



# COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

## On I-70 Stops yield drugs

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

Two traffic stops in Thomas County by the Kansas Highway Patrol within the last week have resulted in the seizure of 102 pounds of marijuana and 2 kilos of cocaine, according to Kansas Highway Patrol spokesman Sgt. Travis Phillips.

Phillips said that last Thursday, a rented 2003 Ford Escape was stopped at mile marker 57 on I-70, eastbound, and a subsequent search found 102 pounds of Mexican marijuana, with a street value of \$204,000.

The occupants of the car, Steven Lamar Henry, 26, of Columbus, Ohio, and Richard Allen Boydston, 62, of Chillicothe, Ohio, were both transported to the Thomas County Jail, where they were charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and conspiracy to distribute marijuana. The rented vehicle was returned to the rental company. Henry and Boydston have since been released from the Thomas County jail.

On Jan. 25, the Highway Patrol stopped a Ford Focus at mile marker 59 in the east-bound lane of I-70 for speeding. After a consent to search was obtained, officers discovered 2 kilos of cocaine behind the trunk liner.

Rene Gomez-Valdez, 65, of Calexico, Calif., and Hector Manuel Aguilar, 34, of Heber, Calif., were arrested and transported to the Thomas County jail, where they were charged with possession of cocaine with the intent to distribute. The cocaine that was seized had a street value of \$100,000 per kilo.

Both Aguilar and Gomez-Valdez were released on Jan. 27.

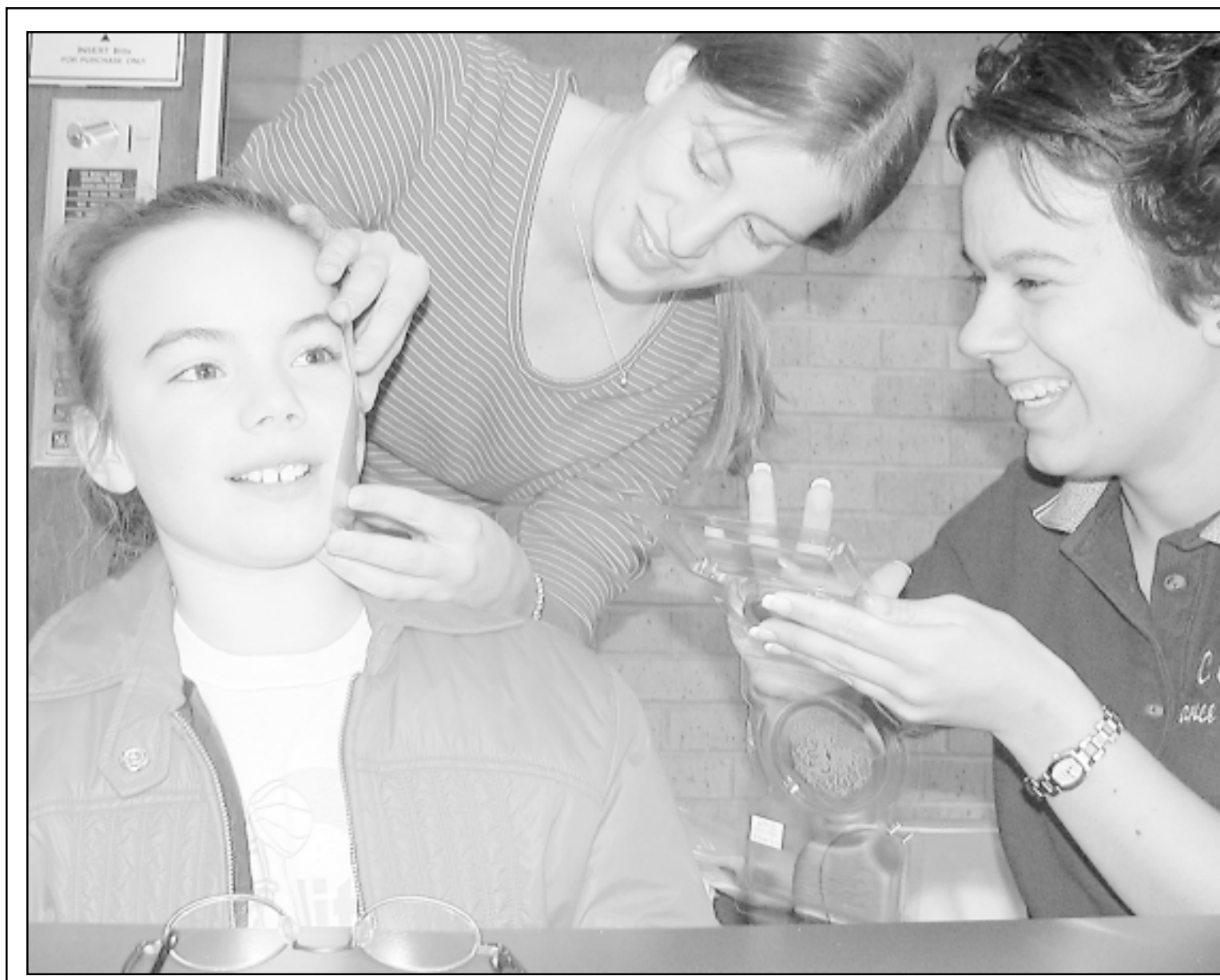
## Four sign Republican unity pledge

TOPEKA (AP) — As promised, the four Republicans who hold statewide office pledged Wednesday to stay out of contested primary elections.

Attorney General Phill Kline, Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh and State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins signed a pledge to remain neutral during primary campaigns and then support the winners.

The pledge is intended to promote Republican unity. Last year, Republican votes helped Democrat Kathleen Sebelius win the governor's race and U.S. Rep. Dennis Moore win a third term.

The four Republican officials had said during last weekend's GOP Kansas Day festivities that they would sign a pledge.



## A face of support

Kate Ostmeier, left, had her face painted by Shannon Harter, middle, and Candy Stiles Wednesday night at the Colby Community Building. Kate is a fourth-grade student at Sacred Heart School in Colby, and was at the Colby Community College Trojan basketball games to play in the Little Cagers' game during half-time of the Lady Trojan's game against Dodge City. Harter and Stiles had a face painting booth set up to raise funds for the college's Phi Theta Kappa sorority.

DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

## Senior Center, library are the locations

# Free tax service again available for some residents

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

It's tax preparation time and...they're back!

For many years, a group of people in Colby have been providing a tax return service for those in middle to low-income brackets and for senior citizens 60 and older, said Alvin Volk, coordinator.

Beginning on Monday, Feb. 3, and Wednesday, Feb. 5, Volk, along with one other volunteer, will be helping people prepare their tax returns for 2002. This special service, he said, will continue on Mondays and Wednesday until the Internal Revenue Service deadline of April 15.

For those interested, Volk and his

assistant will be available from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Mondays, at the Senior Progress Center of Thomas County, 165 Fike Park in Colby and on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. at Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th St.

Volk said that the program is through the AARP Tax-Aide, which is the nation's largest, free volun-

teer-run tax counseling and preparation service.

In most instances, he said, we can answer the majority of tax issues that would confront those in the middle and low-income, along with senior citizens.

There is also a website for questions about the program, he said, by going online to [www.aarp.org/](http://www.aarp.org/)

taxaide for year-round assistance.

Although Volk was unsure about how long the program has been offered in Colby, he did say that prior to his overseeing it this year, Alice Oelke of Colby coordinated in previous years.

For questions or other information on this free service, Volk asks people to call him at 462-2645.

## Commissioners announce agenda for Friday meeting

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet Friday at 9 a.m. for their last meeting of January in their office in the courthouse.

Items on the agenda include a visit from Todd Unruh of Midwest Energy, who will discuss the boiler situation at the Thomas County Office Complex; County Health director Kathy Ryan will be in with the contract for the bio-terrorism program; Cindy Mullens, with

Oliver and Associates, will give a presentation on long-term healthcare options available to county employees; Kathi Wright and Martin Rinehart will give the yearly EMS update; and Clair Schrock will talk with the commissioners, but the topic wasn't available.

The public is invited to this and all commissioners' meetings and their input is appreciated.

# Bush ponders deadline for Saddam

WASHINGTON (AP) — Edging closer toward war with Iraq, President Bush weighed setting a deadline for Saddam Hussein to disarm, and closed ranks with allies who support Washington's hard line against Baghdad.

With a crucial second round of United Nations talks set for next Wednesday, Bush began a flurry of last-minute consultations with world leaders. Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi was due in the Oval Office today, a day after his country pleased White House officials with permission — one of the few concrete offers from Europe — to use its bases for refueling and other "technical" functions during

any military action.

On tap Friday is Bush's pivotal Camp David session with Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, the Bush administration's most vocal ally. Meanwhile, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Saud, was rushing to Washington for meetings with Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The Saudis have been seeking a way to avoid war and have not said publicly they will allow the United States to use military facilities in Saudi Arabia. However, U.S. officials have been saying for weeks they are satisfied with the level of cooperation being offered privately and the U.S. commander who

would run a war against Iraq just returned to Washington from a round of meetings with military leaders in the region, including those in Saudi Arabia.

In a letter published today in newspapers including *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Times* of London, the leaders of Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Denmark paid homage to the "bravery and generosity of America."

And in a veiled attack on France and Germany, the leaders call for "unwavering determination and firm international cohesion on the part of all countries for whom freedom is precious."

## Doing her part



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Donna Roberts of Colby was one of 147 people to donate to the American Red Cross blood drive held Wednesday at the City Limits Convention Center. Seated beside Roberts was one of many assistants helping from the Central Plains Regional office. Of the 147 donations that day, 130 were evaluated as productive units, said Jackie Stephens, co-coordinator of the drive. In addition to the many people who donate on a regular basis, Stephens said there were five first-time donors at the drive. More information about the volunteers and highlights will appear in a future edition.

## WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

### The numbers

Wednesday's high, 50  
Low this morning, 23  
Soil temperature, 34  
Year ago today, 22 and 12  
Precipitation for month: 0.00  
Records for this date: 66 in 1971, -14 in 1918

### The forecast

Tonight, partly cloudy, lows mid 20s, west winds becoming north late 10-20 mph. Friday, sunny, warm, highs near 60, northwest winds becoming southwest late in the morning 5-10 mph. Friday night, clear, lows near 30. Saturday, partly cloudy, warm, highs mid 60s.

## Briefly

### Fr. Galen back from hospital stay

Fr. Galen Long, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Colby, is back from his hospital stay in Denver. He is doing well and thanks everyone for their prayers and good wishes. Masses for this coming weekend will be on the regular schedule: 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. on Sunday. Parishioners are asked to check the weekend *Bulletin* for next week's daily schedule.

### Pancake feed is Saturday

The Odd Fellows and Rebekahs will hold their annual pancake and sausage feed on Saturday at the Colby Community Building from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Thomas County freshman or sophomore scholarships. The cost is \$3. The public is warmly invited to attend.

### Irrigation conference nears

The Central Plains Irrigation Association is holding its 15th

annual conference and exposition in Colby on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 4-5 at the City Limits Convention Center and Comfort Inn. Due to the overwhelming response, said Donna Lamm, one of the coordinators, it is necessary to limit registration to 225 people. For those planning to attend, Lamm encourages them to call her at 462-7574 or 462-7140 as soon as possible.

### Conservation dinner deadline Friday

The Thomas County Conservation District's 59th annual meeting and awards banquet will be held at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 10, in the Thomas County 4-H Building at the fairgrounds. Reservations for the dinner must be made no later than Friday. RSVP to 462-7482, ext. 3. There is no charge for the event.

### Red Cross plans classes

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is offering a shelter operations class to help with local shel-

ters in the event of bad weather or other disasters, said Molly Oliver, spokesperson for the organization. The class is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. In addition to the shelter operations class, the Red Cross is always looking for people interested in learning how to drive the ERV (emergency response vehicle).

For questions or to register for either of these needed services, call 462-7161 or 462-6133.

### Dog training starts tonight

Dog training classes will be offered beginning at 8 tonight at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds, said Carrie Bredemeier, coordinator. Those interested will need proof of current vaccinations from a licensed veterinarian. The class fee is \$50, which will be required on the first night of training. This class, she said, will teach discipline and other basic techniques.

For questions or other information, call Bredemeier at 462-3816.

