



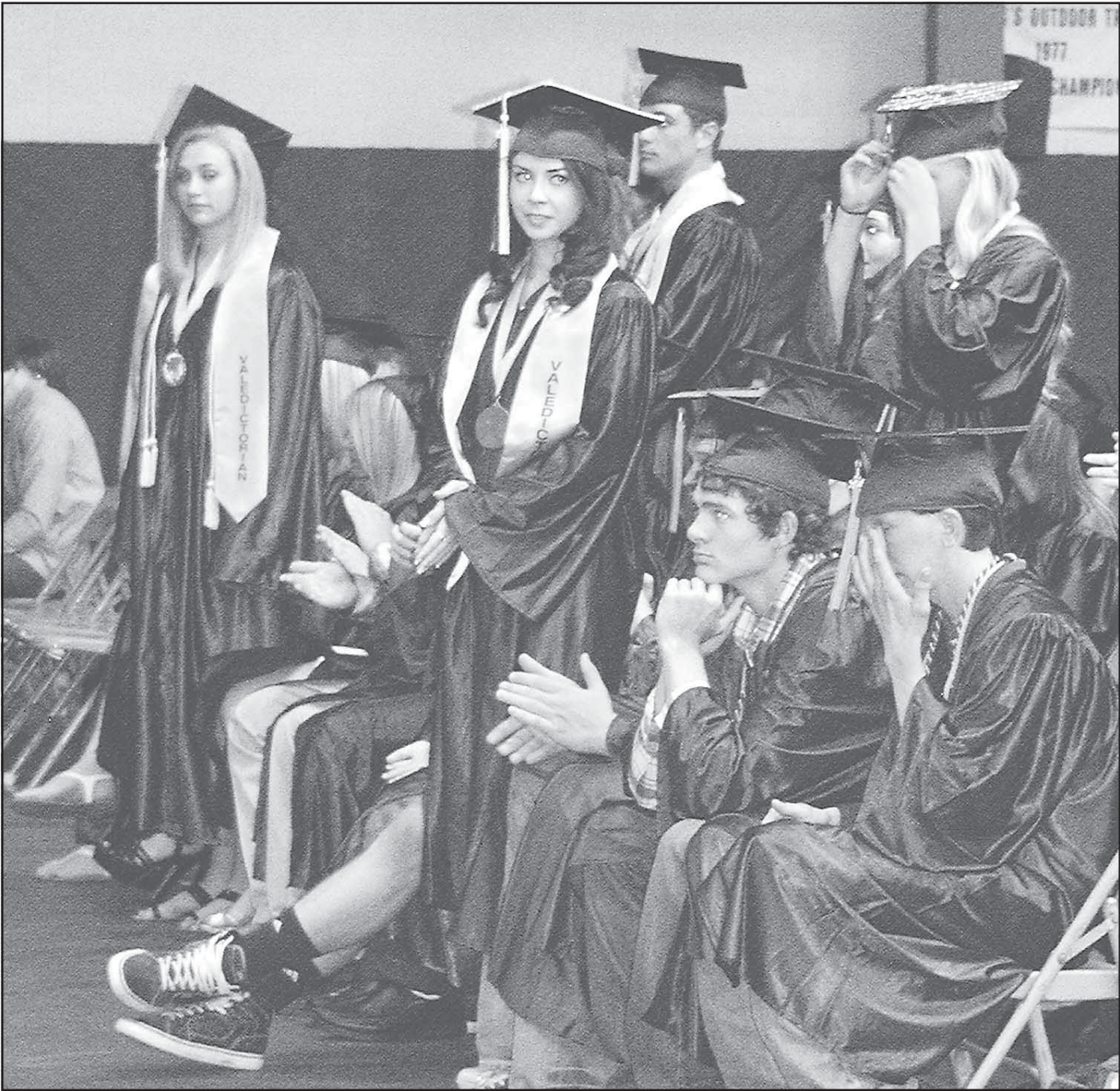
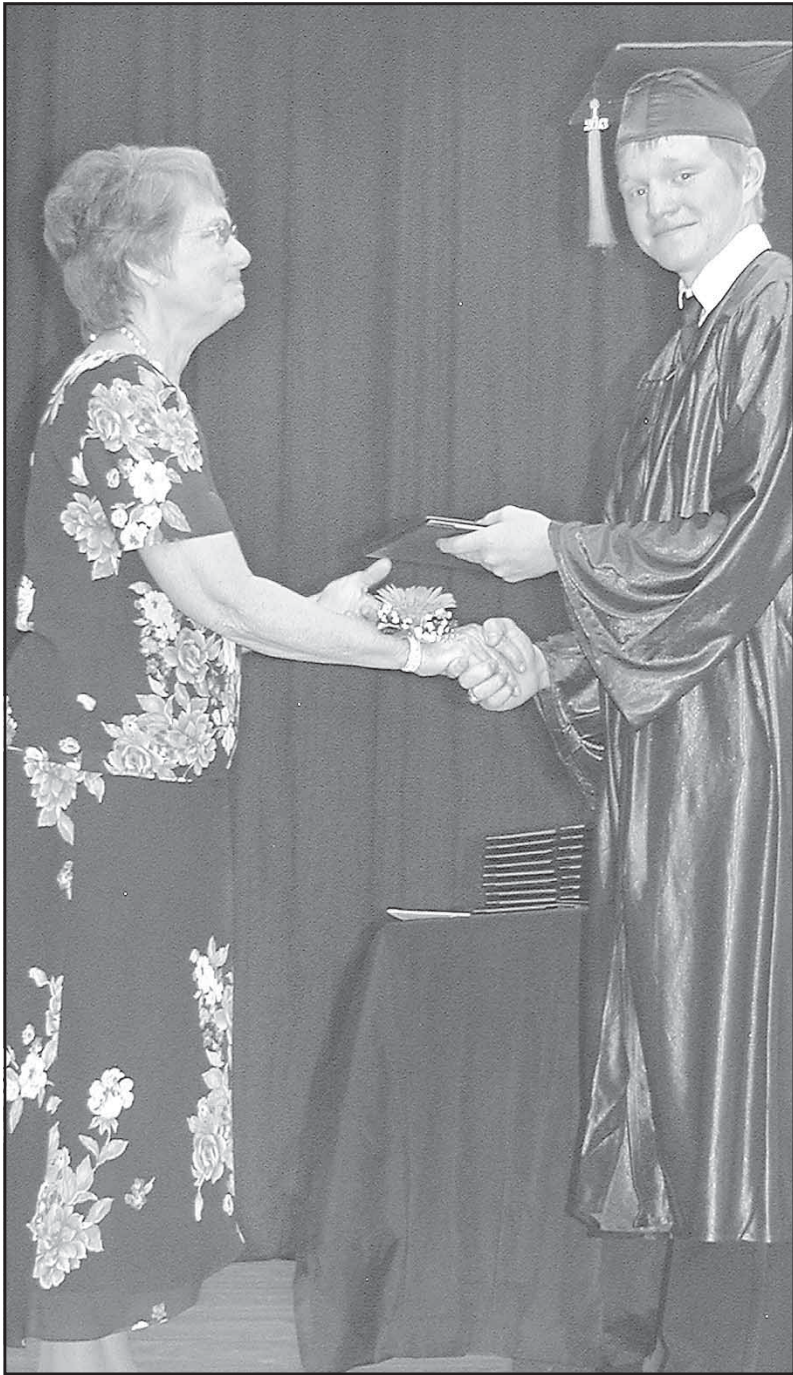
8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

May 13, 2013  
Volume 124, Number 76  
Serving Thomas County since 1888



## Say goodbye to Colby High

While their parents started to fill the seats in the Community Building on Sunday, Colby High School's graduating seniors got themselves ready downstairs.

Then the 68 seniors in the Class of 2013 marched upstairs and into the front-row seats. Jeff Wallingford, who became their principal at the start of their senior year, welcomed the class and pointed out an easel at the front of the stage with the amount of scholarship money the class got this year: \$1,038,171. He asked the National Honor Society members, the top 10 percent of the class and the five Valedictorians to stand.

Two of them, Gabrielle Browne and Tomi Miller, were brave enough to speak for the class. Some

of the graduates took their places in the band and choir as those groups provided the music for the ceremony.

Class President Dustin Reed introduced Jemelle Holopirek, who congratulated him on getting her name right and described what high school was like when she graduated from Colby High in 1991. After attending Colby Community College and Kansas State University, she is now a television reporter for Channel 10 in Wichita.

After some of the senior did their part of the ceremonies, the class stepped onto stage one by one to get their diplomas. Teacher Nancy Rundel introduced each of them and told the audience what they planned to do with the rest of their lives.



Aaron Higerd (above left) shook hands with Janice Frahm, president of the Colby School Board, as he got his diploma at the graduation ceremony Sunday in the Community Building. The National Honor Society members and top 10 percent of Colby High School's class of 2013 got extra recognition at the

ceremony (above right). Guest speaker Jemelle Holopirek, a television reporter in Wichita and 1991 graduate, told the 68 class members they would get to choose their future from here out (right). Valedictorians Tomi Miller and Gabrielle Browne spoke for the class (far right).

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

## Commissioners continue with plans

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press  
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Thomas County Commissioner Paul Steele met with architects last week to work out details of the floor plan for a proposed new Thomas County justice complex and office building.

"We're getting pretty far along with the floor plan," he said, adding that he plans to have it ready to present to the public by next week. Steele has been meeting with county department heads and local officials for several weeks to plan the space allocations in the new building.

The preliminary floor plan now includes a full basement which will house the emergency dispatch center. Uses could include storage for county files and secured storage for judicial records.

"If we have a full basement," he said, "they're going to find a way to use it."

The main floor of the proposed building would house nearly all offices currently in the courthouse and law enforcement center.

At their meeting last Monday, the commissioners discussed possible plans for the historic courthouse that currently holds most county offices. Commissioner Byron Sowers asked Steele several times what might happen to the courthouse.

"I think it's a given that the historical society won't want it," said Steele.

He said there is a possibility pieces of the building, such as antique fireplaces and woodwork, could be sold off. He said there are no plans to incorporate any architectural features of the courthouse in the new building.

Steele said he would like to use the courthouse's boiler and chiller in the new building if they are large enough. If the county cannot use them in the new building, he added, they might have to pay back a portion of the federal money used to buy the boiler and chiller.

"Do you have a purpose in this building?" asked Sowers.

"I do not," Steele responded.

See "PLANS," Page 2

## Kansas tax debate uses delay as one key tactic

By John Hanna  
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Stalling is an important tactic for the Kansas Senate's top leader as she tries to push a reluctant House toward stabilizing the state budget by canceling most or all of a scheduled decrease in the state's sales tax.

Senate President Susan Wagle and House Speaker Ray Merrick are negotiating on tax issues, rather than leaving the talks to the lawmakers they've appointed to resolve differences between the two chambers. Gov. Sam Brownback also is a key player, of course, but Wagle and most fellow GOP senators are backing his proposals.

The Republican governor and

many members of the GOP-dominated Legislature want to follow up on massive personal income tax cuts enacted last year and position Kansas to phase out the tax. However, the state also must avoid budget shortfalls, and the sales tax is the year's biggest and most contentious issue.

The Senate approved Brownback's proposals for additional cuts in personal income tax rates over the next four years and to keep sales tax at its current rate of 6.3 percent. The House passed legislation allowing the sales tax to drop to 5.7 percent in July as planned while making less aggressive income tax cuts.

Wagle said last week that she expects lawmakers to pass tax legislation close to what the

Senate approved. During an interview, the Wichita Republican said resolving the tax impasse requires time to talk to individual House Republicans to educate them about fiscal issues and persuade them that canceling the sales tax decrease won't have dire political consequences.

She and her allies are counting on the passage of time to pressure legislators. Republican leaders had promised publicly that lawmakers would finish the year's business by Monday, and at least a few have said they have trips, family events or other personal and professional busi-

See "TAXES," Page 2

