



14 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢

Friday

March 20, 2009

Volume 120, Number 45
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Lions, tigers get new homes

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Three lions and two tigers that have been living near the Free Breakfast Inn, a motel near the north Oakley exit off of Interstate 70 on U.S. 83, will be moving to new homes soon.

Lisa Wathene, a captive-animal specialist for the animal-rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), said the lions will be heading to the Detroit Zoological Society by the end of the month.

The tigers will be moving to the Carnivore Preservation Trust in Pittsboro, N.C., at the end of the month or the beginning of April.

Thomas County Sheriff Rod Taylor said Thursday that the lions should be taken to Detroit on

Monday, March 30. He said the tigers would either be taken to North Carolina that day or a couple days later.

A statement from the Detroit Zoo said the lions have passed the required medical testing to ensure they will not transmit diseases to other animals and are due to arrive at the end of the month.

Once they arrive at the zoo, the lions will be in quarantine for 30 days to ensure they are healthy and acclimating well before joining the others at the lion habitat.

The animal's current owner, Jeff Harsh, has agreed to sign a release for the animals, Taylor said. As a condition of the zoo accepting the animals, Harsh must agree not to acquire exotic animals in the future, Taylor said.

The animals became mini-celebrities in Thomas County after Lady, one of the female lions, at-

tacked Bradley Buchanan, a man who lived and worked at the motel, on Feb. 21. Taylor said the man apparently was intoxicated when he stuck his arm into the lion's cage. In a statement, Harsh said he was loading meat for the cats when he heard a scream at about 7 p.m. that night.

He said after seeing the perimeter around the lion enclosure was open, he ran to the cage. Buchanan had his arm over the door, stuck into the enclosure, and the lion had one arm in her mouth, Harsh said.

"I then began to beat the animal with a steel pipe until the animal released the arm," said Harsh.

He said he drove Buchanan to the Citizen's Medical Center. The man was later flown to the Swedish Medical Center in Denver, said Harsh. He was eventually released.



Jeff Harsh for Colby Free Press
A male lion, living near Oakley, will soon get a new home in Detroit.



Runners predict time in second annual 5K

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Sara Betz placed first in the Colby Recreation Department's Second Annual Spring Fling 5K on Thursday at the Community Building.

Betz predicted she would run the race in 28 minutes and 52 seconds and she ended up running in 28:38.

Nancy Arendt finished second by finishing the race in 38:30. Her predicted time was 37:55. Rachel Budke came in third by

finishing 40 seconds after her predicted time. She predicted she would finish the run in 29:10.

Thirteen runners competed. The runners started behind the Community Building and took Fike Park Road before going left on Sixth Street and north on Lincoln, then heading east on Seventh Street. They then went north on Franklin Avenue before going east on Veterans Memorial. From there they went south on Country Club Drive before going west on Eighth Street. They then went south on Court Avenue and headed back to the community building.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Nicki Caroll (above right) and Mandy Lanning walked towards the finish line at the Colby Recreation Department's second annual Spring Fling 5K on Thursday. Ashley Hill (left) and her dog jogged the last stretch of the run.

Election forums planned

Candidates for the Colby Community College board will appear at a candidate forum at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, at the Frahm Theater in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center on campus.

The forum is being planned by the college Endowment Foundation, Faculty Alliance, Student Senate and the Kansas National Education Association Student Program.

Candidates for the three available seats on the college board are incumbents Cindy Black and current Chairman of the Board of Trustees Kenton K. Krehbiel, Shad Metcalf, Robert M. Renner, Bill Shields and Vernon L. Wranosky.

Wednesday, April 1, candidates for the Colby City Council and Colby School Board have been invited to a forum at the same time and place. That event is being sponsored by the Endowment Foundation, the Colby Rotary Club and the Colby Free Press.

City Council candidates for three available seats are Tim Hutfles, Mark Beringer and David G. Voss. Hutfles and Beringer are both running for re-election.

School board candidates for three at-large positions are J.C. Carter, incumbent Janice Frahm, incumbent Gerald Fulwider, Susan McLemore, incumbent Tracy Rogers and Dale Vap.

'In God We Trust' license plate receives Senate approval

By Cynthia Haynes

Colby Free Press
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

A bill to allow people to buy a license plate with "In God We Trust," on it has passed the state Senate and is awaiting its next hurdle — an OK by the House for minor changes made after its passage there.

Francis Landry and John Brenekamp of Colby used a computer to design the plate in 2007. It pictures the "In God We Trust" motto in front of stalks of wheat on a blue background.

The bill had passed the House earlier in the month and on Thursday it passed the Senate on a 37-3 vote, Senator Ralph Ostmeyer's secretary Judy Crasper said.

There was little opposition, she said, but there were a few minor changes from the House version so the bill has to go back to the House to see if it will concur with the changes.



On Thursday Sen. Ostmeyer spoke in favor of the bill, she said, and written testimony was received from Landry and state Rep. Jim Morrison, who spoke for it in the House, when it was there.

After the bill has been authorized by both houses

of the legislature and signed by the governor, plates will still not be available until the state gathers in \$40,000 to defray manufacturing expenses.

The plates will sell for \$40 each so there will need to be 1,000 people pay for their plate in advance and then wait for the state to get them made, Crasper said.

"That should not be a problem since there are already more than 2,000 on the waiting list," she said.

In fact, she said, Sen. Ostmeyer showed off the waiting list when he spoke for the bill this week.

When testifying against the bill in committee, Carmen Alldritt, director of the Division of Vehicles,

Department of Revenue, said that development costs for the plates can exceed \$13,000 and the cost to produce and deliver specialty license plates can be as high as \$6.51.

As a result, she requested the advance orders and payments before the state went to the time and trouble to make up the specialty plate.

The state's budget problems are causing most of the problems associated with this bill, Crasper noted.

So if and when the House OKs the present form, the governor signs the bill and 1,000 drivers order it, people will have a chance to replace their current Kansas tag, a plain white with a light underprint of the state seal in blue, with the new tag, which can be used until they wear out or are damaged. Owners will still have to pay the yearly registration and sticker costs.

Briefly

Storm spotter class planned

A free storm spotter workshop will be held at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Colby Community Building, offered by the National Weather Service. Anyone interested in learning how to spot tornado-producing weather and severe storms is encouraged to attend.

County, city discuss impound lot

The Thomas County commissioners will meet with Sheriff Rod Taylor and Police Chief Randy Jones to work out an agreement on an impound lot for both the city and county during their meeting at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. The commissioners also plan to see Jeff Harsh of the American Trail Foundation to discuss his application for a homeless shelter, open proposals for cleaning and mowing of the courthouse and office complex, talk to Judge Glenn Schiffner about repairs to a door,

receive a request to ask the state to support the Resource Conservation and Development program and look at a copy a Hamilton County resolution on wind energy.

Hospital offers childbirth class

Citizens Medical Center plans a four-week series of childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m. Thursdays starting April 2. Mothers who expect to deliver before August should attend with their labor support partner. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Campus class to involve police

An "investigative scenario" for students in Linda Davis-Stephens' Homeland Security class at Colby Community College from noon to 3 p.m. Tuesday may involve units from the Colby Police Depart-

ment. Anyone on campus that day should not be alarmed, said Susan McMahan, Thomas County emergency management director. The activity is a "closely monitored training scenario." For questions, call Davis-Stephens at 462-3984.

Lenten talk focuses on soldiers

The Lenten Brown Bag and Bible program at noon Wednesday will be led by the Rev. Carroll Morony talking about "The Soldiers." The program will be in the fellowship hall of the First Presbyterian Church. Bring your own lunch; drinks are provided.

College president to report

The public is invited to the Colby Community College "State of the College Address" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center. President Lynn Kreider will discuss new pro-

grams, existing programs to be expanded, current events and future plans and projects. If time allows, he will answer questions. Everyone is encouraged to attend. For information, call Debbie Schwanke at 460-5411.

Kindergarten enrollment set

Kindergarten pre-enrollment for the coming school year will be from 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday at the Colby Grade School conference room. Bring your child's birth certificate, immunization records and Social Security card. Call the school office at (785) 460-5100 for questions.

