



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Elk statue captures attention



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

This bronze elk drew quite a few looks while it was parked at Colby's Hampton Inn this morning. Steve Parks, who owns the foundry where the statue was cast, stopped in town on the way from Oregon to Kansas City.

By Kevin Bottrell

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Colby isn't known as a natural habitat for elk, even ones made out of bronze.

Steve Parks, owner of Parks Bronze Foundry in Enterprise, Ore., stopped in town to stay the night Sunday while hauling one of his latest works, a life-size bronze elk statue, to Kansas City.

People were pulling off I-70 this morning to take pictures of the elk as it sat in the Hampton Inn parking lot. The statue, a bronze casting of a sculpture by artist Karl Lansing, is on its way to Kansas City to be installed as a 60th birthday present. Parks said he has gotten a lot of strange looks and thumbs up signs from drivers on I-70.

Parks stopped in Loveland, Colo., over the weekend to display other sculptures at the Sculpture in the Park show, one of the largest shows in the country.

Parks does sculpture casting for many different artists. He has his work displayed all over the country, even some in the rotunda at the U.S. Capitol Building. Parks said he grew up in the business and has worked in foundries since he finished school.

"I know every inch of the job," he said.

That knowledge, he said, is why he often transports the castings himself to do the installation, while his other employees stay in Oregon. Parks said the elk is bolted to the trailer in addition to being tied down, so the wind doesn't affect it on the road. However, he said, he does have to clean off the bugs.

Parks said he has several artists that he regularly works with, but this was his first time with Lansing. Lansing is a Canadian sculptor whose work most often depicts North American wildlife such as bighorn sheep and mountain lions.

Parks said another foundry in Enterprise recently closed, and Lansing's mold was ready to go, so he rushed production of the sculpture, getting it done in six weeks, whereas a sculpture this size would normally take about 12 weeks. Some, such as a giant eagle his company is currently casting for a military museum, can take up to two years, he said.

College plans week of fun to start school

New and returning Colby Community College students flooded the campus this weekend, and the college is planning a week-long series of events to welcome them.

Dorms were open for students to move in over the weekend, with orientations for parents and transfer students on Sunday. Sunday evening the college held a family reception and a barbecue at the student union. Students got a discount at Colby Bowl and Fun Center that night.

New student orientation was today. It included campus tours, time to meet with advisors and financial aid specialists, intramural sports and activities at the dorms. The college also worked out a deal with the city to allow free admission to the Colby Aquatic Center for students tonight. Students must have college identification or a class schedule with them to

get free admission.

Classes begin Tuesday, but the events don't stop. The Community Block Party will begin at 11:30 a.m. outside the student union. Business, civic organizations and churches will have booths set up for the students to look at. The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce helps organize the event and provides a welcome bag for each student. There will be a mud volleyball game at 6:30 p.m. that evening behind the softball field.

Other events include a kickball game at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the softball field, a discount movie night at 7 p.m. Thursday at Colby Cinema, and a free Christian band concert at 7 p.m. Friday in the Cultural Arts Center. The college will also be busing some students to the REO Speedwagon concert at the Chase County Fair on Friday.

Gem Lions Club plans hog roast

The Gem Lions Club will hold its annual hog roast from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 24, at the Gem Community Building.

Donations will be accepted toward improving the community. The night's entertainment will be bluegrass, folk and country music. A horseshoe throwing tournament

will also take place.

The Lions Club will hold a drawing for eight processed and packaged hogs. Anyone can enter for \$5 each and each ticket has eight chances to win.

The club will also be collecting any used eye glasses or hearing aids for recycling.

Cell phone store moves to new digs

Colby Hometown Z Wireless — a Verizon dealer — has a new home at 2025 South Franklin Avenue, in the new building across the parking lot from Walmart.

National Sales Director Joshua Oberheide said the move was about convenience for area residents, as the new location is larger, offers more parking, and is more easily accessible.

"We know a lot of Verizon customers want regular access for paying bills, getting new accessories, looking at new phones, or even getting accident protection for their phones," said Oberheide. "Being across from Walmart makes us an easy second stop, and now we have more room for prod-

See "STORE," Page 2

Colby High School students go on musical tour of Europe

By Vera Sloan

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When you're a teenager, love music and get a chance to be a part of a music group on tour in Europe, it's a trip of a life time most kids would love to take.

Chace McNinch, 2010 Colby High School graduate, and Trek Keck, a Colby High junior, took advantage of the opportunity to be a part of one such tour early this summer.

In July they joined Voyager International, a music tour of choirs and bands which included students from schools across the United States. They traveled as members of the Kansas Ambassadors of Music — Keck as a member of the band and McNinch as a member of the choir.

"Kansas has been sending vocal and band groups for the past 40 years," McNinch said, "and has the reputation of having the best musicians, which makes them a favorite on the European cities tour."

Keck said he had been planning for the tour about a year and a half, because he wanted to be prepared when the time came that he could go.

McNinch said his decision to join the group was sort of late in the game so he had to do lots of last minute fund raising.

"Mom made a quilt to help me



Colby High graduate Chace McNinch (above) sings with a choir of Kansas students while on a trip to Europe in July. McNinch and junior Trek Keck (right), seen here posing in front of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, went on a music tour with choir and band students from across the country.

raise funds," he said. "I worked as many hours as I could get at Dillons and did about anything I could find to do to have the money to go. Plus, my parents gave me some financial help as a graduation gift."

After three days of practice in Wichita to learn the music, the musicians — 246 of them from Kansas — headed for London, where they did an impromptu performance at the chapel of the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley Chapel.

Each stop on the tour included

time for site seeing. In London they visited Buckingham Palace, but with the Queen at home, they couldn't get very close. They crossed the River Thames as it winds through the city, and visited the usual tourist sites. McNinch said London was his favorite city on the tour.

The group took a boat from the Dover on the southeastern English coast across the English Channel to France.

"The French countryside is beautiful," McNinch said, "and the concrete bunkers scattered



here and there were a reminder of the reality of World War II along with the white crosses that mark where soldiers fell in the battles there."

McNinch also recalled the remains of concentration camps they saw in Germany.

Both young men agreed that Paris was a let down because it appeared to be so dirty, although they described the Eiffel Tower as amazing. They visited the Louvre, the Palace of Versailles, Notre Dame Cathedral and Napoleon's tomb. Also, after crossing

the River Seine after a downpour, McNinch said a storybook-like rainbow added to the picturesque landscape of the city.

Switzerland was tops on the list of favorite countries for both young men. McNinch said his musical hero, the late Freddy Mercury, lead singer of Queen, a classic rock band, is memorialized in a statue at Lake Geneva, near the ancient Savoy Castle.

McNinch said none of the group wanted to leave Switzerland, especially after a stop at Zermont, at the foot of the Matterhorn, which he described as "awesome."

After crossing the tiny 12- by 14-mile country of Lichtenstein, they came to Austria.

"It was cloudy and rainy on the drive through Austria," McNinch said, "and it really added to the picturesque effect of the mountains and the countryside there. The Rockies just can't begin to hold a candle to the Alps."

"The food was incredible. It was so authentic and I ate bratwurst every day for three days. Man, that was some good food."

The European architecture especially stood out to Keck.

"It was all so neat and so old.

See "EUROPE," Page 2

