



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Anthrax fears end pet's life

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Widening fears of anthrax are prompting more people to take a closer look at locations where previously no anthrax had been found and, for one former Colby man, the reality hit home when he took a sick dog to his veterinarian.

Ken Mitchell, who was an art instructor at Colby Community College for many years, told one of his good friends and colleagues, Roger Hale, that about a week ago he experienced firsthand how an innocent visit to the veterinarian ended up costing him a great deal of money and concern to the animal clinic.

Hale said that Mitchell told him that his dog, a 12-year-old Scottie, had taken ill and he and his wife, Vickie, raced the dog to their vet in Cosmopolis, Wash.

"The dog was running a very high temperature and within 15 minutes after arriving at the clinic," Hale said, "the dog died."

Neither the veterinarian nor Mitchell knew what was the cause of death, but the doctor began questioning Mitchell as to whether or not he had received any mail from Washington, D.C.

Complicating the matter further, Hale said that Mitchell's good friend, Col. Lowell Graham, who year's ago taught band also at Colby College and is now the U.S. Air Force band director, had sent him a package of CDs not

long before. Consequently, Mitchell told the vet that, "Yes, I have received mail from the Pentagon in Washington, D.C."

Since the vet or Mitchell didn't know what anthrax was, Hale said that Mitchell told him the doctor had blood tests done and ordered the dog be cremated.

Mitchell told Hale that not only was he feeling sad that his dog died, but then the next day the clinic had sent him a bill of \$300 for the cremation and will be forwarding a second bill once the blood tests are completed.

More than likely, Mitchell said his dog died of natural causes, but fears of anthrax mounting, everyone is being more cautious.

Anthrax has killed four people and infected six others with the dangerous inhalation form of the disease, according to media sources.

An additional seven people have been infected with the highly curable skin form.

Anthrax spores were found in a Kansas City, Mo., postal facility, and about 200 workers joined the tens of thousands of others from elsewhere who are taking antibiotics to ward off possible infection.

Mitchell believes the veterinarian was just being careful, but the episode was quite costly and while the risk from mail is very low, the vet probably just wanted to be sure the risk didn't translate into yet another case of anthrax.

One injured in pickup rollover east of Colby

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Emergency crews had a difficult time removing three people from a motor vehicle accident east of Colby early Saturday morning.

According to the Kansas Highway Patrol, Jacob Reed, 19, from Goodland was westbound on I-70 at milepost 60, or seven miles east of Colby when a semi passed his 1998 Dodge pickup at about 4 a.m.

Reed lost control of the pickup and an empty trailer went into the median, where the vehicle launched into a railroad overpass and landed on its roof.

Reed and one passenger, Gabriel

Flaska, also 19 and from Goodland, were uninjured.

The third passenger, Jennifer Keyser, also 19 and from Goodland, was taken to Citizens Medical Center by Thomas County ambulance and flown to Swedish Medical Center, according to hospital spokesman Michael Boyles. Gail Flaska, Victoria, who is Gabriel's mother, said Keyser suffered a broken pelvis.

The Colby Fire Department dispatched an additional engine and crew because of the steep grade and difficulty getting to the pickup.

None of the occupants was wearing seatbelts.

Variations on Christmas



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The Holiday Home Tour held Sunday was the best tour that Kappa Upsilon has ever had, said Bonnie Dinkel, chairperson of the event. "We had over 300 people attending the tour, which was outstanding," she said. "A great attendance in past years has averaged around 200, so this was exceptional." In addition to thanking everyone who visited the homes, Dinkel also wanted to thank those who graciously opened their homes for the tour. ABOVE: Vera Sloan looked at many

of the holiday items at Keith and Charlene Baalman's home. BELOW LEFT: Mary Kay Bowen admired an old-fashioned Santa Claus wall hanging at Jo Strange's home on E. Plum. BELOW RIGHT: Tammy Goossen was interested in a Christmas tree decorated with old vintage purses and jewelry at Mike and Jennifer Woofler's home on W. 5th St. Other homes featured, but not pictured, were those of Bryan and Kim Bullington and Larry and Sarah Ja ne Barrett.



Southwestern Bell representative brings concerns to county

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Darin Miller, Southwestern Bell representative based in Garden City, met with the Thomas County Commission at its Friday meeting, to discuss concerns and solicit input.

Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock told Miller he was not real happy with service from Southwestern Bell, and Miller said he had heard the same story from other commissioners he had visited with.

Miller said technology for broadband service is developing quickly, and that Southwestern Bell is seeking regulatory reform to be able to offer broadband Internet hookup to rural communities. He said Southwestern Bell has to follow outdated regulations that are okay on the telephone side of the business, but needs legislative relief on the Internet side.

He said companies that offer cable modem service or wireless Internet access are free to invest and deliver the services where they choose, as they choose. "They must make busi-

ness decisions based on available capital and possible market share, but they face no arcane regulatory burdens in their decision to deploy," he said.

"On the other hand," he said "as Southwestern Bell considers its plans to deploy DSL (high-speed Internet service) there are other considerations not faced by those new technologies."

Miller explained that in most states served by Southwestern Bell, the network serving the area must stop at area code boundaries, meaning multiple networks must be built and operated separately.

"In addition, as Southwestern Bell considers delivering DSL service into a community, regulators are trying to require that those investments be shared with competitors who don't want to install their own equipment," he said. "Even in large urban markets, there aren't enough customers to make the millions of dollars of investment reasonable if the resulting networks must be shared with competitors un-

der these rules. In rural areas, where the possibility of recovering the investment is small, the requirement of sharing the facilities with a competitor who has little invested, means the investment will never be made. It is purely economics," he said.

Anyone with questions can reach Miller at Southwestern Bell, Telephone 800-276-4515; darin.miller@sbc.com. Miller succeeds Les Depperschmidt, longtime Southwestern Bell external affairs director.

In other business:

- The commissioners opened bids for a pickup truck for the road department. On the recommendation of Chris Bieker, roads supervisor, they accepted a bid from Tubbs and Sons of \$17,647.40 for a 2000 3/4 ton pickup with two-wheel drive, which includes the trade-in of a 1991 Dodge Ram with 91,000 miles. They rejected bids of Frontier Autoplex for \$20,200 for a 2002 Dodge pickup with trade, and \$20,500 for a 2002 Chevy pickup with trade.
- Larry Jumper, Thomas County Landfill

supervisor, sent a memo saying he had installed an answering machine at the landfill.

"On the message, I will have the operational hours plus any additional information, such as when the landfill will be closed for holidays. In addition, the caller can leave a message if needed. The landfill number should also be in the next telephone book listing. I will have the landfill number posted at the front gate of the landfill," he said. The landfill number is 785-462-8139.

• The commissioners approved tax abatements for \$449.29. Of this \$119.56 was for a 1994 truck which was double assessed; \$58.24 for grain bins belonging to someone else; \$42.47 for minerals; \$49.56 for property double assessed; \$5.28 for a golf cart sold; \$84 for a 1984 Chevy pickup sold; and \$16.18 for an antique tag, which should only be paid for one time.

• The commissioners went into a 20-minute executive session to discuss personnel with Extension Agent Dennis Chandler. No action

was taken when the meeting reopened.

• Commission Chair Ron Evans asked Sheriff Tom Jones about providing medical services for prisoners. Jones said he would not admit a person to the jail who was obviously sick or injured, but wanted their medical problems taken care of first.

Kersenbrock brought a clipping from a newspaper saying a prisoner had been released from a jail because of medical problems and wondered if that were a solution. Jones said he would look into it.

Evans said Jones should ask about a medical card or insurance when admitting prisoners. He said the citizens of Thomas County should not have to pay for medical treatment of prisoners if it could be avoided.

Jones said Kathi Hapke was in New York helping at 'Ground Zero,' but the county is not paying her salary while she is gone. Evans and Kersenbrock agreed the taxpayers should not have to pay for what she is doing on a volunteer basis.

Briefly

Weather: No major changes

Nothing major in the way of a weather change looms for the Colby area this week, said the National Weather Service in its forecast this morning. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the lower 30s and west winds 5-10 mph. Tuesday, partly sunny, highs around 50 and variable winds up to 5-10 mph. Tuesday night, increasing clouds, lows in the lower 30s and a 20 percent chance for showers late. Wednesday, partly sunny, highs 40-45, and Thursday, partly cloudy, lows in the teens and highs in the middle 40s. Colby's high Sunday was 62 and the overnight low this morning was 25. There has been no precipitation during the first three days of the new month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 33 degrees. The records for Dec. 3: 68

in 1988 and -5 in 1919. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Soup supper Wednesday

The Trinity Lutheran Church youth group and Aid Association for Lutherans is having a soup supper at the church on Fifth St. and Country Club Dr. from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 5. The supper is being held to benefit the Thomas County Big Brothers Big Sister organization. Admission is free-will donation.

School urges caution in ad sales

Officials at Colby High School are reminding businesses

and individuals to use caution when considering to advertise in publications other than those approved by the administration. "Over the last several years," said Jeff Quenzer, assistant principal/activities director, "Colby High School has become the subject of unwanted solicitation by advertisement groups that are selling ads for sports calendars." In recent weeks, phone calls are coming from people that are rather hesitant about giving too much information out to their potential customers about who they are and phone numbers, he said. The only companies approved for producing activity schedules, he said, are Leroy's Printing of Colby for the All-Sports calendar and Hi-Plains Printing for the pocket schedules. These are the only businesses that have our permission to use the schedules, he said. For questions or information, call Quenzer at 465-5300.

Colby Middle School concert set

The Colby Middle School band will be performing in concert on Tuesday beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium. Everyone is invited to the event, with refreshments served after the concert by the Music Boosters.

Seemann to talk about insurance

Rosalie Seeman, Silver Haired Legislature representative, will be speaking on issues regarding the upcoming change in Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage for those using it as a secondary insurance to medicare. The meeting will take place at the Senior Progress Center in Colby on Thursday at 11:45 a.m.

