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Schools agree to join league in fall 2010

By Andy Heintz

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Colby's days of playing in the venerable Northwest Kansas League are numbered.

Superintendents from Goodland, Scott City, Ulysses, Holcomb, Colby Hugoton met last Thursday to plan for a new league, the Great West Activities Conference, said Colby Superintendent Terrell Harrison.

The Colby School Board voted to join the conference at a meeting on Nov. 17, said Administrative Assistant Janel Andrews. The conference will begin play in July 2010, since next year's football schedules are already set.

Rob Ross, principal at Colby Middle School, told the school board Monday that middle schools will have north and south divisions in the new league. He said that should lead to a decrease in travel time for his school.

The vision of the conference is to provide quality programs for student activities, Harrison said, including academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular areas. The activities will cover the high schools and middle schools of the member

districts, she said. The conference will also try to provide participation and scheduling opportunities with area schools that may not be part of the new league, she said.

The Colby board began discussing the possibility of joining the league at the start of the year, Andrews said.

Five of the districts have agreed to join so far, Harrison said. The Hugoton School Board will decide on joining the conference in January.

The Kansas State High School Activities Association and current league members have been told about the plans for the new league, Harrison said.

The members of the new conference are proud of their past alliances but look forward to an exciting future, she added.

Colby High Activities Director Larry Gabel said the main reason Colby is wants the new league is to give students and athletes more opportunities to compete. Declining enrollment at the other schools in the Northwest Kansas League has made it hard for Colby to find competition for some of its teams, he said, since most smaller schools don't have teams in other than the major sports.



STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Nasa, a white Indian dove that lives at Puddle Duck Preschool, fascinates the kids. Jo DeYoung showed Tessa Hill (center) and Keden Frahm how to handle the fragile bird. Teacher Amy

Jennings passed the dove around among (from left) Emma Griffith, Maryn King and Tessa Hill. When he escapes, Nasa heads for the warmth of a ceiling light fixture.

Woman's life is for the birds

By Marj Brown

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You'd have to say that Jo DeYoung just naturally attracts birds.

"People started leaving their birds with me when they were no longer able to care for them," she said.

DeYoung, business manager of the Colby School District, said at one time she had four cockatiels and a dove in her office when the school administration was housed in the old hospital building. However, when the school offices moved to a new building on the site of the old grade school, she said, she was no longer able to keep the birds. She had to find places for them.

One of the cockatiels, Julio, had been given to her after its owner, Kathy Hapke, passed away. She gave him to Kay Wallin in Brewster, who told her that Julio died on July 14. DeYoung says that bird had to be at least 8 or 10 years old.

DeYoung said she got another cockatiel from Allen and Rita Wade when she was feeling badly about giving the birds away.

"That bird was named Fred," she said, "but he died just after he was given to me when he flew into a wall and broke his neck. I really felt sad about that, but since I have cats at home, it

would have been difficult for me to keep birds in my home anyway."

DeYoung gave two of the cockatiels, Petey and Tweety, to Sacred Heart School for the children there to enjoy. The dove, Nasa, went to the Puddle Duck Preschool. DeYoung says teachers have told her that some children who have difficulty relating to humans find it easier to talk to birds, and that they are one way to get them to open up.

"Nasa, the dove, is one of the smartest birds I have ever seen," DeYoung said. "He seems to be aware of every one and every thing. He can even laugh."

Nasa belonged to Bev Eicher when she ran the Pied Piper Preschool in Colby, DeYoung said. Eicher recalled that she got the dove from Kathy Howard. Eicher said she closed the school in 1998, so she guesses that Nasa has to be over 20 years old.

"I also had a fantail pigeon," she said, "but when he heard I was closing the school, he died, proving that birds have feelings, too."

DeYoung goes to the Catholic school and Puddle Duck every day to clean the birds' cages.

"I appreciate them taking the birds," she said, "and I know birds are messy and it is a job to keep them clean, so I just try to do my part to help them out."

Temp principal praises students

Andy Heintz

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Interim Principal Don Krebs thanked the Colby School Board on Monday for hiring him for a second tour of duty.

Krebs, who was principal from 1995 to 1999, said working at the high school again has been a rewarding experience. The school has a great student body, he said.

He reported that 146 out of 305 Colby High students made the honor roll this semester. But Krebs also said he is concerned with the number of students getting Ds and Fs — 85 this semester. He discussed making changes to the seminar, a study hall for students struggling in class, to help students raise their grades.

He also said there seems to be

a problem with students who have been absent or tardy lately.

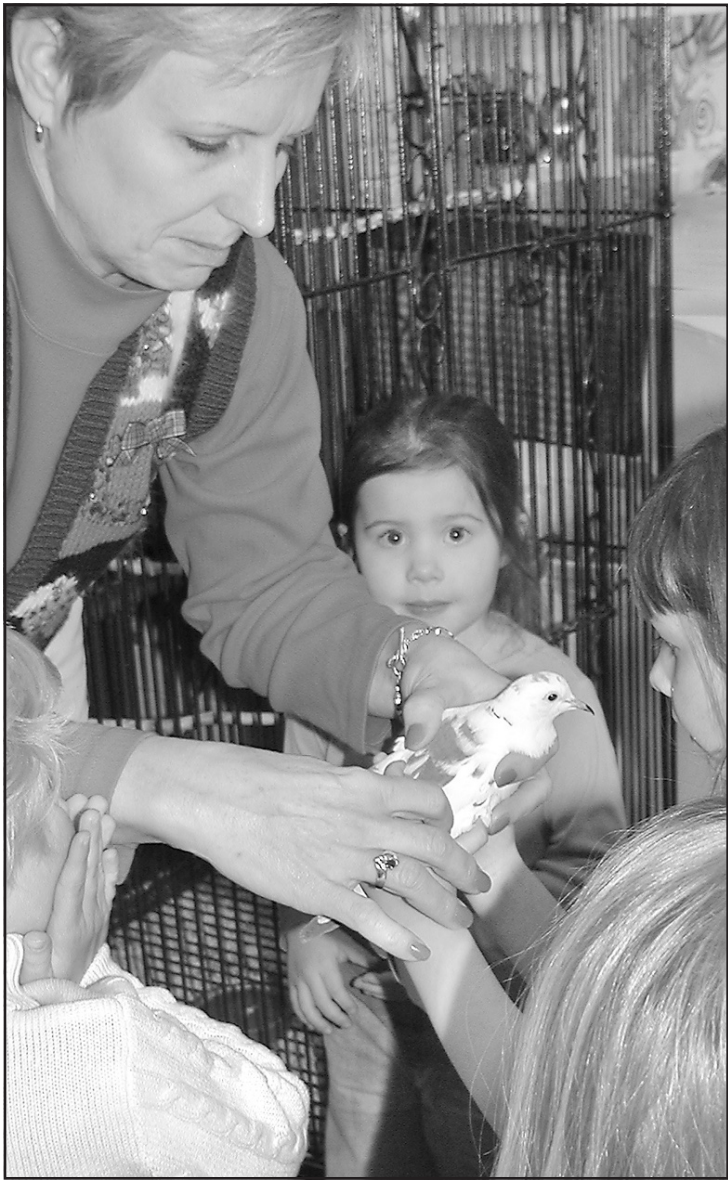
Krebs said social studies teacher Rick William's class will be displaying their projects this week. They were assigned to build a city.

Larry Gabel, assistant principal and activities director, told the board that the high school had come in first in the most recent scholar bowl appearance. He said the middle school and high school vocal concert will be at 7:30 p.m. on Monday.

Grade School Principal Lance Krannawitter said a "post office" program, where students all have addresses and mail is delivered each day, has started at the elementary school.

The post office is a project of

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Power co-op asks judge to hear arguments in permit lawsuit

By Roxana Hegeman

Associated Press Writer

WICHITA — Sunflower Electric Power Corp. has asked a federal judge to allow oral arguments as it seeks to keep alive its \$1.5 billion lawsuit against the state over a decision not to allow two coal-fired plants in western Kansas.

In papers filed Tuesday, the company asked U.S. District Judge Eric Melgren to hold a hearing before ruling on its motion for a preliminary injunction to keep the state from considering carbon-dioxide emissions in any future proceedings on Sunflower's application for an air quality permit for the Holcomb plants. The Hays-based company also asked for oral argu-

ments on the state's motion to dismiss its lawsuit.

Sunflower filed the suit last month in U.S. District Court in Wichita, saying Health and Environment Secretary Rod Bremby's decision to deny the permit violated its rights to equal protection and to conduct interstate commerce.

The attorney general's office contended

in its response that the federal court lacks jurisdiction in the case because an appeal is pending before the state Department of Administration's Office of Administrative Hearings. The Kansas Supreme Court has postponed a case before it until the office rules.

But in its latest filing, Sunflower argued that it is not asking the federal court to

enjoin the state proceeding or make any ruling on Kansas law or the role of carbon dioxide in climate change. The company said it is asking the federal court to exercise its jurisdiction over constitutional claims.

"And none of Sunflower's claims raise

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Briefly

Library taking Food for Fines

Have a book that's a little overdue? The Pioneer Memorial Library is giving people the chance to pay their overdue fines by donating canned food before Christmas. The Food for Fines campaign will run through Tuesday. Food will be given to Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank. For information, call the library at 460-4470.

Pets available for adoption

Colby Animal Clinic has a yellow lab puppy about 6 months old, a younger black dog that looks like a Patterdale terrier, a small black-and-white terrier more than a year old, and two Italian greyhound puppies available for adoption. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots,

and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Piano students to play Sunday

The piano students of Sharon Kriss will hold a Christmas recital at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Students who will be performing are Brittany and Brooklyn Bange, Andrea Barton, Dryden and Lucas Baumfalk, Lauren Dempewolf, Bailey Foss, Abby and Allie Friesen, Miranda Kern, Amy Myers, Katelin Neuenschwander, Ashley Standage, Andrew and Anna Taylor, Rachel Urban and Stacey Williams. The public is invited.

Fifth grade on stage tonight

The Colby Grade School fifth graders will present their holiday program, "December in Our Town," at 2:30 and 7 p.m. today in the grade school au-

ditorium. Vocal music teacher Jill Nickols says to come enjoy a celebration of the season.

Vocal concert Monday night

Colby Middle School and High School students will give their winter vocal concert at 7:30 p.m. Monday in the High School Auditorium. Performing will be the sixth-grade choir, seventh and eighth-grade choir, the high school Women's Choir, the CHS Singers and the Concert Choir, said music teacher Jill Nickols. Don't miss this wonderful night of music to get you in the holiday spirit.

Holiday trash pickup Friday

The Colby Sanitation Department will pickup up Wednesday and Thursday residential routes on Friday, Dec. 26. There will no pickups Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

County offices to close early

The Thomas County courthouse, office complex and landfill will be closed from 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, through Friday, Dec. 26, and on Thursday, Jan. 1. The country transportation van will not run during those times.

City crew trimming trees

The Colby city crew is trimming trees over streets and sidewalks as the weather allows. Trees will be trimmed to 13 feet, 6 inches above streets and 8 feet above sidewalks, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. For questions, call the city office at 460-4410.

Emergency med class planned

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services will be offering an emergency medical technician B class starting in January. Call (785) 460-4585 for details.

