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President, trustee clash over staff role

By Kayla Cornett
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Arlen Leiker, vice chair and treasurer of the Colby Community College board of trustees, spoke directly to Dr. Stephen Vacik, college president, about issues surrounding Vacik's administrative staff Monday at their monthly board meeting in Thomas Hall.

Leiker expressed his concerns as the board was approving the consent agenda, which often contains routine items and bills. He said that several of the administrators have been teaching classes on top of their regular duties.

"September board meeting, we had Alan (Waites) teaching a class," Leiker said. "October, Barry Kaaz. This month, Keegan (Nichols). When I hire you as a president, I hire you to do whatever it takes. I pay you a salary, and that's kinda the way I feel administrators are hired."

He went on to say that he doesn't think this is a good situation.

"If I felt like we were getting everything we needed from your administrative staff, then it would be a different story," he said to Vacik.

Vacik said that in each of those situations, they were all above and beyond their regular duties and responsibilities.

"Those are classes, in Barry and

Keegan's cases, that are online-developed outside of the class," Vacik said. "And in Alan's situation, he was asked to teach that class because we had no one else to teach it. So those weren't ones in which they were looking for ways to pad their pockets; that was certainly not the intention of that."

"But that's the perception unless we put it out there," Leiker said.

Leiker said his problem is that he is not getting everything he wants from Vacik's administrative staff and that they're not doing 100 percent of their jobs.

"I guess that is a perception issue because I think we are making some serious progress," Vacik said. "If there are specific things that we're not doing that you would like to see from the administrative staff, you let me know and I will do my best to make sure we address those."

Kaaz, dean of external affairs, said he understands Leiker's concerns about staff teaching classes, but they are doing this to help the college.

"In some of these cases, we're jumping in where there wasn't anybody else to do it," Kaaz said. "There is nobody else on campus that's trained to teach wind energy."

Leiker said he understands that,

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Getting in the Black Friday spirit



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Jo Booth and Dixie Thompson stopped to smile for the camera while taking advantage of Black Friday deals at 2nd Hand

Rose this morning. Many businesses around town were participating in the traditional post-Thanksgiving event.

Oakley restaurateurs recognized by Kansas hospitality association

By Christina Beringer
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Oakley's Colonial Steakhouse owners Dave and Sherri Nelson were recognized for their lifelong passion for hospitality at the Evening of Hospitality Awards and Fundraising Event on Oct. 17.

The Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association honored six industry leaders at the annual event in Wichita, recognizing those who show tremendous support for the association's mission, the hospitality industry and their community.

Dave Nelson was the recipient of this year's Hall of Fame award. Nelson said he couldn't have gone all these years without his "right hand woman," his wife Sherri.

"She has been by my side, helps with catering and is my partner," he said. "I'm so proud of the award and it means a lot to us."

Nelson said he grew up in the restaurant business beginning when he was about four or five when his parents owned a restaurant. Then in 1963, at the age of 12, he started his career sorting potatoes and onions, working his way up to trash and finally to cook at his uncle's restaurant in Oakley. The Little Cafe broke him in and inspired him to one day have his own business.

"You could say it's in my blood, I guess," joked Nelson.

From 1975 to 1978 he managed the Vagabond Restaurant and Club in Hays and then managed the A&W in Dodge City for a year.



Dave and Sherri Nelson

While in Hays, he and his wife attended and graduated from Fort Hays State University.

"We got married and two years later we bought the restaurant," he said. "She was a rookie back then, in 1979."

The Colonial Steakhouse has been a staple in Oakley ever since.

That same year, they joined the hospitality association. Nelson joined the board of directors in 1981, served as president of the board and still remains active by serving on the insurance board. He has helped with membership drives, served on the government affairs committee and convention committee. In 1994 Nelson was recognized as the association's Restaurateur of the Year.

Although Sherri is not officially on the board she has been very active over the years

donating her time and providing insight on industry topics.

"She also keeps me motivated," he added.

In addition to his service to the association, he and the restaurant have also been active in community events in Oakley and throughout northwest Kansas.

Most recently, they catered over 200 prime ribs during the Governor's Hunt dinner on Saturday.

"It was quite an honor, there were a lot of noteworthy celebrities there and all of the prime ribs were made to order," he said. "Of course, the governor and his staff were there and other celebrities like the country band Ricochet, golfer Tom Watson, retired Kansas City Royals baseball player George Brett and people from the Great Outdoor Trails."

Nelson said the restaurant has catered to many other events in northwest Kansas such as weddings and receptions, and will serve over 400 people at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital's Winter Blast.

Although the Nelsons hope to sell the restaurant within the next year or two, they continue to give their time and resources to ensure the growth and success of their community, the industry and the association.

"We listed the restaurant about three years ago and we are just looking for something new and different. Sherri wants a relaxing retirement and I just don't want to work seven days a week anymore," he said. "It has been a great 33 years but it's time for something new that I can do leisurely on my own time."

Award given for Colby pool

Lenexa-based Prosser Wilbert Construction was honored by the Associated Builders and Contractors Heart of America Chapter at a banquet on Nov. 10 for its work on the Colby Aquatic Center.

City Administrator Carolyn Armstrong and Mayor Gary Adrian joined a group of executives from Prosser Wilbert as they were presented with a First Place Award in Specialty Contracting for "Excellence in Construction" at the Sheraton Hotel in Overland Park.

Prosser Wilbert was the general contractor for the new pool. The

project includes a 7,838 square-foot lazy river and leisure pool, several types of slides, a 4,844 square-foot lane pool, bathhouse and filter building. The project took less than 10 months, ending with a ribbon cutting on Memorial Day.

The company will also be receiving the Kansas Ready Mixed Concrete Association's Municipal Concrete Award for the pool project. The award will be presented at a luncheon on Friday, Jan. 13, during the Kansas Ready Mixed Concrete Annual Convention.

Nominate homes for lighting contest

Now that Thanksgiving is over, it's time to get in the Christmas spirit with the Colby Promotion Committee's annual Christmas Lighting Contest.

There are three categories this year: residential, non-residential and motion displays. Non residential can include businesses, churches or civic groups.

Each category will have a first-place prize of \$100, a second-

place prize of \$75 and an honorable mention. The prizes will be Chamber Certificates, which can be spent at any current Chamber of Commerce member.

Nominations will be accepted at the chamber office, 350 S. Range Ave., or by calling 460-3401 until Tuesday, Dec. 13. Judging will be Wednesday, Dec. 14.

The winners will be announced on Friday, Dec. 16.

Teen apologizes, but doesn't repent, for 'disrespectful' governor tweet

PRAIRIE VILLAGE (AP) — A suburban Kansas City teen landed herself in trouble by tweeting a few "joking" words about Gov. Sam Brownback during a Statehouse fieldtrip.

The Kansas City Star (<http://bit.ly/1thyVCP>) reported that it all started Monday during Brownback's greeting to young people who were in Topeka with the Youth in Government program.

Emma Sullivan, 18, thumbed from the back of the crowd, "Just made mean comments at gov. brownback and told him he sucked, in person (hash)heblowsalot." She actually made no such comment and

described the tweet as "joking around."

But she soon learned that that Brownback's office monitors social media for postings containing the governor's name. Brownback's director of communication wasn't amused.

"That wasn't respectful," responded Sherriene Jones-Sontag. "In order to really have a constructive dialogue, there has to be mutual respect."

The tweet was passed along to the Youth in Government program. The resulting scolding she received at school lasted nearly an hour. She said she was told the "not so nice" comments had embarrassed

her school and the district and that "damage control" with the governor's office was the next step.

The principal even suggested talking points to hit in the apology letter she was ordered to write.

Shawnee Mission East principal Karl R. Krawitz called the situation a disciplinary action.

"It is a school issue, a private issue, not a public matter," he said.

Sullivan, who plans to study psychology next year at the University of Arkansas, isn't balking at writing the letter of apology. But she isn't repentant either.

"I don't regret sending the tweet," she said. "It was harmless. It's not like I was really fired up about anything he said."

She said she wasn't a fan of Brownback before, and his staff's response to her tweet isn't making her or her friends converts.

"We all are liberal, and we are opposed to a lot of his views," she says. "I'm just an 18-year-old girl who knows what I believe, and I know what he believes, and we disagree. That is not going to change."

One of the reasons for the Topeka visit was to give students a chance to draft and debate a mock bill. But Sullivan took

something altogether different from the experience: "Twitter has more impact than I thought."

"But I'm sure the governor gets a lot of hate mail on Twitter and Facebook, so I don't know why his office would pick on an 18-year-old high school girl just horsing around with her friends. I was shocked. I'm still shocked."

