



Improvising a bonfire



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Students at the Colby High pep rally couldn't make a bonfire because of high winds Thursday, so the cheerleaders came up with the next best thing: They created a symbolic image of a bonfire using streamers and twigs. The rally came at the end of week-long Homecoming festivities. Colby will face Phillipsburg in the homecoming football game at 7 p.m. tonight.

County to kick off anniversary

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

On Wednesday, one year and one day before the 125th anniversary of the formation of Thomas County, the Anniversary Committee will hold a kick-off from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Prairie Museum of Art and History to begin a year of events marking the birth.

Mike Baughn, president of the anniversary committee, will be master of ceremonies at the event, which will include an Oktoberfest celebration with bierocks – German meat-filled pastries – sausages, cheese, bread, crackers, pretzels and beer. This will be the second year for Oktoberfest.

Baughn said that since the anniversary is not a 150th or 200th, the committee chose to use things that are done every year as anniversary events.

"It's a good chance for people to come out and socialize and see what's new and the museum," said Museum Director Sue Taylor, "and there's always something new at the museum."

The winners of the theme and

logo contests will be announced and given their prizes. There will even be an appearance by the county's namesake, Gen. George H. Thomas, played by Cal Mahn, a teacher at Colby Community College. Several other local characters, such as collector Nelly Kuska and early pioneer Mary Hay, also are expected.

The museum will be dedicating the Honor Walk Paver project, which will replace the concrete walk out front with engraved granite blocks that people can buy. Taylor said the first four concrete squares have been torn out and will be replaced for the event. Eventually, the museum will replace the entire walk.

Taylor said the Honor Walk is one of the museum's fund-raising campaigns, also serving to replace concrete which needed fixing anyway.

The granite blocks, which come in three sizes, can be bought for any purpose from now through the spring. Taylor said there has been a lot interest in the blocks and she expects to see more once the first

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Embezzler wins \$96,000 in lottery; court takes prize

GIRARD (AP) — A former radio executive who admitted that he embezzled to support an addiction to scratch-off lottery tickets found out during his preliminary hearing that he had won a \$96,000 "second-chance" prize.

Prosecutors said the money won by Paul W. Lyle will go toward paying restitution to his former employer, American

Media Investments, which owns three radio stations in Pittsburg, five in Joplin, Mo., and five in Texas.

Lyle, 63, pleaded guilty Thursday to felony theft for embezzling an estimated \$87,750 from American Media, where he was the company's chief operating officer until his theft was discovered in May.

Crawford County Sheriff Sandy Hor-

ton said investigators found \$30,457 in losing scratch-off tickets in a drawer of Lyle's desk at KKOW radio station near Pittsburg when he was arrested. Lyle was charged July 21.

On Sept. 20, Lyle's name was drawn at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson in a "second-chance drawing" for losing scratch-off tickets. He won a "Cruisin'

and Cash" grand prize worth \$96,000 that included a 2009 Cobra 230 boat and trailer, boating accessories, about \$2,000 in cash and tickets to a NASCAR race this weekend at the Kansas Speedway.

Lyle found out about his win the next day during his preliminary hearing in Crawford County Court when state lottery officials trying to find him contacted

the sheriff's department.

"It's like being struck twice by lightning, one of which kills you, the second of which revives you," Lyle told the *Joplin Globe*.

Prosecutor Michael Gayoso Jr. said as part of his plea bargain, Lyle agreed to

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Colby National Guardsmen return home after tour in Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Mark W. Reasoner
mark.reasoner@us.army.mil

Three Colby National Guardsmen who volunteered to fill vacancies with the 287th Sustainment Brigade last year returned from Iraq in the past couple of weeks.

Specialist James Hobbs returned with a group of 75 soldiers on Sept. 24 and Sgt. Norman Rogers and Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Bryson returned with a group of 180 on Tuesday.

The 287th took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom 9, departing Kansas after a ceremony at the Masonic Center in Salina on Sept. 26 last year.

The unit's first overseas stop was at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, where the men worked for two weeks.

The unit then moved into Iraq itself on Dec. 2, where it served out of Contingency Operating Base Adder for the next 10 months, providing logistical support and services for all of southern Iraq.

Command of the logistics operation controlled by the 287th was transferred to the 36th Sustainment Brigade (a Texas National Guard unit) in a ceremony at Camp Adder on Sept. 19.

During the ceremony, Col. Robert Schmitt, commander of the 287th, praised his soldiers for their hard work and dedication.

"The soldiers who have worked for us have done

an awesome job," Col. Schmitt said.

He said the key role in logistics in southern Iraq meant that about 80 percent of all fuel moved through Iraq came through hubs controlled by the 287th, and the convoys run by the unit covered over 3 million miles during the year.

The unit worked with Iraqi civilian and military leaders, helping with the rebuilding of a much needed water pump house, a reading program for Iraqi children and the channeling of school supplies from students at Steadley Elementary School in Carthage, Mo., to an Iraqi school.

Soldiers who returned on Thursday from 170th Maintenance Company included Command Sgt. Maj. Manuel Rubio of Goodland (former 1st Sgt. for the 170th), Spc. Cody Breon (Co-, Norton), Spc. Matthew Bryce (Co-, Norton), Staff Sgt. Terrence Burgess (Det 3, Russell), Spc. Zachary Gibbs (Co-, Norton), Sgt. Ryan Grillo (Det 1, Goodland), Sgt. Don Little (Det 1, Goodland) and Sgt. Blake Schulte (Det 1, Goodland).

The group returning on Tuesday included Sgt. 1st Class Rickie Christie (Det 3, Russell), Sgt. Adam Fink (Det 3, Russell), Sgt. Richard Fisher (Co-, Norton), Staff Sgt. Robert Flynn (Det 1, Goodland), Staff Sgt. David Jermak (Det 1, Goodland), Spc. Kristopher Ried (Det 3, Russell), and Spc. Matthew Sheetz (Co-, Norton).



STAFF SGT. MARK REASONER/Kansas National Guard

Kansas National Guardsman of the 287th Sustainment Brigade, Command Sgt. Maj. Manuel Rubio (former 1st Sgt. for the 170th Maintenance Company), and Sgt. Ryan Grillo stepped back on to Kansas soil with the first group of guardsmen returning from Iraq on Thursday, Sept. 24.

Briefly

Free dance Friday for birthdays

There will be a free dance from 7 p.m. to midnight Friday at the Colby Community Building. There will be snacks and cake to help mark the birthdays of Gerald Plantz and Shirley Cranston. For information, call Plantz at 462-6250.

Sign up for food package

Prairie Land Food sign up for October will be today through next Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 95 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 10, at Sacred Heart School Gym, 1150 W. Sixth. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Dance team to give away ball

The Colby High Dance Team will be selling tickets for a drawing at half time of the Homecoming

game Friday to raise money for the girls' trip to the Liberty Bowl. The prize will be a football signed by the members of this year's team. For information, call coach Donita Rodgers at 462-1325.

Coaches offer coffee, talk

Join the Colby High School football staff for "Coffee with the Coaches" at 9 a.m. Saturday and every Saturday after home and away football games at the Sports Shoppe, Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue. For information, call Eagles' Coach Chris Gardener at 460-1390.

Students to give free massages

The Therapeutic Massage Department at Colby Community College plans public clinics on Wednesdays this month in Thomas Hall, room 402. Cubicle massages are 30 minutes and chair massages

15, starting at 6:15 p.m., 7 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Massages will focus on shoulders and back on Wednesday; neck, shoulders and chest on Oct. 14; feet on Oct. 21; and legs and feet on Oct. 28. Donations will be accepted. To make an appointment or for information, contact Director Debra Waites at (785) 460-5427 or e-mail debra.waites@colbycc.edu.

Foundation to meet Monday

The Thomas County Community Foundation will hold its annual meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday at the City Limits Convention Center. The speaker will be Michelle Cummings, founder of the Colorado-based Training Wheels, an organization that puts on community development talks and workshops. For information, call Executive Director Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

Food offered at senior center

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodity distribution will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Any eligible person can get these commodities, which will include peanut butter, vegetable soup, canned chicken, juice, mixed fruit, egg mix and peanuts. They will be distributed according to income guidelines on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to bring a sack or box. For information, call the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program office at 462-6744.

