



## Colby helps disabled

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Personal Energy Transportation is often referred to as the Gift of Mobility for a reason. Officially incorporated in 2004, these organization, mostly volunteers, are creating a way to mobilize disabled people.

Wayne Horlacher of Colby first heard about the organization at an annual United Methodist Church conference and wanted to find a way to get involved.

"I try to spread the word and get the support they need," he said. Horlacher has been involved with PET for six years. His main role is to promote the organization to surrounding areas by giving presentations at churches, as well as demonstrating how the equipment works using a model given to him by a man in Manhattan.

"It's an exciting project and a pleasure to see those get the help that they need," he said. Horlacher also said that there is no religious affiliation with the organization and welcomes all denominations to take part in its effort to mobilize the disabled.

The first prototype was created in 1994 after Rev. Larry Hills, a missionary in Africa, told Rev. Mel West about the need for disabled people who have lost the use of their legs due to polio, landmine injury, amputation, etc.

The design for a three-wheeled, hand-cranked wheelchair that could handle diverse surfaces began. Earl Miner, a product designer, combined his efforts with West and produced the prototype,



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Wayne Horlacher of Colby demonstrated how the hand-cranked, three-wheeled wheelchair works for those who have the lost the use of their legs due to land mine injuries, polio and amputations.

which they sent to Hills for field testing.

When they passed the test, PET began its early stages of development. These mobile devices, called PETs, are built at assembly sites, also referred to as "PET affiliates," and take \$250 to build. Once it is ready to be shipped overseas, the personal energy transportation unit is partially disassembled to fit into the package, while toys and various necessities fill in the gaps.

Once the units are distributed, receivers are given their "feeding and watering" instructions for their new personal energy transportation.

"These people want to try to give you something back for what you have just done for them and this mother was wanting in the worst way to do something for us," wrote Ray and Shirley Truhn, volunteer part makers in Michigan. "She was crying and shaking, just so filled with gratitude and feeling like she was so inadequate for not being able to give back to us."

West once said, "When I was a farmer, I gave first and most attention to the animals that were most weak and sick. I think God wants us to do that with His people."

Besides Horlacher, others have taken the initiative to help dis-

abled people. Selden donated \$200 worth of wood and Hank Vette of Colby builds parts for assembly sites. Jerry Hanson also has joined efforts by sending parts to an assembly site in Mound Ridge, Kn.

For those who want to donate or directly get involved, Horlacher welcomes anyone to contact him.

"They need people who have metal or wood working skills to build parts," Horlacher said.

The 10,000th unit was created this year, said Horlacher, but there are still millions of people who need the gift of mobility.

For more information, visit [www.petinternational.org](http://www.petinternational.org).

## New library director checks in

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The Pioneer-Memorial Library is under new management by Melany Wilks of Redwood City, Cal. Replacing Jeff Friesen, she will become the new library director.

"I missed my library," she said. After receiving a Master in Library Science degree from San Jose State University, Melany and her husband, Sandy, changed a westcoast landscape for the plains of Kansas.

Even though they investigated the city before making the move, they are familiar with the mid-west.

"We have relatives around here, so we knew the general area, topography, weather and style," she said. They arrived in Colby June 30 and she began working July 7.

Melany was a library director for eight years, but wanted to finish her MLS degree. Before moving to Colby, the couple both worked for a non-profit organization in Oakland, Cal., with Sandy being an executive director. They have been married for 26 years.

As the library director, Melany said that she oversees the library, helps coordinate the staff and makes sure they work together.

"I make sure that policies and equipment are up to date, this community is being served, we are following the laws of the land, the laws of Kansas and the wishes of Colby," she said, "I cast the vision



Melany Wilks

of the library, direct the overall management and overall working of the library."

While the library has plans to bring in new services and ideas that will center in on youth, Melany's main focus is to serve the community and the people.

"I'm just learning what we have been doing, staff and I together will work on new projects and things, but I'm not coming in with a clean broom and sweeping everything," Melany said, "The outstanding staff has done an excellent job. We are going to do it together as a team. That's one of my philosophies," she said.

"We just love the town so far. We can walk down the street and people wave to you. It's really great. This place is amazing. We are thrilled to be here," she said.

## New athletic director named at Colby College

Head Lady Trojan softball coach Ryan Sturdy is very familiar with multi-tasking. For over a decade, he has successfully worked at more than one job, been a coach and assisted with athletic director duties at Colby Community College.

Sturdy will continue that tradition as he assumes the full-time administrative duties as the athletic director at Colby Community College, replacing Duane Arnt who recently resigned to accept an administrative position in the Nebraska public school system.

Sturdy served as assistant softball coach and assistant athletic director for eight years. He was also the assistant director of the Colby Recreation Department for eight years and head of the department for 4 1/2 years prior to accepting the head softball job at Colby College in December 2006. Following the death of athletic director Carl Adams, Sturdy was selected as the interim athletic director and served in that capacity from December 2006-July 2007.

Dr. Lynn Kreider, Colby Col-



Ryan Sturdy

lege President, announced the selection of Sturdy earlier this month.

"Ryan is very familiar with the administrative duties and Jayhawk Conference regulations," said Dr. Kreider. "He is extremely loyal to Colby Community College and we are fortunate to have him as athletic director and head coach of the Lady Trojan softball team."

Sturdy and his wife Valerie have one daughter, Daisy. He began his duties July 1 as athletic director at the college.

## Season finale

The McLemores gave the last performance for Picnic in the Park yesterday, bringing the event to an end. The event was sponsored by the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau and Colby Free Press.



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## Briefly

### Enrollment dates set

Enrollment for K-12 returning students will be from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 7, at Colby High School in the commons area. New student enrollment will be from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Aug. 8, at the respective buildings. Enrollment details will be published in the Wednesday, July 30 edition of the Colby Free Press and parents should receive their enrollment packets by August 4. In addition, the 2008-09 activity calendars will not be available until enrollment (Aug. 7). For questions, call 460-5000.

### Mutton Busting Saturday

The Mutton Busting Ranch Rodeo will begin following the Thomas County Fair parade Saturday which begins at 10 a.m. from Fike Park. The event

will be held in the small arena on the fairgrounds once the parade has concluded between 11 and 11:30 a.m.

### Vets wanted for parade

All Veterans of Foreign Wars and members of the American Legion, along with both auxiliaries, interested in riding in the Thomas County Fair parade are asked to meet at the VFW Building, 220 N. Lake, Colby, at 9:15 a.m., Saturday. The parade will begin at 10 a.m. For questions, call Dale Deaver, 443-1113.

### Book sale continues

Pioneer Memorial Library is sponsoring a "Book Sale Blowout," during regular library hours, through Saturday, in the library basement. Officials said "ev-

erything must go." For questions, call 460-4470.

### Marching next week

The Colby High School band will be having its Marching Academy from 9 a.m. until noon, Monday through Friday, Aug. 4-8, in the high school bandroom. Every member of the Colby High School band program is requested to attend, said Joey Nickols, instructor. Students will be receiving informational packets in the mail soon. For questions, call Nickols, 460-0599.

### Pet adoption available

Colby Animal Clinic has animals ready for adoption. Interested people can call or stop by the facility at 810 E. Fourth St. All adopted animals have current shots. The goal is to find homes for these animals

rather than have them euthanized. For questions or minimal adoption costs, call 460-8621.

### Reception Sunday

Colby artist Bev Kern will exhibit her paintings throughout the month of August at the Prairie Museum of Art and History, 1905 S. Franklin Ave. in Colby. In addition, the High Plains Art Club will honor Kern, who is also a club member, with a reception at from 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday.

During the reception, Kern will talk about her paintings and answer questions. Her favorite mediums are acrylic and oil, although she sometimes uses acrylic in the same way one might use watercolor by thinning it with water to achieve a more delicate effect.

The reception is open to the public.