



12 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢

Friday

April 10, 2009
Volume 120, Number 57
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Recruiter to get spot in video game

By Andy Heintz
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Staff Sgt. Billy J. Hackworth, the Army recruiter in Colby, is a friendly fellow. You wouldn't know he's a hero.

When he greets you, it seems like he really is happy to see you. But behind the smile is a man who risked his life to save two of his fellow soldiers in Iraq, and has been rewarded with one of the Army's top medals.

And in a 21st century twist, the Army has given him a place in a special video game, a section called "Real Heroes" in the Army-sponsored game "America's Army 3."

Hackworth said his brigade was on patrol southwest of Baghdad on June 8, 2006, looking for intelligence on insurgents. Two soldiers were inspecting a house while Hackworth and two others were keeping watch outside when the two inside were attacked by insurgents.

One soldier inside was shot in the leg, Hackworth said. The other stayed in the house to help him out and they both became trapped. The insurgents included two Iraqis, two Syrians, two Iranians and two Saudi Arabians, said Hackworth.

Luckily for the two inside, the insurgents hadn't seen them yet, said Hackworth. He said he and two other soldiers from his bri-

gade entered the home and killed all eight insurgents despite being outmanned eight to three.

"If we would have waited a few more minutes, they would have found them," said Hackworth.

Hackworth received the Bronze Star Medal for valor for his heroic actions that day. The plaque he received reads, "Sgt. Hackworth's actions helped save the lives of his platoon as well as contributing immeasurably to the success of building a free and democratic nation for the citizens of Iraq. Sgt. Hackworth's bravery and total disregard for his own safety reflect great credit on him, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (air assault), Task Force Band of Brothers and the United States Army."

Not only did Hackworth and his companions kill the insurgents, the sergeant said, they also found the intelligence the bad guys had been using to fight American troops.

He said they found cell phone numbers, locations of terrorist camps and a computer "thumb drive" sewn onto the overlap of an insurgent's shirt.

Hackworth said he has served two stints in Iraq. He deployed in 2002 with the 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and returned in 2005-2006 with the 101st Airborne out of Fort Campbell, Ky.

He described his experience in Iraq as "an unhappy day at the



Sgt. Billy Hackworth

Staff Sgt. Billy Hackworth (left) and gunner Troy Marston posed for a picture with a Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Iraq.

beach," but said it was worth every minute of it.

Hackworth said he was told about six months ago that he would be one of 11 soldiers who will be featured characters in the video game. The "Real Heroes"

segment features American soldiers who engaged in heroic acts on the battlefield, he said. The game is backed by the Army, and the money for new changes must be approved by President Barack Obama, said Hackworth. He said

the money will probably be approved by June or July.

He said a re-enactment will be done of the scene that won him the Bronze Star so it can be assimilated into the game.

To learn more about the game,

you can go to www.americasarmy.com. The website currently only has biographies of nine of 11 soldiers who will be featured, Hackworth said. He expects his to be in place by fall.

Wrestling coach honored by peers

By Andy Heintz
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The top way to get athletes to do their best is really pretty simple, says Colby Community College wrestling coach Steve Lampe.

"The most effective way to make sure a person does right is to show how much you care about them," the coach said.

Lampe received the Bob Bubb Coaching Award for the third time in an illustrious career after finishing his 37th season as a junior college wrestling coach and his 34th season at Colby. According to the National Wrestling Coaches Association, Lampe was chosen "because he epitomizes the qualities and characteristics of a role model and mentor for developing young student athletes."

The coach also has been inducted National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame early in his career, in 1984. It was the first time Lampe was

eligible for the hall of fame.

"That was a huge compliment from my fellow coaches," said Lampe.

While a lot of people claim that today's kids are different, Lampe said he doesn't see much of a difference between today's athletes and the wrestlers he coached at the start of his career.

"We've had our share of problems over the years, but 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds are the most fun people to be around," said Lampe. "Boy do they have a lot of energy."

The coach said one of his most memorable moments was when his team won the regional tournament in 1977.

"We won with almost all regional kids from the area," he recalled.

Another was when the Trojans won their first national championship in 1999. The team won their first 19 matches at nationals. "There wasn't anybody in the whole place who wasn't amazed at what was going on," said Lampe. "It was as close to a



Coach Steve Lampe perfect day as any coach could imagine."

This year's wrestling team finished fourth at nationals in

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Rodeo ready to ride at fair

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Rodeo Committee chair Claire Schrock told the the Thomas County Fair Board that the details have been ironed out for the rodeo at this year's fair, which starts on Monday, July 27, when the group met at the 4-H Building on Thursday.

The rodeo will begin on the first day of the fair. Schrock said the board reached an agreement with the Kansas Professional Rodeo Association to ensure the rodeo would take place this year. This is the board's first year working with group. They had previously worked with the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

He said there will also be a clown act. The board approved selling rodeo and demolition derby tickets for adults for \$10 and for children for \$5. This is the

same price they charged at last year's fair, said Schrock.

Rich Epp, Colby sports broadcaster, told the board that the Oakridge Boys Concert at the grandstands on Sunday, July 26, could be moved from the fairgrounds to the Colby Community Center Building if the town gets a lot of rain during the week.

Epp said he expects to sell 2,000 tickets for the concert. He said he hopes to start selling tickets on Saturday, May 2. The costs will be \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Epp said posters promoting the concert will go out on Friday, May 1.

In other business, the board heard that:

- CNC Energy will be performing at the fairgrounds from 8 a.m. to noon on Thursday, July 30, during the Slab Dance.

- The entire princess and queen pageant will take place at the fair-

grounds, starting on Saturday, July 11. The pageant will begin that day at the fairgrounds. Marie Skolout is putting together a website to help support the event. The winners will be announced at the rodeo, said Schrock.

- Board member Nancy Rundel asked if there should be an upper weight limit on cows and sheep at the fair since there is an upper weight limit on pigs. The board decided not to do so.

- The antique tractor show will begin at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, July 29, at the fairgrounds.

- Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore wants to park a golf cart at the fairgrounds. The board decided that McLemore will be charged a \$25 storage fee and the cart will have to be cleared out before the fair.

- The Thomas County Community Foundation breakfast will be held at 7 a.m. Thursday, July 30, at the 4H Building.

Volunteers to be invited for sundaes

Big Brothers Big Sisters Thomas County will take time to recognize and thank it's mentors and donors during National Volunteer Week, April 19 to 25.

The Colby group will be honoring those who volunteered or made a contribution to the program with an ice cream social from 7 to 8 p.m. Monday, April

20, at the Pioneer Memorial Library.

Big Brothers Big Sisters identifies itself as the nation's largest network of volunteers providing mentoring to youth.

The group will be serving ice cream brownie sundaes as a thank you, said Director Diane Stithem.

Church plans egg hunt

The College Drive Assembly of God, 245 W. College Drive, plans a huge Easter egg hunt for kids 10 and younger from 1 to 2:15 p.m. Saturday. Registration will open at 12:45 p.m. Organizers plan a coloring contest with prizes for the winners, games, songs and more prizes to give away. Come join the fun. For questions, call Michelle Hillery, 443-1395.

No racing this week

The Racing for Christ radio-controlled car club will not meet Sunday because it is Easter. The next race will be on Sunday, April 26. For information, call Kent Higerd, 462-3440.

Sequel to formal sale Monday

Colby's "gently used" formal-wear sale was so successful the organizers have been asked to do it

again. The second round – the sponsors are calling it "Mom's Closet" – will take place from 5 to 8 p.m. Monday in the basement of First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth Street. For questions, call Sue Draper at 460-6332.

City plans spring cleanup

The annual Colby spring cleanup will be Monday-Friday, May 4-8. Residents may use this time to spruce up their yards. The city will remove items placed at the curb. This does not include businesses or rental or commercial property. For information or to schedule a pickup, call 460-4410.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or have a partner in a nursing

Seniors plan potato bar

The Senior Progress Center in Fike Park will have a potato bar, raffle and bake sale from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday for the center's spring fund raiser. For questions, call Kaila DeBoer at 460-2901 weekdays before noon.

Come to library for lunch, talks

The Pioneer Memorial Library plans book reviews, talks by authors and lunch at noon each day for National Library Week next week. The library plans book reviews each day, with authors for three

and two by local reviewers. A free lunch (really!) will be served at noon. (Participants can give a donation if they wish.) Book reviews begin at 12:15 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

County van will be gone

The Thomas County community van will run short hours on Wednesday and be unavailable Thursday and Friday, due to conflicts. The van will run from 8 a.m. to noon only on Wednesday. For a ride or information, call 460-2901 or 443-9208. A \$1 per stop donation is requested.



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