



COLBY FREE PRESS

Jail full after 16 arrested

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

The Thomas County jail was once again filled beyond its capacity on Monday following the arrest of 15 adults and one child who were illegally traveling in the United States.

It is the second time in less than a month that illegal immigrants were housed locally, said Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones today.

The most recent incident occurred in Gove County when Kansas Highway Patrol officials investigated a broken down vehicle and discovered the people didn't have valid U.S. paperwork.

"There is no jail in Gove County," Jones said, "so we take care of their prisoners." The cost to house one prisoner, he added, is \$40 per day per inmate. However, in cases involving federal prisoners, the government reimburses the county for all expenses.

Agents from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services in Wichita arrived in Colby early Tuesday morning to transport the 16 people to another facility. They will eventually be taken back to Mexico, Jones said.

The other incident recently was when Colby Police officers arrested 17 illegal travelers on Sunday, Feb. 18 when they pulled off Interstate 70 at a local filling station.

"The jail," Jones said, "is geared to hold 11 people and after the arrest of these 16 people, we had a total 24 people in the facility, which was more than a full house."

According to Jones, Thomas County is the only certified jail to hold federal prisoners in the immediate area and has been that way for quite some time.

It's actually a win-win set of circumstances, Jones said, in that the county can assist federal agents coming through the area by holding federal prisoners while they stop for dinner or for other reasons. In addition, the federal government also pays for services rendered, such as with the recent holding of illegal immigrants.

Thomas County has assisted the U.S. Border Patrol for many years and, according to Jones, has arrested hundreds of illegal immigrants.

County sees road plan

By **MAXINE NELSON**

Colby Free Press

No one appeared to give public input to the 5-year plan for county roads at the Monday meeting of the Thomas County Commissioner, a plan approved by the state using government funding matched by county funds.

Chris Bieker, county roads supervisor, presented the plan to the commissioners. He said the plan included work on three structures in the three-mile section of the county road south of Levant.

The plan is to replace the guard rail on the middle structure, and to undertake whatever the state wants on the other two. Bieker said they may not be wide enough to meet state regulations, and they might have to put on railings.

The bids will be let in 2003, and construction will be in 2004.

The commissioners, at the meeting, also re-appointed Larry Berg to the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance. This is a three-year term, expiring Dec. 31, 2003.

A helping hand



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Brette Pfeifer, Colby High School special services teacher and student council advisor, marked some items for the silent auction on Tuesday. The auction was in conjunction with the soup supper held to raise money for Sharon Vap, a paraprofessional in Pfeifer's department. Vap, organizers explained, had a recurrence of lymphomic cancer and will be facing more chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant in the near future. The event was to help her and her family with expenses. As of presstime, organizers did not have a dollar amount on how much was raised.

'Thank you' to come in form of honorary diplomas for vets

By **JAY KELLEY**

Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board wants to thank veterans who left school to fight in World War II before it's too late, according to Superintendent Kirk Nielsen. That is why they are participating in Operation Recognition to award honorary diplomas to eight local and area veterans at a school presentation Thursday morning.

"Many of these veterans were unable to finished high school for a variety of reasons, but led productive lives and built our communities over their lifetime," said Nielsen.

Eight veterans will be honored, six from Colby and one each from Levant and Russell Springs. Board president Stan Molstad and member Bill Miller will present the diplomas at the high school auditorium at 8:45 a.m. and the public is invited to attend.

The honorees include:

- Leamon Colson was a member of the 85th Air Corps in Europe. He joined the service on March 25, 1942 at the age of 23 and was discharged Dec. 8, 1945. Some of the highlights of his career included walking with Gen. Eisenhower, participating in D-Day, June 6, 1944, moving the famous Lippizaner stallions and liberating Paris. Colson died on Oct. 3, 1971 and his wife, Edna will receive his diploma.
- Robert "Bob" Withers joined the Naval Reserve on July 24, 1945 and served aboard the USS Saratoga, an aircraft carrier. He said he was painting the docked ship when he heard the news that anyone who wanted to go home was allowed to go. He did and was discharged in Norman, Okla. in August of 1946. Withers was born in Colby in 1927 and is married to the former Louise Rall of Hoxie. They still

live in Colby.

- Darrol Powell entered the Army in Denver on Oct. 1 1943. Discharged in 1946, he continued in the Air Force Reserve and National Guard units until his retirement as a staff sergeant in 1984. Powell was born in 1924, near Brownsville and moved to Colby at age eight.
- Henry "Hank" Vette enlisted in the Army on May 10, 1946 and was discharged on June 30, 1949, entering the inactive reserve. He was reactivated in 1950 as a construction engineer foreman and served one year in Korea. He served with the 4th Cavalry in Germany and Austria and the 430th Corps of Engineers in Inchon, near Pusan, Korea. Vette and the former Eileen Eddy live in Colby. He will receive his diploma from Levant Consolidated School.
- Robert "Bob" Maxwell joined the

Navy on Sept. 22, 1942. After boot camp in Great Lakes, Ill. he trained at gunnery school in Gulfport, Miss. He served as an armed guard aboard the merchant ships SS Philip Livingston, Lucius QC Lamar, Madaket, Kenneth McKay, receiving the rank of gunner's mate 3rd class. Maxwell lives in Colby with his wife, Shirley and went to Colby High School.

- Ardis "Gene" Jones entered the Merchant Marines in 1944, at the age of 16. He served in the Pacific, working in the engine room. In 1946, he joined the Army Air Corps, achieving the rank of E-4 before his discharge on Dec. 7, 1946. Jones and his wife Friede live in Colby and he volunteers as a prison chaplain in Lansing.

- Jay Griffin was in the Navy Seabees, or Construction Battalions. He joined on Sept. 27, 1944 and was discharged on July 18, 1946. He spent

10 years in the reserves. Griffin was on Okinawa, awaiting the invasion of Japan, when a typhoon hit and destroyed many ships. Griffin and his wife Magene live in Colby.

- Dale Deaver was drafted into the Army Air Corps in 1943 and served until March 13, 1946. He was a nose gunner and tagalier on a B-17 with the 303rd Bomb Group in England. He was shot down over Germany on his seventh mission. They landed near Wursburg, Germany. Picked up by soldiers of Gen. George Patton's Third Army and learned of the allied victory while being shipped home. Deaver met Minnie Tubbs while in the hospital, recovering from appendicitis and married her on Oct. 3, 1946. They still reside in Colby. Deaver attended Russell Springs High School and will receive his diploma by the authority of Unified School District 315.

Discovery returns first space station crew to Earth today

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Space shuttle Discovery glided to a predawn touchdown today, bringing home the first residents of the international space station and ending their 4 1/2-month voyage.

The congratulations started rolling in as soon as Discovery landed.

Bill Shepherd, space station Alpha's first commander, and his two Russian crewmates rode back from orbit in reclining seats to ease their reintroduction to gravity.

A team of doctors rushed aboard the shuttle to assist Shepherd, Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Krikalev. The physicians expected the space station pioneers to be weak, wobbly, dizzy and possibly nauseated after months of weightlessness, but all three men walked away from the shuttle and shunned the gurneys waiting for them.

"The Expedition One crew is doing great. They're up and walking around," reported shuttle commander James Wetherbee. "The docs don't let

them walk around too much. They do have medical experiments that they have to do." The tests were for gauging the men's readjustment to gravity, including bone and muscle loss incurred by months of weightlessness. Also a top priority: reunions with wives and other family members at the Kennedy Space Center crew quarters.

Space station Alpha's three new inhabitants were thrilled to learn of Discovery's safe return.

"I hope Shep, Yuri and Sergei are

enjoying their first minutes back on the planet," astronaut Susan Helms radioed to Mission Control.

Discovery's homecoming was delayed 1 1/2 hours because of thick rain clouds and gusty wind at the landing strip. The crosswind was right at the safety limit as Wetherbee guided Discovery to a 2:31 a.m. touchdown.

The shuttle returned 13 days after it lifted off on a mission to deliver not only a new space station crew but 5 tons of space station gear.

"All in all, it was a great mission," shuttle program manager Ron Dittmore said from Mission Control.

NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin was not present for the landing; like many others, he stayed away thinking bad weather would send the shuttle and the seven men on board to California or keep them in orbit an extra day.

The space station voyagers circled Earth about 2,200 times during their trailblazing, 141-day mission, covering 58 million miles.

Briefly

Weather: Spring showers

The Colby area can expect showers through Friday, the National Weather Service said today. Tonight, cloudy, a 20 percent chance for showers, lows 35-40 and light variable winds. Thursday, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for showers, highs 55-60 and east winds 5-15 mph. Thursday night, a 40 percent chance for showers, lows near 40. Friday, showers, highs around 55. Colby's high temperature Tuesday was 72 and the overnight low this morning was 36. There was no additional precipitation to report during the past 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. today. The records for March 21: 89 in 1907 and -4 in 1965. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

Advanced ballots available

Advanced ballots for the Tuesday, April 3 general election will be available for voters on Tuesday, March 20, said Tracey Perkins, Thomas County Clerk. Advanced ballots need to be returned on or before 7 p.m., April 3.

Forensics training Thursday

Persons who agreed to participate as judges in the Colby High School forensics tournament will meet at 7 p.m., Thursday, in the teacher's lounge for a training session. Volunteers can call 465-5300 for information.

Site council meets next week

The Colby Grade School Site Council will hold its regu-

lar meeting at 6:30 p.m., Monday, March 26 in the cafeteria. Everyone is invited to attend. For information, call 465-5100.

Preschool screenings planned

A free screening for preschool children is scheduled from 9 to 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 3, at the Golden Plains Elementary School in Selden.

To make an appointment, call the school at (785) 386-4560.

Kindergarten enrollment nearing

Enrollment and screenings for next year's kindergarten students at Golden Plains is planned from 1 to 3 p.m., Tues-

day, April 3. School officials ask that parent or guardians of the children, who will be five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2001, should call the elementary school at (785) 386-4560 for an appointment.

Carnival set, volunteers needed

Colby Elementary School's Parent-Teacher Organization is sponsoring a carnival, Sunday, April 22, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Jurassic Journey is the theme this year, said Julie Price, one of the organizers.

In addition to bringing back the egg toss, many other games and prizes are planned. People are still needed to help. For information, call Price at 462-3506.

