



Russ Erbert, right, stands beside the record-breaking King Snake Eel, he caught off the coast of Mississippi. The little girl is the daughter of the fishing boat captain that piloted the boat Mr. Erbert and five of his friends rented to go deep-sea fishing.
— Photo courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Hide and seek game turns dangerous in Colby

By Kevin Johnson
Colby Free Press
kjohnson@nwkansas.com

The object is to get from point A to point B without getting caught.

Participants are divided into two teams: "fugitives" and "police." The "fugitive's" objective is to run from the starting point to the finishing point without being tagged or caught by the "police".

The "police" are in cars and can drive without lights, wildly zooming through alleys and roads using whatever means necessary to catch the "fugitives," who must remain on foot.

The "fugitive" has no boundaries as to where he or she can go; through yards, houses, businesses, over fences, on roofs; the "fugitive" may hide out in unlocked cars, doghouses, basements, garages, use any part of the city terrain to help evade the "police".

There are no rules, just as long as the "fugitive" doesn't get caught by the "police" and makes it to the "safe zone" within the time limits. It's a more intense version of capture the flag.

This is happening in Colby. Imagine kids in cars, utilizing cell phones and low range walkie-talkies, "police" hunting down "fugitives" in your streets. According to Police Officer Randy Jones; the "fugitive" game is here.

"We started getting calls from parents and citizens concerning this game right around the time school started," Jones said Wednesday.

According to Jones, the Colby Police Department became aware when officers made contact with individuals dressed in black running around town at night.

"At one point two individuals were carrying air soft weapons that are extremely hard to differentiate from a real weapon," said Jones.

Though the original age group of the "fugitives" were college age, Jones says that, "after (college-age kids) befriending high school students, it now seems to be made up of a mixture of both."

When calls from parents came pouring in, Jones became concerned.

"We had parents of high school kids calling up saying that their kid had asked permission to play the game and they were concerned and wondered what was going on."

"It is important that parents are aware of what their kids are up to", said Jones. "There is nothing worse than getting a late night call from the hospital saying your kid is hurt."

Though there have been no reported injuries due to the "fugitive game," there has been minor property damage reported.

"We got calls of kids running around, dressed in all black, on private property. Some cars were vandalized when kids would get into them to hide from the "cops" and a few fences were damaged when kids hopped over them trying to escape," Jones said.

Jones gave advice to people who do not want their property damaged or homes invaded in the process of the game.

"Make sure your homes and vehicles are locked. Get motion detector lights on if you think there might be a problem."

Most of all, Jones said it is important that people pay attention.

"If you see someone dressed in black, running around your neighborhood, call it in. It doesn't mean the person is doing anything wrong but it doesn't hurt to have us check it out. We want to make sure that people are aware that this type of activity is going on," said Jones.

Jones has directed his officers to, "assess each situation as it presents itself when dealing with young people engaged in this activity."

"If there are crimes committed... we will be asking that charges be pursued through the county or city attorney's office. We are going to go after them."

"We no longer have any tolerance for it."

"If we catch them damaging property we will cite them as such," said Jones.

One option in consideration is a curfew, though according to both Jones and City Manager Carolyn Armstrong, a curfew would only be implemented as a drastic measure.

"Only if it really gets to be a problem," said Armstrong. "It is an accident waiting to happen."

"It is activities like this that can result in curfews getting imposed," said Jones. "All it takes is for one kid to get hit by a vehicle."

It is hard to curtail an activity played by a large group. Especially when the group is running around dressed entirely in black, playing a game that theoretically has them dodging the law in the first place.

"You might only catch two or three in a group," said Jones, "and nobody wants to be a rat so it is hard to catch them all."

"As for those who don't get caught, there is no reason to think that they would stop."

"Young people just don't think that anything is going to happen to them."

Man brings in record breaking catch

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
cplotts@nwkansas.com

What Russ Erbert caught on the end of his fishing line was not what he was expecting.

In the last week of September, Mr. Erbert, a well-known Norton jeweler, was deep-sea fishing with four friends 110 miles off the coast of Mississippi. The men had rented a fishing boat and had been catching black-fin tuna, yellow-fin tuna, amber jack, sharks, red snapper, rainbow fish and lots of what Mr. Erbert called "junk" (inedible) fish.

He said they were fishing on the bottom in 768 feet of water when he felt a tug on his line. Since the bait he was using was a 5 pound fillet off a junk fish, he thought he might have something or else he

was snagged. Soon enough he knew he had something very much alive on the other end of his line. After a 35 minute battle he was about to reel in his catch. When it broke the surface of the water he still wasn't sure what it was, but it definitely wasn't a fish. His catch was a King Snake Eel.

Mr. Erbert said, "I thought it looked like an anaconda. We had to use a gaff to get it into the boat. It thrashed all around the boat and left this "slimy goo" everywhere it touched, but we finally got it crammed into a cooler — then we had to tie the cooler shut."

Mr. Erbert's catch also landed him in the Mississippi Sportfishing Record Book. His monster eel weighed-in at 30 pounds 8 ounces

surpassing the previous record of 28 pounds 13 ounces set in June. He said the eel's girth measured 16.5 inches and it was 73.5 inches long. He also said it had rows and rows of teeth, all angled backward in its mouth.

He barely missed setting another record. He landed a "trigger fish" that weighed over 9 pounds when he caught it. But, by the time he and his fishing buddies got to shore, the fish had lost a pound and tipped the scales at 8 pounds 13 ounces. Just 2.5 ounces shy of another listing in the record book.

Most fishermen will tell you of the one that got away. Russ Erbert will tell you of the one that didn't.

Accident sends man to Colby hospital

An accident last Wednesday ended with a Colorado man taken to the hospital in Colby.

The accident at the intersection of U.S. 83, K-383 and K-23 took place just before 10 a.m., said Trooper Phil Henrickson.

It happened when Wanda Dickinson, 54, of Oberlin was driving her 1995 Cadillac south on U.S. 83 and ran into a 2005 Ford truck driven by Milfred Harr, 69, of Colorado.

Trooper Henrickson said Ms. Dickinson probably did stop at the sign, but then didn't see the truck and crossed the highway to go south onto K-23 when she hit the truck just behind the driver's side door.

Mr. Harr was east bound on U.S. 83 when she ran into his truck. The

truck after being hit went east, when the driver lost control. The truck went into the south ditch rolled one time and stopped the right way up facing southwest.

The truck driver was taken to the hospital in Colby by ambulance.

Both vehicles were towed by

Butch's out of Colby, said Trooper Henrickson. Ms. Dickinson, he said, will receive a ticket for failure to yield right of way.

Trooper Henrickson said the intersection is part of the area that he works, but he made it to the scene first because he was in Dresden when the call came in.

Prairie View church hosts annual supper

The Annual Fall Supper sponsored by the Prairie View Reformed Church will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 24.

The menu will feature turkey with all the trimmings. Admission is by free-will donation.

COWBOY JUNCTION
HILL CITY, KS • 421-3005

COWBOY JUNCTION FUNCTIONS

Located at 2649 280th Avenue
Hill City • 785-421-3005
(One mile east of the stop light)

Fri., Oct. 26 ... Halloween Costume Contest
(Music by Carbon Cowboys, out of Norton)

Sat., Oct. 27 Ramblin' Andy, 8 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 3 Russell Hull, 8 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 10 The 3 Jacks, 8 p.m.
(Another great band from Norton)

October 24-31

75% Off Spring & Summer Closeouts

Buy 1 at regular price & get the 2nd of equal or lesser value for **1/2 Off**

Serendipity

220 W. Main, Hill City, KS
Open 9 A.M. - 6 P.M. Mon. - Sat.

Prices So Low... it's Scary!

Sign up today and receive

- FREE* Phone
- One Month FREE* Service
- FREE* Activation
- Two FREE* Accessories

FREE* Motorola W315
Receive up to 5 Motorola W315 phones FREE!

FREE* Kyocera K323

NEXTECH Rural Telephone Company
NEXTECH wireless Authorized Agent
RURAL TELEPHONE

117 N Norton • Norton, KS 67654
785-874-4498

*Limited time offer. Certain restrictions apply. See stores for details. With 2-year contract and qualified rate plan of \$40 or higher. While supplies last.