

**Weather Corner**



**Highs near 75, lows in the 40s**

**Tonight** — Partly cloudy with a low around 43. Breezy with a south wind 10 to 20 mph becoming west. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

**Tuesday** — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high around 73. Breezy with a north wind 5 to 10 mph increasing to between 15 and 20 mph. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph.

**Tuesday night** — Partly cloudy with a low near 39. North wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm.

**Wednesday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 77. Southwest wind between 5 and 15 mph with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Wednesday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 46.

**Thursday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 85.

**Temperatures**  
Sunday's high, 76  
Low this morning, 36  
Records for this date, 90 in 1899, 5 in 1989

Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
April's precipitation, .44  
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

**Briefly**

**Hydrant testing begins this week**

The Colby Fire Department will be testing hydrants throughout the city for the next three weeks, said Assistant Fire Chief Rick Dickman. While the hydrants are being flushed, some residents may notice discoloration in their water. Should that happen, continue to run water until it is clear, he said. For questions, call 460-4454.

**Fair board meets Thursday**

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday, at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include: Thomas County extension agent report; bills and financial report; committee reports on the buildings and grounds, carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising income/ex-

penses; discussions on the fair barbecue and event sponsor contract and display cases for open class. The meeting is open to the public.

**Last week for tax assistance**

Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, will be the location on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. and until April 15 assisting with tax returns for the elderly or low to middle income families and individuals. Alvin Volk is coordinating the project in Colby and will help in tax preparation at no charge. For information, call 460-2645.

**Chorus rehearses every Tuesday**

The Hi-Plains Harmony Chorus of Sweet Adelines holds rehearsals every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Colby United

Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. All female singers are encouraged to attend anytime.

**Orchestra continues rehearsals**

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra holds rehearsals from 7:30 to 9 p.m., Mondays in the Colby High School band room. All musicians are invited to join the orchestra, said Sharon Kriss, one of the members. Musicians span a wide range of vocations and ages (middle school to retirees) from communities throughout the area. For questions, call Kriss at 460-2800 or Mary Shoaff, 462-2391.

**Sacred Heart plans preschool event**

Colby Sacred Heart Preschool, 1150 W. Sixth, will be holding an open house from 1 to 6 p.m., Friday, April 28. The public is invited.

**Company founder credits rural life for success**

By Ron Wilson

Director of the Huck Boyd

Today let's meet a big wheel. No, she's not some self-important person. She's the founder of a company that helps keep the proverbial wheels turning in a positive way for kids, companies, and communities. She gives her rural roots in Kansas much credit for her success.

Michelle McMullen Cummings is the founder of a company called Training Wheels Inc. But it's not bicycle accessories that she produces, it's really experiential education.

Cummings grew up on a farm near Norton, population 2,943 people. Now, that's rural. She was active in 4-H, which helped her learn to communicate effectively. "When I was 10 years old, I had to get up in front of a crowd at the county fair. I attribute much of my success in public speaking to 4-H," she said.

Cummings studied psychology at Kansas State University and went to work at a wilderness camp and therapy center in Texas.

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**"We were living in tents with emotionally disturbed kids, using camping to teach life skills. It was like the Peace Corps - incredibly hard, but you're glad you did it."**

Michelle McMullen Cummings, founder of Training Wheels, Inc.

said. "I saw amazing things with these kids. They could compare their journey in life with their experiences at the camp. I fell in love with the concept of helping people learn from their experiences and transform lives."

Cummings went on to get a master's at Mankato State in experiential education. Then organizations in Texas and later, in Colorado asked her to design team-building, experiential education programs for them.

"The day I moved to Colorado was the day I met my future husband," she said.

They settled in the Denver area and Cummings thought about what type of business she could create.

"Well, I've built programs for two companies, maybe I could build my own."

In July 1999, she created a company called Training Wheels which offers professional training and which provides experiential education supplies. She called it Training Wheels for two reasons: One is that she uses portable wheeled duffel bags to carry her supplies when she goes out to do her trainings.

The other is symbolic: "You use training wheels when learning how to ride a bike - but then you take them off. I train groups and organizations about various things, but then they need to do it on their own."

Her training has been very well received. Cummings does corporate retreats, meetings and school inservice programs. She's done sessions from Seattle, Washington to Orlando, Florida and is going to Hawaii, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.

One key to her success is that the training is experiential and interactive. Participants are doing things and learning lessons in the process. Michelle would use collections of various kinds of items to teach these lessons.

Today the Training Wheels product line includes 275 different items, from books to tool kits to novelty items such as the world's largest underpants. Imagine using that in a training session!

Cummings has authored two books, including A Teachable Moment with 130 educational activities and Bouldering Games for Kids which has 38 activities. All this material is available through her Web site, www.training-wheels.com.

"If it hadn't been for the Internet, I don't think I would have been as successful," she said.

Her products have gone from coast to coast and an estimated 47 countries worldwide. Not bad for a 4-H farm kid from rural Kansas.

It's time to say goodbye to this big wheel. No, she doesn't consider herself big and important, but she does have a passion for helping people learn from their experiences. This type of experiential teaching can make a difference in people's lives and organizations, so we commend Cummings and Training Wheels Inc.

After all, a big wheel is just a little wheel that keeps on turning.

**Accident shuts down road**

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

An accident involving a car and semi kept the west lane of U.S. Highway 24 near Menlo blocked for nearly an hour Wednesday.

The Thomas County Sheriff's office was one of three agencies that responded to the accident.

Thomas County Undersheriff Jason Moses said the wreck happened at mile marker 71, east of County Road 35.

Lester Chapman of Hoxie was driving his 1992 Buick Park Avenue on U.S. Highway 24 and didn't see the semi in front of him turning right.

Chapman drove his car into the semi's trailer.

The semi was a 2000 Kenworth and driven by Dana Chatman of Floydada, Texas.

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services and the Menlo Fire Department also responded to the accident.

Emergency medical services

transported Chapman to Citizens Medical Center in Colby.

The Menlo Fire Department helped with traffic control.

**Cards of Thanks**

We wish to thank friends, family, Hays Medical Staff and Kennedy-Koster Funeral Home for their support, care and many acts of kindness.

Sammy Russell  
Andrea, Kevin Plummer & family  
Herb & Annette Russell  
Amy, Ty Mercer & family



**Board to consider abstinence only in sex education**

WICHITA (AP) — The Kansas Board of Education on Tuesday considers a proposal requiring abstinence-only sex education across the state.

Under the proposal, districts that teach more than abstinence could risk losing their accreditation.

"Abstinence until marriage is the best thing for young people physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually," said board member Kathy Martin, who proposed the change. "It's the best thing for society as a whole, and it's the message that schools absolutely ought

to be sending."

Opponents say abstinence-only programs are unproven and impractical. Most districts promote abstinence but also give students information on how to protect themselves if they choose to have sex.

"We don't want our kids to have sex, but unfortunately the reality is that a lot of them are," said Sandy Hysom, health education teaching specialist for Wichita schools. "Therefore, we have to give them accurate information."

The proposed switch to abstinence-only education comes after

the state Board of Education voted last month to mandate parental consent for sex education courses. Kansas is one of only four states with so-called "opt-in" requirements.

"If we lived in a perfect world, in a bubble, just saying 'Don't do it' would be great," said Candee Stuchlik, who teaches ninth-grade sex education at Heights High School in Wichita. "But it's not a perfect world. Kids have STDs, they have HIV, they're getting pregnant. This stuff happens."

"If we're truthful and we arm them with a little bit more informa-

tion, that's just smart."

Supporters of abstinence programs, however, say any other message sells kids short.

"We don't say, 'We know you're not going to fasten your seat belt or go the speed limit, so here's a road over here that you can drive on,'" said Martin.

"My belief is, let's actually tell them not to. If we tell kids things, they will listen. We know that kids will live up or down to the expectations we give them."

**Victim of shooting gets \$4.75 million**

WICHITA (AP) — A man who recently reached a \$4.75 million settlement with the city after he was shot and paralyzed by a Wichita officer accused investigators in the case of covering up police incompetence.

Matt Clay, who this month accepted a \$4.75 million settlement from the city, said Officer Matthew McGuire did not need to fire the shot on Feb. 27, 2004, that severed Clay's spinal cord.

"Officer McGuire had no good reason to shoot, and the settlement shows that," Clay said as he spoke publicly about the case for the first time during a news conference in Wichita.

Clay and his lawyers also said they disagreed with city claims that the settlement was not an indication of any wrongdoing by Wichita police.

"I'm here to tell you this is an incorrect statement," said one of the lawyers, Pedro Irigonegaray of Topeka. "Officer McGuire did a lot wrong."

"The investigation ranks as possibly the worst I have ever seen. Officer McGuire committed a terrible act of incompetence, and he's still out there."

Deputy Wichita Police Chief Tom Stolz said McGuire resigned from the department early this year, largely because of the fallout from the lawsuit.

Stolz said he disagreed with their allegations of incompetence.

"Suffice it to say it's hard being a police officer. The decisions they may make on the street are often very difficult."

Stolz said his department followed its policy for when officers are involved in serious incidents by asking two agencies, the Kansas

Bureau of Investigation and the Sedgwick County district attorney's office, to handle the criminal investigation.

"Both of those agencies found there was no criminal wrongdoing" by police, he said.

Irigonegaray said the KBI investigation was superficial.

"They did nothing but rubber-stamp the statements made by" officers, he said.

Documents filed in the lawsuit show that Clay was asleep in his west Wichita home the morning of the shooting when he was awak-

ened by the sound of a car crashing into two of his family's vehicles. The driver drove off.

Clay grabbed his car keys, a cell phone and an unloaded shotgun, the lawsuit said, and set out to find the driver. When he noticed a police car parked nearby, he pulled in to ask for help.

**Faced with a Drinking Problem?**  
Perhaps  
**Alcoholics Anonymous Can Help**  
Meetings are Open to the Public  
City Hall Basement  
Mondays & Thursdays - 8:30 p.m.

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**Join Us!**

Enjoy an entertaining and informative event with your cooperative members and employees.

Friday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m.  
for Rural Telephone's  
Annual Meeting.  
The meeting will be held at the High School Auditorium in Quinter.

Registration from  
6:15-6:45 p.m.

Enjoy live music performed by local artist, Natalie Metcalf during registration!

**Financial & Cooperative REPORTS!**

**ELECTION of Trustees.**

**DOOR PRIZES will be given away!**

**REFRESHMENTS will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.**

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