

Flying low



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Stevenson Flying Service pilot Kevin Stevenson of Selden made one of many passes over a field 12 miles east of Colby on Monday morning as he applied chemicals to standing corn. Kevin and his dad, Dick Stevenson, own the crop dusting service.

Library plans book sale during county's free fair

Our annual book sale is here again!

We have a complete turnover in books since the last sale in February 2006. Better yet, we have a slew of books from which to choose. Our selection covers the gamut; from the newest James Patterson hard-back book to books dating back to the late 1800's.

The book sale will take place in the basement of Pioneer Memorial Library during the Thomas County Fair from Saturday, July 29 through noon on Saturday, Aug. 5.

The book sale will only be open during regular library hours which you can find by going to www.colbylibrary.com and clicking on "Calendar."

Also remember that if you are looking to dispose rather than acquire books, the library is a great place to donate books.

We will gladly accept and find new homes for those books that are being neglected in your home. Bring them in this week (if possible) so we can get them into the upcoming summer book sale.

Speaking of donations, we appreciate how the community has supported Pioneer Memorial Library in so many ways.

Memorial gifts, book sales, volunteering, joining the Friends of the library, making a contribution to our newly established Foundation, or simply donating a book are all ways that we have been supported in the



Jeff Friesen

• Library Link

past. We could not be what we are today without your help.

Thank you for helping us be a better library!

You might be surprised to know that a significant number of books from our large type print section of the library have been donated.

Train from Marietta by Dorothy Garlock is one of the latest donations to the large type print section.

Kate Tyler is the daughter of a wealthy man from New Orleans. She is on her way by train to California to work her first job as a nurse.

A group of kidnappers however, have a different plan for Kate.

A ransom is demanded from Kate's father by the bandits for her release — and a warning not to call the authorities.

Rather than risk his daughter, Kate's father calls in a favor from a Texas Ranger and through him is able to enlist the services of rancher Tate Castle.

Tate has a handicapped daughter and is at first reluctant to take the job but eventually honor wins out and he accepts the offer.

Any notion of an easy job though, is dismissed after a tangle with the kidnappers.

Tate rescues Kate but nearly at the expense of his own life.

Tate is initially turned-off by the "city girl" he rescued but his attitude changes when he realizes her true grit.

The question now is whether the kidnappers have called off the plot. The longer Tate has to lay low, the more time he has to spend with Kate — which is turning out not to be so bad after all.

Drop into the cool library this week and donate a book!

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 West 4th and open seven days a week.

Summer hours are as follows: Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

For information call the library at 460-4470 or visit our website at www.colbylibrary.com.

As always, we are here to serve you.

McPherson family factory has mixture for success

McPHERSON (AP) — Three years ago, sales of The Old Muffin Factory's muffin and pancake mixes were hotter than hotcakes almost everywhere — except here.

"We sold all over the country, from Maine to California, but we couldn't get anybody here in McPherson, Kansas, to take us seriously, and really do a good job with our products," co-owner Les Mason said. "So we said, 'We'll do that,' and here we are."

In April 2004, Mason and his wife, Kala, opened The Old Muffin Factory in downtown McPherson. They had been producing and selling their mixes since 1990, but the 1,600-square-foot retail space opened the market to the Masons' hometown.

"We just felt like we could be a really good outlet for our own products here," Les Mason said. "We projected when we opened this that we'd probably do 75 percent of our business out of the back and 25 percent out of the front, but our retail sales are almost half of our total."

The business started 16 years ago in the Masons' garage.

Les Mason had been sales man-

ager of a McPherson milling company and his wife was an elementary school librarian when they decided to break out on their own.

"This is sort of our mid-life crisis," said Les Mason, 51. "We decided we wanted something of our own. We'd been dreaming about it for years, and we finally got to the point in 1990 where we said, 'We're going to do it, and if it doesn't work out, we'll get other jobs.'"

That didn't prove necessary. Their mixes — which feature dozens of flavors — were a hit.

"We offered a couple of items at first to (stores selling Kansas products), and the reception was very, very good," Mason said. "We went to gift shows, trade shows, and then it was more regional. By the mid-1990s, we had gone national."

The McPherson mixes are sold at tourist and specialty shops in Branson, Mo., Las Vegas and places like Knott's Berry Farm in California and Garden of the Gods and Estes Park in Colorado.

As exposure has multiplied, so have The Old Muffin Factory's sales.

"You have a scenario where a

lady from Wisconsin has a shop, and she goes to Branson on vacation," Mason said. "She sees our products in the Branson stores, and she goes back home, looks us up on the Internet and gives us a call. We open a lot of accounts that way."

The Old Muffin Factory's biggest account is with Mercier Orchards, which has a 15,000-square-foot gift store at its orchard in Blue Ridge, Ga.

It buys about \$50,000 worth of mixes each year, said Melissa Mercier, the company's owner and manager.

"I love them, I really do," she said of The Old Muffin Factory. "They are just great people to work with. Ah, yes, the packaging."

Mixes typically are sealed in plastic bags that are packaged within a textile mill bag matching the flavor of the mix. The cookies and cream mix, for example, comes in a bag resembling an Oreocookie.

"I love the packaging," Mercier said. "Our customers come in and just think it's darling, because if they have apple muffin, they have a little apple sack with little leaves on it."

Another selling point is that the directions for the mixes — which make about a half-dozen muffins and cost \$4 at the McPherson store but \$9.95 elsewhere — are simple to follow, Mercier said.

"They have great resale for us," she said. "People come back and say, 'Where are the muffins? Where are the pancakes?'"

Of the 37 muffin flavors offered, 23 come in the designer bags. There are 30 pancake varieties, from buckwheat to pina coloda.

The Masons developed their recipes — which they guard with their lives — with a lot of trial and error.

"We looked at a lot of different recipes, and there were bits and pieces we liked from recipe A and part of recipe B and part of recipe C," Lee Mason said. "Then we would turn it back to our focus group."

That would be the Masons' three (now grown) children.

Eldon Wiens, whose financial services office is a block away from the store, often visits twice a day.

"Les and Kala and Jesse and Angela are a really neat family, and it's pleasant to go in there and be treated nice," Wiens said. "It's just a terrific atmosphere and a unique store."

General Public

Transportation Van

Hours: 8 am to 4 pm

Days: Monday - Friday

Phone:

460-2901 (8 am-12:30 pm)

443-9208 (12:30 pm - 4 pm)

If possible call for Reservations by 11 am the previous business day. Provided to Colby, Brewster, Gem, Menlo, Rexford and a Portion of Oakley as needed.

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NATUR

Thomas County

August 1 - August 5

2 BIG NIGHTS!

Wednesday **August 2**

PEDAL TRACTOR PULL

Sponsored by: Th. Co. Farm Bureau Assn.
Registration at 4 P.M.

DEMOLITION DERBY

Sponsored by: Roofmasters Roofing
8 p.m. Thursday August 3

P.R.C.A. RODEO

8:00 p.m. Tuesday & Wednesday
August 1 & 2

MUTIN BUSTIN

Both Nights of the Rodeo!
Sponsored by: Orscheln Farm Supply

FREE BBQ:

Sponsored by:
Dillons of Colby,
Cornerstone Ag, LLC,
Taylor Motors, RoadRunner MFG.,
KQLS, City of Rexford.
Wednesday **August 2**
@ 5:30 p.m.

Saturday **August 5**
PARADE
10 A.M.

2 NIGHTS OF RACES!!

Friday, August 4

Sponsored by: F&M Insurance

Bombers & Modified Qualifier
Hot Laps: 7 p.m.; Races: 8 p.m.

Saturday, August 5

Sponsored by: F&M Insurance

MODIFIED SHOOTOUT

\$5000 to Win ~ Also featuring Super Stocks
Hot Laps: 6 p.m.; Races: 7 p.m.

CARNIVAL & GAMES **Bracelet Night • Sat., Aug. 5**

August 1-5
7-11 p.m.

Buy a wrist band & ride all the rides for \$10