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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Kortney Bredemeier (above) and Lizzie Cornell (below) put their horses through reining maneuvers Saturday afternoon during the Thomas County Rodeo Pageant contest in the small arena at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Bredemeier is last year's rodeo princess, and Cornell is competing to be this year's junior princess.

## Contest judges riding

By Sam Dieter  
Colby Free Press  
sdieter@nwkansas.com

Still on their horse, the girls in the Thomas County Rodeo Pageant competition Saturday were willing to talk about how long they had been riding.

"Since I was 7, so three years," said Emeline Hutton, age 10.

"Forever," said Tylor Todd, age 9.

"I think I did OK," Hutton said, adding that she practiced for two weeks learning the series of reining maneuvers that the girls had to run their horses through in the small arena next to the 4-H Building. These included run-downs, steps, roll-back, circles and pivots. Each one finished with the "queen's run," a lap around the arena, waving at the crowd.

In all, seven girls rode for three titles in the pageant. Hutton had just finished competing for the position of junior rodeo princess, which Todd has held for the last year.

The competition began at 9:30 a.m. Saturday with a modeling contest in the 4-H Building. In their fanciest clothes, the girls stood before a crowd of about 40 people delivering –



and sometimes stumbling over – a rehearsed speech. Closed interviews on the subject of rodeo were held at 1 p.m., and the horsemanship competition began at 5 p.m.

Three winners for queen, princess and junior princess will be announced at the rodeo on Monday, July 30.

Competing for the title of queen this year are MaKayla Hoffman, 14, and Ariel Severson, 18. Faith Edwards, 15, Jamie Nemechek, 13, and Abbey Schmeiser, 12, are competing to become the princess. Lizzie Cornell, also 10, is competing with Hutton for junior princess.

Along with Todd, Jennifer Schwanke, 18, is the reigning queen. Kortney Bredemeier 15, is the current princess.

Schwanke has spent her year as queen attending community events, including stick-horse races and pony rides at preschools, and promoting the Thomas County Rodeo at other events. She described the pageant as a good character builder.

"It's a really good way to get involved in rodeo and represent a great sport, and then get involved with your community at the same time," Schwanke said. "It's fun because you get to exchange stories, you get to

tell people about your title, and they get to tell you about what they did."

Pageant organizer Brandy Todd, Tylor's mother, said that competition covers many areas of knowledge.

"You know, these girls have had to study, they've had to ride, it's a lot of work," Todd said. "What a lot of people don't know is that a pageant is a lot of work."

The pageant is sponsored by 5-S Feed and Livestock, S&T Internet, Sew Cute, Donelan Jewelry, Ferma Garrett, Fotogirl Photography and Peoples State Bank, she said.

## Artist begins repair on giant piece

By Tom Betz  
The Goodland Star-News  
nbetz49@nwkansas.com

Once the giant Van Gogh sunflower painting in Goodland was on the ground Wednesday, the repair and repainting began with Canadian artist Cameron Cross.

Taking down the Van Gogh sunflower painting was a matter of attaching it to a crane and then cutting the more than 30 feet of welds holding it in place for the last 11 years to bring it down to allow Cross to repair and repaint the artwork.

Those watching from the ground could tell when one of the welds broke loose with a popping sound. In one case, a weld at the top made a big popping sound and a steel wedge fell to the ground.

Then Bryant Nemechek of Nemechek Welding had to get to one more about half way down before the whole painting popped free with a shudder, shaking the easel and putting the 22,000-pound load fully on a crane rented from

Woofert Construction of Colby.

When the painting came loose, city employees helped guide the painting to a place on the ground to the east of the easel where Cross is cleaning, repairing and repainting the image.

Early Wednesday, the crews arrived and began taking the painting down about 6 a.m. The last weld popped loose about noon. Then workers swung the work to the east and put it down on the ground.

Cross said he expects to take more than a week to get the painting ready to be put back on the easel. Nemechek said it will be easier to put it back up and weld it back into place.

The painting was erected 11 years ago under a state grant obtained by a group formed to finance the project, Sunflowers USA. The group had financial difficulties and last year agreed to turn ownership of the painting and viewing area over to the city. It's

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## Fund raising money goes to activities, clubs

By Sam Dieter  
Colby Free Press  
sdieter@nwkansas.com

Money raised from the fourth "Drive One for Your School" event at Tubbs and Sons Ford this spring will be used to support extra curricular activities, school officials say.

The event took place April 7. Ford Motor Co. donated \$20 to Colby High School for every person who test drove one of its vehicles, raising about \$6,000 for the school.

"The money that we have collected for the school has been just over \$24,000," Tubbs said.

Jo DeYoung, business manager for Colby Public Schools, said that the money from three of the Drive One events, which started in late 2010, was deposited in the district activity fund, used to pay for extracurricular programs. The

check from the fourth occasion, she said, went to the Colby High booster club.

Donors can designate money sent to the activities fund for certain areas, DeYoung said, but Tubbs did not voice a preference for one activity over another.

"The money, as far as we were concerned, was earmarked for high school extracurricular activities at the discretion of the school district," Tubbs agreed.

"Basically, it's for the athletic department to purchase equipment and stuff like that so we can continue activities," Colby High School Athletic Director Larry Gabel said, describing the money as being used "on a need basis" for different activities.

A list of expenditures from the first check sent to the activities fund, for instance, included every-

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## College lecture series features Colby grad

Dr. Mark Hansen, a Colby High graduate who now is a senior advisor to the President of the University of Chicago, will be the first speaker of the year for the Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College.

His free lecture, "Coming Together or Coming Apart: America and the 2012 Election," will begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 5, in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center on campus. Dr. Hansen, a 1977 graduate of Colby High and a former Colby College student, says he has delivered this talk in nine countries on three continents.

He says American politics today is polarized between Democrats and Republicans, and between liberals and conservatives, as never

before. Looking beyond the heated rhetoric, Dr. Hansen, a political scientist, will trace the extent and origins of American political divisions, analyze the effect they may have on this year's elections and assess the prospects for effective government in the future.

One of the nation's leading scholars of American politics, and a Charles L. Hutchinson Distinguished Service Professor at Chicago, Dr. Hansen has focused his research on interest groups, citizen activism, public opinion, public budgeting and politicians' inferences from the outcomes of elections.

He has written two books, "Mobilization, Participation and

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## Repealing health care law won't be easy

By Andrew Taylor  
The Associated Press  
WASHINGTON – Yes, if Mitt Romney wins the White House and his Republican allies retake the Senate, he could shred most of President Barack Obama's health care law without having to overpower a Democratic filibuster.

But it won't be as easy as some Republicans portend, and it certainly won't be quick.

Why?

Because any realistic effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act – as opposed to last week's quixotic

vote in the GOP-controlled House – is sure to get jumbled together with lots of other issues, including Medicare, taxes, food stamps and defense spending.

And that's because Republicans have to first pass a budget. It's the only way to invoke special Senate rules that allow legislation to pass with just a simple majority vote – instead of the 60 votes needed in the 100-member Senate to beat a filibuster.

Passing a budget requires answering a raft of questions unrelated to the relatively simple idea of repealing "Obamacare." How much to cut the deficit? Should Medicare be overhauled and Med-

icaid bear sharp cuts? Is it realistic to sharply boost defense programs, as Romney would like, in such an atmosphere?

The first step is to pass a budget resolution – a nonbinding, broad-brush outline of budget goals like cutting or increasing taxes, or slowing increases in Medicare. A budget resolution sets the terms for follow-up legislation that's called a reconciliation bill.

Two years ago, Democrats used a reconciliation bill to finalize the health care law with a 56-43, party-line vote in the Senate.

Republicans have a problem in that there's a lot more on their agenda than just repealing the

health care law, and it's all going to have to be crammed into a budget resolution and follow-up reconciliation bill, too.

In 2001, when Republicans set about the relatively simple task of cutting taxes in an era of unprecedented budget surpluses, it took them until Memorial Day to pass the legislation.

What Republicans would confront next year is far more difficult – wrenching cuts to programs popular with voters. A more apt comparison might be the GOP's budget efforts of 1995, when it took the party until November to complete action on its budget plan.



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