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Dave Spalsbury (above), a state fisheries biologist, dumped a netload of catchable-size channel catfish into the larger of two ponds east of town Monday. Before he released the fish (be-

low right), Spalsbury checked the water conditions to be sure they were OK. One of the fish (below left) got used to its new home before swimming into deeper water.

EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Catfish released in ponds east of Colby

By Evan Barnum

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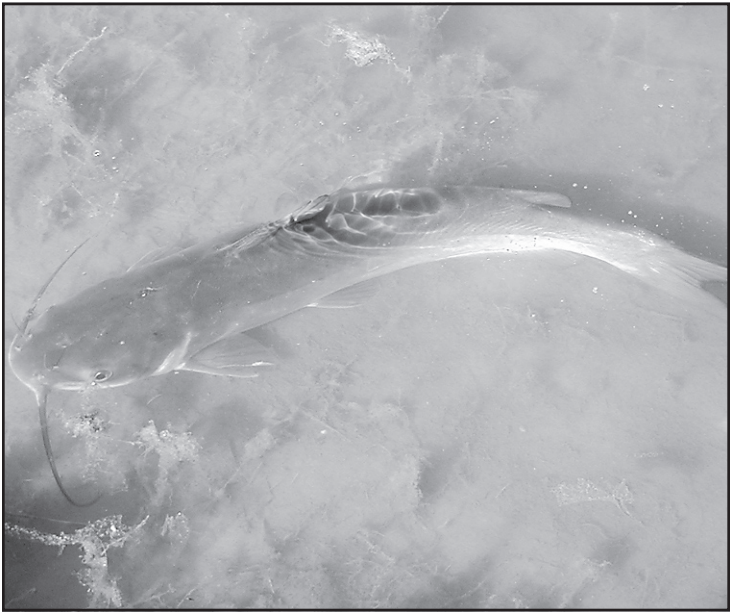
Catfish that were supposed to be released in Colby's Villa High Lake had to make a sudden change of plans Monday after many of their brethren were found dead on the shore of the popular fishing spot.

Dave Spalsbury, a biologist with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, was set to release about 225 keeper-size channel catfish into the lake until he counted about 50 dead bullheads and a few other species on the banks.

"It looks like we have a fish kill," he said, adding that the most likely reason was the heavy rains a couple weeks ago. He said those might have washed excess nutrients into the lake, which along with the warm weather, likely lead to a plankton bloom.

At night, he said, the plankton use up the oxygen in the water instead of generating it and the fish can suffocate. It was not a complete kill, he said, but "I can't, in good conscience, release fish into those kind of conditions."

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Trojans sophomore gets college jersey to wear at Special Olympics here

Colby Community College sophomore Nick Rice will be wearing a college jersey when he competes in the Special Olympics on Saturday, May 5, at Dennen Field in Colby.

Rice plans to graduate from the college with an associate's degree in radio on Saturday, May 12. He will be competing in the softball throw, shot put and in two races in the Special Olympics.

"Nick is a dedicated and hard worker," said Trojans Track Coach James Ortiz. "He has the qualities

we look for in a student athlete. I know he will do great representing the college at the Special Olympics."

In his free time, Rice enjoys horseback riding. Nick and his parents, Betty and Earle, will be moving to California for two months this summer, where he will do an internship with a nationwide radio program, "Joni and Friends."

Nick Rice with the Colby Community College jersey he'll be wearing in the Special Olympics.

DEBBIE SCHWANKE/
Colby Community College



Legislature reconvenes for veto term

By Kevin Bottrell

Goodland Star-News
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Despite all the business still left to do, the area's state legislators, Rep. Rick Billinger and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, described the House and Senate's first day back on Wednesday as a "pretty slow day."

The Legislature recessed March 30 for the traditional midsession break. Both houses reconvened Wednesday for the so-called veto session. Billinger said he expected the first day back to be slow. Time was spent in conference committees, joint committees between the two houses which convene to work out differences between House and Senate versions of a bill.

One of the most high-profile issues still undecided is redistricting, redrawing the legislative boundaries to account for the population

change over the last 10 years.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach held a press conference Monday, reminding the Legislature that they have only until Friday, May 11, to finish so plans for the August primary election can proceed. Failure to finish by then, he said, could cause a "constitutional crisis" in Kansas.

Billinger said even though the Senate has a Republican majority, it is almost evenly split between conservatives and moderates. The two sides can't agree on redistricting. Plus, it's an election year for both houses, something Billinger suspects is holding up the process.

Some Legislators have wanted to draw the maps so challengers would be put in other districts, he said, which amounts gerrymandering — redrawing district lines for political advantage.

See "VETO," Page 2

Call United Way to help relief effort

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management advises people who want to donate to the relief effort for those affected by the massive storm system that hit the state last week to call the United Way's 211 number.

"It seems that as soon as a disaster hits, the calls start coming in from people asking how they can help," said Angee Morgan, deputy director of the division.

"Calling 211 is one of the best and fastest ways to do that."

Calling 211 from any phone will allow people to donate money, goods, service or volunteer to help. Contributions can also be made by going online to give.liveunited.org/page/contribute/contribution1 or at www.ksready.gov and clicking on the "Donate to Kansas disaster relief" link.

Day of Prayer event planned in Colby

People from all area churches are invited to gather for an observance of the 61st annual National Day of Prayer from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. Thursday, May 3, near the Thomas County Courthouse flagpole.

This event, sponsored by the Thomas County Ministerial Association, will include Bible reading, singing of patriotic songs and prayers for America's churches, families, schools, military, businesses, media and government.

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance on the first Thursday of May, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of Congress and signed

into law by President Harry S. Truman.

The event here represents a Judeo-Christian expression of the national observance, based on the understanding that this country was birthed in prayer and in reverence for the God of the Bible.

"We have lost many of our freedoms in America because we have been asleep," Shirley Dobson, chairman, said. "I feel if we do not become involved and support the annual National Day of Prayer, we could end up forfeiting this freedom, too."

Colby pastors encourage everyone to be involved in this event.

For information, call Pastor Tom Peyton at (785) 462-2930.

Candidate's wife political weapon

By Steve Peoples

The Associated Press

BOSTON — She is a 63-year-old grandmother known as "Mamie," a former stay-at-home mother of five boys and the cookie-baking wife of the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. But do not be fooled: Republicans and Democrats alike see Ann Romney as an effective political weapon.

The nation is only just beginning to meet the woman Mitt Romney calls "my sweetheart." And as the general election spotlight burns brighter, the Romney campaign is leveraging Ann Romney's natural ability to connect with voters in a

way her husband cannot. Already, she is becoming a fund-raising powerhouse and chief aggressor in her husband's push to court women.

President Barack Obama's team quietly acknowledges the threat it faces from the Romney, who is sweet, unassuming and, at times, unusually willing to share bathroom humor.

To be sure, people who know her well have long viewed her as a political force.

The Romney campaign insists that Ann Romney's intense schedule hasn't changed much since

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