



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

Taking a bow



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

The cast of the Colby High all-school play, "Iphigenia," took a curtain call on Friday and thanked the people who helped put the play together. The students put on the play Thursday and Friday at the school, with a dinner-theater on Friday.

Ferrets find new home in burrows

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
nt.betz@nwkansas.com

For the fourth time in a year, the population of the endangered black-footed ferret south of Russell Springs increased Friday afternoon as federal wildlife agents and volunteers released 13 of the tiny predators, bringing the total so far to 48.

Larry Haverfield, a Logan County rancher who's taken a lot of heat over his views on wildlife, especially prairie dogs, said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service brought 13 more ferrets out to his ranch to be released.

"We put some near the house," Haverfield said, "and took the others a couple miles north to another spot."

"It was a terrible day with the winds, and we had a much smaller group to help and watch the release. The ferrets came right out of the cages and went into the prairie dog holes. They did not put on as much of a show as they have on better days."

He said this brings the total released up to 48 on his property, with about 20 released on Nature Conservancy land along the Smoky Hill River.

This is the fourth release of the endangered ferrets in Logan County as part of a reintroduction project being coordinated through the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kansas Audubon Society.

Ron Klataske, executive director of Audubon of Kansas, said Haverfield and two other landowners have invested thousands of dollars defending their right to conserve native wildlife on their land.

A century-old state law that allows county commissions to order eradication of prairie dogs and enter private land with poison "violates ever acceptable concept of property rights and modern con-

servation standards," he said.

Over the past two years, Haverfield and his fellow landowners have been in a battle with their neighbors and the Logan County commissioners over the preservation of the prairie dogs that are the key to the reintroduction of the ferrets. Black-footed ferrets were thought to be extinct until a small colony was found in Wyoming about 20 years ago. Since then, the federal agency has been working to reintroduce them across the High Plains.

Haverfield said Henry Maddox of the Fish and Wildlife office in Denver was one of the people who came out to watch the release. He told the ranch owner he was impressed, thanking him for being willing to help save the ferrets.

Haverfield said some of the ferrets this time came from the Phoenix Zoo, where they had been raised. He said this may be the last release, at least for the year. Depending on how successful the ferrets are in reproducing, he added, Logan County may not get any more next year.

He said the wildlife people and Audubon Society will come out in the spring to see if they can spot and tag some of the young ferrets.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has been raising ferrets and finding places to reintroduce them.

Over the past 25 years, the service says, the national goal has been to improve the status of the species from endangered to threatened by establishing 10 free-ranging population, spread over their former range. To meet this goal, the service hopes that 1,500 breeding adult ferrets will be established in the wild by 2010.

Black-footed ferrets are found almost exclusively in prairie dog colonies. Prairie dogs are their principal food, and ferrets live and rear their young in old prairie dog burrows.

Woman takes position in the Free Press office

Tammy Withers has joined the Colby Free Press as office manager.

She moved to Rexford in March from Morris, Okla., where she worked at the Okmulgee Daily Times as office manager.

She and Danny Withers married in June. He is a truck driver, and the couple live northwest of Rexford. Withers, 35, has four children, Samantha Griggs, 19, a student at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa; Katrina Griggs, 14, a ninth grader at Golden Plains

High School; Tiffani Hapke, 12, a seventh grader; and Lucas Hapke, 11, a sixth grader at Golden Plains.



T. Withers

She was born in Okmulgee and attended Oklahoma State University there, earning an associate's degree in computer networking.

She started at the Free Press at the end of October. Her duties include billing and helping customers.

Her grandmother, Erma Hamill, and aunt and uncle, Marsha and Floyd Gaede, live in Colby.

City Council to meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

The Colby City Council will be meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the council chambers.

Business to be covered includes the continuation of a public hearing on the creation of a redevelopment district for the Bosselman Truck Stop Project, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

Also to be considered are lighting for the ball fields at Young Memorial Park and marking temporary notes to finance the lights.

Other items include creation

of limited time handicapped parking stalls in front of the Senior Progress Center, approval of 2009 airport lease rates and amending the municipal code to prohibit truck parking in residential areas, and criteria for use of effluent water on a golf course. A request from Colby Implement to place a sign in on city right-of-way was a late addition.

The council will hear a statement on conditions in violation of the environmental code at 165 E. Cherry Street.

Dog shot for messing in yard

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Coco, a big chocolate Labrador retriever with bundles of energy, doesn't seem to have a mean bone in her body. She greets a stranger with affection at Stan Strange's home west of town.

Her happy demeanor survived being shot last week, allegedly by a neighbor in the rural Country Acre Estates subdivision off of County Road 15, where Strange lives. Strange said the neighbor told him he was unhappy because Coco had done her business in his yard.

Patches of hair were missing all over the dog's body where the veterinarian treated the wounds.

Strange said his daughter told him the dog had followed her down the block when she went

to see a friend, Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn said. As she got back to her yard, she heard a gunshot. She said Coco came running back to the yard limping and bleeding, Baughn said.

Strange said he called the neighbor, Rodney Zimmerman, and the man admitted shooting the dog. He said the man told him he'd shot the dog "because it had pooped in his yard." He said if the man had called him and told him to take better care of his dog, he would have apologized and gone to the house and picked up the mess himself.

"What worries me is that he will be shooting at an animal when kids are walking by," Strange said. "There are a lot of children in this area."

Strange said he asked the man if he would be paying for the vet bills required to nurse the dog

back to health. He said the answer was "heck no."

"It was a \$100 vet bill, but she's still with us and that's the important thing," Strange said.

Strange said he called the Thomas County Sheriff's Department and Deputy Kraig Cersovsky came out to the house and took a report.

Strange apparently is not the only neighbor who has had a run-in with the occupants of the house. Kathy Tubbs said a man living there had threatened to kill her 12-year-old chocolate lab for messing in his yard.

Tubbs said the dog had wandered over to the man's property one day. She said the dog had only been there for about five minutes when she came to get it.

"I apologized to him and told

See "DOG," Page 3



ANDY/Colby Free Press

Coco, a 4-year-old female chocolate Labrador retriever owned by Stan Strange, was shot by one of Strange's neighbors for defecating on his property.

Briefly

Hospital plans open meeting

Citizens Medical Center plans a public meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Colby High School auditorium to discuss current operations, the hospital's strengths and successes and plans for the future. Everyone is invited. For questions, call (785) 475-7511.

Classes selling goodies for trip

The juniors and seniors of Heartland Christian School will hold a bake sale Saturday to raise money for a trip to Washington. They will be selling homemade goodies from 9 a.m. to noon at Wal-mart.

Church youth making dinner

The senior high youth of the Colby United Methodist Church will be serving a traditional Thanksgiving dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday at the

church. Donations will be accepted for mission and ministry work. For information, call the church office at 460-6521.

Pets available for adoption

Colby Animal Clinic has a female cat, three kittens and a adult male black lab ready for adoption. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Red Cross offering classes

The Thomas County chapter of the American Red Cross will be offering a first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation class from 6 to 10 p.m. Tuesday at the Thomas County Office complex. Pre-registration and prepayment are required. The cost

is \$45, which includes all materials. For information, call Sherry White at (785) 462-7161.

Kids plan musical Tuesday

The Colby Grade School second graders will present "Circus, Circus," a musical, at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday in the grade school auditorium. The program is free and everyone is welcome.

Genesis needs food, money

Genesis-Thomas County is looking for nonperishable food and money to buy items to put in Christmas baskets, which will be distributed to those in need of help during the holidays. Donations can be left at Genesis from 10 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays or at LeRoy's Printing, or Sacred Heart Catholic, First Presbyterian, Colby United Methodist or Trinity Lutheran churches. Send checks to Gene-

sis-Thomas County at Box 214, Colby, Kan. 67701. For information, call (785) 460-7930.

City crew trimming trees

The Colby city crew is trimming trees over streets and sidewalks as the weather allows. Trees will be trimmed to 13 feet, 6 inches above streets and trimmed to 8 feet above sidewalks, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. For questions, call the city office at 460-4410.

Outdoor water use expensive

Colby water meters will be read Thursday. All water used between then and Feb. 20 will be used to figure indoor use for next year's sewer bill. This means any outdoor use during the winter, such as lawn watering or washing a car, might drive up your sewer bill for the entire year. For questions, call 460-4400.

