



COLBY FREE PRESS

Happy Birthday, America!

Bikers take pit stop

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Bicyclists from New Haven, Conn., had an extended stay in Colby over the weekend.

Twenty-six cyclists on a cross-country trip to raise money and awareness for Habitat for Humanity stopped in Colby Saturday to stay overnight. Seven of the bikers went to the emergency room at Citizens Medical Center with viral infections and dehydration from the ride. The entire group left for Cope, Colo., this morning with help from Colby United Methodist Church.

Bikers have been dealing with heat and the wind while riding.

This is the 12th year the group has stayed at Colby United Methodist Church. Carolyn May, missions chairman at the church, organizes the stay each year. But this year, the cyclists got an extra night here.

May said some of the bicyclists were riding in their own van and their bikes are being hauled by trailer. The rest were back on their bikes for the journey.

"They're on their way," she said.

Sunday, only 11 of the bikers were healthy.

May said despite illness, the cyclists enjoyed their stay in Colby and the hospitality and generosity here.

She said Dillon's donated food for their stay, as did church members. Dr. Gary Slavens treated the bikers at the emergency room and also threw them a barbecue.

Daniel Weisfield, one of the trip leaders, said the group is on a nine-week trip from New Haven to San Francisco, Calif.

The group is one of three traveling the 4,400 miles to raise awareness for Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven. Habitat for Humanity is an international organization dedicated to building affordable housing for low



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Harry Flaster of Phoenix, Ariz., worked on his bike Saturday in the lobby at Colby United Methodist Church. Flaster was one of 26 bicyclists traveling from New Haven, Conn., to raise money and awareness for Habitat for Humanity, an international organization that build houses for low income families.

income families.

The group that stayed in Colby is on the southern route. Two other groups are on their way to Portland, Ore., and Seattle, Wash.

Weisfield said they depend on their relationships like the one they have with the United Methodist Church.

"We built contacts in the community," he said. "We look forward to coming back every year."

All of the bicyclists are college students or recent graduates, many

from Yale.

Before coming on the ride, they must raise \$4,000, a dollar for each mile ridden, Weisfield said.

The group rides 70-100 miles a day, and leaves early in the morning to beat the heat of the day.

Harry Flaster of Phoenix, Ariz., is one of the trip leaders. He said this was his first Habitat ride, and the longest trip he has done. Before, he said the longest was 30-50 miles.

Flaster said he has enjoyed meeting people along the way and seeing

the differences between the states. And, he said, the biggest challenge has been dealing with all of the unforeseen things that happen along the way.

"Those are fun to overcome," Flaster said.

He also said planning the trip and getting the riders and everything they need to their destination is a day to day challenge.

The group expects the trip to end July 30, when they cross the Golden Gate Bridge.

State holiday costs taxpayers about \$519,000

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' decision to give thousands of classified state employees an extra day off today isn't coming cheap.

Sebelius' executive order declaring the day a holiday to extend the Independence Day weekend will cost about \$519,000, according to her spokeswoman, Megan Ingmire. That's because some employees will have to work despite the order and will be paid premium holiday pay.

The calculation was tallied from the actual cost of differential compensation paid to employees on Christmas last year, but adjusted to account for a 1.5 percent pay raise last month.

State workers across Kansas are likely applauding the move; Sebelius called it a tribute to their hard work.

"State employees should be proud of the work they do on behalf of the people of Kansas," the governor said. "This will allow you more time to spend with family and friends."

It's not the first time Sebelius has given some state employees an extra day off. She declared June 11, 2004, a legal holiday in Kansas to observe a day of mourning for

former President Ronald Reagan. Neighboring states weren't as generous this weekend.

Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt did not declare Monday a holiday, but last year, he followed a 45-year-old state tradition and gave employees the day after Thanksgiving off.

Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry also has workers reporting to the office Monday. But his spokesman, Paul Sund, said he expected work to be minimal.

But Sebelius wasn't the nation's only governor giving employees a four-day weekend.

Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco also designated Monday a state holiday, saying "a day of rest" was appropriate. And Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine also gave state workers an extra day off.

Some of Sebelius' predecessors have made similar decisions. Gov. Bill Graves let some executive branch employees go at noon on Christmas Eve in 1998. And Gov. Joan Finney made July 5, 1991, a state holiday in honor of Kansas troops who served in Operation Desert Storm.

Editor's note: Portion of the preceding article came from *The Topeka Capital-Journal*, <http://www.cjonline.com>

Fair project slated

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Anyone attending the 2006 Thomas County Fair will have an opportunity to learn what county employees do for taxpayers and county residents.

Earlier this month, Commissioner Paul Steele presented the idea of educating the public about what county employee jobs entail to Commissioners Ron Evans and Ken Christiansen. Steele suggested a computer presentation be made during the fair about each department's responsibilities.

"It's an opportunity to tell people

of Thomas County what you do," Steele said to several department heads at Friday's meeting.

Thomas County Shelley Harms has agreed to assist of the county department heads with making arrangements to have Fulwider tape what goes on in their department as part of the project which will open to the public during the Thomas County Fair on Aug. 1 to 5 at the fair grounds located on Range Ave.

In other business, the commissioners approved the June 19 minutes, paid end of month bills and payroll, and signed the communication contract with the city for dispatching services.

Ready, aim . . .



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

J.L. Ellis, a firefighter with the Colby Fire Department, inspected mortar tubes today at the fire department. The tubes will be used Tuesday to launch mortar shells for the annual Kiwanis Club Fourth of July fireworks display. The fire department shoots off the display for the club. The display will begin between 10-10:15 p.m. at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

County ponders budget, fire services

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Money and how to spend it consumed Friday's Thomas County Commission meeting.

Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen talked with Thomas County Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper about how to pay for a new trash compactor.

Jumper said two debts totaling about \$36,000 would retire in 2007, and he would like money earmarked to pay for new equipment. He needs to submit an order to Martin Tractor Company soon.

"It takes 32 weeks from the order date for a compactor to be delivered," he said.

A bid previously submitted by



P. Steele

"It looks like Menlo Township Trustees are in the driving seat. And if you want to put in money for a fire district then you don't need us to do it."

— Paul Steele
Thomas County Commissioner

Martin Tractor Company will cost \$239,000 after a \$72,000 trade-in of one of two compactors currently being used. Also meeting with the commissioners were Menlo Township Clerk Loren Guill, Trustee Jack Steiger and Treasurer Susie Guill about a previously proposed fire district for the township.

"I do not have any problem with a new fire district for Menlo Township," Evans said, "but there are so many unanswered questions. I'm not prepared today to sign my name

to a resolution to create a fire district."

Steele asked the group how a fire district in Menlo Township would effect nearby Sheridan County.

"I don't know," Steiger said. Loren Quill said he had researched state statute and he understands only one township needs to be involved in setting up a fire district.

He also said he had visited Sheridan County Rural Fire Chief Ross Carder and was told no one who

lived near Menlo Township was interested in joining a new fire district.

"It looks like Menlo Township Trustees are in the driving seat," Steele said. "And if you want to put in money for a fire district then you don't need us to do it."

Andy Munk, a Menlo fireman, said people in Sheridan County have donated money to Menlo's fire department. He wanted to know where that left those people as far as protection.

"Menlo can serve those people," Steele said. "I believe in great collaboration."

Loren Guill said he wasn't sure whether the township could financially support a fire district and he had unanswered questions.

"I think it should go to a vote of the people," Susie Guill said.

Steele agreed. "People are concerned with taxes," he said, "but if the people say they want to pay for a fire district then go for it. I think we need to wait and sort it out."