



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

New bands join festival this summer

By Sam Dieter
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Having grown over the years, this year's Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival next weekend at the Thomas County Fairgrounds will feature a lineup of both familiar bands and newcomers, including two nationally known acts.

Susan McLemore, a co-founder of the festival and member of the committee, described the first festival as a "pickin picnic" of 50 people.

"We've grown from that," she said, into a festival which drew about 1,200 people last year. Festival attendance rose by about 25 percent last year.

McLemore, part of family band the McLemores, said the festival has seen more and more musicians attend over the years. These include her sons Brandon and Blake, who have not only played with their parents since they were 10, but also formed their own band, Driven, about three years ago. Later, guitar player Jake Workman joined the boys' band.

"They were at Winfield (bluegrass festival), it was 3 a.m. and Brandon and Blake were walking around and they found this guitar player, picking by himself, and

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Birds to be tested for entry into fair

By Christina Beringer
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A federal veterinarian and state livestock inspectors will be in Colby on Wednesday to test birds for pollorum-typhoid so they can be entered in the county fair.

Extension Agent Clint Milliman said all birds to be entered in the Thomas County Free Fair must be tested, and this is a chance for people to get the required work done for free.

People who want to enter birds in the fair can come to the Colby Livestock Auction sale barn, 125 S. Country Club Dr., at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday. Otherwise, owners will have to pay to get their birds tested by a veterinarian and then show documents verifying their

entry is disease-free before it can be shown in the fair.

Some birds may have been hatched in a typhoid-free flock, the agent said. These don't require testing, but documentation must show the bird is free of disease.

The tests are required by the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health. All poultry, except waterfowl, must have proof they are pollorum-typhoid clean before they can be shown at any Kansas county or state fair.

Fair rules say that if any bird in an entry tests positive, the entire entry, as well as all other birds from the same premises, will be refused.

Milliman said they offer the

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State says voter ID law does not discriminate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Texas and the Department of Justice are framing their final arguments about Texas' controversial voter ID law around the federal Voting Rights Act.

The Texas lawyers argue they have proved the 2011 state law, which requires voters to show a government-issued photo ID, won't discriminate against minority voters.

Justice Department lawyers say the Texas voter ID law is exactly the type of statute the Voting Rights Act, passed in 1965 to protect minorities' right to vote, is designed to prevent. Kansas has a similar ID law, pushed through last year by Secretary of State Kris Kobach.

Both sides gave closing arguments today after a weeklong trial to determine the fate of the law. The Justice Department blocked the law in March, citing the federal act. Texas, in turn, sued, sending the issue to federal court where a three judge-panel is deciding the case.

Heavy rain fell in a swath of land running north and south through Thomas County, he said. Colby and the surrounding area received about an inch. The rain started near Levant and fell east into Sheridan County. The eastern part of the county got from a quarter to half an inch of rain, Lundquist said. The heaviest rain, between two and three inches, fell in an area around Monument in Logan County.



STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Warren Edmondson and his son, Jake, 7, (above) know how to spend their mornings, surrounded by the quiet beauty of Villa High Park and its pond. Warren said they're at the pond

fishing nearly every day. This morning, though, the little lake was brim full after an overnight rain, and Jake (below) was catching minnows for bait along the shore.

Quiet lake draws man and son to fish

By Steve Haynes
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The pond at Villa High Park was cool and still this morning, its surface a perfect mirror for the trees and grass.

Warren Edmondson and his son, Jake, 7, had their usual seat for the show as fish jumped in the center of the pond and turtles bobbed up now and then. And they even caught some fish.

Warren said Jake had caught a channel catfish "with a head this big," holding his two hands together to make a circle.

He said they come down to the lake about 6 every morning in the summer, then pack up and go home when the sun warms up.

Fishing was a little slow at the moment, but Warren said it had been better early, with all the water and new food in the pond.

"We were catchin' them left and right," he said.

Jake was using a minnow he'd caught with a mesh net along the shore for bait, but his dad put on a bite cut from a hot dog. Sometimes, he said, you catch a snapping turtle with those.

"There's a lot of turtles in here," he added. "Don't know where they come from."

He said they often are the only people fishing in the morning.

"It gets a lot of traffic at lunchtime," said Warren, who works at Deseret Heath and Rehab.

The pond made a pretty picture, still as glass. Just out of earshot, busy people rushed by on busy Range Avenue. Down by the east end of the water, though, you could hardly hear a thing.

"We spend our mornings here," Warren said, "then he goes to the pool and I go to work."



Colby receives heaviest rainfall

By Sam Dieter
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About an inch of rain fell in Colby overnight, starting about 2 a.m. and ending by sunrise. Lightning laced the night sky before the rain fell.

"It looks like Colby was right in the heaviest rainfall," said Jesse Lundquist, a forecaster with the National Weather Service office in Goodland.

Heavy rain fell in a swath of land running north and south through Thomas County, he said. Colby and the surrounding area received about an inch. The rain started near Levant and fell east into Sheridan County. The eastern part of the county got from a quarter to half an inch of rain, Lundquist said. The heaviest rain, between two and three inches, fell in an area around Monument in Logan County.

The rain could help some of

the area's corn crop, which has been hit hard by heat and dry weather.

"It did get a little rain," said Tom Simpson, an agronomist at Colby Ag Center. "It has a bit of a chance."

Simpson said dryland corn which was planted late, closer to May, will be the most likely to survive, especially if humid conditions persist.

But Simpson said that if hot, dry whether like what Colby has

been seeing this month continues, "it will cut the yield back every day."

It doesn't look like rain will continue, however. The weather service predicts that temperatures will rise to almost 100 today and throughout the weekend, with some wind. Nights will be in the high 60s this weekend with some clouds, but no rain in the forecast.

Learning about the Bible



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Maranda Whorton (center) taught Alex Silsbee (left) and Gus Bain about God and scripture Friday at the Colby United Methodist Church's Vacation Bible School. Isaac Bain and Eli Jennings (foreground) sat with Gabrielle Wilson and listened to the lesson as well.

Chinese aviation industrialist behind Hawker Beechcraft bid

By Joe McDonald
The Associated Press

WICHITA (AP) — Known as the "Helicopter King of China," Shenzong Cheng has been quietly building a small empire in aviation manufacturing. Now, the Chinese industrialist is making an ambitious play to acquire Kansas aircraft maker Hawker Beechcraft's civilian aircraft operations.

As details of the \$1.79 billion deal with Beijing-based Superior Aviation Beijing Co. Ltd. begin to emerge in bankruptcy filings, so too does the dizzying maze of companies leading back to Cheng in Beijing. Superior is 60 percent owned by Beijing Superior Aviation Technology Corp. Ltd. — a

private entity entirely owned by Cheng and his wife, Qin Wang, according to a letter outlining the proposal.

Hawker Beechcraft, which filed for bankruptcy protection in May, said it was premature to comment on Cheng's role in the acquisition.

Superior CEO Tim Archer told the Associated Press in a written statement Thursday that Superior Aviation looks forward to a strategic partnership with Hawker Beechcraft's civilian aircraft division. He said Superior intends to strengthen Hawker Beechcraft's position as a global leader by "reigniting" its research and development programs.

"We will aggressively work to

keep jobs in the United States by continued production of the Hawker and Beechcraft product lines and expanding the production, design, and servicing of civilian aircraft at all locations including Kansas, Arkansas and Texas, and many other states across America," Archer wrote.

An assistant for Cheng in China, Qian Chunyuan, said that Cheng was too busy to give interviews.

In a report published this week in a Chinese newspaper, 21st Century Business Herald, Qian was quoted saying Hawker Beechcraft

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