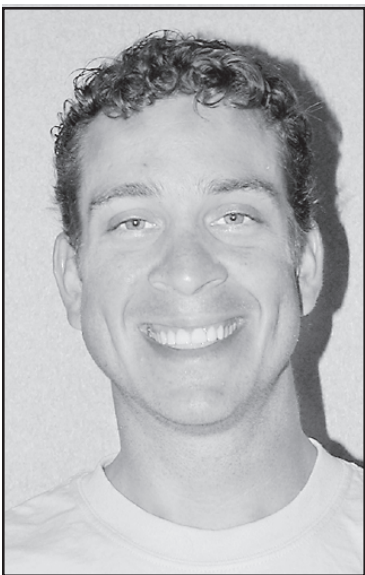




Bicycle rider stops on trip for Haiti kids

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Colby was one of many stops in an effort to raise awareness about impoverished children in Haiti. Jesse Johnson, 31, a Seattle pastor and founder of the Haiti Kids Foundation, is biking from Seattle to Miami. His planned trip is 4,000 miles in 40 days. Johnson stopped in Colby Tuesday with his wife, Rachael, and 20-month-old daughter Trinity. Tuesday was his 32nd day of riding. Rachael and Trinity are riding in a van along the way. "After a trip to Haiti last year, I decided to do something for its children. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere," Johnson said. "I was absolutely astonished by what I saw there." Between 5,000-7,000 children under the age of 7 live by themselves on the streets, in poverty. He said conditions are "totally unacceptable" and decided to do something to help get the children off the streets which was his incentive to form the foundation. The foundation works with Haitian orphanages to help them operate at their highest capacity to provide shelter, food and an education to the children. The poverty came from government upheaval and other problems. "These children bear the brunt of that poverty," Johnson said. "The childhood AIDS situation in Haiti is worse than in sub-Saharan Africa, along with the already bad condi-



Jesse Johnson

tions they face." A different social structure is also part of the problem. Johnson said in the United States someone would look after their child first, no matter the circumstances. "In Haiti, people sometimes surrender their children instead." The foundation plans on opening orphanages next spring along with medical facilities. "The trip has gone well," Johnson said, "and many people have become interested in my work, and have also donated to the cause." Johnson is averaging about 130 miles a day. He said the biggest hurdle was the Rocky Mountains, and being attacked by two hawks — one in Oregon and another outside St. Francis.

Primary turnout low

TOPEKA (AP) — Only 18 percent of the state's registered voters participated in this year's primary elections, a record low blamed on a lack of contested races and triple-digit temperatures. About 296,000 people voted, out of 1.6 million registered, according to the secretary of state's office. The previous record low was 26 percent set in 2002. Democrats had only one contested statewide race, for secretary of state. While seven Republicans were

seeking the party's nomination for governor, only one, Sen. Jim Barnett, the eventual winner, used television advertising. "The bottom line is that the one thing that continues to draw great voter turnout is highly contested, active races," Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh said Thursday. Thornburgh also said declining interest in primaries is a national trend. In Kansas, turnout dropped from 43 percent in 1992 to 26 percent in 2002, but it rebounded two years later, to 31 percent.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Fair and fur

Riders on the Tilt-A-Whirl, above, at the home-owned carnival held on for life at the Thomas County Free Fair this week. The fair and carnival run through Saturday, with the carnival open from 7 to 11 p.m. Wrist band night will be held Saturday, and bands will be \$10 and allow carnival goers to ride all night. Other fair activities Saturday include the fair parade at 10 a.m. in downtown Colby. Veterans are invited to ride on the Veterans of Foreign Wars float, and floats will gather at Fike Park before the parade. The grand marshal is the Kansas Army National Guard. **RIGHT:** Madison Zimmerman and her rabbit, Honey, waited to be judged at the hand pet show at the fair Tuesday. Exhibits wrap up Saturday, and entries can be picked up at 8 a.m. Sunday.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

New K-9, deputy team up in county

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Thomas County Sheriff's Deputy Rod Taylor has a new partner, except he isn't human. Taylor's new partner is Buster, a 4-year-old Belgian Malinois dog. Taylor and Buster bring a second K-9 unit to the sheriff's office, joining Marc Finley and his partner Reveille, also a Malinois. Taylor was a K-9 officer with the Kansas Highway Patrol from 1992 to 1997. After 31 years, Taylor retired from the highway patrol. He joined the Thomas County Sheriff's Office in May 1998. About five years ago, Finley joined the office and has gone through the highway patrol's training. Finley is also a certified K-9 instructor and Reveille is a patrol dog who is also certified narcotics detection. K-9s can be used in a criminal interdiction situation. If someone is pulled over and refuses to cooperate, the dog can be used. Taylor said his K-9 is trained in narcotics detection and officer protection.

"We worked the interstate together," Taylor said. "I was fortunate to have him here." Taylor and Buster went through eight weeks of training with the Kansas Highway Patrol, beginning in April. Before that, Finley worked with the two. Taylor said Finley was an asset because of his knowledge going through the highway patrol training. Training has changed since the first time Taylor went through it. "Learning to work with Buster has been a challenge, along with learning the dog's traits and drives. You've got to work as a team," Taylor said. The Malinois is a popular breed for law enforcement because they are hardy and trainable. Buster also isn't the first Malinois Taylor has worked with. His K-9 partner in the highway patrol was a Malinois. Finley also weighed in on the breed's suitability for law enforcement. "It's been his experience that the Malinois has a high drive and fewer health problems than other breeds, such as German Shepherds," he said.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Sheriffs Deputy Rod Taylor and K-9 Buster

Sheriff Mike Baughn said the addition of a second K-9 will allow the office to cover two full shifts. Also, if another agency has a request for assistance from a K-9, it can be done while keeping one on duty in Thomas County. Baughn said Finley and Reveille have "seized hundreds of thousands of dollars in drug money, thousands of pounds of narcotics and numerous vehicles used in the illegal transportation of narcotics." The K-9 units are funded through drug forfeit money.

Governor names Hoxie woman to board

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A Hoxie woman has been appointed to the state's highest emergency medical service board. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius selected Sheridan County Medical Services Director Deborah Kaufman to serve a four-year term on the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services. "Deborah's experience as EMS Director will greatly benefit the important work of this board as they continue to provide quality emergency medical services to Kansans," Sebelius said. Kaufman said she was contacted in late May about serving on the board and was sworn in June 28. "The board is a regulatory agency," Kaufman said. "Every director has a policy book to follow and the policies are approved by the state board." The Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services was established by the Kansas Legislature in 1988. The board is made up of 13 members, nine are appointed by the governor; leaving one appointment each to the president of the Senate, Senate minority leader, speaker of

the House and House minority leader. The nine members appointed by the governor are done so by qualifying descriptors. Kaufman is the only northwest Kansas resident to be appointed to the EMS board and will serve on two of four subcommittees, the Executive Committee and the Education and Examination Committee. Kaufman said the state EMS board meets at least six times each year; five meetings are held in Topeka and one in Salina. She said the duties of the board reach far and wide. "The board oversees staff board members which do inspections, education, certification and renewal, training and special projects," she said. Kaufman said two examples of special projects currently underway by one of the board's staff members is oversight of rural budget workshops and development of a data collection system. "We are lacking when it comes to a system for data collection and one staff member is working on developing a better system," Kaufman said.