

May snow storm postpones activities

A brief snow storm shut down Interstate 70 overnight, although all but one area school stayed on a normal schedule. The Goodland station of the National Weather Service reported 4.3 inches fell here. After a heavy cloud cover, all day, the snow started Wednesday night, but the skies were clear and the snow was melting by this morning. In Colby, the K-State Experiment Station recorded .12 inches of moisture from the storm. The Kansas Department of Transportation, working with the Colorado Department, closed the interstate from Goodland to Burlington, Colo.,

from 9:40 p.m. Wednesday to 8 a.m. this morning because of the snow and poor visibility. A construction project is currently shutting down part of the interstate from the state line to the Caruso exit. Colby High School was still waiting to see if a golf meet this afternoon would be postponed, and a regional tennis meet this weekend has been postponed a day. But Colby, Golden Plains and Brewster school districts stayed on a normal schedule. Thomas County Fair small animal weigh-ins scheduled for today were postponed for a week due to the storm.

Germ-zapping 'robots' combat hospital germs

By Mike Stobbe
AP Medical Writer
NEW YORK — They sweep. They swab. They sterilize. And still the germs persist. In U.S. hospitals, an estimated 1 in 20 patients pick up infections they didn't have when they arrived, some caused by dangerous 'superbugs' that are hard to treat. The rise of these superbugs, along with increased pressure from the government and insurers, is driving hospitals to try all sorts of new approaches to stop their spread: Machines that resemble "Star Wars" robots and emit ultraviolet light or hydrogen peroxide vapors. Germ-resistant copper bed rails, call buttons and IV poles. Antimicrobial linens, curtains and wall paint. While these products can help get a room clean, their true impact is still debatable. There is no widely-accepted evidence that these inventions have prevented infections or deaths. Meanwhile, insurers are pushing hospitals to do a better job and the government's Medicare program has moved to stop paying bills for certain infections caught in the hospital. "We're seeing a culture change" in hospitals, said Jennie Mayfield, who tracks infections at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. Those hospital infections are tied to an estimated 100,000 deaths each year and add as much as \$30 billion a year in medical costs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency last month sounded an alarm about a "nightmare bacteria" resistant to one class of antibiotics. That kind is still rare but it showed up last year in at least 200 hospitals. Hospitals started paying attention to infection control in the late 1880s, when mounting evidence showed unsanitary conditions were hurting patients. Hospital hygiene has been a concern ever since, with a renewed emphasis triggered by the emergence a decade ago of a nasty strain of intestinal bug called Clostridium difficile, or C-diff. The diarrhea-causing C-diff is now linked to 14,000 U.S. deaths annually. That's been the catalyst for the growing focus on infection control, said Mayfield, who is also president-elect of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. C-diff is easier to treat than some other hospital superbugs, like methicillin-resistant staph, or MRSA, but it's particularly difficult to clean away. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't work and C-diff can persist on hospital room surfaces for days. The CDC recommends hospital staff clean their hands rigorously with soap and water — or better yet, wear gloves. And rooms should be

cleaned intensively with bleach, the CDC says. Michael Claes developed a bad case of C-diff while he was a kidney patient last fall at New York City's Lenox Hill Hospital. He and his doctor believe he caught it at the hospital. Claes praised his overall care, but felt the hospital's room cleaning and infection control was less than perfect. "I would use the word 'perfunctory,'" he said. Lenox Hill spokeswoman Ann Silverman disputed that characterization, noting hospital workers are making efforts that patients often can't see, like using hand cleansers dispensers in hallways. She ticked off a list of measures used to prevent the spread of germs, ranging from educating patients' family members to isolation and other protective steps with each C-diff patient. The hospital's C-diff infection rate is lower than the state average, she said. Westchester Medical Center, a 643-bed hospital in the suburbs of New York City has also been hit by cases of C-diff and the other superbugs. Complicating matters is the fact that larger proportions of hospital patients today are sicker and more susceptible to the ravages of infections, said Dr. Marisa Montecalvo, a contagious diseases specialist at Westchester. There's a growing recognition that it's not only surgical knives and operating rooms that need a thorough cleaning but also spots like bed rails and even television remote controls, she said. Now there's more attention to making sure "that all the nooks and crannies are clean, and that it's done in as perfect a manner as can be done," Montecalvo said. Enter companies like Xenex Healthcare Services, a San Antonio company that makes a portable, \$125,000 machine that's rolled into rooms to zap C-diff and other bacteria and viruses dead with ultraviolet light. Xenex has sold or leased devices to more than 100 U.S. hospitals, including Westchester Medical Center. The market niche is expected to grow from \$30 million to \$80 million in the next three years, according to Frost & Sullivan, a market research firm. Mark Stibich, Xenex's chief scientific officer, said client hospitals sometimes call them robots and report improved satisfaction scores from patients who seem impressed that the medical center is trotting out that kind of technology.

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Start planning now for summer reading

Happy May! Just a few more days until school is out and all the kids begin looking for something to do.

Have them come to the library and look at all the new items we have added. We have added a multitude of junior fiction and teen items. We are also adding a large number of easy reading picture books (JE's) and small chapter books.

Did you know that if you keep your children reading through the summer they will not lose the skills that are necessary for school in September? Much time is spent in the first couple of weeks improving reading skills for children when they return because their reading skills are rusty.

Well, help them by finding fun books to read. Remember, girls most often like fiction, boys more often than not love nonfiction, fact-based reading; such as books about things or persons. Young teens are reading the fantasy type works. The littlest just love to read books that are bright with a good story or tale.

If you have a child afraid of reading, let them read to the dog or cat, or a younger child. If they don't get all the words right, don't worry about it, let them get confident in telling the story, being the "reader" and soon they will pick up the essence of reading because they will overcome fears. If you need help, come and ask our librarians for suggestions.

Now, let me give you some suggested books to read for the more mature audience. The first one is a mystery, "Evidence of Life," by Barbara Taylor Sissel.

Protagonist Abby stays home as her daughter Lindsey and son-in-law go camping for the weekend. A flash flood hits, they are presumed dead. Abby is told to go on with her life, but refuses. Abby realizes that lies have replaced truth and she has to find out what really happened.

The second item is "Amity and Sorrow," by Peggy Riley, award-winning author in England. She makes this fiction book read like a real event.

Mother and two daughters are running for their lives, not only from father and husband but a polygamous lifestyle. They wreck their car, are befriended by a local farmer who is a recent widow. He takes them in and their lives begin to be intertwined. It is said to be both beautifully written yet also terrifying.

The third item is "Damascus Count Down," by Joel C. Rosenberg. This thriller is book three of the *David Shirazi* series. The two other books are "Tenth Imam" and "Twelfth Imam."

In this book, Iran is bombed, which takes out their nuclear sites. The United States and Israel have words. CIA operative, David Shirazi finds out there are still two



Melany Wilks

Library Links

nuclear warheads in Iran. Now it is up to Shirazi to find the warheads and destroy them before they are used to destroy the U.S.

The fourth book is "Edge of Earth," by Christina Schwarz. Trudy is expected to marry into a well-respected family, to a childhood friend. However, she has an itch that will not go away. She desires something more exciting and unpredictable. She and her new lover, Oskar, runaway to Big Sur. There they hire on as light keepers in a lighthouse. Together they learn their duties, and some mysterious and scary things. This novel, set in the 1890s, will keep you on the edge of your seat.

The fifth item is "Ready to Die," by Lisa Jackson, book number five of the *Selena Alvarez and Regan Pescoli* series. In this romantic suspense, Sheriff Dan Grayson lies near death after a shooting, and the police department of Grizzly Falls, Mont., is in shock. Alvarez is torn between a new relationship and her loyalty to Grayson, but decides to work with Pescoli to whittle down the list of suspects. However, the murder has been watching both Pescoli and Alvarez. They begin to realize how dangerous and personal this killer has become.

We are holding our first "Adventures in Nutrition and Wellness" group. We have special guest speaker and author Jane Ibbetson to help us launch this new group. She will talk about nutrition and her book, "Smart Eating Made Simple." She lived in Colby years ago and is the mother of Rhonda Faber. Ibbetson now lives in Arizona. The event will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 16. Come and be part of something new at the library!

Also, summer reading and special events for children 15 months to middle school age begin Wednesday, May 29. Come in and pickup information on activities for various ages, or check out our website on the children's page at www.colbylibrary.com/Children.html. Adult and teen summer reading will begin Saturday, June 1. All ages have a chance to win prizes and have fun. We will give you information on the summer reading schedule for children and youth in one of my upcoming columns.

Remember our normal hours until after Memorial Day are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday

See you in the library!

Green schools get grants

TOPEKA (AP) — The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has awarded grants totaling nearly \$83,000 to 27 of the state's public schools for recycling-related projects.

The department the grants were awarded for the next school year and will help pay for recycling bins, composting programs, programs for handling cafeteria waste and field trips to recycling centers.

The grants are financed with a state fee of \$1 on each ton of waste at a landfill.

The six schools receiving the

Deaths

Robert J. Bixenman

Robert J. Bixenman, 91, a Colby farmer and horseman, died Tuesday, April 30, 2013, at his home.

He was born April 22, 1922, to Peter and Lucy (Nordman) Bixenman in rural Thomas County. After he graduated from Menlo High School he joined the Army.

In June of 1946 he married Mary Helen Sims

He was a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church of Colby and the American Legion.

Preceding him in death were his parents; a brother, Leroy; and two sisters, Shirley Hemstrom and Patricia Hafer.

Survivors include his wife, of the home; two sons, Louis Bixenman, Santa Fe, N.M.; and Daniel Bixenman, Colby; two daughters,

Pauline (Elmer) Maurath, Oakley; and Maureen Bixenman, Santa Fe, N.M.; two sisters, Geneva Cooper and Florene (Jerry) Messamore, all of Colby; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 4, 2013, at the church in Colby, with burial in the church cemetery.

Visitation will be from 3 to 6:30 p.m. Friday at the Baalmann Mortuary in Colby, with a vigil service at 6:30 p.m.

The family suggests memorials to the church or to Sacred Heart Catholic School in Colby, in care of the mortuary, Box 391, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Condolences for the family may be left at www.baalmannmortuary.com.

Colby Rotary Club

Colby Rotary Club met Tuesday at Colby Community College with 42 members and guests Joey Nickols, Katie Rose, Tanya Staats and eight music students from Colby High School.

Brian Staats was recognized for 15 years as a club member. He and his family are moving to Great Bend where he will continue working for Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball.

Thank you notes were received from Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Colby Community College Foundation for donations made by the club.

Michelle Spence reminded members the Rotary-Chamber Golf Tournament will be May 31. Pat Sloan and Nick Wells also serve on the tournament committee.

Terrel Harrison had the program. Her guests were music students under the direction of Nickols and accompanied by Rose. Nickols said 70 students participated with 39 entries at the

Regional Music Festival and did very well, qualifying 63 students for 26 entries at state competition.

At the state level, Nickols said, four entries received a I (superior) rating, 20 entries received a II (excellent) rating and two entries received a III (average) rating.

Matt Dickman, Trek Keck, Daniel Myers and Brady Rose, members of the Colby High School Men's Quartet, entertained the club a *capella* with "Good Night Ladies."

Keck performed the trombone solo on which he received a superior rating at both the regional and state competitions.

Michele Kirby, Brady Rose and Alex Juenemann each sang a solo in Italian.

The trombone trio of Abby Friese, Keck and Juenemann performed "The Cavaliers."

Tanya Staats won Roto-Lotto. Colby Rotary Club meets each Tuesday at noon in Room 106 of the Student Union.

—Relda Galli

Colby graduate inducted

Shanda Mattix of Colby has been initiated into Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Mattix is pursuing a degree in agriculture at Oklahoma State University.

Mattix is among approximately 32,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into the society this year. Membership is by invitation and requires nomination and approval

by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors, having at least 72 semester hours, are eligible. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

For information, go to www.PhiKappaPhi.org.

Hoxie student to graduate

Joshua Gaede of Hoxie will receive a Bachelor of Science in chemistry at the University of Nebraska at Kearney commencement exercises on Friday.

More than 700 graduate and undergraduate degrees will be conferred, the most graduates ever in

the history of the institution.

The commencement, at 10 a.m., will be live-streamed at unk.edu.

Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day

Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat (bushel)	\$7.47
Corn (bushel)	\$6.66
Milo (hundredweight)	\$11.27
Soybeans (bushel)	\$13.23

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UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

Brought to you in part by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

Brews, Blues & Bar-B-Q/Lansing Daze
May 3-4, Lansing
Annual Bar-B-Q Cook-off includes live entertainment, activities for children, crafts, car show & great food. (913) 727-5488, www.lansing.ks.us

Kansas Sampler Festival
May 4-5, Liberal
Sample what there is to see, do, hear, taste buy and learn in Kansas! This event includes food, entertainment, historical performances, products, information and much, much more! (620) 626-0170 kansassamplerfestival.com

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Corrections

The column "Volunteers honored for Tourism Week" on Page 3 of the Monday, April 29, *Colby Free Press* gave incorrect dates for the stock car races in May. They will be Sundays May 12 and 19 at the Thomas County Speedway. This was an error in information provided to the *Free Press*.

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story