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Colby man charged in theft case

By Kevin Bottrell

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After a six-month investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a grand jury in Wichita has indicted a Colby man for transporting more than \$1 million worth of allegedly stolen farm equipment.

The indictment was handed up Wednesday. Brian Truchon, FBI special agent in charge of the Kansas City office, issued a statement Thursday, saying that Jones, 31, and a Nebraska man, Ryan Hanzlick, 32, had been arrested. The Thomas County Sheriff's Office took Jones into custody in Colby and the Hayes County Sheriff's Office arrested Hanzlick in Hayes Center, Neb.

While the indictment is a formal charge of a serious crime, Truchon noted, the two men's guilt or innocence will be determined at a trial.

James Cross, public affairs officer with the U.S. attorney's office in Wichita said today that Jones appeared before U.S. Magistrate Karen Humphreys on Friday in Wichita and has been released on \$10,000 bail. Hanzlick had not yet appeared in court. Cross said there will be motions and discovery next but U.S. District Court Judge Eric Melgren has not set any further court dates.

"We're very early in the process," Cross said.

Alan Metzger, an assistant U.S.

attorney based in Wichita, will prosecute the case, he said.

Jones and Hanzlick each face 12 counts of knowingly transporting stolen property across state lines, one for each piece of equipment seized near Colby in September last year. The counts carry a maximum sentence of 10 years each. If convicted on all 12, Jones and Hanzlick could get as much as 120 years in prison.

Jones, the son of former Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones, was first arrested Sept. 10 for possession of stolen property. The Thomas County Sheriff's Office had been investigating him after a traffic stop that week. Jones had been pulled over while towing a John Deere tractor on a trailer, and when officers checked the serial number, it turned up as stolen from Colorado.

Deputies obtained a search warrant for Jones' property north of Colby, which turned up more than \$1.3 million worth of allegedly stolen farm equipment. Jones was taken into custody that day, but released two days later on \$50,000 bond. He was arrested again on Sept. 12 on a theft warrant from Keith County, Neb.

The equipment had been reported stolen between November 2005 and April 2008. The indictment lists the stolen equipment by year:

In 2005, a 30-foot gooseneck

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Allegedly stolen farm equipment seized at a property north of Colby in September, including these two John Deere tractors, remained impounded at the Colby city shop today. The equipment was reported stolen from six states over a three-year period.

Extension helps people suffering from brain injuries

By Andy Heintz

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The Kansas State University Northwest Extension Center here is part of a statewide effort to connect victims of traumatic brain injuries to help in their hometowns.

The project, dubbed the TBOptions,

involves 44 cities in the state right now, said Diann Gerstner, Thomas County extension agent in family and consumer science. The project started in January, and it's still in its opening stages, she said, adding that she recently sent information to area businesses explaining the effort.

Gerstner said brain injury victims need more services, and the need is on the rise because of war and changing demograph-

ics. The country is dealing with an aging population and older adults have a greater risk of falls – the leading cause of traumatic brain injury. Gerstner said the age issue is important to northwest Kansas because we have proportionally more elderly citizens than anywhere else in Kansas.

Injured soldiers returning home from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are another

group needing help, she said.

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, operated by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, reported says as many as 22 percent of wounded service members returning home have a traumatic brain injury.

Debra M. Sellers, assistant professor and extension specialist in aging at K-State, said educational programs and ma-

terials for brain injury victims and their families typically have a broad aim, not personalized to meet the needs of survivors, caregivers or communities. She said wounded veterans with traumatic brain injury often return home to family members who lack the training and information needed to help them.

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Dartmouth author to talk here Tuesday

By Vera Sloan

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The book "Babies by Design, The Ethics of Genetic Choice," asks some hard questions on the choices parents face as science unlocks the mysteries of genetic disease and offers a pathway to genetic engineering.

Sue Evans, director of the Regional Prevention Center, reviewed the work for about 50 people Wednesday at the Pioneer Memorial Library.

The author, Dr. Ron Green, will speak at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College. Green, who holds a doctorate in religious ethics, has taught at the Dartmouth College Department of Religion since 1969 and is director of Dartmouth's Ethics Institute. His talk is part of the Max Pickrel Lecture Series.

"Parents are already beginning

to select their children's genetic traits," Evans quoted Green as saying. "The time to be talking about the challenges of genetic engineering is now."

She said questions the book asks include: "If you had to choose one of the following, who should have the power to control the genetically linked characteristics of a child before birth: a) doctors, b) parents, c) no one, or d) only God."

These are moral and ethical matter, she noted.

Evans said she believes the issues should be discussed over coffee, the dinner table and in churches and classrooms. She emphasized that "Babies by Design" is not about "designer" babies as such.

The book is about morals and ethics, and whether or not we should keep repeating dangerous halfway therapies in each generation if we could get rid of disease

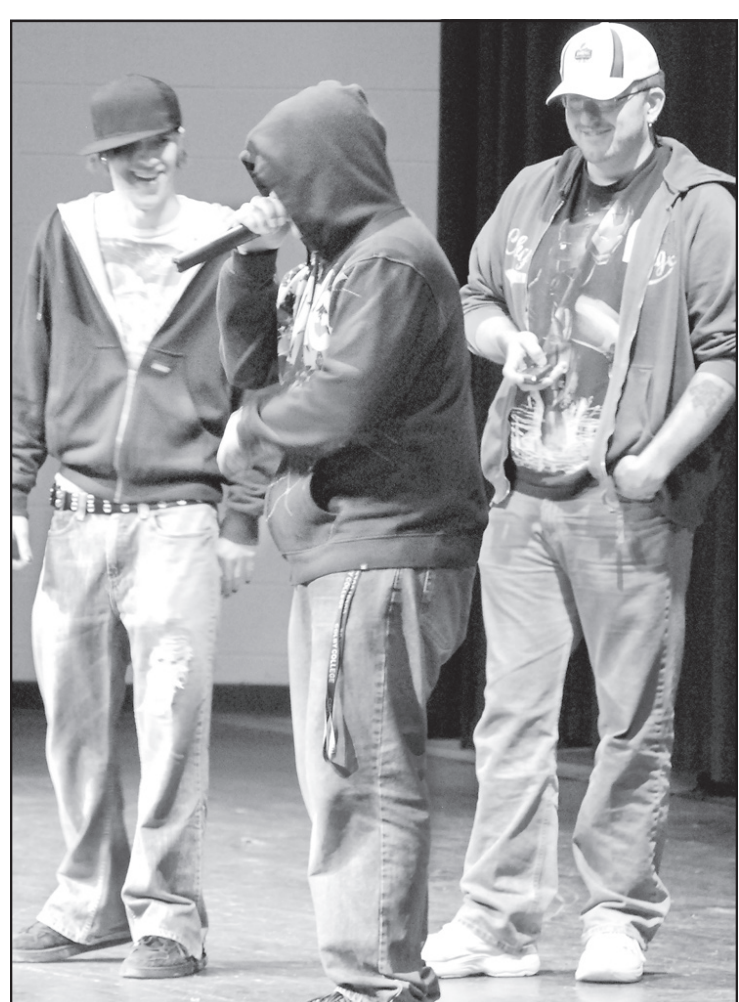
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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

College students show off talents

College students Kate Hockersmith and Matthew Vickery (above) talked romance during their comedy sketch, "What Women Want," at the "Colby Community College's Got Talent" show Thursday. Students Alan Crawford and Tyler Lowe (right) had a "Beatbox Battle" while Paul Vandergriffe timed them. Each act was judged by a five-student panel. The winner was Lendon Hartshorn with, "The King of Pop," and the runner up was Brittany Ritter with a song she wrote and performed.



Briefly

Business After Five on Thursday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce's March "Business After Five" will be at the Citizens Medical Center annex at 5 p.m. Thursday. The annex is the new building just south of the ambulance garage. Enter through either the east or west doors after parking on either the east or west side of the building or in the west employee parking lot. For information, call Holly Whitaker at the Chamber, 460-3401.

First graders to perform musical

The Colby Grade School first grade will perform a music program, "The Unity Tree," at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday at the school auditorium. For information, call teacher Jennifer Koel at 460-5100.

Seniors having potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck din-

ner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. The building has an elevator near the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

'Brown Bag' series continues

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor the Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles program at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent with the theme, "The Prodigal Son." Speaking Wednesday will be Steve Todd, College Drive Assembly of God, Come to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. For information, call 462-6342.

Tornado drill postponed

The state-wide tornado drill originally scheduled

for Tuesday has been rescheduled for 1:30 p.m. Thursday because of the weather. Radio and television stations will air an emergency broadcast tests, said David Floyd, warning coordinator for the National Weather Service office in Goodland. Floyd said towns may sound their tornado sirens and everyone is encouraged to treat the drill as the real thing. For information, call Floyd at (785) 899-6412.

Coalition to meet for lunch

The Thomas County Coalition will meet at noon Thursday at El Dos De Oros restaurant at the Quality Inn. The meeting will cover the recent town hall and the coalition's projects, such as a walking trail, events and the community garden. For information, call Trisha Korthanke at 460-8177.

Low-income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons will

offer a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60 or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

Head Start taking applications

Thomas County Head Start preschool is accepting applications for 3- and 4-year-old children. The program takes applications all year, but children must be 3 by Sept. 1 to start class in the fall. Tuition is free. To apply, call 460-6067.



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