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A bicycle and a trip for two

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

For a Colorado Springs, Colo., couple, ‘a bicycle built for two’ isn’t just a song. Steve and Penny Koerner were in Colby Thursday, taking a break from their 1,000-mile trip on a tandem bike.

They are traveling from Colorado Springs to Mankato, Minn., for Penny’s family reunion.

It is the 30th anniversary gathering for Penny’s family and, in celebration, she wanted to do something different. They chose to ride a bike to the reunion. They left June 10 and the reunion is July 1.

They have three rest days planned for the trip. Thursday was one of them.

Though no stranger to bike riding, a trip of this type is something new. They have had the custom-built tandem bike for more than 25 years and planned on taking it on a long trip but never had the chance.

“What we’ve never done before is the long distance stuff,” Steve said. The trip is totally unsupported — no one is following along in a vehicle, carrying their gear. Instead, they are going it alone, hauling everything they

need in a trailer attached to the bike.

“It’s an experience,” Penny said.

The people they have met along the way have been the best part of the trip she said.

“I have been impressed with how helpful people have been. When pulling over for rest stops, people passing by ask if they need anything. It rekindles your belief in the human spirit,” she said.

They both agreed the time was right for their epic road trip. Their children are grown and Penny closed her law office in February. Steve still practices law and took off enough time to complete the trip.

He said there is a misconception that people need to be a Lance Armstrong-type to undertake such a bike trip.

“We are proving that wrong because we are both recreational riders and are managing just fine,” he said.

They have a moderate pace and are riding about 50 miles a day, stopping every 10 miles take a break and are staying in motels each night.

“We didn’t want to make this a death ride,” Penny said.

That’s not to say they haven’t had their share of troubles. Flat tires and mechanical issues have been a problem. High winds Wednesday were also an issue. Penny said the



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Steve Koerner, left, and his wife, Penny, of Colorado Springs, Colo., worked on their tandem bike in their hotel room at the Colby Days Inn, 1925 S. Range, Thursday. The couple stayed in Colby overnight as one of the stops on their 1,000-mile bike trip from Colorado to Minnesota.

wind kept pulling off the timing chain and was also a hindrance to riding.

Their route from Colorado Springs has been U.S. Highway 24, including the portions that are now

considered county roads. They will ride only on two-lane highways. Today, they were heading north to Oberlin and into Nebraska over the weekend. From there, their route is northeast across Nebraska through

northwest Iowa and then into Minnesota.

Once the reunion is over, they won’t be making the return trip to Colorado on the bike. They rented a minivan to drive back.

Remodeling project on McDonald’s menu

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Colby’s golden arches are getting more golden.

The McDonald’s restaurant, located near Interstate 70 at exit 53, is in the middle of a major remodeling project.

Owner Bob Anderson said the time was right.

“We opened in May 1982 and there was nothing out here but us and wheat,” he said.

“We’ve done a little remodeling since, but now we are gutting everything.”

Anderson said the remodeling is from the counter out, meaning all seating, landscaping and the parking lot will be upgraded.

“It will all be brand new,” he said. “It’s been 24 years. It’s time to do something.”

After nearly two years of planning with McDonald’s administration, work started in May. Some days with construction will be more complex than others. That means there will be a few days when only drive-through service will be available. A large majority of the seating



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Customers at Colby’s McDonald’s wait for their order as a wall blocks off most of the seating in the restaurant. Colby’s 24-year-old restaurant is undergoing a major remodeling project. The work has eliminated much of the seating and will force the restaurant to have only drive-through service on some days.

has been removed because of construction, leaving a handful of tables for customers.

Anderson said McDonald’s will only have drive-through service on Monday and a portion of Tuesday and Wednesday. Drive-through ser-

vice only is also scheduled June 26-27. But having only drive-through service is not as bad as it sounds.

“Forty-five percent of sales are drive through,” he said. “And its mostly local people, meaning from Oakley to Atwood.”

Anderson said the construction has decreased sales, but not as much as expected.

“I appreciate those who still come. Colby has been good to us,” he said. “The next two weeks are going to be critical.”

Even the drive through is getting a make over. A second window will be installed. After ordering, drive-through customers will pay at the first window and pick up their order at the second window. Anderson said the reason for the second window is to make service faster.

Inside, seating will be reduced by about 10 seats. Before the work, the restaurant could hold 105 people. Because of new seating arrangements, seating will be about 95.

In addition to the restaurant getting a facelift, the restaurant will better meet federal regulations regarding customers with disabilities. The restrooms will be made larger and appropriate for customers with disabilities.

If there are no major delays during construction, Anderson said the work will be finished in early July. He had to wait longer than he wanted for work to begin.

“I wanted to start sooner, but with architects, construction people, plans and suggestions, it just took longer to get things in,” he said. “Our target is July 1. I just want our customers to come in and just say ‘wow.’”

Kansas Senator leads delegation in wealth

WASHINGTON (AP) — If Sen. Sam Brownback’s presidential hopes don’t work out, he can take comfort in knowing that he continues to lead the Kansas congressional delegation in personal wealth.

Financial disclosures released Wednesday show the Kansas Republican and his wife have a blind trust worth as little as \$1 million and as much as \$5 million. Brownback also owns mutual funds, stocks and other investments worth between \$223,000 and \$675,000.

The state’s senior senator, Republican Pat Roberts, listed most of his assets in real estate. Roberts owns two condominiums in Alexandria, Va., and a home in Dodge City, with a total value between \$450,000 and

\$1 million. He carries a mortgage between \$100,000 and \$250,000 on one of his Virginia properties.

The forms, filed every year by all 535 members of Congress, report assets and liabilities in broad ranges that make it impossible to determine exactly how much each lawmaker is worth.

Overall, the forms show little change from those that Kansas lawmakers filed last year. All rank-and-file House and Senate members earned a salary of \$162,100 in 2005, up from \$158,100 the year before.

Brownback’s 335-acre grain farm in Linn County is worth \$100,000 to \$250,000, while his condominium in pricey Washington, D.C., is valued even higher at \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Lawsuit threat discussed

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Threat of a lawsuit has resulted in a Logan County landowner getting help with encroaching prairie dogs.

Byron Sowers told Logan County Commissioners Carl Uhrich, Doug Mackley and Nick Scott he will sue the county if they don’t help stop prairie dog infestation on land he owns in the southwest part of the county.

“I’m not upset with the commissioners, but I didn’t buy that land to go down there and spend \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year to treat prairie dogs,” Sowers said.

Sowers asked commissioners June 5 for their commitment that they will comply with state law requiring them to control prairie dogs throughout the entire county.

Land Sowers is concerned about is nine miles south of Russell Springs. His land is adjacent to land owned by Larry Haverfield. Accompanying Sowers to the meeting were Darrel Dirks and Derek Dirks, who own land south of Haverfield.

According to minutes from the June 5 commission meeting, Sowers told the commissioners they have the power to put pressure on Haverfield to control his prairie dogs and they are not doing it.

Sowers said he has an attorney and if the commissioners continue to “let things go,” he, along with his area neighbors, plan to file a class action lawsuit against Logan County.

Haverfield did not return telephone calls.

Haverfield at a public meeting at the Logan County Courthouse in January said he likes prairie dogs and doesn’t see them as a threat to nature or the livelihood of farmers and ranchers.

Sowers disagrees with Haverfield’s suggestion of using a 90-foot grass buffer strip as a way to control prairie dogs.

Sowers told the commissioners he didn’t want to resort to suing the county, and said he received word from the board of commissioners on Tuesday about their intent for action.

“I’m proud of Carl Uhrich,” Sowers said. “He’s called me and sent me a letter and a copy of a letter the commissioners sent Larry (Haverfield).”

Sowers said the content of the two letters was to inform him the commissioners intended to get Haverfield to comply with state law.

“They told me they agree Larry’s buffer zone is not working, and on or about Oct. 1, the county will take action and charge him for costs of treatment unless he notified the county he will do it,” Sowers said.

Denny Mackley is supervisor of Logan County’s weed and prairie dog department. He said October through March is when the county can use the chemical Rozol to treat prairie dog nests.

He said the only other chemical suggested to treat prairie dogs is zinc phosphide, which is used from July through December. He said zinc phosphide is not as cost effective as Rozol because it requires each dog hole be prebaited causing more than one trip to each hole.

Sowers purchased the land four years ago and he said the population of prairie dogs has increased since then. He said he is trying to be a good neighbor to Haverfield, but his patience is wearing thin.

“The way I understand it, if Larry doesn’t treat (the land) the county will,” Sowers said.

Logan County Attorney Andrea Wyrick said she is researching the situation and would work with the commissioners to help them comply with the law.



C. Uhrich

Curbing the dry spell

Rain water flowed down a gutter on East 10th Street in Colby after Thursday’s storm left .86 of an inch of rain and a minor hail. City officials reported no major damage, with only minor damage to trees, like small limbs blown down.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press