

Weather Corner



Windy and warmer Thursday

Tonight — Mostly clear with a low around 38. Breezy, with a northwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Thursday — Mostly sunny with a high around 68. Northwest wind around 15 mph with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Thursday night — Mostly clear with a low near 41. Northwest wind around 10 mph becoming south.

Friday — Mostly sunny with a high around 76. South wind around 5 mph becoming northwest.

Friday night — Mostly clear with a low around 45.

Saturday — Partly cloudy with a high near 75.

Temperatures
Tuesday's high, 75
Low this morning, 42

Records for this date, 92 in 1893, 27 in 1981

Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00

May's precipitation, 0.32

A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Briefly

Mail carriers set food drive Saturday

Colby Post Office's letter carriers will be out in full force Saturday delivering mail and collecting non-perishable food items for the Thomas County Genesis food bank. As in previous years, the collection is part of the National Association of Letter Carriers food drive. Anyone who would like to donate canned goods and other non-perishable items are encouraged to leave them by their mailbox during the normal mail times Saturday.

Slavens offers physicals today

Slavens Family Practice will be offering free athletic physicals for all middle school and high school students in Thomas County from 5 to 7 p.m., today. Slavens Family Practice is located at Citizens Medical Center, 100 E. College Dr. For questions, call Tawny Stover, 460-8000.

Provider Appreciation Day Friday

Smart Start NW Kansas encourages everyone to show their local child care providers how much they appreciate them Friday on *Provider Appreciation Day*. With all the contributions child care professionals make, officials hope children and families will remember the accomplishments and dedication of those special people.

City-wide garage sales needed

The Colby High Plains Lions Club in conjunction with the Highway 25 Association is sponsoring a city-wide garage sale, Saturday, June 10, said Hazel Estes, Lions Club member. This is the second year for this event, she said, and like last year, any service organizations, individuals or groups interested in coordinating a garage sale that weekend are encouraged to call the Lions Club. In turn, the Lions Club will advertise all the garage sales on a map showing locations and make those available to the public prior to the weekend. In addition to the garage sales in this area, other sales will be going on from Interstate-70 at Coby to Interstate-80 at Sutherland, Neb.

"To be included on the garage sale list for June 10, we need to know as soon as possible," she said. For questions or to sign up, call either Estes at (785) 460-0557; Mary Hurtt, (785) 443-1886; or Francis Britton, (785) 460-6426 (evenings).

Family Readiness holding meeting

The Northwest Kansas Military Family Readiness Group will meet at 10 a.m., Saturday, at the Colby National Guard Armory, 470 S. Range Ave., Colby.

Anyone who has a family member or friend in any branch of the armed forces, activated or not, or anyone who would

like to be involved in the readiness group is encouraged to attend. For questions, call Melanie Fortin, 460-2995, or Lisa Varney, 890-6939.

Fair board to meet 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, advertising expenses and income; a discussion on the fair barbecue, tent for the fair and display cases for open class entries.

Health screenings available May 20

The First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St., Colby, is hosting a health screening Saturday, May 20. The non-profit organization, Gerontology Research Foundation/Health Screens is offering 10 noninvasive, non-radiation tests for early detection of cancer, heart disease, Peripheral Artery Disease, thyroid disease, kidney disease, stones, diabetes, aneurysms, osteoporosis, risk of stroke, and other illnesses. For questions about the cost of testing or to make an appointment, call toll-free (877) 854-4735.

Suspect charged with rape and sexual battery

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A former Colby Community College basketball player has been bound over for trial in Thomas County District Court on charges of rape and aggravated sexual battery.

Andrais Thornton, 21, of Chicago, Ill. is charged with the alleged Nov. 16, 2003 assault of a then 19-year-old college student and cheerleader.

During a preliminary hearing lasting four hours Tuesday afternoon, District Magistrate Judge Richard Ress listened to the testimony of the alleged victim, two detectives, a doctor and a nurse. "Based on evidence of the case

and what's been presented here today, I believe the state has met its burden of proof," Ress said.

Thornton sat quietly next to his attorney, Todd Stramel of Colby, as Assistant Kansas Attorney General Nola Wright presented the state's position that he allegedly attacked the woman. Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick is co-counsel for the state.

Stramel disagreed with Ress during closing statements saying the case was "a bad case."

"I don't think there is anything either of us is going to say that would change your mind," Stramel said. "This alleged victim has credibility problems."

The woman testified she and a

second woman who is not pursuing prosecution of Thornton and a co-defendant, Ontario McKee of Milwaukee, Wis., were attacked by both men.

She said she and her friend attended at least two parties, one on campus and the other in a downtown apartment, where they drank heavily before the alleged attack.

Colby Police Department Detective Sgt. Gary Shull said he did not know why investigative reports filed with former Thomas County Attorney Allen Taylor on Jan. 29, 2004, didn't result in charges being filed against Thornton and McKee while he was in office.

Dr. Gary Slavens of Colby and Ginger Rupp, a nurse at the college,

testified about examinations conducted on the two women some 36 to 40 hours after the alleged attacks. Slavens said the exams were inconclusive whether rape had occurred. The only other witness to testify was Detective Cloyd Hopper, who said his involvement in the case took place only during an initial series of interviews.

Thornton, 18 at the time of the alleged incident, was arrested in late January on the campus of Southeastern Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Mo. where he attended college and played basketball.

Should Thornton be convicted of the rape charge, and 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.

McKee, 19 at the time of the alleged incident, was arrested on Jan. 22 on the campus of San Angelo University in San Angelo, Texas. On Jan. 26, McKee, as part of a plea agreement, pleaded guilty to sexual battery in front of a Texas magistrate judge.

He was ordered to unsupervised probation.

Thornton remains out of jail on bond awaiting trial.

Hospital administrator cautions others about insurance

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Logan County's hospital administrator is cautioning people to be aware about how insurance changes affect them.

Kyle Hahn said an Oakley resident ended up uninsured when admitted to the hospital after unknowingly changing insurance plans at a discount store.

Hahn said a representative from the Humana organization talked with patrons at the store and some changed their prescription drug coverage to Medicare part D which later left one person "much more than they had bargained."

"Shortly after signing with Humana," Hahn said, "they had a stay at our hospital and that is when they found out that Medicare Part A and B no longer covers them. When they had signed the contract with Humana, they had signed on for Medicare Advantage, which automatically cancels their Medicare Part A and B coverage."

Hahn said Logan County Hospital, like many hospitals and providers in the northwestern Kansas area, does not have a contract with Humana at this time.

"This means that patients are subject to higher deductibles and co-payments," Hahn said. "Jessie Holzmeister, our social service director, is presently working with the resident to get them back on Medicare Part A and B."

Hahn wants area residents to be wary of offers which sound too good to be true when looking for prescription drug coverage.

"Please be careful when you are looking for prescription drug coverage that you are getting just Part D coverage and not coverage for Part A and B, which are hospital and physician coverage," he said.

Anyone who accidentally becomes enrolled in Medicare Advantage has until June 30 to opt out of the plan and can do so by calling the Social Security Administration at 1-800-633-4227 and asking for the disenrollment department.

"If you have any questions or need help, please call Logan County Hospital at (785) 672-3211 and ask for Jessie Holzmeister or Cindy Albers.

Logan County Hospital cares about your health and well being," Hahn said.

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