



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Museum vies for year-round attraction

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

Colby's Prairie Museum of Art and History held a party Sunday to celebrate Kansas' 145th anniversary. Museum directors hope people remember the museum throughout the year, not just for special occasions..

"It went great," said director Sue Taylor. "There were a lot of families. That was what I was hoping for."

Activities included plenty for families and admission was free.

Taylor said they hold several events in the spring and fall for people to experience all the museum has to offer.

"I was excited about how well everything went, and the playa lakes exhibit on display was one of the big draws. It was also the centerpiece of the Kansas Day celebration. It's a very nice traveling exhibit," Taylor said.

She's selective about the traveling exhibits they choose, and usually don't have something that takes up a lot of space like the playa display. Kansas Day was the first event of the year.

This summer, the museum may have a wheat weaving exhibit.

For March, they're planning a day for Women's History Month, and in April, which is Kansas Archaeology Month, an archaeology day April 23.

The March event might not feature as many children's activities, but the April day will feature family events. The Celebration on the High Plains may be at the museum again this year, and in late November, they'll hold their annual

Christmas open house.

Last year, the museum held four activity days and also hosted Celebration on the High Plains on its grounds.

Visitors have plenty to see. The permanent galleries display the best of the Kuska collection — 15,000 of its 40,000 items are on exhibit. The collection was amassed over the years by Nellie Kuska. The Kuskas lived in Colby more than 50 years, and after her death, her children in California returned the collection to Thomas County as a gift. The collection was appraised at \$1 million in 1975, Taylor said.

She said they opted for a display that shows off the items, while also having interpretive information about some of it.

Attendance fluctuates each year, but the average is about 10,000 people. Last year, attendance was down., but the seasonal events, helped keep attendance steady.

One event was the Colby All-School Reunion. A special exhibit honoring past graduates brought in 500-600 alumni one afternoon.

Taylor attributed lower attendance to the fact Franklin Avenue was torn up for construction and they seem to be getting fewer travelers.

"We rely on travelers a lot," she said. "I'm not sure how much people are traveling."

The economy, and high fuel prices have impacted travelers, and how they travel she said.

"People have a destination and they aren't deviating from it," Taylor said, adding it affects when and where they stop, and why.

Many are only stopping for fuel or food, and getting on their way.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Calley (left), Caitlin and Andy Burr looked at a tank with a tadpole shrimp, which is a species native to Kansas playa lakes Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History.

Marketing helps to pull people off the interstate, and Kansas Day activities gave people a reason to see the playa exhibit, attracting many from around the area. The museum stayed busy all day long, and also gave people a chance to revisit the permanent exhibition of the Kuska collection.

The museum is also home to the county's historical society, and serves as repository for more than 60,000 photos, manuscripts and documents.

"That's an understatement by far," Taylor said. The museum is also always looking to expand its membership. Taylor said a family membership is \$25, and \$15 for an individual. Benefits include free admission, a quarterly newsletter and more.



Allie and Abby Friesen made Kansas Day pinwheels.

## County approves consultant on road project

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners Monday approved a consultant for the Willow Drive project. Penco Engineering of Plainville was selected and work will begin later this year.

The county will straighten Willow Drive where it connects with

Country Club Drive.

The curves will be eliminated, he said.

County road department supervisor Clair Schrock said the project will cost approximately \$400,000. The Kansas Department of Transportation is responsible for 80 percent of the project, with the county paying 20 percent.

The state will pay \$300,000 and

the county pays \$100,000.

Schrock also handed out a tentative 2006 work plan for his department.

They plan to oil overlay nine miles of #465 between County Roads P and Y; one mile east of Rexford on the bypass and blade patch around the county as needed.

Sealing projects will include nine miles south of Brewster on #391; 15

miles south of Levant on #407; six miles on #415 and one mile on Grain Terminal Road.

They plan to elevate eight miles on #412 from K-25 west to #407 and 10 miles on #412 from K-25 east to U.S. Highway 83.

Other work will include producing sand, putting down gravel where needed, township work, ditch mowing, maintaining equip-

ment and road signs, work at East Hale and Rovohl Townships when needed, and the fairgrounds.

The commissioners also approved Schrock's request for a new choppersaw.

They also went into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss personnel issues.

No action was taken after the session.

## Army leaders pledge smaller Guard role for Iraq war

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of the Army National Guard will be spending less time on the front lines Iraq and more time at home in their civilian jobs in coming years, according to the Army's top two generals.

After a tough year in Iraq, where they provided nearly half the fighting force, the citizen soldiers will play a much smaller combat role

for the remainder of the war, the officers said in interviews with The Associated Press.

The changes come as part of a reorganization proposal that includes a shift in some brigades from combat roles to support units. In addition, President Bush will propose shrinking the authorized sizes of the Guard and the Army Reserve — proposals that have

triggered concern on Capitol Hill.

"It will set up a more predictable schedule for the National Guard brigades ... so that we're not calling them back and remobilizing them every two to three years. It will be more like one year in and six years out" for Guardsmen, said Gen. Richard Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff.

Gen. Peter Schoomaker, the

Army chief of staff, said shifting some units from combat to support tasks will be a historic change in the way the Guard is organized. The aim, he said, is to better prepare Guardsmen for both their federal role as a combat and support force and their domestic job of responding to emergencies.

In the 2007 budget he presents Congress on Monday, Bush will

propose to pay for a National Guard of about 333,000 citizen soldiers — the current total — rather than the 350,000 authorized by Congress.

The president also has proposed paying for less than the full authorized total for the Army Reserve.

Critics of Bush's proposals say they amount to an unwarranted and untimely shrinking of the Guard.

## Allegations of unprofessional conduct, incompetency under review

By Patty Decker  
Free Press Editor

An initial order Monday from the Kansas Board of Healing Arts may clear a Colby doctor of professional incompetency, but ruled three allegations of unprofessional conduct had merit.

Edward Gaschler, presiding over the Kansas Board of Healing Arts case against Dr. Victor H. Hildyard, provided findings and conclusions regarding the 19 allegations.

Gaschler's initial order was reached following a formal 10-day hearing from Oct. 5-17, 2005, held in Colby and Topeka. The case involved more than 20 people testifying either for the Board of Healing

Arts or Hildyard.

Prior to Gaschler's ruling, both sides filed their own findings, arguments and conclusions on Dec. 29, 2005. About 350 pages were submitted between Michael O'Neal of Hutchinson, representing Hildyard and David Steed, the state's prosecutor. O'Neal filed a 270-page document and Steed, 80-page, according to Mark Stafford, general counsel for the Board of Healing Arts.

Gaschler's conclusions are based on findings and law. It will now be

up to the entire Board of Healing Arts to either adopt Gaschler's initial order, modify it, or send it back for additional procedures.

The board could make a decision at its Feb. 10-11 meeting; however, the matter could be continued until the next board meeting in April.

The following is a brief overview of each count from Gaschler's 28-page initial order.

### Count 1

The board alleged Hildyard's care of a 22-year old pregnant patient deviated from the standard of

care when he encouraged her to push in an attempt to deliver the baby and delayed the emergency cesarean section by refusing to call another doctor. He was further accused of failing to appropriately respond to the patient's and baby's condition.

Basing his conclusions on testimony by Dr. David Hanson of Salina (the board's expert) and Dr. Michael Machen of Quinter (Hildyard's expert), he had no basis to accord the board's expert more weight than the testimony of Dr. Machen.

He added Hanson was operating on at least one piece of information that was incorrect dealing with the belief that another surgeon was

"simply across the street from the hospital," which was not the case.

### Count 2

In January of 2003, a 24-year-old pregnant woman at Citizens Medical Center complained of back pain and was experiencing bleeding. She had no other complaints at that time. In his findings, Gaschler said, the issue as in Count 1 also dealt with the board's allegations that Hildyard did not meet the standard of care.

In this situation, Hanson's opinion was that Hildyard's failure to go to the hospital was a deviation from applicable standards.

However, Machen disagreed and Gaschler concluded in favor of Machen that care and treatment was

## Charges filed in rape case

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Charges have been filed against two former Colby Community College basketball players stemming from an incident two years ago.

Ontario McKee of Milwaukee, Wis., and Andrais Thornton of Chicago, Ill., have been charged in Thomas County District Court for the alleged sexual assault of a 19-year-old woman in a Colby Community College dormitory room in November 2003.

Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick filed rape and aggravated sexual battery charges against Thornton, 18 at the time of the alleged incident. Thornton was arrested Monday at Southeastern Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Mo., where he is a student and starter for the basketball team.

Should Thornton be convicted of the rape charge, depending on a presentence investigation he faces 20 to 54 years in prison and a fine up to \$300,000. Should he be convicted of the aggravated sexual battery charge, he faces four to 11 months in prison and a fine up to \$300,000. No court date has been set in the case against Thornton.

Wyrick filed aggravated criminal sodomy and aggravated sexual battery charges against McKee, 19 at the time of the alleged incident. He was arrested Jan. 22 at San Angelo University in San Angelo, Texas.

Wyrick said McKee on Jan. 26 in front of a Texas magistrate judge pleaded to the lesser charge of sexual battery as part of a plea agreement.

He was ordered to unsupervised probation. Had McKee not entered the plea agreement, he would have faced 15 to 41 years in prison for the sodomy charge and four to 11 years for the aggravated battery charge. In addition, both crimes carry fines up to \$300,000.

According Detective Sgt. Gary Shull with the Colby Police Department, two 19-year-old women reported they were attacked by Thornton and McKee Nov. 16, 2003. While one of the women has continued to seek prosecution of the men, the whereabouts of the second woman is unknown.

Shull said investigative reports were filed with former Thomas County Attorney Allen Taylor Jan. 29, 2004, but charges were never filed while he was in office.

"I was given no reason as to why they wasn't filed," Shull said.

Taylor could not be reached for comment.

Shull said he's been working on the cases all along, but last February one of the victims contacted him asking the status of the cases.

"At the time, I suggested she contact the new county attorney and ask her if she could review the cases," Shull said. "Also, it took so long because it took a while to find Thornton and McKee."

Both men were located through Shull using an Internet search engine.

### Count 3

A 33-year-old pregnant woman was in an automobile accident in July 2002 and went to Citizens Medical Center for an exam and monitoring of fetal heart tones by Hildyard. The patient was discharged. The patient was an employee of the hospital and in later in July complained of bleeding and pain.

Following an exam by Hildyard, the patient was discharged from Colby's hospital and sent to Hays by private car. She had a cesarean section and marginal abruption at the time of the section.