



COLBY FREE PRESS

Prairie Heritage Festival, Great Race here Saturday

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Leilani Thomas, one of the organizers of the Prairie Heritage Festival, is encouraging everyone to come out on Saturday for a day of fun in downtown Colby.

"It's going to be great!" said Thomas. This year's theme is 'Sod Buster to Crop Duster' and activities will start with a biscuit and gravy breakfast, sponsored by the retired senior volunteers, at the Colby Community Building at 7 a.m., followed by coffee and cinnamon rolls at the Senior Progress Center.

A ham and bean feed will also be held at the center

"The Sharon Springs rattlesnake committee will have their petting porch," said Thomas, "where children can learn about snakes." Children will be allowed to handle non-venomous snakes.

Various activities will be going on during the day, according to Thomas. The model railroad club will have their display in the Scout Hut and there will be a special children's tent set up in the park. Antique tractors will be on display and musical groups and living history demonstrations will entertain spectators.

"At 11:15, the Great Race Stage Show will begin at Fourth and Franklin," said Thomas. "It will open with a

performance from the Navy (Ceremonial) Band."

Great Race cars will be arriving through the lunch hour. Colby is a lunch and fuel stop this year for the annual precision race across America.

"It will be a great centerpiece for our annual event," said Thomas.

Festivities will wind up with a watermelon feed sponsored by F&M Bank at Fike Park, followed by musical entertainment from the Power Praise Kid's Choir, Shannon Myers, Jeff Waggoner Family, Marj & Gordon, McLemore Family and Off Limits.

"Everyone is invited to enjoy a day of fun at this annual event," said Thomas.

Public invited to airport

Amateur radio club ready for its 24-hour disaster drill

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Members of the Trojan Amateur Radio Club will be combining fun with training on Saturday.

A field day, running 24 hours from 1 p.m. will involve not only the 15 or so area Trojans, but 2,000 similar clubs from the United States and Canada.

This is the second consecutive year the local club will assemble at the Colby airport terminal to set up and operate radios under field disaster conditions.

Groups across North America will run generators to power their radios and erect antennas as if their normal stations had been destroyed.

"It gives us the chance to check out the equipment and practice effective radio procedures on an annual basis" said Gerry Bieker, club member. "It's nice to enjoy some outdoor fellowship with others of similar interests, and establish contacts at unusual hours."

While the main purpose of the event is readiness for emergency communications, it takes the form of a competition, with clubs competing for bragging rights through a point system. The Trojan Club typically finishes in the

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Jim Engle,
Club president

top 40 percent or so of the most popular two-transmitter category.

Club member Mike Albers won an Environmental Hero award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration this spring for his work organizing and leading the Trojan Amateur Radio Club in weather spotting activities. Many club members mentioned that Albers' experience in logistics and operations was key in putting on a successful performance in the annual event.

The public is invited to drop by the airport to witness the action.

"Part of the bonus point program in the Field Day rules involves publicizing and giving public access to the event," said member Bruce Frahm.

Frahm also said some new technology will be on hand. "While Morse Code and sideband voice contacts still are a big part of what ham operators do, newer digital modes are gaining favor and will be part of the club's arsenal this weekend."

Club President Jim Engle adds, "We do it for more than just the points. The more people we can involve in this hobby, the more interesting it is for all of us. Ham radio offers a lot to experimenters, science-minded folks and geography buffs, as well as those who relish the social aspects."

More information about ham radio is available from the national association for amateur radio at <http://www.arrl.org>



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Ken Mitchell (left), commissioned to do the work, reviewed the final details of the mural with Steve Zerr in the college's maintenance department.

Mural project begins next week

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Work begins next week on a wall mural at Colby Community College that when completed will be 47' across by 12'8" high, according to Ken Mitchell, who is in charge of the project.

Mitchell, who taught art at the college from 1969 to 1989, said there will be 17 panels measuring 8' x 4' that will first be painted on the ground and then put up in the reception area at Bedker Memorial Complex.

"One of the challenges right now," he said, "is in getting all the right paints for the project."

He also wanted to recognize two former students, Bruce Bandy and Leon Volk of Commercial Sign, for volunteering to help in preparing the panels for painting next week.

"Once the panels are ready for painting," Mitchell said, "I'm estimating we will complete one and a half panels

every two days."

As the panels are placed on the wall, some touch-up work will also be required, he said.

Mitchell is encouraging people interested in learning how this process works to take the special class being offered solely for this purpose.

"A lot of the college students and some senior citizens have expressed a desire to work on this project," he said.

According to Debbie Schwanke, public relations officer, enrollments for the mural class will be taken through Monday, June 25, with class meeting times will be determined by each student and Mitchell.

The mural itself depicts education scenes in Thomas County over the past century, highlighting school buildings and people.

For information on the class, *Problems in Painting*, call the admissions office at 462-4590.

Colby's retirement facility has a new administrator

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Fairview Estates Retirement Community in Colby has a new administrator.

Karen Hodson, 62, formerly of McCook, Neb., took over the position Monday, saying she is excited about being here.

"I have worked with senior citizens for many years in varying positions and I think this will be a fun and rewarding experience," Hodson said. For the past 42 years, Hodson has been a professional hairdresser and making a career change is something she's ready to do.

Her husband, Don, also works at the facility in maintenance and together they want to make Colby their home.

"We both love the residents here and have always thought Colby was a nice town," she said.

Hodson said she is willing to

speak to various groups and organizations about the facility and is open to giving tours.

The goal, she said, is in filling the center to capacity and there are still lots of vacancies available.

"We have had many inquiries from people interested in living here — some as far away as London," she said. The facility has 48 apartments and, at this time, more than half are occupied.

In addition to offering tours and speaking engagements, Hodson said she plans to approach Colby Community College for a possible internship program with students in social service-type careers.

According to Hodson, that type of partnership would not only provide hands-on experience for the students, but would benefit the residents and facility as well.

In July, the retirement community will celebrate its first anniversary and Hodson said she is looking at plans for an open house.

Hodson said she is looking forward to meeting people in the community. For those wanting more information about the facility, she encourages them to call 462-2154.



Karen Hodson

Mom charged with killing her five children

HOUSTON (AP) — When Andrea Pia Yates called police, she offered no specifics about why she wanted officers to come to her suburban home.

When an officer arrived, police say, a wet and panicked Yates succinctly described what had just transpired in four words: "I killed my children."

Yates, 36, was charged with murder Wednesday night in connection with the deaths of her five children, all apparently drowned in a bathtub.

"It is just rather unimaginable," Houston police spokesman John Cannon said. "It's difficult to deal with when you are talking about five little kids who were killed, probably systematically."

Cannon said Yates was breathing heavily when she called police to her home, but she didn't provide details.

She was wet when she answered the door. "At that time she said to the officer, 'I killed my children,'" Cannon said.

He said the woman then led the officer to a bed in a back bedroom. Found under a sheet were the wet bodies of Mary, 6 months; Luke, 2; Paul, 3; and John, 5. The fifth child, Noah, 7, was found in a bathtub.

Yates was led away in handcuffs from the one-story brick home in far southeast Houston, near NASA's Johnson Space Center. The children's father works at NASA as a computer specialist. Cannon said Yates called her husband home Wednesday morning shortly after phoning police.

Authorities gave no motive for the slayings, but the woman's husband told police she had been on medication

to treat postpartum depression for the past two years, since the birth of their fourth child. Judy Hay, a spokeswoman for Children's Protective Services, said records indicate the woman attempted suicide on June 18, 1999. Five days later, Children's Protective Services was called because mental health officials worried the woman's children didn't have proper care.

"We found them at their grandparents with their father," Hay said. "It was never assigned because there was no abuse or neglect."

Postpartum depression — suffered by mothers who have just given birth — affects 10 percent to 20 percent of new moms, researchers say.

Dr. Lauren Marangell, a psychiatrist who leads the Baylor College of Medicine's mood disorders research

program, said postpartum depression is treatable and rarely results in violence to others.

"With depression, you're typically more worried about (the patients) themselves," Marangell said. "With postpartum depression, you do worry because you have a vulnerable infant at home." The three oldest boys had attended a birthday party over the weekend at the home of Raymond Rivera, whose grandson Rocky celebrated his first birthday.

The birthday party video shows Noah, John and Paul Yates as neighbors described them — happy, exuberant kids often seen playing outside with their father. The children smacked a pinata, ate cake and appeared to enjoy themselves along with their father on the video.

Service providers concerned about elderly

TOPEKA (AP) — Directors from local area agencies on aging raised concerns over the state's commitment to provide transportation, in-home care and prescription drug services to Kansas' growing elderly population.

During a teleconference with 13 sites statewide, Kansas Department on Aging officials got plenty of com-

ments Wednesday from those who provide services and see the needs firsthand.

Chief among the concerns is action by legislators to use \$50 million of a prescription drug trust fund for seniors to cover other state budget needs.

Shifting the money will delay the program six months, a gap elderly ad-

vocates say will hurt seniors who can't afford costly medicine. The program, which was to start July 1, would provide up to \$1,200 in benefits to eligible seniors.

Legislators established the trust fund by banking extra federal Medicaid reimbursements, with interest from the account going to help pay down pre-

scription costs. The trust fund was supposed to grow as the state collected the extra federal dollars over time. But Gov. Bill Graves and legislators decided to use \$120 million collected in fiscal years 2002 and 2003 to shore up spending elsewhere. Fiscal 2002 begins July 1. That would leave only \$51 million in the trust fund.

Briefly

Weather: Warm

Clear skies and warming temperatures are on the weather plate for the Colby area now through the weekend, according to the National Weather Service. Tonight, clear, low 50-55 and light southeast winds turning southwest. Friday, clear, sunny, high 80-85 and south winds 5-15 mph. Friday night, clear, low 55-60 and light winds. Saturday and Sunday, clear, high Saturday 85-90, low early Sunday morning 60-65 and high Sunday in the middle 90s.

Wednesday's high in Colby was a cool 67 (just one-degree off the coolest daytime high of 66 for the date set in 1902) and the overnight low this morning was 45.

The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 69 degrees. Precipitation for the month remains at 0.41 inches. The records for June 21: 106 in 1988 and 35 in 1902.

(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

'Big for a Day' scheduled

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Thomas County will sponsor *Big for a Day*, Saturday, June 30, at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. Registration will be from 3-3:30 p.m.; with a museum tour and activities from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Activities will include bobbing for apples, sack race, 3-legged race, cow crafts, cow milking and feeding the animals. There will be a picnic meal at 5:30 with checkout from 6-6:30 p.m. This is an opportunity to 'test drive' the

Big/Little friendship according to organizers. There are 17 boys and five girls waiting — 21 kids who need volunteers for the day. RSVP by June 26 to 465-9125.

Landfill hours noted

Thomas County landfill hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; and 1-4 p.m. Sunday. The landfill will have more compost to give away in about three weeks.

