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## Colby debaters talk way to medal at state

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The Colby High School debate team of junior Gray Henry and senior Sam Matzek brought back a ninth-place medal from the Class 4A state two-speaker debate tournament at Topeka last Friday and Saturday.

Sixty-one teams attended the event. Henry and Matzek were among the final

16 who advanced to the octafinals, and those eliminated in that round received a ninth-place medal.

Three Colby teams debated at the tournament: senior Kayla Sloan and junior Rachel Lamm, juniors Gunner Gawith and Jake Rose and Henry and Matzek.

The teams had six rounds of preliminary competition. Henry and Matzek were the only Eagles team to move on to move one.

"The young Eagle debaters had a great

season, placing as a squad in five of their six season tournaments," said Coach Nancy Rundel.

The results for the other five tournaments were first place at the Sweepstakes Dodge City Boothill Classic, third place at the Sweepstakes Hays High Arrowhead Invitational, second at the Sweepstakes Western Kansas Debate Classic, first at the Sweepstakes Scott City Invitational and third at the Sweepstakes Garden City Invitational.

Rundel said the national topic for debate this year revolved around what incentives the government could offer to companies to get them to increase money for alternative energy. Each team could choose how they wanted to approach the problem, said Rundel.

She said the Eagles offered a variety of answers to the alternative energy question, including gas compression, nuclear energy and converting food waste into biofuel.

Nineteen students competed in debate this year.

"About half the team had a 50 percent win level or better, which is good," the coach said.

Matzek and Gray accumulated more points at debates than any other Eagles' team, she said.

"They are very knowledgeable and they are very polished speakers," Rundel said.

## Budget cuts threaten jobs at area prison

By Tom Dreiling

The Norton Telegram  
tom.d@nwkansas.com

A state official's reaction to Republican budget-cut proposals has Norton abuzz with talk about the possible fate of its state prison and nearly 270 state jobs.

By Friday, a House committee had restored part of the cuts from a Senate bill, and officials said the prison and one in Winfield would stay open. Final action will depend on how the two houses settle their difference, however.

Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz threatened the closing in a letter to employees assessing the impact of proposed \$9.3 million cuts his department faced under the bill the Senate passed last week. He concluded that closing some facilities, including prisons at former state hospitals in Norton and Winfield, might be in order.

Other cuts could include an end to supervision of parolees and all rehabilitation programs, he said.

One area legislator said it would never happen, however.

"The Norton facility is not going to close!" said state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, a Grinnell Republican who represents the 40th District of northwest Kansas. The senator hoped he could say the same thing for the Stockton honor camp — already targeted for closing — but wasn't as sure as he was about Norton.

"Where are we going to put all those inmates if Norton was to close?" he asked.

The Norton facility houses in the neighborhood of 730 convicts.

The state Senate initially passed a budget-cutting bill on Wednesday.

The final Senate vote was expected to come sometime Thursday.

The effect on Norton and the surrounding area could be devastating should the prison close. At least 267 state employees could lose their jobs.

Secretary Werholtz, in his letter, told employees that the Senate proposal provided for a 3.4 percent across-the-board reduction for state agencies. He said for the Department of Corrections, this reduction would be in addition to reductions previously submitted by the department. He said a 3.4 percent cut means approximately \$9.3 million. The House cuts, at 1 percent, amounted to only \$2.7 million, however.

"Since we are now completing the seventh month of the fiscal year," Werholtz said, "it would be very difficult to realize reductions of \$9.3 million in the remaining five months.... To accomplish this, reductions would have to be made in major budget areas.

"The possible areas of budget reductions include: suspension of operations at Winfield and Norton Correctional Facilities effective April 1, advance the suspension of operations at Stockton Correctional Facility (from June earlier reported) to April 1, abolish parole and post release supervision ... and terminate all offender treatment and intervention programs...."

He said decisions would have to be made regarding what to do with the inmates from the three facilities, since they would exceed the capacity of the remaining state prisons.



MARJ BROWN/Colby Free Press

Colby firemen wasted no time putting out the fire which destroyed a child's playhouse behind a garage at 535 S. School on Saturday. Assistant Chief Sean Hankin said the cause of the fire, reported at 4:22 p.m., had not been determined.

## Fire Saturday burns playhouse

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

A playhouse behind the home at 535 S. School Ave. burned to the ground Saturday, said Sean Hankin, assistant chief of the Colby Fire Department. No one was injured.

The cause was still under investigation, he said. The department was called out about 4:22 p.m., he said, and it took 45 minutes to

put the fire out. Paint on a concrete-block garage next to the playhouse was scorched by the flames.

That evening, a fire in corn-stalk bales on Tom Sloan's land on County Road W. was reported to the Thomas County Sheriff's Department at 9:11 p.m., said Sheriff Rod Taylor. He said feed bales on Sloan's land had been set on fire. Sloan did not start the fire and the case is under investigation, Taylor said.

The fire department arrived on the scene after getting the call at 9:15 p.m. Firemen spent about two hours at the field.

The fire department was dispatched to the new three-story dorm on the Colby Community College campus after smoke was reported coming from the third floor at 11:22 p.m., said Hankin. He said the smoke had been caused by a young man who had left foil in his microwave oven with some ramen noodles.

## Farm Bureau offers seniors scholarships

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County Farm Bureau is offering three scholarships to high school seniors whose parents are members of the association.

County co-ordinator Sue Draper said Farm Bureau has been giving out scholarships since the early 1990s. The first students who received them are 30 and 31 now, she said.

Quintin Flanagan and Clint Horinek were early recipients, she added. They returned to Thomas County and are now Farm Bureau board members.

Applications are available at Thomas County high schools and at the Farm Bureau office at 550 N. Franklin, Draper said. They are due by Thursday, March 12.

Thomas County students in the first through sixth grades can enter a safety poster contest Farm Bureau is sponsoring, Draper said the poster can be about anything to

do with safety. Examples include posters promoting any topic of farm, fire or bicycle safety, safety around animals and safe ways of crossing the street at crosswalks.

The top three posters will be chosen from each of three divisions, Division I, first and second grades; Division II, third and fourth grades' and Division III, fifth and sixth grades. The posters must be turned in to office by Monday, March 2. The winners will be submitted to Kansas Farm Bureau for the statewide contest,

Draper said.

Draper said the Women Managing the Farm Conference will be Feb. 12-14 in Hutchinson. For information, go to [www.women-managingthefarm.info](http://www.women-managingthefarm.info). The conference is for women who are involved in farming in any manner, Draper said.

She said there will be about 25 speakers. Subjects include passing assets to the next generation, understanding the Farm Bill, managing pasture, animal identification and credit scores.

## Tech college hires chief

Dr. Guy E. Mills will be at the helm of Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland starting June 1.

The new president now is associate provost and dean for the University of Texas-Permian Basin at Odessa.

"Dr. Mills brings to Northwest Kansas Technical College exceptional academic and administrative leadership credentials," said Robert Loftin, chairman of the college board.

Before going to the University of Texas, Mills was the dean of the College of Education and Technology at Fort Hays State University.

Mills will be the fourth president for the technical college. He will succeed Kenneth A. Clouse, who is retiring after eight years.

The school, founded in 1964 as a vocational-technical school, became a degree-granting college in 2001.

## Briefly

### Parent-teacher conferences set

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday in Colby schools. All teachers and coaches will be available on Tuesday for conferences, but some may not be present Thursday. Parents should have received a card or phone call with an assigned time. For information, call the principal's offices at 460-5300 for the high school, 460-5200 for the middle school, 460-5005 for the Thomas County Academy or 460-5100 for the grade school.

### Dog obedience class Tuesday

The Pawsome Paws 4-H Dog Club is offering basic

obedience training classes beginning Tuesday. Registration will open at 6:30 p.m., with the first class at 7 p.m. at 4-H Building on the county fairgrounds. There is a \$65 fee. Owners need to bring a copy of their dog's current vaccinations, a training collar, a six-foot leash and a clean-up kit. For information, contact Carrie Bredemeier at (785) 460-3816.

### Grade-school book fair starts

The Colby Grade School Parent-Teacher Organization will hold its annual spring Scholastic Book Fair from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., on Tuesday and Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday. This year's theme is "Lights! Camera! Book Fair! — Reading makes you a star!" The fair offers new releases, award-winning titles, children's classics, interactive software, adult books and current best sellers. For information, call the school office at 460-5100.

### Lecture at college Tuesday

Colby Community College will present the first speaker of this year's Max Pickerill Lecture Series at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Cultural Arts Center on campus. Dr. Jeffrey Kieft of the University of Colorado School of Medicine will talk about the conflict between faith and evolution at the free lecture.

### Booked for Lunch Wednesday

Melinda Olson will be reviewing "Philanthropy and Rural America Challenges and Opportunities" at the Booked for Lunch Program at the Pioneer Memorial Library on Wednesday. Lunch will be at noon and the free program will start at 12:15 p.m.

### Sealant, fluoride clinic for kids

Students in the dental hygienist program at Colby Community College will hold a sealant and fluoride

clinic for kids 6 to 12 from 1-5 p.m. Friday in the Health Sciences Building on campus. Cost is \$7 per tooth for the first four teeth, with no charge for additional teeth. Make an appointment by calling (785) 460-5438, but walk-ins will be accepted.

### Volunteers needed to deliver

The Senior Progress Center is looking for two volunteers to help deliver meals to the homebound. Deliveries are from 10:30 to noon every Monday for every other month beginning in April. For questions, call director Kaila DeBoer at 460-2901.

### Music Boosters to offer soup

The Colby Music Boosters plan a soup supper during the Colby-Oberlin basketball games from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Friday at the Community Building. Homemade chili, chicken noodle soup, desserts and drinks will be available for a donation.

