



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢
Thursday
April 2, 2009
Volume 120, Number 52
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Candidates want to improve the college

By Shalee Roundtree
Colby Free Press
sroundtree@nwkanas.com

Six candidates are running for three seats up for grabs on the college board in Tuesday's general election.
Four newcomers, Shad Metcalf, Robert M. Renner, Bill Shields and Vernon L. Wranosky, entered the race, along with two board members up for re-election, Cindy Black and Kenton Krehbiel.
Trustee Cleona Flipse did not file for

re-election.
The county's only polling place Tuesday will be at the Colby Community Building, but voters can cast their ballot by mail or at the courthouse beginning this week.
To cast an advanced vote in person, the clerk's office in the Thomas County Courthouse will be open for voters from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon on Monday. Voters do not have to give a reason to vote early.
On election day, polls will be open from

7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Voting regulations require that a person must be at least 18, properly registered and a resident of Kansas. If your name or address has changed, you must re-register, said Assistant Deputy Clerk Kristi Mann. Citizens who have been convicted of a felony must have a final discharge from imprisonment, parole or conditional release to vote.
The Colby Free Press asked candidates what changes they might make if elected to the board and what ideas they have for

and about the college.
Cindy Black has served on the board since 2005. She and her husband Jay have a daughter, Jaylea, 17. Black owns High Plains Printing.
Black, a graduate of the college, says, if re-elected, she would like to see how all of the changes the board has implemented turn out. Black said she believes that the college can continue to improve by taking advantage of opportunities.
"I think that the board can change challenges into opportunities by looking

around and seeing what the community needs," she said. "I think we need to pursue people to go out and be creative in these tough times to help serve the college, the students and northwest Kansas."
Black said she would like to see the board become stronger and more progressive because she considers the college as "one of the best assets to the community."

See "COLLEGE," Page 3



'Trotters draw big in Colby

A sold-out audience of more than 1,700 people saw the wild antics and showmanship of the Harlem Globetrotters, more "screwball" than basketball, Wednesday night at the Colby Community Center. The Globetrotters mixed their trademark slick ball handling with campy audience participation in a game against their long-time "foes," the Washington Generals. Above, Nathan "Big Easy" Lofton held a little ball while a girl identified as "Ashley from Colby" made off with the real one. Balancing, spinning and dunking were all part of the show.



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press



Faulty estimates could torpedo state's new budget

John Hanna
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — A \$13 billion-plus state budget won approval from legislators this week, but it's built on what seems a convenient fiction.
The apparent fiction is the notion that state revenues won't fall short of expectations again for the rest of the current fiscal year or the state's 2010 fiscal year, which begins July 1. Few, if any, legislators expect the state to have such good luck in the current economic climate.
If tax collections continue to fall as short of expectations, as they have through February, the budget about to win approval fiscal 2010 won't balance, and legislators will be forced to revise it. If the state's finances get significantly

worse, legislators might even have to revise the current budget, too.
But legislative leaders are stuck with a four-month-old financial forecast in a climate in which their colleagues appear averse to painful decisions.
The next forecast won't be issued until April 17, two weeks into the Legislature's annual spring break. Legislators are scheduled to reconvene April 29 to wrap up their business for the year, which is likely to include budget revisions.
"I think it's anybody's guess at this stage of the game," said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, a Topeka Democrat. "Everything is contingent on the revenue side."
The House and Senate expect to vote this week on a

2010 budget drafted by negotiators who reconciled dozens of differences between the houses on spending. The product uses \$585 million in federal stimulus money to prop up the state's finances, as Gov. Kathleen Sebelius proposed.
The results are mixed, depending on the agency. Legislators are making significant cuts in public safety, agriculture and natural resources and general government agencies. Some social services are protected.
The state would cut base aid to its 295 school districts and their special education funding by about \$25 million, only 0.7 percent of their total budget.
Higher education comes out looking like the biggest winner. Having taken a round of cuts in the first budget,

See "BUDGET," Page 3

County needing cleaners

Custodian leaves job without a substitute

By Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkanas.com

Custodian Darrin Bell decided to turn in his building and vehicle keys at the Thomas County commissioners meeting on Tuesday, turning down an offer to work another 30 days.
Bell had been responsible for making sure the courthouse was cleaned and maintained, said County Clerk Shelly Harms. There have been complaints that he was not doing an adequate job, and the county has been advertising for a contractor to take over the work.
"The mantels never get dusted, the window sills never get dusted unless we do it," Harms said to Bell at the meeting.
"I've done everything I could for this place," Bell said.
The commissioners have been advertising for a contractor to replace Bell, Harms said. So far, the county does not have a bid to take over the work at the courthouse.
The commissioners did accept a contract from Al Smith to do snow removal and lawn care at the county office complex on Range Ave. He will get \$200 per week for lawn care and \$25 per hour for snow removal.
Custodian Ron Roeder had been doing this job, as well as cleaning and maintenance. He decided to not continue because he didn't want to work as a contractor, Harms said. She said the commissioners are looking to hire contractors to maintain the office complex and courthouse as opposed to hiring county employees.
On another issue, commissioners approved having the road department mow all the rights of way every time they mow, rather than just once a year. The number of times the right-of-ways will be mowed will be determined by the weather, said Commissioner Ken Christiansen.
In other business, the commissioners:
• Approved allowing emergency medical services to take a county ambulance to a field operations exercise at Hutchinson Community College. The county's only expense should be one tank of gas used in the trip, Commissioner

See "COUNTY," Page 3

Briefly

School looking for students

Heartland Christian School plans a kindergarten and preschool open house Friday for parents and students ready for classes in the fall. A short informational meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the school, 1995 W. Fourth St. in Colby. For information, call (785) 460-6419.

College plans wind seminar

Colby Community College will hold a seminar on wind energy for rural landowners from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center. Lunch will be provided. Topics will include lease arrangements, agricultural implications and community wind development. Landowners around Mingo and the Solomon Forks area, where a large wind farm is planned, may want to attend. Cost is \$10. To register, contact Kathy Cayton at (785) 460-5413 or go to the college website at www.colbycc.edu.

460-5413 or go to the college website at www.colbycc.edu.

Church plans big auction

Colby Berean Church will have an auction at 9 a.m. Saturday at the TNT-Jones auction house, 200 N. Franklin. Items include antiques, tools, vehicle, furniture and household. Berean Youth will have a food stand. Auction items can be previewed from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday and after 8 a.m. the day of auction. For information call (785) 443-3433 or 462-6664.

Egg hunt Saturday at Fike Park

The annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Colby Kiwanis Club will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at Fike Park. Kids will be divided into groups for age 3 and younger, at 10 a.m.; 4-6 at 10:10 and 7-9 at 10:30. In case of bad weather, listen to KQLS or KXXX radio. For information, call Scott Haas at 460-3922.

Center offers field of eggs

Kids 10 and under are invited to an Easter egg hunt at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Care Center, 105 E. College Dr. For questions, call Amanda Hillis, 462-6721.

College auction, dinner coming

The Colby Community College Endowment Foundation will have its annual scholarship benefit auction Saturday at the City Limits Convention Center. Dinner will be at 5:30 p.m. and the live auction will begin at 7 p.m. Doors will open at 4:45 p.m. Tickets are \$35 per person or \$250 for a corporate table of eight. For reservations, call (785) 460-4684.

Student screening next week

Free kindergarten screening for incoming students, which had been scheduled for this week, now will be

Monday and Tuesday at the Colby United Methodist Church. To make an appointment, call school nurse Amy Hutfles at 460-5111 or 460-5100.

Commodities to arrive Monday

Government commodities will be distributed from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office in the Senior Progress Center. Distribution to eligible people, under income guidelines, is first come, first served. Participants are asked to not arrive before 12:30 p.m. If you are eligible, you may send a signed permission slip with another person to pick up your commodities.

