wall will stand on the Sheridan County Fairgrounds through a closing ceremony at 2 p.m. on Monday, June 16.

The Moving Wall, also referred to as the Traveling Wall, the Half-Scale Replica Wall and the Healing Wall, the two walls contain the names of each veteran as listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C.

Paid for entirely by donations, the Moving Wall is 252.83 feet, slightly longer than one-half the length of the granite memorial in the nation's capital. At the vertex of the Moving Wall, the joint of the two walls, the panels are 6-feet tall, while same panels on the memorial in Washington, D. C. measure 10.2 feet in height. As a way to replicate viewing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, when facing the Moving Wall, the east wall is always on the right of the person standing in front of it, and the west wall is just to the left. The Moving Wall that will be in Hoxie is privately owned, and is not part of the National Park Service.

Hoxie is the only town in western Kansas to host the Moving Wall, according to Spillman and Leanna Sloan, president of the Sheridan County Economic Development Corporation, co-sponsoring organization.

Featured speaker for the opening ceremonies will be Angela Matthews, the Director of Development at Plymouth State University, Plymouth, N.H. Matthews' fiancé, the late Joe Sintoni, has his name listed on the Moving Wall. Their love story is chapter two of the book "Shrapnel in the Heart," by Laura Palmer, the book used by students of former Hoxie High School history teacher Joanne Emerick to prepare History Day presentations for competition. Emerick will serve as mistress of ceremonies for the Moving Wall events.

Other featured guests for the opening ceremonies will be Rev. Larry Booth of Colby, who will provide a musical selection and the benediction.

Discipline policy changed for Colby High

By Joey Falkoff

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As part of the Colby school district's hand-book changes for next year, high school administrators Rocky Robbins and Larry Gabel now have the authority to be judge and jury when dealing with behavioral issues.



Robbins

Colby High's old discipline code restricted Robbins or Gabel from making a judgment call when doling out punishments because those punishments were already explicitly defined in the handbook based on the number of discipline points a student had accumulated.

Points were given based on the severity of the action.

On a student's fifth discipline point, they received an out-of-school suspension no matter how miniscule the offense may have been.

A similar point system will still be in place next year, but now it's up to Robbins or Gabel to make the final call on what the proper recourse should be.

The new policy, they believe, will make punishments more appropriate.

"The old policy is pretty cut and dry," said Gabel. "If a kid had so many tardies and their cell phone vibrated in their pocket, that was the straw that broke the camel's

back and they'd have to be kicked out of school for a day. We have a little more discretion how to apply those now. The punishment has to fit the crime. In some cases that was happening, but in others it definitely wasn't. Our hands were tied as administrators."

The school's discipline code breaks down violations into four levels based on the severity of the action. An example of a level one violation is having more than five tardies in a semester. A level four violation constitutes drug or alcohol possession or possession of a weapon, among other things.

Punishments for each level, listed above the violations, will now read "may earn OSS (out-of-school suspension)" instead of "will earn OSS."

The changes led board president Tracy Rogers to question the merits of the new system during Monday's board meeting.

He expressed his concern that Robbins might be setting himself up for criticism from parents if he were to hand out two different consequences for the same offense.

Robbins said he had discussed that scenario with Gabel, but still believed the new system beat the alternative.

"I don't think a point system is needed," said Robbins. "It's devalued what a suspension means. It's just another day off. Cussing and being tardy to class get the same consequences. If we didn't have a progression, we wouldn't have come up with these changes."

"If you're comfortable with it... you're the one that has to deal with it," responded Rogers.

"I don't think a point system is needed."
Rocky Robbins,
Colby High School principal

In an effort to get away from out-of-school suspensions as a main form of punishment, the school is considering the possibility of Saturday school for attendance issues.

Along the same lines, the board made changes to its policy on excused an unexcused absences. Language was added to the excused absence policy making it necessary for the administration to approve a student's non-attendance, in addition to a parent. The policy previously read that it only took a parent dismissing their child for a legitimate reason to get an absence excused.

An unexcused absence is now defined as any absence not meeting the guidelines listed above as an excused absence or any absence in which the high school office was not notified by a parent before or at the time of the absence by phone or written note.

The policy previously listed examples of unexcused absences, but those have since been removed. Those reasons included vacations, haircuts, reunions or sports activities not sponsored by USD 315.

"By listing these examples, this actually restricts the policy," wrote Robbins in his rationale behind the change.

A revision was also made to the dress code policy. Heelies were

added to a list of banned apparel that includes caps, scarves, bandannas, hats, sunglasses and rollerblades. They are also no longer allowed at the grade school or middle school.

Further language was changed or removed for the policy on class standing, parent/teacher conferences and gym and weight room usage.

The big change at Colby grade school and Thomas County Academy involves the new policy on lice. In the past, students could return to school after treatment had been initiated and nits removed. Now, students can't return to school until treatment with an anti-parasitic drug is initiated and no live lice are found.

A new lunch policy will be added for all of the school's after lunch prices and procedures determining when lunch money is overdue are set.

In other school board news:

- A three percent raise for administrators was approved by the board with a 7-0 vote. High school assistant principal/athletic director Larry Gabel will make \$65,457 next year, high school principal Rocky Robbins will make \$72,917, middle school principal Rob Ross will earn \$72,998 and curriculum director Diana Wieland will make \$70,009.

Briefly

Power outages explained

A piece of electrical equipment overheated in Colby causing brief power outages Tuesday and Wednesday. Rick Carter, electrical distribution supervisor for the City of Colby, said a piece of equipment that acts as a fuse in the electrical system broke. He said shortly before noon on Tuesday a resident reported seeing sparks on the line where the load break was installed. A second incident was called-in to the city Wednesday morning. While the equipment failure was not storm-related, it effected a large portion of Colby for 20 to 30 minutes both days. Areas affected included much of Range Avenue back to Country Club Drive.

Fair board meets June 12

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m., Thursday, June 12, in the 4-H Building on the

fairground. Agenda items include reports on buildings and grounds; rodeo contracts; parade and entertainment; demolition derby; races; fairbook; advertisers; free barbecue and queen and princess contest.

Special meeting Monday

A special meeting of the Colby Community College board of trustees is planned for noon, Monday, in the Thomas Hall board room. Agenda items include a closed-door session on personnel matters followed by open review and action of employment policies and employment recommendation if any. For questions, call 462-3984. All meetings are open to the public.

Appreciation day planned

LINK (Living Independently in Northwest Kansas) is sponsoring a business appreciation day from

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, June 11, at Fike Park. Organization officials said everyone is invited to the open house. Hot dogs, hamburgers, brats, chips and drinks will be available. The event is also in conjunction with Picnic in the Park.

Fun fly scheduled

An RC Fun Fly (remote controlled aircraft) will be held from daylight to dusk, Saturday and Sunday, June 14-15, at the club's flying field (five miles south of the Rawlins/Thomas county line on Kansas Highway 25). Officials are encouraging everyone to join in the fun with open flying, contests (spot drops, spot landings and limbo), non-competitive events, racing demonstrations and more. Free iced tea and water will be available, along with food and soft drinks at a nominal cost. For questions or to register, call Bob Dible, 687-2626; Nick Nichols, 460-6357; David Backus, 460-6941; Marvin Farmer, 460-7767 or Ken

Crampton, 460-0128.

Open house Sunday

Genesis-Thomas County, Inc. will be holding an open house at their new location in the Thomas County Office Complex, Suite 13, from 1-3 p.m., Sunday.

Fundraiser Saturday

In conjunction with the Brewster City-Wide Garage Sale starting at 7 a.m., Saturday, in Brewster, a fundraising event to benefit Ashton Domsch, who plans to attend school in Ireland as a exchange student will begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Brewster. The benefit will include Sloppy Joes, salads and desserts. All proceeds from the lunch and sale of items will go toward paying her expenses to Monaghan County, Monaghan Ireland.