



COLBY FREE PRESS

City grants landowners more time

By **Patty Decker**

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Colby resident Tuffy Taylor met with city council members Tuesday to continue talks about proposed alternatives for eliminating the hazards of his pond near the municipal airport.

In addition, Ken Eland of Hoxie, who represents Taylor was also present.

"We are wanting to find a resolution to keep everyone happy and we are not looking for litigation," Eland told the council.

The reason the council is concerned about the pond, which serves as the Taylor's heating and cooling system for their house, is because the Federal Aviation Administration could put the city in default under future and previous grant agreements.

At this point, Eland said Taylor is willing to contact a wildlife biologist and come up with a plan which would make wildlife less attracted to the pond and thus resolve the problem.

Taylor said it might take between 60 and 90 days to come up

with a specific plan.

"So much is dependent on when the expert can do it," Taylor said.

The council asked City Manager Carolyn Armstrong to work with the Taylors and keep on top of progress reports.

"We are asking for time to work through this," Taylor said. "I know the responsibility of finding a solution is on my shoulders."

City Attorney John Gatz reminded the council that the response from the FAA was for the city to eliminate the pond.

Council member Tom Waldschmidt said the city cannot take a chance in losing federal grants.

"Any extensions in looking for another solution (rather than to eliminate the pond) are contingent upon maintaining close contact with the FAA," he said.

"I know this needs to be resolved," Taylor said, "and we want to avoid a lawsuit."

"The city's role should be to act as a conduit between the FAA and the Taylors," Gatz said, "and a detailed plan is needed."

The council decided to give the Taylors a deadline of 90 days for a plan.

Water declines to be reviewed

The general ground water declines in northwest Kansas have scientists and economists looking at the potential long-run effects of the rate of water use on the resource and the economy.

Progress of the studies to date, said Tracy Streeter, director, Kansas Water will be presented during the Kansas Water Authority meeting Thursday and Friday, April 3 and 4, at the Comfort Inn, 2225 S. Range Ave., Colby. The presentation starts at 1 p.m. Thursday.

The authority will meet Thursday as the committee of the whole and Friday as the full authority.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. both days. A ground water computer model used in the Republican River Compact Settlement between Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado was adapted for specific use in northwest Kansas to better understand the relationship between rates of use and the aquifer's response.

Study partners include Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources, Kansas State University, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Kansas Water Office.

The water management scenarios were applied to the six priority aquifer subunits identified by the

Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 Board within the District's boundaries. No change in current rate of pumping, a 30 percent reduction in pumping rate and cessation of all pumping were the management "what ifs" considered.

The economic impact varies with how the pumping reduction is achieved. Scenarios considered in achieving the 30 percent reduction are voluntary, incentive-based water right retirement accompanied by either land conservation or dryland farming, or a 30 percent reduction on each well pumping.

A presentation Friday will be made on how Colorado is proposing to deal with its Republican River Compact compliance. Other issues at the Authority meeting will include a preliminary policy plan for management of surface water, and current water-related legislative issues.

The 24-member Kansas Water Authority represents the state's diverse water interests. The Authority advises the Kansas Legislature and Governor on water policy issues. Members of the state's 12 Basin Advisory Committees provide two-way communication between the Authority, the groups they represent and basin residents.

For information, call toll-free (888) 526-9283.

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Briefly

Endowment auction April 5

"Gold Rush" is the theme for this year's Colby Community College Endowment Foundation Scholarship Benefit Auction Saturday, April 5, at the Comfort Inn Convention Center. Doors open at 4:45 p.m. with dinner served at about 5:30 p.m. and live auction starting at 7 p.m. Donated items include a gold nugget, jewelry, toys and home decorations. Many trips will also be auctioned. Items will be on display beginning March 28 at Colby Photo and Plum Creek. For reservations call 460-4684.

College play April 10

Colby Community College's theater department will present Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* at 7:30 p.m., April 10-12 in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center on campus. "The play is a comedy

suitable for everyone," said Director Deb Bickner. Tickets will be available at the door or may be purchased at the Campus Bookstore.

Swim Club to meet

Parents with children interested in swimming this summer might want to plan on attending the Colby Swim Club meeting from 4-5 p.m., Sunday, April 6, in Room 803 of the Health Science Building on the Colby Community College campus. A "fun swim" for young people will follow from 5-6 p.m. at the college pool. For questions, call Ronda Faber, 460-6548.

Dutton family to perform

Western Plains Arts Association will present the Dutton Family at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 27,



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: Samuel Ramey poses in front of the Colby he house he was raised in. Ramey, an opera performer for more than 30 years, was in Colby Wednesday to show the town to his own son, Samuel Guy, 4. **BELOW:** Ramey poses with his own father in front of the same house.

The roots of the music

By **John Van Nostrand**

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In the late 1950s with American radio waves filled with Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley, one Colby youth was intrigued by the voices of other musical performances with intense stories of romance and drama.

Colby native Sam Ramey was just beginning to learn what would be a well-documented and world-traveled career in opera.

"It's kind of an amazing story," he said Wednesday while walking the streets of downtown Colby. "It's been quite an amazing ride."

With a few days to spare before his next performance, Ramey spent time in Colby to show his own son, Samuel Guy, 4, where he grew up. Ramey takes the stage, starring in his most famous role of Mephistopheles in Gounod's haunting tale *"Faust"* at 7 p.m., March 29, at Century II in Wichita.

"I enjoy riding around town and seeing what's left," said the 65-year-old remembering his younger years. "And I see the town has expanded."

The western Kansas wind blew the bangs of his gray hair while recollecting his adolescent years.

"The winds haven't changed," he laughed with his bass-baritone voice. One thing that has expanded has been Interstate 70. Ramey said he remembers driving home during his college days when Interstate 70 was being completed in chunks leading to Colby.

"Parts of the road would be interstate and then other parts wouldn't," he said.

Part of his Colby tour included stopping at the house in the 200 block of West Seventh Street he grew up in. He stopped to meet whoever was currently living in the house. No one was home.

He estimated his parents, Grace and Guy, moved the family into



that house by the time he was 2 from another house in town. Sam is the youngest of four children.

Both of his parents had northwest Kansas roots. He said his mother was from a farm south of Colby and his father was from Linda, an extinct-town between Colby and Atwood.

"It's not even on the map," he said. Ramey said any relatives remaining in the area would be distant cousins. He said he occasionally keeps in touch from his Chicago-area home with people in and around Colby he grew up with via Christmas cards and e-mail. He attended the Colby all-school reunion in 2005.

The neighborhood the Ramey family settled in turned into being an important one. Almost in view from the front porch of the house is the apartment building on Chickamauga and West Sixth Street where he listened to opera recordings with Ron Lock, a University of Kansas extension agent.

Before that, the only genuine samples of opera performances he

heard were from occasional guests on the "Ed Sullivan" television show.

"I hadn't seen an opera until I was actually in one," he said while pointing to the apartment building.

Ramey was still like other youth, and people, in Colby.

"I was still interested in Elvis and Pat Boone," he said.

He remembers when Colby had a community theater group which had its performances in a bandshell in the park. Years later, Ramey would be singing in much bigger venues to many more people.

After graduating from Colby High in 1960, Ramey went to Kansas State University to pursue education in music. He was considering becoming a music teacher, but meeting certain people fueled the interest in opera. He rehearsed "Figaro" there. He eventually transferred to Wichita State University which, he said, had a better music program.

After a college education, he needed a place to work in opera. He had heard an opera company

in Central City, Colo., was accepting samples of performers. Ramey said his recording he sent to Central City was done in KXXX radio studios. Central City liked his work. Ramey performed in Central City and in Santa Fe, N.M., as an apprentice before his professional debut in 1973 in New York City.

Since then, Ramey's 30-plus years has expanded more than just three decades. Although places like New York City, Chicago and other major American cities have a following in opera, he said Europe's interest in opera succeeds America's. He is known around the world at opera theaters. Because of that, he has learned to speak some French and Italian, both of which are popular for operas.

"I'm not that fluent," he said, "but we Americans are spoiled. Everybody knows how to speak English. I just know enough of the others to get by."

When he started, vinyl records were still on shelves in stores. He has made several recordings of either his solo work or opera performances. Now, he has his own web site.

"When my friends see something new of mine on youtube, they send it to me," he said.

Spinning CDs rather than vinyl, Ramey knows things have changed. He said he, too, is not exactly the same performer he used to be.

He said his age is becoming more of a factor. He still performs about 10 months out of the year. But Ramey's fans, nor does he, see the immediate end as he has performances scheduled four years from now. Ramey said he is not much different than Placido Domingo, 67, who is also still performing opera. "I plan to be singing when I'm 70," he said. "But when to stop performing, it's always in the back of mind."

For more about Ramey go on line to www.samuelramey.com

Childbirth classes near

Citizens Medical Center, 100 College Dr., Colby, is sponsoring a four-week series on childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m., beginning Thursday, April 3. The classes will continue at the same time, Thursday, April 10, 17, and 24. Expectant mothers in their last trimester or who are due to deliver before August 2008 are encouraged to attend, said Jeanene Brown, RN, in the hospital's education department. The next series will be July 2008. To register, call Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Egg Hunt Saturday

College Drive Assembly, 245 W. College Dr. in Colby, is sponsoring an Easter Egg hunt from 1 to 2:15 p.m., Saturday. Registration opens at 12:45 p.m.