



COLBY FREE PRESS

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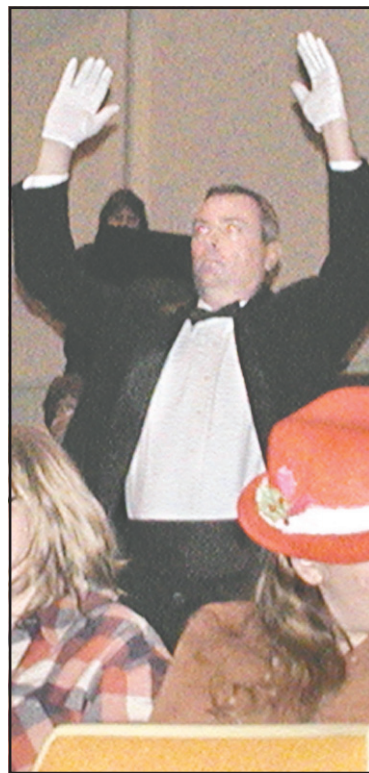


Concert season in Colby



Colby Middle School seventh graders (above) were just one of four groups to perform at the school's band concert Monday evening in the Colby Grade School Auditorium. Brother and sister Josiah and Kendra Ackers (left) accompanied the bell choir concert Saturday night at Trinity Lutheran Church. Both are members of the Pride of the Prairie Orchestra, which had its Christmas concert Sunday in the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. Conductor Andrew Salvador (right) directed the orchestra, walking up the aisle at one point while musicians surrounded the audience as they played. During the last song, Salvador invited audience members (bottom) to stand behind their favorite instrument or musician.

KATHRYN BALLARD
and SAM DIETER
Colby Free Press



Robot brings student to class

By Darcy Gray

The Hutchinson News

HAVEN (AP) — Tuesday was the first time 16-year-old Kolton Kincaid, who was paralyzed in a farm accident last month, was able to roam the halls of Haven High School again — even though he's still undergoing rehabilitation in Denver.

Yep, the Haven High School student was in two places at once.

Students at Haven High School gasped Tuesday when they received a surprise visit

from Kolton, who talked to them from a Segway-style robot he was controlling from Denver.

In Denver, he was using an iPad application to move the robot into Haven High School's cafeteria during lunch and down the halls of the school, where he talked to friends and teachers. The robot's iPad, attached to a long pole and wheels, gave a live view of Kolton.

Kolton was trying out one of the three "Double" robots from Double Robotics that belong to the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas,

based in Hutchinson, The Hutchinson News reported (<http://bit.ly/19chcuh>).

"Hey, Kolton!" Haven High School students called out to him in the noisy cafeteria as he moved among the aisles of tables, quickly finding friends to talk to.

Then, he was off down the hallway toward Drew Thalmann's physical science class.

"He definitely knows the school quite well," said Steve Wyckoff, ESSDACK chief innovation officer, as the robot whizzed toward Thalmann's classroom.

Jail capacity about half current use

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press
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Thomas County's new jail should have a 30-bed capacity, according to a demographics expert hired by the county.

The commissioners accepted his report, which cost about \$19,000 and took three months, at their meeting Monday.

"The purpose of this request, to have this study done, is to show the public that we have done due diligence as to the size of the facility," said Commissioner Mike Baughn.

The county's current draft jail proposal, prepared months ago, shows a 28-bed capacity when inmates are bunked two to a cell.

When concerns were raised about the factual basis for the proposed design, the commissioners asked architect Glen Strait to find an expert to analyze the jail's current conditions and forecast growth.

Through double-bunking and rearranged cells, the current jail can hold 15 inmates, though it was designed for 11. Sheriff Rod Taylor told the commissioners last week that he thinks the county should at least consider the possibility of even more than 30 beds, perhaps as many as 40.

According to the study, the county has had as many as 36 in-

mates at a time over the last several years, forcing the sheriff to house inmates in other counties.

From a low of eight in 2009, the average daily population increased to 19 as of Aug. 31, the report says, but that number does not accurately reflect the need.

"The number of needed beds is always larger than the average daily inmate population," says the report, because of fluctuations in the population as well as the need to separate inmates by gender and for safety and health reasons.

For example, it is generally a good idea to separate pre-trial and post-trial inmates and co-defendants in the same case. An inmate with an infectious disease cannot be housed with healthy inmates, nor can a woman be housed with men.

Once periodic increases and the need to separate inmates are factored in, the report said, the average daily demand was 29 beds this year.

Arrest statistics, says the report, are the most reliable predictors of future jail needs. Numbers fluctuate but, according to the report, do not show an overall increase or decrease. Arrests over the last 10 years ranged from 322 in 2011 to 441 in 2003, with no numbers reported for 2005, 2006 or 2009.

"We have to rely on arrest

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Coalition says to 'pass on pop'

Thomas County residents are being encouraged to give up soda for at least one day a week.

The Thomas County Healthy Communities Coalition is passing out pledges for "Pass on Pop; Soda-Free Sundays" to any people and businesses who want to participate, said coalition coordinator Megan Carmichael. She said Sue Evans, another member, is on the board of Kansas Action for Kids, a children's advocacy organization which came up with the idea. Evans decided to bring the pledge to Thomas County after going to the group's board meeting Dec. 6, she said.

Evans talked about launching

the idea in January when she and Carmichael discussed the idea at the coalition meeting Thursday.

They went to the Thomas County commissioners' meeting Monday, passing out pledges to the commissioners.

Action for Kid's pledge points out that soda can lead to high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes, and also harm teeth and bones. Sweeteners found even in diet beverages contain empty calories, the group claims. Carmichael said there is no exact time for which people need to give up soda once a week.

To get a copy of the pledge, call her at 460-8177.

Selden gathers for anniversary

To observe the 125th anniversary of Selden's founding, the north Sheridan County town will celebrate Sunday with a holiday gathering at the Community Building, including food, games, carols, fellowship and fun.

Activities begin with bingo at 3 p.m., with one card free per person from kindergarten up. Additional cards are \$5. Businesses and residents are donating prizes.

A potluck soup supper will be served at 5 p.m. by the Selden American Legion. Bring a side dish, salad, cinnamon rolls or dessert. People can pick up commemorative shirts and caps ordered in advance, with forms available for

anyone who hasn't ordered.

More bingo will follow the supper. The blackout prize will be paid in Selden Greenbacks, which can be spent only in Selden. Knights of Columbus members will call the numbers.

A Community Christmas Celebration will follow, with caroling around town, followed by hot cocoa and snacks at the Community Building. Winners of the Christmas decorating contest will be

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