



COLBY FREE PRESS



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Members of the original board for the Senior Progress Center were on hand on Thursday for the retirement reception of Deb Koon. Pictured above are (from left to right), Mary Jane Engelhardt, Deb Koon,

Willie Engelhardt, Maurice Phelps (current president of the board), Matt Hamill (seated), Mildred Goke, and Helen Frahm. Another member, Sam Unruh, was unable to attend.

Center honors retiring director, welcomes successor

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

It was a day of celebrating the past and turning the page to the future at the Senior Progress Center in Colby on Thursday, as a reception was held honoring the retirement of director Deb Koon.

Koon has been the director for 14 years and is retiring for health purposes.

"I am sure going to miss them all," Koon said of the seniors, "I love them dearly."

Koon began working as the director when the center opened, June 1, 1988. The center was built through funds supplied by an economic de-

velopment grant and contributions of supporters.

Koon will be replaced by Donna Schielke. She has been working the past two weeks with Koon in training.

Schielke has worked with seniors in a variety of capacities in the past, including being a caregiver for an elderly person.

She said she enjoys working with seniors and is looking forward to her new position. Eventually, Schielke said she would like to add some different activities to the schedule.

Another goal of Schielke's is to increase the number of lunches served daily at the center. Currently, lunches are served to 60-75 people and some

are home delivered to those in Colby, Oakley and Hoxie. She said she would like to see 100 people daily served on a consistent basis.

"I want it (the Progress Center) to be one of the friendliest places in Colby," said Schielke.

The Senior Progress Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and offers many services, such as: indoor walking, exercise bikes, Cablevision, video tapes, snooker, pool, puzzles and cards. And both Koon and Schielke said the coffee pot is always on when the doors are open. All area residents and visitors who are 60 or older are invited to participate.

They also offer different weekly

classes, such as a line dance class, exercise class, paint class, and a basic computer class. Those over 60 can call Schielke to sign up for classes or to get information.

Another service offered by the center is a public service van which is open to anyone — senior or otherwise. Koon said that the van is available to take residents shopping or to do errands, but people should call by noon the day before they would like to use the service to make a reservation. The van will be available on Tuesday, Nov. 5, to take anyone who wishes, to the polls to vote.

For more information about the center, call 462-2901.

Thousands of dollars in counterfeit money found in vehicle here

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

An employee of the Conoco Travel Shoppe called the Colby Police Department earlier this week saying that a woman had just tried to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill, Chief Randy Jones said today.

In response to the call on Wednesday, Colby Police Sgt. Kent Dible arrived at the station and began questioning the woman, he said. Since the woman could not produce positive identification, Dible escorted her to the Law Enforcement Center for further investigation.

"Only after the submission of fingerprints to the FBI database was the woman positively identified," said Jones

Colby Police determined the identity of the woman to be Kathy Jo Nelson. Nelson, who is 48, is believed to be currently living in Colorado.

After a search warrant was issued on Thursday for her vehicle, a 1988

Mazda, police recovered \$3,250 in counterfeit funds. The money was in denominations of \$20 and \$50, and were hidden in the engine compartment.

Jones said that along with the money, marijuana, methamphetamines, drug paraphernalia, several documents containing identities of other individuals were found in the vehicle. Police also recovered a lap-top computer, which is believed to be stolen, he said.

"The United States Secret Service was contacted and they will have an officer arriving in Colby sometime early next week," said Jones. "They have advised that they will be seeking federal charges against Nelson."

The portion of the investigation which involved the drugs and paraphernalia, has been turned over to the Quad County Task Force for further investigation and prosecution, said Jones.

Nelson is currently being held in the Thomas County Jail.

Attorney for doctor responds to latest suit

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

A Colby physician's attorney said on Thursday that he and his client were disappointed that anyone would file an action based on a recanted story, referring to a civil lawsuit filed earlier this week.

Michael O'Neal of Hutchinson was referring to a petition filed against his client, Dr. Victor H. Hildyard, by Margaret Ann Staats who alleges that the doctor committed "extreme and outrageous" actions that prompted her to ask for a judgment for damage in excess of \$75,000 for herself and also another \$75,000 for her husband.

Staats recanted her story verbally and before witnesses six months ago, O'Neal said, and she gave as a reason pressure to file the harassment against the doctor from the chief executive officer, Michael Boyles of Citizens Medical Center, and others, not Dr. Hildyard.

In addition, he said, her recantation included an expressed desire to be committed for evaluation.

"This appears to be an unfortunate lady who needs help," O'Neal said,

"but not the kind of help a lawsuit will provide."

In her petition, Staats, an employee at the Colby hospital, who initially brought forward acts of misconduct by Dr. Hildyard to the attention of the hospital administrator, according to court documents, alleged in her petition this week that she suffered severe emotional distress because of Dr. Hildyard's conduct.

O'Neal said that Dr. Hildyard denies her claims and that he will vigorously defend against her action.

"We do question who or what is really behind this suit, which as Ms. Staats stated in her prepared statement, isn't about wanting to get money, notwithstanding the request in the petition for an amount in excess of \$75,000," O'Neal said.

In the prepared statement from Staats, which O'Neal referred to, Staats said, "I know it has been reported that I recanted my original statement, but what I originally stated was true. When I recanted that statement, I felt threatened and I was scared and just wanted everything to go away and felt that would make it happen."

Thief unable to outrun cross country team

WINFIELD (AP) — A suspected shoplifter ran smack into a championship track team, which chased him down and put a quick end to his getaway.

The Southwestern College men's cross-country team has won 22 consecutive championship titles in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Confer-

ence. The team was warming up near a JCPenney store on Monday when the youth hurtled around the corner and into the team.

"He was sprinting as hard as he could, and we were all in a bunch," said team member Nathaniel Wheatley.

The youth told the runners he wasn't hurt, and ran away. A moment later,

someone emerged from the store and told the team the boy was a shoplifter.

At that point, Wheatley said, the team split up and chased after the boy.

"I don't know why he was running," said Wheatley, who earned All-American honors during the 2001 cross-country season. "He wasn't going to be able to outrun us."

The boy eventually surrendered his backpack to some of the runners.

They took it back to the store and let the boy go, only to find out that the stolen goods were the shoes on his feet, which he had swapped for his own shoes.

But the contents of the backpack led police to the boy.

Sniper suspects are linked to even more murders

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Two sniper suspects are now charged with a month long series of killings from the Gulf Coast to the suburbs of the nation's capital.

Louisiana officials said Thursday ballistic tests had linked John Allen Muhammad, 41, and John Lee Malvo, 17, to the Sept. 23 murder of a beauty shop worker — the second state to file murder charges after re-examining a local shooting for possible links to the Washington-area attacks.

Muhammad and Malvo were also tied to an Alabama murder two days before the Louisiana shooting.

The two suspects face multiple state

and federal counts in the Alabama and Louisiana cases, as well as the sniper spree that left 10 people dead and three others wounded in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. They are also suspects in a February killing in Washington state.

Baton Rouge Police Chief Pat Engle issued first-degree murder warrants for Muhammad and Malvo after ballistics tests matched the rifle used in the sniper shootings to the shooting of Hong Im Ballenger, 45.

Ballenger died from a single shot to the head as she left the Beauty Depot. Witnesses said the gunman was a young black man who fled into a

nearby park and evaded bloodhounds called in to track him down.

According to the arrest warrant, police believe Muhammad shot the woman and Malvo allegedly stole her purse and fled.

Jim Ballenger, the victim's husband, said his wife was a native of Incheon, South Korea, and the two were married in the Asian nation when he was in the military. The couple moved to Baton Rouge in 1996 with their three sons.

"I know my wife is in heaven," he said at a church party Thursday. "Jesus said to forgive and I am born again. The man who did it needs to do time in jail."

Earlier Thursday, Alabama authori-

ties said the same rifle used in Ballenger's killing, a .223-caliber Bushmaster, had been linked to the shooting death of a liquor store worker in Montgomery on Sept. 21, two days before the Louisiana slaying and 315 miles away.

In that case, the suspect — allegedly Malvo — was seen rifling through one of the victim's purses before he was chased off by a police officer.

The sniper suspects have been in custody in Maryland since they were captured at a highway rest stop Oct. 24. Authorities found the rifle in their car, which they say was modified so someone could fire unseen through a hole.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers
Thursday's high, 25
Low this morning, 19
Year ago today, 83 and 37
Soil temperature, 38
Temperature at 11 a.m. today, 32
Records for Nov. 1, 79 in 1914, 13 in 1935

The forecast
Conditions will continue to be more winter-like than fall for the next few days. Lingering clouds and slight chances for a few more snow flakes are forecast through Monday, with low temperatures generally in the 20s and highs in the lower 40s. Winds won't be much of a factor during the period.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will be meeting on Monday at 9 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Thomas County Courthouse. Kathy Ryan is on the agenda to give a bioterrorism update and Bob Harper to talk about cancer insurance. The meeting is open to the public.

College board to meet at Norton

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Colby Community College will be held on Monday at 7 p.m. at the Norton County Hospital Annex, 102 East Holme. Items of business on the agenda include the approval of contracts and agreements, computer bids and approval of purchases over \$5,000.

Child Birth Class begins next week

The Colby Child Birth Education Class Series will begin for the month of November on Thursday, Nov. 6. The four-week se-

ries will be each Thursday through Dec. 4, but will not meet on Thanksgiving. Classes will be held from 7 to 10 p.m. and will be in the Health Science Building at Colby Community College. For information or to register, call Jeanne Brown at 462-4850. The next class will begin on Jan. 9.

Area Health Care group to meet

The Area Citizens for Health Care open meetings will be held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Colby Community Building in the Little Theater, said John Kern, president. The public is invited and urged to attend. The next meeting is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Commodities distribution set

Distributions of leftover commodities from Oct. 21, will be distributed on Monday at the RSVP Office in the Senior Progress Center from 2 to 3 p.m. Eligible persons may receive them according to income guidelines on the above date and time only.

Expected commodities are raisins, tomato sauce, walnuts, applesauce and corn. For questions contact the RSVP Office at 462-6744.

Next 'Share' sign up announced

SHARE sign up is Nov. 4 to 8, at State Farm Insurance office in Colby with the delivery set for Nov. 23, at 9 a.m. in the Sacred Heart School gym. For information call Gene at 462-3579 or Anna at 462-3733.

Wellness Fair set; coupons on sale

With the annual Wellness Fair nearing, businesses are being asked to take part in promoting community health and wellness by covering the cost of the fair registration and or health screenings for their employees who may want to participate. The fair will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the student union on the Colby Community College campus. Blood work will be done on Saturdays, Jan. 4 and Jan. 11.

