



COLBY FREE PRESS

12 pages

Summer program signup begins

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Looking for something to do this summer?

The Colby Recreation Department just might have the answer. Assistant Recreation Director Joshua Elliott said sign-up for summer programs starts this week and runs through May 12.

The department has offerings for everyone, from tee ball for 4- and 5-year-olds to trips for adults.

Colby residents will find out more this week because information is in the mail.

"I just sent out the brochures," Elliott said, adding programs start June 5 and run through August.

He previewed some of the new 2006 programs.

For children, there will be a sensory enrichment program.

"It will help with hand-eye coordination and flexibility for youth," Elliott said.

A youth day trapshoot, by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, is on the schedule. Elliott said it's free for anyone under 18, women or inexperienced shooters. For information, call Benny Young at 462-7602.

More programs are scheduled for children and youth, and they are at the heart of what the recreation department offers during the summer.

Tee ball is for 4- and 5-year-olds; rookie boys and girls are 6- to 9-year-olds and bambinos, 10- to 13-year-olds.

"We took out a league this year," he said, "but any youth older than 13 has other programs to choose from for ball."

For adults, there are a few more choices this summer, including trips.

"We are trying to promote trips and tours," he said. "We want to see how many people would be interested in that."

Examples are a NASCAR trip to Kansas Speedway or a casino trip to Cripple Creek, Colo.

The department is also having a summer kickball league for anyone over 16-years-old. It will be held Tuesday nights, and he hopes it draws some interest.

"That's something new," Elliott said. "We hope to get people in it."

Another new offering is a mud volleyball tournament to be held later in the summer. The co-ed tournament will be for players 16 and up.

For more information or to sign up for a program, call the Recreation Department at 460-4440.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Parker Weishaar, son of Wendy and Bill Weishaar, Phoenix, Ariz., and his friend and service dog, Candy, want others to understand how much they need one another. Candy, now a 3-year-old Golden Retriever, works about five hours a day helping Parker with

Asperger Syndrome (a type of autism) and the rest of the time serves as Parker's friend. According to the American Disabilities Act, Parker cannot handle Candy alone, but for the picture Wendy was standing close by.

Autism therapy interests CBS

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

People across the country will soon learn the struggles and success of Parker Weishaar and his parents, Wendy and Mark Weishaar of Phoenix, Ariz.

The struggle is Parker's autism. The success is how a 3-year-old Golden Retriever has changed their son's life for the better. CBS Evening News in New York is planning to feature Parker and his dog, Candy, sometime between now and mid-May.

Both Wendy and Mark Weishaar grew up in Colby and visited Parker's uncle, Lon Frahm, last summer. While they were here, the family agreed to talk about Parker and Candy's unique relationship.

The national network is treating this as a human interest story about autism and how Parker and Candy work together on agility trials.

For those unaware, Parker has Asperger Syndrome, which is a mild type of autism and described by some as a nonverbal learning disability.

Wendy spoke about the latest therapy that Parker and Candy have been working on.

Known as a "dog agility trial," Parker and Candy work together on sequencing skills.

"It is like speech and occupation

Free Press wins second place

Colby Free Press Editor Patty Decker received a second place award in feature writing for her initial story last year about Parker Weishaar and his dog Candy.

Candy has helped Parker and his family cope with Parker's Asperger Syndrome, a mild type

of autism and described by some as a nonverbal learning disability. The award was presented Saturday during the Kansas Press Association's convention held in Wichita. *The Colby Free Press* competed against other daily papers with similar circulation.

therapy in one," said Wendy.

"Parker has to plan a route through a course, moving his body and giving hand signals to Candy, along with verbal commands — and all at once."

"It's not an easy thing to do," she said, "but it's also a lot of fun for both of them. Candy must negotiate obstacles in a certain order and in a certain time limit, making sure she does each obstacle in the proper order and touching all areas required," Wendy said.

There are jumps, elevated balance beams, teeter totters, tire jumps, tunnels and weave poles and each day, each course is set up differently with categories for beginners, intermediates and advanced participants.

The benefit for Parker is he has been able to transfer the sequencing required in an agility run into his school work.

Wendy said Parker is now getting the concepts of sequencing in math.

"For example, Parker can memorize and rattle off the math facts, but putting them together in a sequence order like in long division was pretty tough," his mom said.

"I believe that the agility sequence work has made those concepts easier to apply in academics," she said.

"He is working on fractions now and although the progress is slow, the sequencing part is much better than before."

The difference in Parker is he's not as frustrated.

According to Wendy, Parker and Candy have a special relationship. "Their bond is very important and I have to be very careful in not lavishing too much attention on Candy when she is home with me."

Wendy said she doesn't want to interfere with the bond Parker and

Mumps virus move into Sheridan County

By JAN KATZ ACKERMAN

Colby Free Press

State and local public health officials on Tuesday said the mumps virus has made its way to Sheridan County.

Mike Heideman, public information officer for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, said Sheridan County is one of 31 Kansas counties confirming or having a probability of 241 cases of mumps reported across the state.

"Local health departments are also investigating an additional 36 patients with potential symptoms of mumps," Heideman said. "Cases originally recorded as having been in Sherman County were actually in Sheridan County."

"Right now we've only got a hand full of cases and it's reaching a broad spectrum of ages, but you never know, tomorrow it could be a lot more far reaching," Sheridan County Public Health Nurse Melanie Cooper said.

Heideman said the majority of the cases are concentrated in Douglas County, which has reported 116 cases, but there are also cases in Anderson, Atchison, Butler, Chautauqua, Clay, Ellis, Franklin, Geary, Gove, Harvey, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Norton, Osage, Pottawatomie, Pratt, Reno, Riley, Rooks, Saline, Scott, Sedgwick, Seward, Shawnee, Sheridan, Wabaunsee and Wyandotte counties.

The mumps outbreak started in Iowa and health officials there have reported 975 cases of mumps as of April 20.

Bush proposes help for oil prices

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under election-year pressure to reduce surging gasoline prices, President Bush on Tuesday halted filling of the nation's emergency oil reserve, urged the waiver of clean air rules to ease local gas shortages and called for the repeal of \$2 billion in tax breaks for profit-heavy oil companies. The White House was unable to say how much Bush's actions could affect the price of gas.

Bush said, "Every little bit helps."

Gasoline futures prices for June delivery dropped 8 cents a gallon to \$2.10 on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Business is booming: Slavens to relocate until new office opens

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Growing pains have prompted a Colby doctor to seek temporary office space until his new clinic is constructed.

Dr. Gary Slavens is moving his office out of Citizens Medical Center into a temporary location until he and two local optometrists build a complex on Range Avenue.

"I'm building a clinic with Drs. Jeff Morrison and Mark Wahlmeier," Slavens said. "We'll be breaking ground in eight to nine months."

Until the new building is ready, Slavens will practice in a modular clinic building.

Where the unit will be placed has yet to be determined. Slavens said the move from the hospital will take place within the next six or seven weeks.

"The city is working with us to find something quick," Slavens said.

One year ago, Slavens moved his medical practice from Family Cen-

ter for Health Care to the hospital, both located in the 300 block of College Drive. The speed which his practice grew has now made him consider a larger facility.

"We are seeing more than 1,000 patients a month and we want to hire a female provider and need more space," Slavens said. "We are staying positive, moving ahead and looking forward to getting into a 6,000 square foot building."

Slavens and physician's assistant Andy Rose work along side three nurses, Kara Bartlett, Nancy Bixenman and Linda Ladenberger to see patients.

Working in the business office are office manager Tawny Stover, business manager Carolyn Call, receptionist Ali Thomas and Kolean Barrett.

"We've really outgrown this



G. Slavens

"We are seeing more than 1,000 patients a month and we want to hire a female provider and need more space."

Dr. Gary Slavens

place and our new clinic will be just north of the KXXX/KQLS radio station," Slavens said.

Slavens said once moved to the new facility he will add a full-time laboratory technician and full-time radiology technician.

"We'll offer a full line of radiology and laboratory services," he said.

"It's important for our patients to have lab work done in our clinic. We'll also have electronic radiology to go with our electronic medical records system."

Slavens said he is currently using a medical records system which allows him to evaluate a patient's

chart from anywhere in the world by using the Internet.

"I can go anywhere and hook up to the Internet and pull up a chart and review it," he said. "It's a lot better for me to have everything right there in front of me."

With his practice which grew by 2,500 patients since coming to Colby, Slavens said on average he is delivering 10 babies each month.

"Twenty-five percent of our patients are older than 80 years of age and 30 percent of them are birth to 8 years old," he said. "You always hope a new practice goes well, but I never had any idea we would do as well as we are."



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Dr. Gary Slavens is teaming up with eye doctors Jeff Morrison and Mark Wahlmeier to build a new office and clinic space on this lot on Range Avenue. Until the new building is complete, Slavens decided to practice in a modular building. He has not yet determined where his temporary office will be located.