



COLBY FREE PRESS

Lights will stay on at Lantern Park Manor

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

After talking with the management group at Lantern Park Manor late last week, city officials said they are "confident" the situation involving its utility bill will be resolved.

"The lights will stay on at Lantern Park Manor," said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager today.

Prompted by an article in the *Colby Free Press* last Wednesday, David Goldner with Premiere Healthcare Management, based in North Hollywood, Calif., and the group overseeing Lantern Park, will be meeting with Armstrong next Tuesday.

"I am extremely pleased that we will have a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Goldner on Feb. 1 to resolve the utility bills at Lantern Park Manor," she said.

Armstrong added that Goldner has provided information on the water usage they are disputing and the city will be verifying all their records because of the utility billing software problems during the summer.

"The local Lantern Park Manor staff (who receives the monthly bills) have worked very diligently with the city on this matter, and I appreciate their efforts," she said.

The problem with utility bills at Lantern Park was first discussed publicly at last week's council

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Solomon Goldner,

president of Lantern Park's management group

meeting. At that time, Armstrong told council members that she needed direction from them on how to proceed since the bill was unpaid during the software problems from May to July of 2004.

Last week, Armstrong said that Lantern Park officials were disputing the bills from that period, which totaled about \$13,000.

Part of the reason for the dispute, she said, was caused by the software changeover which failed to bill that facility for the three-month period the new software was in place. When the city changed back to its old system, the mistake was caught and Lantern Park was billed the entire amount of \$13,000.

"I am confident this matter can be resolved when we all get together with a member of the management group that issues the checks," she said, adding that this situation has been extremely stressful for a number of people.

The *Free Press* would like to clarify that in last week's article, the

current management group was incorrect. The correct management changes included Beverly Enterprises, which operated the facility until 2001, followed by HP Management Services (Alpha Healthcare Foundation, Inc.) in Alpharetta, Ga.

According to information provided the Goldner family, Premiere Healthcare Management stepped into management at Lantern Park on May 1, 2004, taking over from Alpha Healthcare Foundation, which was operating the facility under a Chapter 11 bankruptcy since 2003.

David Goldner's father, Solomon, who is president of Premiere Healthcare Management and based in Brooklyn, N.Y., said in a recent letter, which was re-routed to the *Free Press*, that he and his son are "continuing to expend significant resources and personal effort" to improve Lantern Park.

"We're not closing Lantern Park," he said, "we're just getting warmed up."

Three arrested in connection with property theft at college

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Almost \$4,000 worth of items were taken from at least six dorm rooms on the Colby Community College campus and police have arrested three people in connection with the crimes.

Suspected in the thefts were Joseph DeLancey, 18, who formerly attended Colby College and is from Benkelman, Neb., along with Cody Earl Graham, 18, a college student from Parks, Neb., and Jeremiah Bell, 21, also a student at Colby College, said Gary Shull, investigator with the Colby police.

The thefts first came to the attention of Colby police on Friday, Dec. 17, he said, when students started reporting items stolen from their dorm rooms with the latest victim filing a complaint on Monday, Jan. 10.

Property taken from the dorm bedrooms of at least five victims, Shull said, included electronic equipment such as laptop comput-

ers, televisions, DVD players, and DVD movies.

In response to these crimes, three search warrants were issued along with four consent searches in Colby, rural Thomas County and McDonald.

"Most, but not all of the property has been recovered," Shull said, "and some of it has been damaged."

Bell and DeLancey were both arrested on Monday, Jan. 17, and formally charged by Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick on Thursday, he said. Bell was charged with felony theft and computer crime, which is also a felony and DeLancey faces one charge of felony theft.

The following day, Graham was taken into custody on the college campus for possession of stolen property, but has not been formally

charged by the county attorney since he was not involved in the theft of the laptop.

None of the three suspects were charged with burglary.

In the initial warrant, DeLancey and Bell had \$10,000 bonds that were reduced later to \$1,000 at their first court appearance.

Shull said that there could be more people charged in connection with these property crimes, but had no other information was available today.

All three suspects are currently out on bond.



J. Bell



J. Delancey



C. Graham



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Eva Deckman showed off the cake given to her for her 104th birthday by the members of "The Ladies of Ahh's" group of the Red Hat Society Saturday at Lantern Park Manor. Her birthday was officially Jan. 5, but the group celebrated with Deckman, who is a member, with cake and cards.

Lady celebrates 104th birthday

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Saturday was a festive day for one Lantern Park Manor resident. Eva Deckman celebrated her 104th birthday with fellow members of the Red Hat Society "Ladies of Ahh's."

Gayla Berggren, queen mother of the group, said Eva was the "oldest, newest member."

Deckman's birthday was officially on Jan. 5, but the group got together to mark the celebration with their usual gathering.

She was born on Jan. 5, 1901 in Palco, where she was raised and lived on the family farm. Later, she lived in Sharon Springs before moving to Colby.

"I was born in a sod house," Deckman said. "There were a lot of them then."

Her family later built a house and the sod house was converted to other uses. She said that was the norm at the time, and they were used as a barn, a chicken house or to store lumber. Deckman went to

school in Palco, but didn't go to college. Nor did she ever work, which she said wasn't an unusual occurrence.

She was only married once, which was enough, she joked, because she said she would forever have been comparing them to each other.

She married Clarence "Tex" Deckman in June, 1920, at a Palco church when she was 19-years-old. She said they called him "Tex" because he was from Texas.

They had four children, although only one son survived. She also has three grandsons and eight great-grandchildren.

Tex farmed and raised cattle, as well as headed up a wheat farming company and had more than 65,000 acres to look after.

Deckman has seen many changes throughout her life. She said when she was a child, they got around by horse and buggy but that all changed when her father brought home their first car.

She said he went to Salina to get

it and brought it home, people came from all over to get a better look.

Her family was also self-sufficient, making soap for washing and laundry, as well as their own clothes, and providing most of their own food.

"We raised about everything we needed," she said, adding they had a garden and canned food, as well as raising and killing their own meat.

Deckman said she didn't know how many president's she's lived through, but she's seen the terms of 19 presidents from William McKinley to the second term of George W. Bush.

She said probably the most important change she saw was washing machines and dryers. Deckman said growing up they had to haul water and use a washboard for the task, but the appliances made life much easier.

Deckman said she's surprised she's lived this long, but she's happy she has.

Briefly

College continues play auditions Tuesday

The drama department at Colby Community College will continue auditions from 7 to 9:30 p.m., Tuesday, at the Frahm Theatre located in the Cultural Arts Center. The auditions, which began today, are being held for the spring play entitled, *The Face on the Barroom Floor*, a melodrama, said Deb Bickner, director. Auditions are open to students and anyone in town interested, she said. Parts range from high school age to adult. Call backs will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27. For questions, call Bickner at 462-3984, ext. 783.

Filing deadline Tuesday

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms is reminding everyone that the filing deadline for city and school candidates is noon, Tuesday, for the April elections.

Sacred Heart School carnival nears

The annual Sacred Heart School Carnival in Colby will be held on Sunday, Feb. 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the school gymnasium. There will be food, games, prizes and more. All carnival proceeds go toward helping the school buy needed equipment and/or other items, said Jennifer Van Eaton, one of the organizers. The carnival is open to everyone. For questions, call 462-2179.

Park permits now available

The 2005 park permits are now available in the Thomas County clerk's office. The price schedule for an annual vehicle permit from January to March is \$34.50; April to September, \$44.50; and October through November, \$34.50. The permit cost for a second vehicle is \$19.50 from January to March; \$24.50 from April to September and \$17.25 from October

to December. Senior citizens or disabled on first vehicles is \$17.25 from January to March; \$22.25, April to September and \$17.25 from October to December. Second vehicles for disabled or seniors would be \$9.75 from January to March; \$12.25 from April to September; and \$9.75 from October to December. Duplicate permits will cost \$10. For questions, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Deadline nears for 'Sky is the Limit' trip

Pioneer Memorial Library is reminding Thomas County students in grades 6, 7 and 8 about "The Sky is the Limit" trip to Colorado Springs on Saturday, Feb. 26. Interested students must complete a form in order to be eligible for the selection process, library officials said. Preference will be given to those who already have their forms turned in. For questions, stop by the library at 375 W. 4th or call (785) 460-4470.

Photo contest packets available Thursday

The final winter *Day in the Life of Thomas County* photo contest will be taking place Saturday, Jan. 29. The contest is open to everyone, said Jeff Friesen, Pioneer Memorial librarian. All necessary information and one roll of film are included a packet that can be picked up from the Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, beginning Thursday and through Friday, Jan. 28. 20-28. For questions about the contest, call 462-4470.

Storytime underway at library

StoryTime at Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, Colby, is in full swing with sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For preschool students, *StoryTime* is held Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m. or Thursdays at 1:15 p.m. Toddlers meet on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. and family night is Thursday at 7 p.m. *Storytime* is open to everyone, said Judy Kleinsorge, children's librarian. For questions, call her at 462-4470.

Colby
Jennings
McDonald



Cooler by mid-week

Tonight...Partly cloudy then clearing after midnight. Lows in the 30s. Southeast winds around 5 mph, shifting to the northwest late.
Tuesday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the 50s. North winds 10-15 mph.
Tuesday night...Cloudy. Lows in the 20s. North winds 10 mph.
Wednesday...Cloudy. Highs in the 40s. North winds 10 mph, shifting to the southeast later in the day.

The numbers

Sunday's high, 65
Low this morning, 18
Year ago today, 45 and 22
Records for this date, 68 in 1981 and -26 in 1894
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
January total, 0.16
January snowfall, 2.8 inches
Soil temperature, 31

The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

