



COLBY FREE PRESS

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'24 hours of madness'

Radio operators get emergency training

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Phillips Park was the temporary home of the Trojan Amateur Radio Club of Northwest Kansas. Club members were staked out in the park from 1 p.m. Saturday until 1 p.m. Sunday for their annual field day, said Mike Albers, assistant emergency coordinator.

He said the purpose of the field day is to make contact with as many ham radio operators around the country as possible.

Having the event at the park was a necessity because they were set up under the conditions they would have to deal with in a real emergency — being outdoors and using generators for power and also using a portable antenna.

The radio operators were making contact by using Morse code and sideband, which is voice contact.

He said it's basically an emergency management drill. If the power was out or telephone lines down, information and communications would still be available in the form of ham radio.

"This is all done without having to rely on the phone lines or anything else."

Mike Albers,

assistant emergency coordinator

"This is all done without having to rely on the phone lines or anything else," he said.

Albers said they didn't have too many people on Saturday afternoon but he said there would be a constant stream of people the entire 24 hours.

"We'll probably have 15 people by the time it's all said and done," he said, adding the event is "24 hours of madness."

Several on hand had already been through several of the annual field day but one person was new. Katelyn Schacher, 14, made 15 contacts around the United States. Her father, Kendal, has been active with the club since 1993.

"I thought it would be fun to get to make contact with the world," Katelyn said.

Another piece of equipment they

were using was the automated position reporting system.

Albers said it can be used to track club members' vehicles but more importantly, it delivers weather information that they use to help out the National Weather Service in Goodland.

Colby has a weather station at the high school, which takes weather condition readings every 10 minutes and sends it to Goodland.

"That's how they get the current conditions for their NOAA radio network," he said.

The club has been participating for about 15 years now, Albers said, but it's been going on about 50 years nationally. He said if people want to know more, they can go to <http://www.arrl.org> or call any club member.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Matt Lindberg operated a ham radio while Gregg Lindberg of Colby watched during the Trojan Amateur Radio Club of Northwest Kansas' annual field day.

Colorado woman sentenced in fatal Goodland crash

GOODLAND (AP) — A woman who was stopped twice for speeding before a traffic accident that killed three people has been sentenced to more than seven years in prison for involuntary manslaughter.

Jennifer Adams, 28, of Edgewater, Colo., received the maximum sentence of 86 months in prison for three counts of involuntary manslaughter, Sherman County At-

torney Bonnie Selby said.

She was also sentenced Friday to 34 months for aggravated battery and six months each for driving under the influence and transporting an open container, but those sentences will be served concurrently with the 86-month sentence.

A crash on Interstate 70, just west of the Thomas County line, killed three women

from Goodland and injured two children in June 2004. The victims were: Aline Becker, 85; her daughter, Mary Wyant, 55; and granddaughter, Christine Williams, 35.

About 30 family members and friends of the victims attended the sentencing.

"We just asked the judge to hold her responsible for her actions on that day, when she chose to drink and drive and caused the

wreck that killed three generations of our family," said Eugene Becker, the son of Aline Becker and brother of Mary Wyant.

Adams' blood alcohol content after the accident was measured at 0.265 percent, more than three times the level considered evidence of intoxication.

The trooper who stopped her for speeding — twice within about five miles — tes-

tified that he couldn't smell alcohol on her breath.

Adams was clocked at 96 miles per hour on one stop and 104 mph on the other.

The trooper testified that on both stops he observed Adams closely, and she was able to sort through her wallet to find her driver's license and proof of insurance without fumbling.

Happy 80th!



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Sada Munkres wished Max Pickerell all the best on his 80th birthday Sunday. In honor of Pickerell's birthday, a bash was held at the Colby Community College Student Union. Pickerell also was the honoree at a surprise party at Sunflower Bank on Friday.

Colby police officer resigning after 19 years

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

For Tom Nickols of Colby, his years as a police officer are some of the most memorable he spent. But now he's leaving and it means the end of one career and the beginning of another.

Nickols has spent the past 19 years as an officer with the Colby Police Department and is resigning on June 30. However, he'll be starting a career because he's taking over Ron Bricker's excavation business, which mainly consists of backhoe excavation for pits or digging out various types of pipe for replacement or repair.

"I've always enjoyed working with equipment," Nickols said.

He went to vo-tech and worked at Rexford Grain before finally deciding to pursue law enforcement in 1985 when he became a reserve deputy with the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and later joined the Colby Police Department on Aug. 16, 1986.

"It's been a very interesting profession," Nickols said. "I've enjoyed it immensely."

As an officer, he said he's seen a "little bit of everything" — from

car chases and being shot at to the everyday duties of an officer in a small town.

A few of the more memorable things from his career include the "Banana House" in the 1970s, where drug paraphernalia and various Halloween incidents over the year.

Another incident that came to mind was the time he had to answer a call about a naked man pushing a shopping car down Range Avenue.

Nickols also said the time of the full moon every month was also more than interesting.

"You'll see different and strange things during the full moon," he said.

Since turning 50, he said he'd been considering a change because he thought it was time to do something else, even though he enjoyed his time as an officer.

And, he said, his wife of 28 years, Vicki, is happy about certain aspects of his impending career change.



T. Nickols

"She's all sorts of excited because I'll be home on Halloween," Nickols said, adding she's also happy there will no longer be a police scanner in their home.

As an officer, he said he saw many changes, mainly in crime and technology.

Nickols said the evolution of communications technology and how to take down criminals were probably the two biggest advancements he saw during his career.

When he was a reserve deputy, he said if he was in Rexford, he could not call Colby directly on the radio. Instead, he'd have to contact someplace like Hill City and have them relay the call on to Colby.

Cell phones and better radios have changed all that.

Also, he said they went from using service revolvers to using semi-automatic .40 caliber guns. There was also the change from using brute force to bring down a criminal to using stun guns and other non-lethal methods.

He said he'll miss being a policeman but is ready to go onto his next endeavor.

Nickols is "excited and scared" because he has big boots to fill in

taking over Bricker's business. However, though Bricker himself is retiring, he will be helping Nickols out quite a bit over the next few months.

Bricker has offered to help and make himself available when needed.

The two have known each other for nearly 20 years since both served as reserve deputies.

Bricker has had the business since 1978 and farmed in Wallace County before starting his own business in Colby.

He's done septic systems, basements, footers for buildings and also digging out pipeline.

Bricker said he's glad Nickols is taking over the business.

"I wish Tom the best of luck in the world," he said. "There's a lot of things I've got to teach him about the business. I'll help him out any way I can."

Now that Bricker is getting ready for his retirement, he said he hopes to spend time fishing and taking trips with his travel trailer.

There will be a farewell party for Nickols from 3:30-5 p.m. Thursday at the Law Enforcement Training Center in downtown Colby.

Oakley, Hoxie superintendents offer their opinion on session

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

OAKLEY — Two area superintendents are closely watching actions of state legislators during a special session which started on Wednesday.

Oakley's superintendent, Bill Steiner, said late last week that he believes the Senate's plan of adding additional money to the At-Risk and special education programs is a "very positive step."

"After reading comments by the senate and house leadership in the various papers, it appears most (legislators) are talking positively about

funding education, whether they agreed or not agreed with the court mandate," he said.

The Kansas Supreme Court ordered legislators to find more money for Kansas schools by July 1. "I think the real challenge lies in the future. Finding money to fund education that a majority can agree on, without raising taxes, will lead to some interesting debates," Steiner said. Someone who openly debates the topic of school finance is outgoing Hoxie superintendent Jim McDaniel. McDaniel leaves Hoxie's district on June 30, and will start as superintendent at the Kaw Valley

school district which is located between Manhattan and Topeka, on July 1.

"The past four years, the Kansas Legislature has chosen not to adequately fund our kindergarten through grade 12 schools. This legislative session, the Legislature was told to "fix" the funding by the Kansas Supreme Court, but our elected officials chose to ignore the order. Instead, they passed a funding plan based on politics, once again ignoring the needs of Kansas students," McDaniel said.

On top of the \$142 million dollars set aside for schools, The Supreme

Court told legislators to find another \$143 million dollars for next year's school budget. McDaniel doesn't agree with actions of legislators and raised questions about their actions.

"And what do we find our elected senators and representatives saying and doing? We find them saying the Kansas Supreme Court is out of bounds and that ignoring the ruling may be a better choice.

"Looking at the gross neglect of the Kansas Legislature to place adequate dollars in the formula during the past four years, should we be surprised that they are once again

speaking of ignoring the needs of Kansas students and Kansas kindergarten to grade 12 schools?" he asked.

On Wednesday, the Kansas Senate for nearly six hours debated Senate Bill 3, the Senate Education Committee's school finance bill, and advanced it to final action on Thursday. While the bill needed 27 votes to pass, it looked like there would be only 24 senators voting in favor of it. McDaniel said he's please the Senate has taken the action to comply with the court's ruling so far during the special session. "I hope the House will respond in

a way that benefits the funding of kindergarten to grade 12 schools as well," he said. Kansas educators are expected to have students show ongoing achievement gains with rigorous assessment and at the same time keep our participation, attendance and graduation rates very high. We are expected to comply with many mandates through Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation and the federal No Child Left Behind laws.

"We are happy to comply with the high expectations; however, we need adequate resources to achieve success," he said.

