



10 pages

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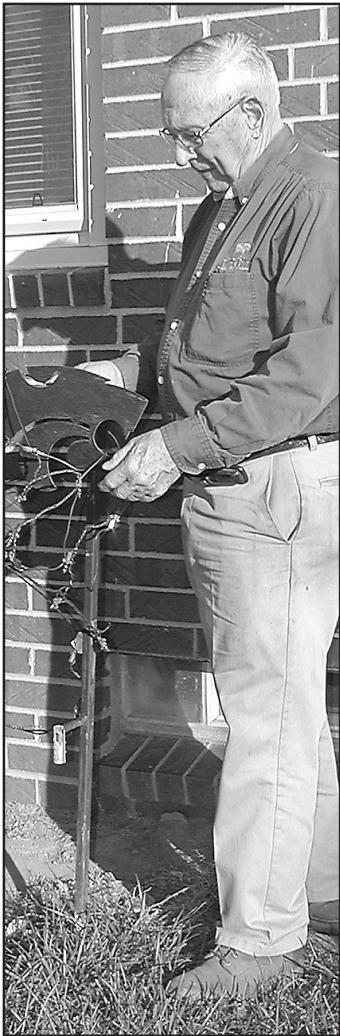
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Setting up for season of lights

Many Colby residents took time to enjoy Wednesday's nice weather and work on their outside Christmas decorations. Jerri Zweygardt (above) painted Santa's nose a nice red as she touched up a display panel. Duane Leek (left) tried to decide if there was any way he could untangle his old lights or if it would be easier to just buy new ones. Bruce "Phil" Finley (right) made sure his K-State Powercat was well lighted.



CYNTHIA HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Radio manager to head north

Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwks.com

By next week, Mike Fell, general manager of KXXX and KQLS radio here the last 4 1/2 years, will be heading back to his native Nebraska — with Colby in his rearview mirror.

Fell has accepted a job running radio stations in Alliance and Chadron, Neb., for Eagle Broadcasting out of Hays. Fell, an Omaha native, grew up in Nebraska.

"It's been 10 years since I left Nebraska, and I'm happy to be going back there," he said. "It will be an exciting challenge."

In Nebraska, he'll be responsible for five stations, KCNB-FM, KCOW-AM and KHAQ-FM in Alliance, and KCNB-FM and KQSK-FM in Chadron.

He will be doing his final broadcast for KXXX on Sunday, though he will be in and out over the next few weeks, helping with the transition in management. The station's owner, Rocking M Broadcasting out of Manhattan, is looking for a new manager here, he said.

While he is excited about returning to the state he grew up in, Fell said he has countless memories about the good times he had broadcasting in Colby.

He said one of his most memorable moments was being able to cover all the Western Kansas Liberty League basketball tournament games on the Colby and Goodland stations for the first time in 2006.

"I dreamed about doing it and we did it," Fell said. "I was really proud of that."

He said he wanted to thank Rich Epp, an independent broadcaster who now appears on Colby Community College radio station KTTC; Terry Ostmeyer, athletic director at Wheatland High School in Grinnell,



Mike Fell

and Marty Melia, general manager of the Goodland radio stations, for making that coverage possible.

Another memorable day for Fell was when the Wallace County High boys defeated Brewer in double overtime in the Liberty League basketball finals in 2007.

Fell said it was the greatest game he had a chance to cover while broadcasting in northwest Kansas.

Other memorable moments for Fell include when the Oakley and Colby girls won state basketball championships in 2007, and when this year's Colby Eagles football team made the state playoffs.

He said his all-time favorite team to cover was the 2005 Hoxie Indians girls' basketball team. The Lady Indians team that year, lead by J.C. Hoyt and Dani Pratt, finished 25-1.

"That team played some killer defense," he said.

Fell said one of his proudest moments here was when the station won the Kansas Association of Broadcasters Severe Weather Coverage Award for its coverage of the tornado outbreak in May.

Four hurt as truck slips on ice on I-70

Four members of a Colorado family escaped serious injury about 8:45 a.m. today when the pickup they were in slipped on an icy bridge west of town on Interstate 70 and flipped into the north ditch.

Trooper Andy Schippers of the Kansas Highway Patrol said then driver, Rose Maria Garcia, 41, Pierce, Colo., was westbound in a 1990 Ford Ranger pickup when she hit some ice on the bridge at the U.S. 24 interchange south of Levant.

The truck left the road just west of the bridge, he said, and rolled, coming to rest on its side facing northeast.

The driver, her husband and their two daughters were all out of the truck by the time help arrived. All four were taken by a Thomas County ambulance to Citizens Medical Center to be checked for injuries.

The family included Garcia, her husband, Magdaleno Garcia, 41, and daughters Jennifer Garcia, 16, and Beatriz Garcia, 13.

Trooper Schippers said he cited the driver for not having a valid driver's license. The Colby fire rescue squad came to help at the scene.

Everyone in truck was wearing a seat belt, Schippers said.

School board plans to hire interim principal for high school

The Colby School Board will hold a special meeting at 7 p.m. Monday night at the district office, 600 W. Third St., to hire an interim high school principal and take final action on the departing principal.

According to the board agenda final,

action will be take to terminate the contract former Principal Rocky Robbins, who was relieved of his duties at a special board meeting on Nov. 13. At that time, the board cited its reason for termination as:

- "Unprofessional conduct, including

engaging in acts of moral turpitude."

- "Conduct unbecoming a school administrator, including dishonesty with the superintendent and board...."

- "Mr. Robbins has betrayed the trust and confidence of the board, engaged in unprofessional conduct and is not an ap-

propriate role model."

Robbins had been with the district since July 1, 2005.

High School Activities Director Larry Gabel has been acting as interim principal until the board could find a replacement.

On Monday night, after finalizing Mr.

Robbins termination, the board is expected to name a new principal.

Much of the meeting could be in closed session because it involves personnel, though actual votes must be done in open session.

Briefly

Health providers collecting food

Thomas County health-care providers are collecting food and money for Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank. People can put food in boxes provided at each office. All checks should be written out to Genesis. The collection will run through noon Tuesday, Dec. 9, at Apria Healthcare, Colby Medical Center, Colby Care Center, Colby Medical and Surgical Center, Docs On Call, the Family Center for Health Care, L and C Home Health, Prairie Senior Living Complex and Thomas County Health Department.

Ladies Association to meet

The Meadow Lake Ladies Association will meet at the Meadow Lake Golf Club for refreshments at 6 p.m. Tuesday, followed by a business meeting at 7 p.m.

Animal clinic has kittens

Colby Animal Clinic a bunch of kittens ready for adoption. For questions, call 460-8621.

Advent programs set at churches

The Thomas County Ministerial Association is sponsoring a weekly program, "Soup and Scripture," each Wednesday in December for Advent, when Christians prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. The sessions will begin at the First Baptist Church on Wednesday, with the theme of "Be Enlightened!"

Santa lunch set at grade school

The Colby branch of the American Association of University Women is once again offering a come-and-go "Lunch with Santa" from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Grade School cafeteria.

Tickets are \$5 at the door, but may be purchased in advance by calling 462-2400. The price includes lunch, a special treat, a coloring book and, of course, a visit with Santa. Bring a camera for a picture with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Women's League offers brunch

The Colby Women's League will hold its annual holiday brunch from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Donations will go to support the Thomas County Historical Society and the High Plains Museum. For information or questions, call Sandy Harper, 462-3759, or any of the league members: Pat Criss, Jo Booth, Anita Hills, Sandy Kriss, Melany Shalz, Sidney Strait, Carol Jo Sweat, Becky White or Esther Woofier.

Regional group to meet here

The 32nd annual meeting of the Northwest Kansas

Planning and Development Commission and Pioneer Country Development Inc. will be begin at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the City Limits Convention Center. A presentation will highlight year's business loan, grant and housing activity. Everyone interested in economic development is encouraged to attend. For reservations, contact Ruth Deines at (785) 421-2151 or e-mail nwkpdc@ruraltel.net by next Friday.

Craft fair set for Saturday

The second annual Holiday Craft and Gift fair will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. next Saturday at the Colby Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 220 Lake Street, said Patty Drake of Nanna's Comfort Foods, the sponsoring agent. She expects more than 20 tables of gifts and holiday ideas. A concession stand will be available all day, serving breakfast burritos, cinnamon rolls and sandwiches. For information, call Drake at 460-3054.

