



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

## City audit has no problems

By PATTY DECKER  
Free Press Editor

The City of Colby's financial audit for 2001 had no major discrepancies or problems, according to information distributed to council members at Tuesday's meeting.

Brian Staats and Cynthia Bieberle of Adams, Beran, Brown and Ball, gave an overview of the audit noting that there were no cash violations and funds were all within budgetary compliances.

"We would like to commend the staff in the administration office of the city for the quality and organization of their records," he said.

In addition, Staats said that the city is showing maturity on its long-term debt, adding that within the next five years the \$1.5 million owing would be paid off.

"There were a few items that are not material from the audit," he said, "but from the standpoint of improving the city's general matters, a management letter has also been submitted."

Of those, Staats said that when the audit was being done, the firm could not locate a copy of the annual financial statements and a certificate of insurance for Red River Commodities, which is a specific requirement of the Industrial Revenue Bonds.

"We recommend that the city maintain the required information," he said. Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong let the council know that this had been corrected.

In the area of accounts receivable reconciliation, Staats said the firm noted that the city is preparing a manual reconciliation by hand each month.

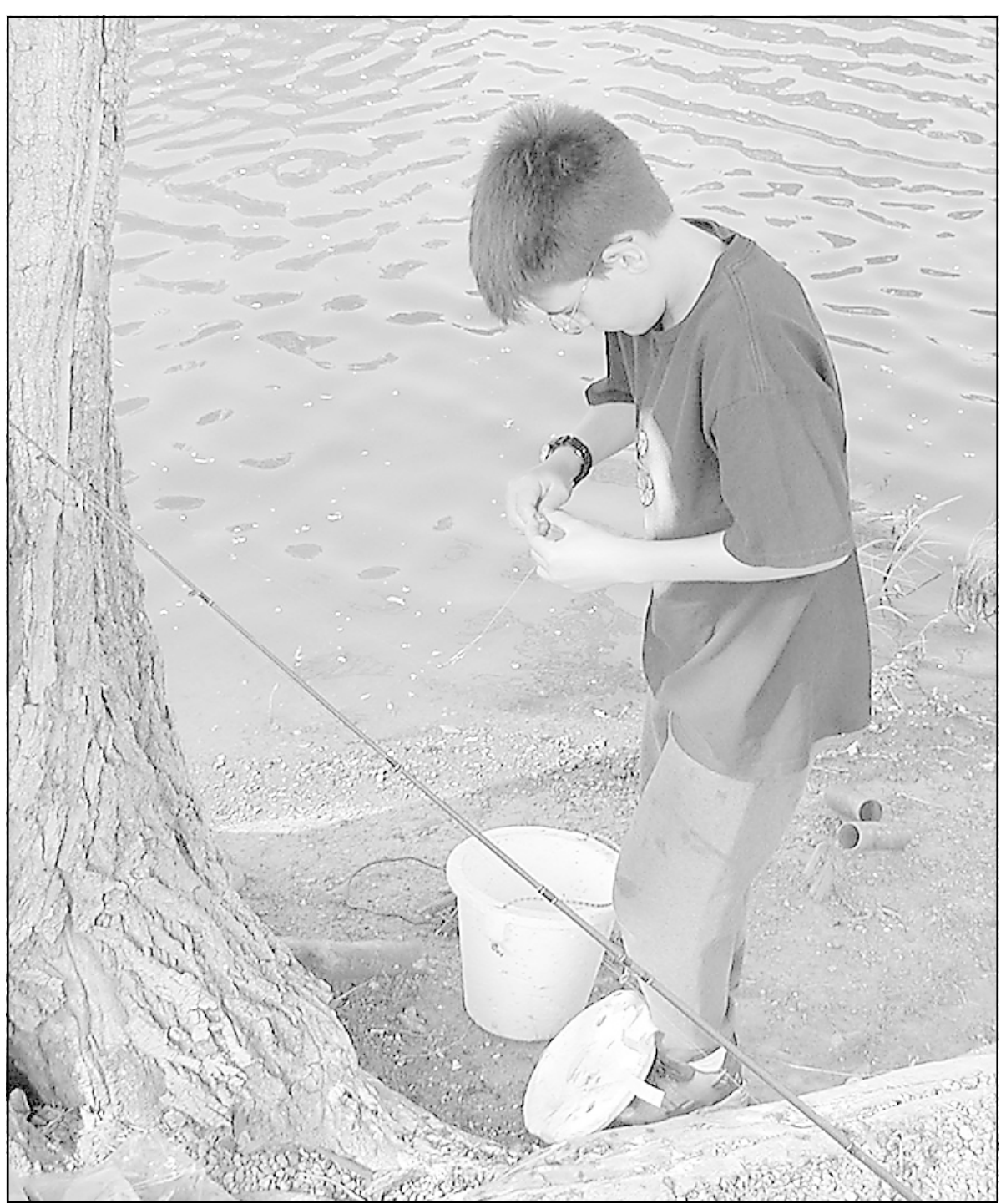
The accounting firm suggested that for efficiency and accuracy purposes, they should be using an excel spreadsheet or other spreadsheet that would work better.

One other item discussed was non-city bank accounts.

"During the audit process," he said, "we noted two bank accounts, one for the police officers benevolent fund and the other for the city's fire department."

The recommendation by the auditing firm was that these groups obtain their own number of the fund be brought under the control of the city.

As part of the annual audit, all information released to the council, Mayor Warren Hixson, and city management will also be filed with the State of Kansas, he said.



Fourteen-year old Cody Bieker of Colby baits a hook as he prepares for another day of fishing at Villa High Park in Colby. Cody reeled in a 6 lb. catfish last Friday (below), the biggest fish he has ever caught.

DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

## Sorry, but it's a Secret

By DARREL PATTILLO  
Colby Free Press

Like all experienced fishermen, 14-year old Cody Bieker of Colby has a favorite bait that he fishes with. And, like all experienced fishermen, he won't reveal what it is he uses to pull catfish out of Villa High Lake in Colby. Cody hooked a 26-inch, 6 pound, 4 ounce catfish last Friday at Villa High, near one of his favorite spots, on the north side of the lake.

"I'm not going to say," Cody said when asked what bait he used to

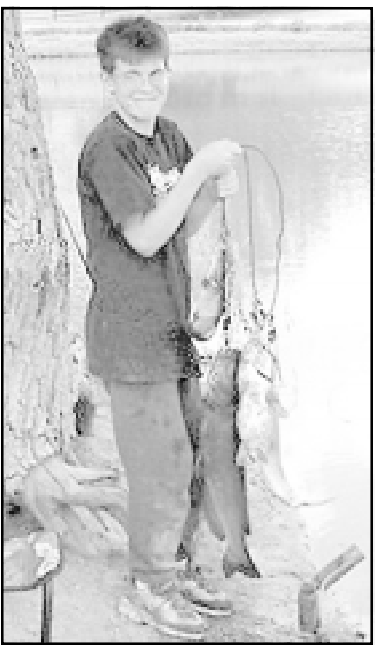
catch the fish.

"He's very secretive when it comes to his favorite bait," Cody's mother Laurie said.

Cody will admit to using catfish and chicken blood. He also said that he catches bluegill at Villa High, as well as the occasional turtle.

"I caught a turtle yesterday," he said. "And one time, I had some bluegill on a line, and I looked over at them, and a turtle was eating them."

Cody has been fishing at Villa High for about eight years now, and also likes to fish the south side.



## College unable to accommodate childcare proposal

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS  
Colby Free Press

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees denied a proposal by Kids Port Childcare to run their payroll through the college's financial department at their Monday meeting. Jeanne Thyfault and Cindy Schafer presented the proposal.

The program, which provides non-traditional hour childcare to families and a training ground for Colby Community College students who require early childhood observation hours, is funded by a grant from the Master Tobacco settlement money for early initiative. The proposal was to provide the funds for the payroll from that grant money, but to distribute them via the college.

Possible complications due to liability and insurance, caused the trustees to deny the proposal. The possibility of the college assisting the program in other areas was tabled pending further information from the Kids Port program.

In other business:

- The board approved an agreement with the Kansas Association of School Boards concerning workmen's compensation for college employees.
- The board approved an agreement with Rural Heath Ventures for nursing clinicals.
- Trustees approved the supplemental contracts for summer faculty.
- The board approved the resignation of library associate Alysia Starkey. Starkey has just completed her master's of library science and will be moving to Salina to work for Kansas State University.
- The recent movement to the state

health insurance plan does not provide for group life insurance, the trustees were told. After receiving bids for life insurance, the trustees discussed two different possibilities. F&M Insurance Store/Employees Mutual Company placed a bid for \$0.26 for every \$1,000 of coverage, while Security Benefits bid for \$0.45 for every \$1,000 of coverage. There are 133 college employees eligible for the plan. The board accepted the bid from F&M Insurance Store/Employees Mutual Company.

• The board approved a resolution honoring Maxine Nelson of the Colby Free Press for her diligent coverage of Colby Community College board meetings and events. Mrs. Nelson is retiring after nearly 20 years of employment at the Free Press.

• Trustees approved a payment of claims in the amount of \$586,268.45.

• Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, told the board that Colby Community College graduate, Wyatt Thompson, will be the new voice of the Kansas State University Wildcats (football and men's basketball teams).

• The college rodeo team, under the direction of Allen Russell, did "very well" at nationals. The men's rodeo team placed 21st and surpassed many four year colleges and universities in the standings. One-hundred one, two and four year colleges attended the event with 480 contestants participating. David Dyke, freshman, placed 5th in the nation in bull riding. Andrea Boettchner, freshman, placed 24th while Annie Boettchner, freshman, placed 48th in goat tying.

The next meeting will be July 1 at 5 p.m. in the college board room. The meeting is open to the public.

## Toddler suffocates

WICHITA (AP) — A toddler left alone inside a car with two other small children suffocated when his head and neck became caught between a car door frame and its window, authorities said.

The accident happened about 10:30 p.m. Monday when the boy's 24-year-old father went into a friend's apartment to call the mother of his 2-year-old and 9-month-old daughters who also were in the car, police said.

The boy was left in a seat belt in the back seat. He was probably trying to

climb out the driver's window of his father's 1996 Dodge Intrepid when he stepped on the power window switch, Wichita Police Lt. Ken Landwehr said.

When the father returned, the boy's neck was stuck. The father drove his son to Via Christi Regional Medical Center-St. Joseph's Campus where police were notified, Landwehr said.

"The cause of death was likely asphyxiation," Landwehr said, adding that investigators were awaiting autopsy results. He said prosecutors would be reviewing the case.

## Hundreds more evacuate wild fires; probe of plane's breakup continues

By TOM GARDNER  
Associated Press Writer

Hundreds more people were forced to flee wildfires that have charred nearly a half-million acres across the West as the owner of an air tanker that suddenly broke up and plunged to the ground said the plane had been repaired four years ago for cracks on one wing.

Investigators on Tuesday tried to learn what caused the air tanker's wings to snap off before the fuselage spiraled into the ground in the Sierra Nevada town of Walker, Calif. All three crew members were killed in the fiery explosion.

The crash resulted in the grounding of all C-130A firefighting aircraft in the United States.

"At the start of the drop, everything appeared normal," said George Petterson, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, who added that he'd never heard of such a double wing failure happening to a C-130A before.

The crash occurred as air tankers and heli-

**"This fire is so powerful it dictates the wind. First it sucks it in, and then pushes it out."**

Mat Wood,  
Colorado firefighter

icopters were helping more than 700 firefighters on the ground battle a Sierra foothills fire that by Wednesday had blackened at least 15,000 acres and threatened the rustic mountain hamlet of Walker.

The blaze was one of many fires burning in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah that have charred nearly a half-million acres of paper-dry forest and brush. Thousands of people have been forced to flee and more than 60 homes have been destroyed, most of them in Colorado.

Federal forest officials say more than 1.5

million acres have burned across the country in 2002—nearly twice the 10-year average for this time of year.

In Colorado, about 2,000 people were forced to evacuate Tuesday as a 120,000-acre fire continued to blacken the wooded hillsides southwest of Denver. With the new evacuations, 7,500 people remained away from their homes.

The fire, the largest of three major Colorado fires that burned more than 163,000 acres of forest and brush, was allegedly set by Forest Service worker Terry Barton, who faces charges in federal court. Her claim that she

started the fire while burning a letter from her estranged husband has sparked suspicion among prosecutors.

As in other parts of the country, unpredictable winds and hot weather were hampering firefighters in Colorado.

"This fire is so powerful it dictates the wind. First it sucks it in, and then pushes it out," firefighter Mat Wood said.

The windy weather sent smoke pouring into Denver, where authorities warned the young, elderly and those with respiratory ailments to stay inside. But the top firefighting priority in the Rocky Mountain region was a 38,000-acre blaze in southwestern Colorado that prompted the evacuation of more than 1,700 homes in the Durango area and destroyed at least 10.

Other fires burning around the country included a 100,000-acre blaze in Alaska's interior. It was started May 22 by firecracker shotgun shells fired by a biologist to scare off a charging moose.

A few hours before fiery air tanker crash,

three firefighters in Southern California were injured when flames leaped over their fire truck in the Cajon Pass, 50 miles east of Los Angeles. They were hospitalized with first-degree burns.

"For a few seconds, I thought it was over," firefighter Thomas Lotko, 45, said from his hospital bed where he was hooked to an IV and had his hands and elbows swathed in bandages.

Still another fire broke out 40 miles north of Los Angeles on Tuesday and quickly spread across 1,000 acres and caused two power lines to overheat and shut down. That in turn prompted a call for power conservation in Southern California.

The owner of the plane that crashed in Walker said company officials notified the Federal Aviation Administration in April 1998 that an inspection discovered two 1-inch cracks in the surface of one of the aircraft's wings.

The damage was repaired and no problems had been reported since, a company employee said Tuesday night.

## Briefly

### No record at 103

Tuesday's 103 degrees did not set a record for the date in Colby; the record for June 18 was 107 set in 1936. The heat will be with us for some time to come, according to the National Weather Service. Today's high was expected to top out near 100. Tonight, partly cloudy, a 50 percent chance for thunderstorms, lows in the upper 60s to near 70 and south winds 10-20 mph, becoming northeast late. Thursday, partly sunny, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms, highs around 90 and east winds 10-20 mph. Thursday night, partly cloudy, breezy, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, lows in the middle to upper 60s. Friday, breezy, partly sunny, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, highs in the lower 90s.

Saturday and Sunday should bring temperatures in the 90s, possible thunderstorms, partly cloudy conditions and breezy. This morning's low was 70.

The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is now averaging 81 degrees. The records for June 19: 105 in 1988 and 39 in 1985. (The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Vets Commission sets meeting

The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs will meet at 1 p.m. Friday, June 21, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, 220 North Lake (1 block west of the courthouse) in

Colby. The Commission affords veterans, their relatives and dependents information, advice, direction and assistance through the coordination of programs and services in the fields of education, health, vocational guidance and placement, mental care and economic security and to manage, operate and control the Kansas Soldiers Home, Kansas Veterans Home, and the Veteran Cemetery Program, said Jana Bowers, Secretary, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Topeka. All veterans and persons that could be eligible for benefits are encouraged to attend.

### Taxes due on Thursday

The second half of the 2001 real estate and personal prop-

erty taxes are due by Thursday, June 20, in the Thomas County Treasurer's office, said Donita Applebury, treasurer. For questions or information, call 462-4520.

### Parking regulations revisited

With the warmer weather and as people begin turning their attention to recreational activities, the City of Colby is reminding its citizens that no truck, motor vehicle, camper, trailer, machinery or equipment can be parked on any street or alley within the city in excess of 48 hours, officials said. The police department is authorized to remove and impound any of these types of vehicles that would be in violation of this regulation, officials said.



