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Kids watch tree planting



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Students from Puddle Duck preschool watched while a truck-mounted tree planter put this sapling into its new home at Fike Park during the Arbor Day celebration Wednesday. At the celebration, Mayor Ken Bieber was presented with a Tree City USA flag and Tree Board President Marvin Bickner received a donation from the Thomas County Community Foundation for the South Range Tree Project.

College cuts class, keeps tech instructor

By Andy Heintz

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The Colby Community College board voted unanimously Monday to retain computer information systems instructor Crystal Pounds but to discontinue the video production program, citing lower demand for its graduates.

The video program, known as the television station program before this year, is taught by Director of Broadcasting Rod Thomasson.

Paula Davis, vice president of academic affairs, recommended discontinuing the computer support specialist courses and the video production program because of low enrollment.

Business instructor Diane Williams said she had heard from the admissions office that 13 students had shown interest in taking computer support classes next year. Davis said, however, two admissions counselors told her they had only received one or two inquiries from students.

"I'm glad they decided to keep the position to make sure Colby keeps up with today's technology," Pounds said. "We definitely need to look at enhancing the program."

Davis said the state Board of Regents' "Perkins Program" had placed the video productions program on probation due to low ratings last spring. Thomasson said the video program taught students

how to shoot and edit videos, gather and write news and do newscasts on S&T Communications channel 118. He said the two-year vocational program was meant to prepare students for entry-level jobs at television stations.

However, news and sports positions that used to be available in towns like Colby and Oberlin no longer exist, Thomasson said. He said most of the jobs are in bigger cities like Wichita, and the stations in these places have plenty of people with four-year degrees to choose from.

Thomasson is being reassigned to teach online courses, do social networking, work on the televi-

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Historic church to reopen

By Kevin Bottrell

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The historic church on the corner of Third Street and Range Avenue will come back to life Sunday after being closed for years.

Pastor Jay Curry and his wife Starla have been working for about a year and a half to restore the 93-year-old Pentecostal church building, replacing doors, heating, air conditioning and more. The job isn't done, he said, but the Oasis Worship Center will hold its first services at 2 p.m. Sunday.

The Currys have experience in rebuilding churches, he said. They came to Colby by way of Mountain

City, Tenn., and Houlika, Miss., where they revived flagging churches through the Pentecostal church's Home Missions program.

Curry said he began one of the churches with a congregation of two and ended with more than 60. He said he's planning on six or seven people for the first service but hopes to have more over time.

The pastor said he came to Colby because he heard about the closed church. Even though it's a big change from the Tennessee mountains, he said he has enjoyed his time in Colby so far.

"I love it here," he said. "The people are very friendly."

Curry said he invites everyone to attend the first service. For information, call 462-0913.

Special Olympics planning regional track meet Sunday

Colby athletes will take on competitors from around western Kansas on Saturday at the Special Olympics track meet at Dennen Field.

Coach Jane Mentlick said the meet is held every year in some city around western Kansas. The

Western Region includes teams from Dodge City, Garden City, Hays, Oakley, Atwood, WaKeeney and elsewhere.

Opening ceremonies will start at 11 a.m. with a torch run and recognition of the athletes. Closing ceremonies will be at 3:30 p.m.

Mentlick said everyone is welcome to come watch – and volunteers are needed to help put on the meet. The organization especially needs "huggers" to congratulate athletes after the events. For information or to volunteer, call Mentlick at 443-1719.

Senior volunteers honored with food, music and dancing

By Marian Ballard

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The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, often known as RSVP, held its annual recognition banquet last Thursday at the City Limits Convention Center, followed by a dance featuring the Ramblin' Andy Band.

The theme of the banquet, "RSVP ... Reel It in in 2010" made for a fun evening with a fishing theme, including costumes and a drawing for a tackle box. Director Laura Withington was the emcee, with an able sidekick in her daughter Jill.

More than 200 volunteers from Thomas, Logan, Phillips and Sheridan counties, all those currently involved in the northwest

Kansas program, attended. Colby Community College classes under Mike McVay, Suzi Calliham and Tom Moorhous assisted with the evening's activities, which included presentation of awards for hours of service.

Awards were presented by college President Dr. Lynn Kreider and board member Kenton Krehbiel.

The top award went to Josie West of Oakley, who has accumulated 35,000 hours in her years with the program.

Other awards went to Elva Livingston, 10,000 hours; Rosemary Bange, 8,000; and Joyce Crabtree and Patty Lewallen, 7,000 each.

6,000-hour awards went to Emma Nelson and Marguerite Walz.

5,000 hours, Virginia Hopper

and Frances Jones.

4,000 hour, Florene Messamore and Bonnie Plummer.

3,000 hours, Myrna Heskett, Merle Hawks, Zelma Kinkade Ester Lienberger, Joan Mohr, Cecelia Ottley, Phyllis Trembley and Ralph Maurath.

2,000 hours, Louise Dougherty, Elaine Hurtt, Carol Lovenstein and Hilda Stapel.

1,000 hours, Carol Albers, LaVonne Baxter, Lany Sharp, Pat Wagoner and Merle Wolf.

The program, sponsored by the college and paid for through a federal grant, provides a network of volunteer workers who are involved in everything from staffing the Genesis-Thomas County food bank to making costumes

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MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Some of the volunteers at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program banquet dressed up to fit the theme of "RSVP ... Reel It in in 2010." Seated here were (clockwise from left) volunteers Jay Gilbert, Elva Livingston, Leta Neitzel, Oscar Jones, Marlene Friesen, Marge Robben and Josie West.

Briefly

City to fill cracks on Range

City crews will begin filling cracks on Range Avenue from Fourth Street south to the 1000 block starting Monday. Drivers are asked to avoid the area if possible. For information, call Public Works Director Chris Bieker at 460-4420.

Band taking garage sale items

The Colby High marching band plans a garage sale Saturday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds to raise money for its trip to Washington. The students will march in the National Independence Day Parade. Band members will pick up items for the sale. Call director Joey Nichols at 460-5300.

Scouts looking for faded Glory

Bring your tattered, torn and faded Old Glory to the Pioneer Memorial Library through Friday. As

part of its U.S. flag disposal drive, Colby Girl Scout Troop 165 reminds everyone that flags should be disposed of if they are torn, dirty, no longer rectangular, faded or in general disrepair. For information, call Katherine Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer at 460-3298.

Couples dance coming up May 1

The last singles dance will be a free event from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday at the Colby American Legion Hall. For information, call Lue Duffey, (785) 855-2341.

Orchestra to finish its season

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra is tuning up for its last concert of the season, "A Musical Trip Across the Atlantic, from America to Europe to Russia and Back," at 3:30 p.m. Sunday at the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. Stacey Williams will conduct. Buy tickets at the door for \$7 for adults and

\$3 for children and seniors. For information, call Carol McGuire at (785) 672-2380.

Baseball tryouts Sunday

Tryouts for the 12-and-under traveling baseball team will be at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Colby Recreation Fields. Tryouts are mandatory for players. For information, call Shawn Curry at 443-0289 or Brian Quagliano at 443-0226.

College offers spring concert

The Spring Band Concert, with the concert and jazz bands, will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. Admission is free.

Offices closed for lunch

The Thomas County clerk's and road and bridge offices will be closed during the noon hour for the

rest of the week for software training. Both will conduct business from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. The offices will go back to regular hours starting Monday. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Rally planned for next Thursday

There will be a multi-denominational Praise and Prayer Rally for the National Day of Prayer at 7 p.m. next Thursday in the Little Theater at the Colby Community Building. The evening will include singing worship songs as well as prayers led by pastors and lay persons from several area towns. For information, call Karen Merryman at 443-3715.

