

8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢

Monday

September 29, 2008
Volume 119, Number 154
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Hospital offers moms a birthing class

Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Citizens Medical Center plans a four-week series of childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m. on Thursdays, Oct. 2, 9, 16, and 23. The center hopes women in their last trimester and their labor partners to attend. The classes aim to reduce an expectant

mother's fear and tension about her pregnancy with information and relaxation techniques. Proponents of the classes believe the perceptions of pain expectant mothers have going into a pregnancy are only heightened by the fear and tension that comes from not knowing what to expect when they go into labor. "Anytime people are tense and nervous, their perception of pain is worse," Jeanene Brown, a registered nurse and education manager at the Citizens Medi-

cal Center, said. Through education the child-birth instructors believe, they can help women be more relaxed during a delivery. "The classes give them the tools of how to work with their bodies during the birth process," Brown said. According to the book "The Gift of Motherhood – Your Personal Journey Through Prepared Childbirth," women who have taken classes go through an easier birthing process and have a shorter

labor if all factors are favorable. Brown said the labor support partner needs to get all the information that is given to the mother so he or she can help. According to the book, the partner needs to provide emotional support, reassurance and reminders if the mother forgets her relaxation techniques. He or she should also know pressure points so he can give massages to help relax the woman and should provide updates

to members of the family and friends. Before the child-birth education movement, the woman and her partner did not have much involvement in the birthing process. Women were given a general anesthetic and doctors delivered the baby. Deliveries were treated like medical procedures as opposed to the "woman-centered" approach popular today.



TERA RAYMOND/Colby High sophomore

Colby Eagles seniors Thomas Wieland and Tanner Kriss peered down at Plainville running back Bryan Brungardt after combining for a tackle in the game Friday night. Colby High won 40-0. Story and photo on Page 8.

Colby youth scores high in music world

Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The seventh time was a charm for a 15-year-old Colby youth, Chace McNinch, who finished in the top five at the National Hammer Dulcimer Championship at the Walnut Music Festival in Winfield. The contest earlier this month featured 15 talented musicians from around the country competing for the top spot. "The competition is really hard," McNinch said. "It's just an honor to be in the top five." The hammer dulcimer competition is one of several music contests held at the festival, held Sept. 20.

Some other contests featured at the festival include the Walnut Valley Mandolin Championship, the International Autoharp Championship, the International Finger-Style Guitar Championship, the National Mountain Dulcimer Championship, the Walnut Valley Old-Time Fiddle Championship, the National Flat-Pick Guitar Championship, and the National Bluegrass Banjo Championship.

McNinch said the judges at the Hammer Dulcimer Championship usually include two musicians who play the hammer dulcimer and one who plays another instrument. The musicians in the contest are told to be prepared to play four numbers for a maximum of five minutes.

Everyone plays two numbers in the first round, he said. After all 15 contestants are finished, the judges decide what five will move on to the second round.

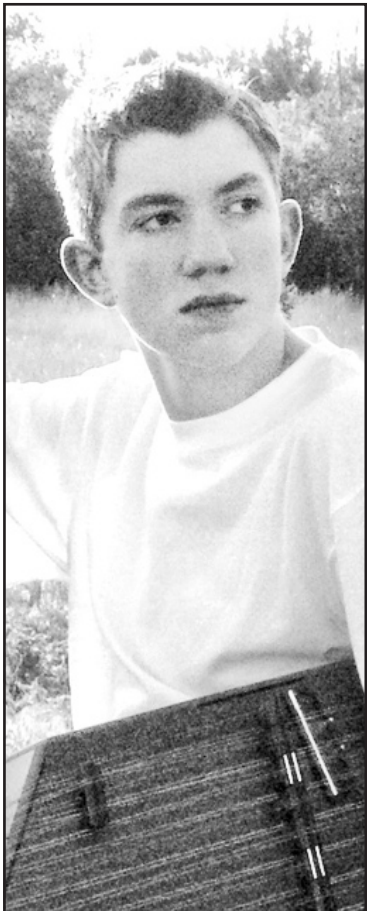
The judge's grades are based on the musician's performances in four categories: arrangement (40 points), execution and articulation (40 points), expression, dynamics and show value (10 points) and overall impression (10 points).

McNinch had never made it past the first round before, so he was not prepared to play two more songs after being chosen as one of the top five.

"I just threw two songs together," he said.

While McNinch didn't win the contest, he shared the top five with some heady company.

"Two of the people who placed



Chace McNinch made the top five in the Hammer Dulcimer Championship at the Walnut Valley Music Festival in Winfield this month.

were state champions," McNinch said.

The tournament capped off what had been an exciting couple of days for McNinch. On Sept. 18, he performed at Colby High School with the gospel group, the Issacs.

McNinch said he first became interested in the hammer dulcimer while browsing the vendor shops at the festival. After spotting the instrument, he said, he decided to buy one. He remains friends with Russell Cook, the vendor who sold it to him. Cook would become a mentor to him, McNinch said.

"He coached me and told me what the contests would be like," he added.

While Cook provided McNinch with some guidance, most of McNinch's skills are self-taught. Despite his natural talent, he remains humble.

"It's a blessing in my life," he said of his music. "I thank God every minute for it."

Cards focus on 'blended' families

By Sharon Corcoran
slcorcoran@nwkansas.com

Been looking for the perfect greeting card for your wicked step-mom?

Having trouble blending your own little "Brady Bunch"? Then a Goodland woman has created the perfect solution.

Brenda McCants, retired director of marketing and volunteer services from Goodland Regional Medical Center, and wife of First National Bank President Larry McCants, kept a journal of comments and experiences from their blended family to springboard a line of greeting cards to help others in the same situation.

Statistics show blended families are common, she said, actually half of all families in America. A lot of people are dealing with the emotions and stresses that come with blending, she said, with one in three Americans being in some type of blended families.

By 2010, she added, blended families are projected to be the predominant family form in the U.S., McCants said, and about

1,300 new step-families are formed every day.

Her Blending Moments cards include greetings to "Wicked Step-mom" and "Wicked Step-dad," the "Broccoli Bunch" and "It's OK to have a tearful moment ... blending isn't easy!"

Brenda McCants said the cards depict things her kids said, such as "You're not my mom!"

"I'm an adoptive mom as well as a step-mom," she said, "so that has special meaning for me."

She said her reply was often, "I'm sorry — you kids don't come with a manual.... I'm a parent in training."

When she and Larry married, she brought a son and a daughter to the family and he two sons. The kids were 6, 8, 10 and 12 at the time, and besides getting used to a new "parent," they had to get used to a whole different way of life.

Mrs. McCants' children had only known the metropolitan life in Charlotte, N.C., and had to get used to rural Goodland.

She said her daughter asked, "Where's the mall?" and she had

to tell her the tallest building in town is a grain elevator.

Humor helped the family get through the tough times, she said, adding that she kept a journal in the hopes she could someday help others with blended families.

Building a blended family feels like an uphill battle, she said — you can't expect a blended family to blend instantly. Parenting is rewarding, she said.

Like on the cards, she uses food and cooking metaphors to describe blended family situations, saying they fit. It's like baking a cake, she said — it doesn't happen fast, and you have to have all the ingredients. Patience is a key ingredient, she added.

"There were times we tried too hard to make it work," McCants said. "We wanted everyone to like each other, but it took time to get along."

Using cartoon characters to depict the situations takes the person out of the situation, McCants says, and focuses on the issue..

McCants' business partner and friend Tammy Neal, vice presi-

dent of Creative Consulting and vice president of marketing and sales for Blending Moments, got involved after seeing the cards.

Neal said she related to the situations in the cards, McCants said, even though she didn't grow up in a blended family, she always found it hard to send.

In bringing McCants' words to life, she gets help from illustrator Erin Terry from Colorado Springs. She works with Danker and Danker Public Relations out of Brentwood, Tenn., and Blending Moments is a member of the Greeting Card Association.

She unveiled the cards at a trade show in Greensboro, S.C., and sells the cards at the Almond Tree in Goodland, Donna's Gift Palace in St. Francis, Buds and Blooms in Burlington and at www.blending-moments.com.

She puts Goodland, Kan., on the back of each card and says she is proud to say the company is local and the cards can be bought in Goodland.

"I think it's good to promote our community," she said.

Briefly

Committee to meet Thursday

The Thomas County Local Emergency Planning Committee will meet a noon Thursday in the conference room at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range. The agenda includes appointment of officers, planning for a tabletop exercise and overview of hazardous material incidents. For information, call Susan McMahan, county emergency management director, at (785) 460-4516.

Preschool screening offered

Early childhood screening by professionals who know how children grow and learn will be offered Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the Colby United Methodist Church for infants, toddlers and preschoolers living in the Colby School

District. Screeners will check how well the child talks, feels, learns, gets along with others and how well her or she does things independently. Staff from the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center will be assisting. Appointments can be made by call nurse Amy Huffles at Colby Elementary School, (875) 460-5111 or 460-5100.

Fly-in breakfast to be Saturday

The Friends of the Colby Airport will hold a fly-in and breakfast from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. The Eagle Med King Air, a Kansas Highway Patrol helicopter, experimental aircraft, powered parachutes, antique aircraft and radio-control aircraft are expected for the event. Tandem skydiving will be offered. Breakfast will be provided by the Boy Scouts and proceeds from the event will benefit youth groups and the airport. For information, call Mark at 460-4438.

School book fair ending

The Colby Grade School Parent-Teacher Organization will hold its annual Scholastic Book Fair on Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the theme "Book Fair Safari - Soma! (Read!) Ota! (Dream!) Kua! (Grow!)" The fair offers new releases, award-winning titles, children's classics, interactive software, adult books and current best sellers.

Hunter education course set

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Colby Recreation Department plan a hunter education class at the Colby Community Building from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7, and Thursday, Oct. 9, and 8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 11. The range session will be Saturday afternoon. Students must be 11 by Oct. 11 and must attend all sessions

to receive a Hunter Education card, needed to buy a hunting license. "This is the only scheduled class in Colby this year," said Benny Young, with Wildlife and Parks. Registration is at the Pirates Den, 1115 S. Franklin Ave., Colby. For questions, call the store at (785) 460-6631, Young at (785) 462-7602, or Matt Bain at (785) 462 3367.

Health Department offers shots

The Thomas County Health Department will be offering flu shots from:

- 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday at the Senior Progress Center in Colby.
- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. next Monday at Golden Plains High School in Rexford.
- 1:15-3 p.m. that day at the Rexford Red Barn.
- 8:30-10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the Meadowlark Manor in Colby.

