



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

## Expert advice



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Tracey Wilcox gave Austin Hart some swimming tips during the first of three sessions offered by the Colby Recreation Department. There are still vacancies in the next two sessions, said Ryan Sturdy, recreation director. The current lessons conclude

Thursday and the second lessons begin Monday and continue until Thursday, June 26. The final session will be Monday, June 30 through Thursday, July 10. Children five years and older can participate either at 8:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., or 10:30 a.m.

## Three Colby doctors buy old hospital building

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

The former St. Thomas Hospital on Range Avenue was sold last Thursday to a local medical corporation.

Medical Arts, Inc., which includes Drs. Victor H. Hildyard, LaDonna Regier and Raymond Ketting, purchased the 44,000 plus square foot building last week from Peoples State Bank in Colby with the cost undisclosed on the corporation deed.

The building has had a diverse history beginning as a hospital with the first open house held during the Thomas County Free Fair in 1941. By 1947, the hospital doubled in size to a 100-bed capacity and housed a Polio Ward — the first of its kind in the county.

As the years went by and federal and state regulations dictated improvements and changes, there was an effort to build a private hospital, known today as Citizens Medical Center.

Consequently, in 1982 and after the new hospital facility was completed, the Thomas County Commissioners agreed to sell the old St. Thomas Hospital for \$1 to the Colby School District.

This would remain the property of the school district until the fall of 2000 when Jon Pope, president of

Peoples State Bank, approached the board and asked to buy the land and building as the location for a new banking facility.

"All I was really interested in was the lot north of the administration building," Pope said earlier this week.

As for the entire facility, Pope said he agreed to keep the property in his name to protect the bank and its investors from liability issues with the understanding that should someone or group ever be interested in buying it, he would deed it to the bank with all profits going back to the corporation.

After working out a few details, Pope said, he and representatives of Medical Arts, Inc. agreed on a price, along with certain conditions.

Among those conditions, Pope said he wanted to retain the mechanical building which is about 2,000 square feet and is separate from the main facility for storage use. In addition to the mechanical building and main structure, there is also one other separate building on the southwest corner that is a three-car garage. In year's past, Pope believed this housed ambulances for the old hospital.

At this time, the physicians buying the building had no other comments about what they plan to do with their new purchase.

## Man remains jailed following accident, discovery of 'lab'

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

An Oberlin man appeared in Thomas County District Court on Wednesday and was charged with four offenses relating to a Friday afternoon one-car accident in Colby and subsequent discovery of a possible meth lab in the vehicle.

Jeremy Edward Stoney, 26, is being held in the county jail in lieu of a \$100,000 bond after being charged with manufacturing of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia and anhydrous ammonia in an unapproved container, along with a second offense for driving under the influence, said Gary Shull, investigator with the Colby Police Department.

Authorities believed Stoney was having an epileptic seizure at the time of the crash at 4:45 p.m. when his 1993 GMC pickup went out of control and got jammed between two trees, but not before crashing through four fences on Range and W. Cherry.

In the initial report, rescue workers from the Thomas County Emergency Medical Services tried to reach the cab of the pickup through the truck bed and in doing so discovered the alleged methamphetamine lab in the back of the pickup.

After taking Stoney to Citizens Medical Center to make sure he was uninjured, he was then transported to the jail pending the filling of charges, Shull said.

Some in Colby might recall Stoney from the incident in October of 2001 when 11-year-old Christopher Brittain, a sixth grade student at Colby Middle School, saved both Stoney, his 5-year-old brother, one-year-old sister and himself from what could have been a disastrous ordeal.

The incident occurred when Stoney had an epileptic seizure while taking the boys to school. If it wasn't for Brittain's quick thinking and quick reactions in maneuvering the car to safety, it's unsure what might have happened.

Not many 11-year-olds can maneuver a car at 60 plus miles per hour through rush-hour morning traffic — and do it from the passenger seat.

At that time, Stoney was driving a yellow 1992 Firebird Formula and after the car was safely parked at Deep Rock Cafe, he was taken to Citizens Medical Center and later released.

As for the three children in the car, Brittain said they all came through the incident uninjured.

## 'Road map' rocked by more bloodshed

JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon swore to hunt Palestinian militants "to the bitter end" and Israeli helicopters rocketed a car carrying Hamas activists in Gaza early Thursday, the latest strike in a cycle of vengeance that killed 28 people in a less than a day and wounded more than 100.

Also Thursday, the Islamic militant group Hamas issued a new threat, saying it has ordered "all military cells" to take immediate action and carry out more attacks on Israelis.

The group also urged foreigners to leave Israel and the Palestinian areas for their own safety.

In a Cabinet meeting Thursday, Sharon dismissed Palestinian leaders as "crybabies" for saying they can't use force against the militias, according to a Cabinet official briefing reporters.

Israel said it will not stand by until Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas persuades the armed groups to halt attacks.

The spike in violence came just a week after President Bush launched a Middle East peace plan at a festive summit.

Difficulties in implementing the so-called "road map" plan had been expected, but many were surprised by such a rapid return to bloodshed.

There have been deadlier days in 32 months of fighting, but despair was perhaps more keenly felt than after previous setbacks because there had been hope of a new beginning and personal involvement by Bush after last week's summit.

"Bush, too, cannot compel Hamas to stop terror," Israeli commentator Sever Plotzker wrote in the Yediot Ahronot daily.

"And the all-powerful Bush cannot compel Sharon to stop the assassinations (of Palestinian militants). The cause and effect, the effect and cause, it's all jumbled. Who remembers who started?"

Bush angrily condemned the bus bombing and urged all nations to cut off financial assistance to terrorists

and "isolate those who hate so much that they are willing to kill." Earlier, Bush had rebuked Sharon for the attempted killing of a Hamas founder, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, which led to threats of revenge by the group.

Hamas said in its statement Thursday that more attacks would follow.

The bus bombing "is the beginning of a new series of attacks and part of a bill the Zionists must pay," the Hamas statement said.

"We call on all military cells to act immediately and act like an earthquake to blow up the Zionist entity and tear it to pieces."

The first retaliation for the botched attack on Rantisi came Wednesday afternoon, during evening rush hour on Jaffa Street.

An 18-year-old high school student from Hebron, Abdel Madi Shabneh, disguised as an ultra-Orthodox Jew, boarded city bus No. 14 just after it left the nearby central

bus station. Shabneh detonated the explosives strapped to his body just as the bus reached Mahane Yehuda, the city's large outdoor market.

The blast lifted the bus off the pavement and tore up the roof and sides. Several passengers were hurled outside.

The bomber killed 16 people, including Alan Beer, 47, who immigrated to Israel from Cleveland several years ago. More than 100 people were hurt.

Less than an hour later, Israeli helicopters targeted two members of the Hamas military wing as they drove in the crowded market area of a Gaza City neighborhood.

The two were killed in a ball of fire, and witnesses said more missiles were fired as hundreds of bystanders ringed the burning vehicle.

Seven more people were killed and 35 wounded by the second volley.

Early Thursday, an Israeli rocket attack killed two low-level Hamas activists in Gaza City.

## Wheat crop estimates climb

WICHITA (AP) — Kansas farmers are expected to produce a better-than-average winter wheat crop, with revised estimates pegging the 2003 harvest at 426.8 million bushels.

The new forecast, released Wednesday by the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service, would make this year's crop 60 percent bigger than last year's drought-plagued harvest. In a typical year, Kansas can expect to harvest about 400 million

bushels of wheat.

Yields are expected to average 44 bushels per acre — 11 bushels per acre higher than last year. About 9.7 million acres of winter wheat will be harvested in the state this year, which is the largest acreage harvested since 1998.

Wednesday's estimate is based on crop conditions June 1, and is 10 percent higher than the forecast a month ago.

Wheat harvest is just getting un-

der way in southern Kansas, with recent rains putting a damper on harvest in parts that traditionally are among the first to run the combines.

Some wheat is being cut between Protection and Sitka, with about 3,000 bushels cut Monday and 25,000 bushels cut Tuesday, said Bill Bayne, wheat harvest representative in Coldwater.

Test weights on those early bushels have been running between 59 and 62 pounds per bushel, he said.

## Flag inserted in today's Free Press

### Briefly

#### College board meets Monday

The regular meeting of the Colby Community College Board of Trustees will be held Monday at 5 p.m. in the board room of the Thomas Hall administration building. Items on the agenda include reports on administrative software and natural gas bids. Also approval is expended on various contracts and agreements, policies and procedure manual, capital outlay, disposal of college property and contract/salary considerations for non-unit employees. All meetings are open to the public.

#### Farewell party planned for Worthy

The Regional Prevention Center of Northwest Kansas will hold a "come and go" farewell reception for Janet Worthy, who worked at the center for nearly 13 years and was responsible for a variety of programs and activities. The event is from 3 to 5 p.m., Friday, at 990 S. Range Ave. and open to everyone. Refreshments will be available

#### Fair board meets tonight

The Thomas County fair board will hold its regular monthly meeting at 8 p.m. tonight in the 4-H building at the fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include a report from the extension agent, drug forfeiture money, annual barbecue, the slab dance and queen and princess contest. The board will also hear from committee chairs regarding building and grounds, carnival rides, rodeo activities, the parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising. All meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

#### Personal, real estate taxes due

The second half of 2002 Thomas County personal and real estate taxes are due by Friday, June 20. For questions, call the county treasurer's office at 462-4520.

#### Babysitting class planned

The Super Sitter Class will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,

Wednesday, June 25 in the Thomas County Office Complex. Children who have completed fifth grade are eligible to enroll, said officials at the Thomas County Health Department. Events planned throughout the day include baby bath demonstration, interaction with local daycare children, fire safety and 911. Children who plan to attend need to bring pen and paper and a sack lunch. Snacks will be provided. The cost of the class is \$15. To enroll, call the health department at (785) 462-4596.

#### Share sign up underway

Heartland Share sign up began Monday and will continue through Friday, said Gene Griffin, coordinator. The sign up is at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. 4th, Colby. Delivery is scheduled for Saturday, June 28, starting at 10 a.m. in the Colby Sacred Heart School gymnasium. As an added bonus this month, she said, those ordering Share and a special of the month will have an opportunity to win a barbecue grill. Questions to 460-3579.



### Thunderstorms

#### Thomas, Logan Counties

Tonight...mostly cloudy, lows in the mid-50s, east winds up to 15 mph, 40 percent chance for thunderstorms. Friday, cloudy, highs in the upper 70s, light and variable winds, 40 percent chance for thunderstorms. Friday night, cloudy, lows in the mid 50s, 40 percent chance for thunderstorms. Saturday, partly cloudy, highs in the lower 80s. Saturday night, clear, lows in the mid 50s.

#### By the numbers

Wednesday's high, 91  
Low this morning, 57  
Year ago today, 91 and 65  
Records for the date, 105 in 1950, 41 in 1985  
Soil temperature, 74  
4 hour precipitation to 8 a.m. today, 0.36  
June's precipitation to date, 1.64  
Year's precipitation to date, 7.99  
2002's precipitation to date, 3.34

#### Water Usage/Colby

June 11 = 2.845 million gallons

