



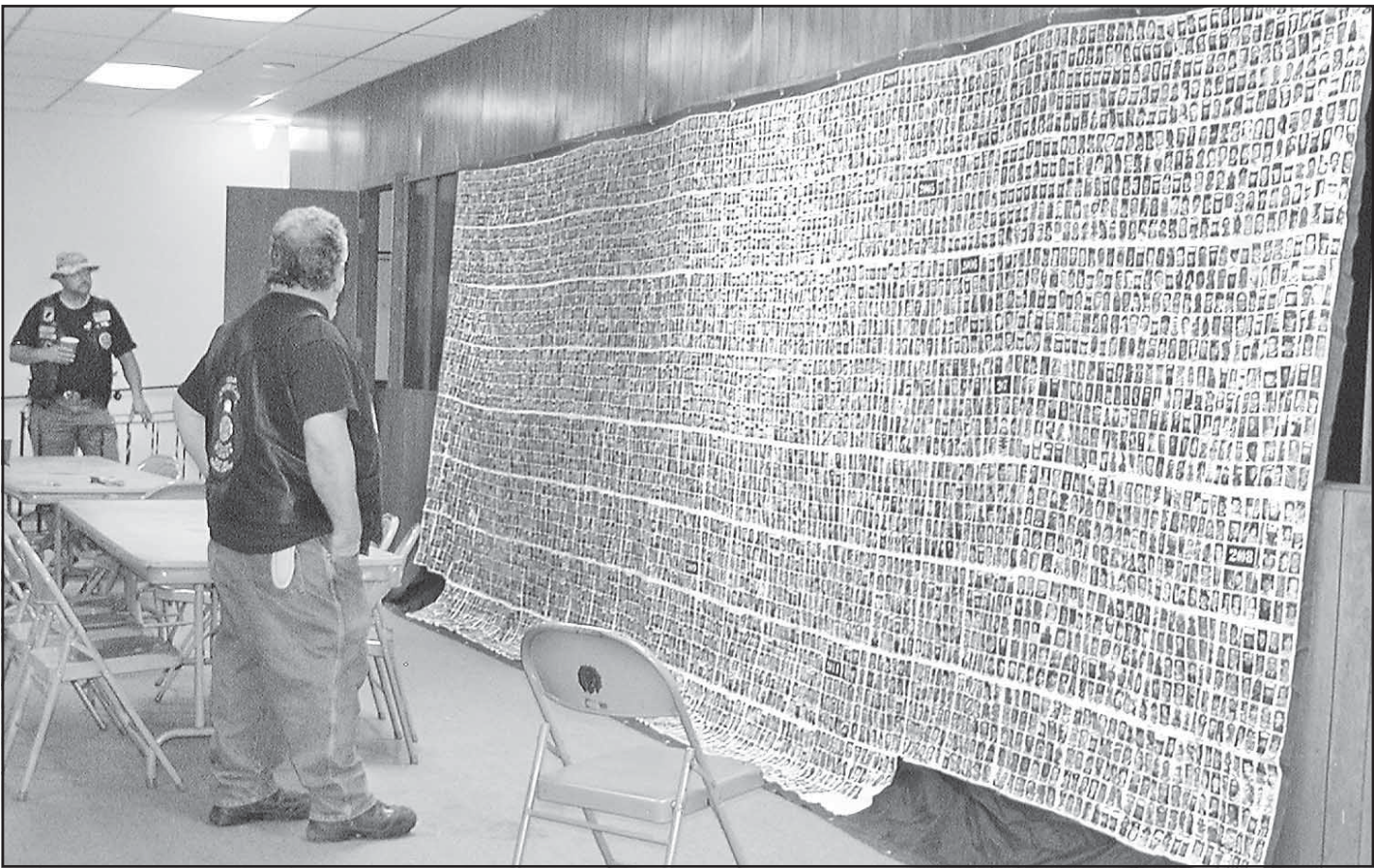
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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press
Clarence Becker (left) and Jim Vap, adjutant of the Colby American Legion Post, looked at a banner they hung in the post hall showing the faces of nearly all service men and women killed in the war on terror (above). Tiger Patrick (below right) is taking the banner across the county with him, carrying it, a fireman's jacket, his personal gear and an American flag in his pack. Legion members looked for names on the banner of area soldiers, including Trenton L. Rhea (below left) and Bryan J. Nichols (bottom left).

Walker acts to remember



By Sam Dieter
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A former soldier brought an unconventional memorial for service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan – each and every one of them – to Colby this weekend.

Tiger Patrick, of Peace Dale, R.I., is walking across the country with a 25-foot-long banner he made to memorialize fallen comrades. It shows the names and faces of almost all the casualties in the U.S. in the war on terror since the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

His trip brought him through Colby for several days, where he hung the banner up at the Colby American Legion before heading east.

"I want everybody to look everybody in the eye that died," Patrick said.

About half a dozen people – mostly Legion members and friends – looked over the banner Friday night, searching for the names of people they knew after Patrick came to the Legion and laid the banner out on floor of the back room. Then the group pinned the banner on the wall, and Patrick told the stories of some of the people on it.

"This illustrates, it brings home what our mission here is," said Post Commander Monte Lewis.

The group quickly found the picture of Trenton Rhea, who drowned May 17 near Kandahar,



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Employee policy to change

By Heather Alwin
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Thomas County will soon have a new policy to ensure it complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act after the commissioners discussed the current policy at their meeting Monday.

Following an audit by the U.S. Department of Labor, County Clerk Shelly Harms and County

Attorney Kevin Berens worked up the new policy to address some of the auditor's concerns.

Since the new policy encourages the county to keep additional records, such as uniform leave request forms, Berens encouraged the commissioners to develop a procedure for leave approvals, appeals and record-keeping.

Berens said the policy could be

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Wreck lands couple in Denver hospital

A Virginia couple's car hit a state-owned tractor in the median of Interstate 70 about six miles east of Goodland on Wednesday, sending the couple and a mower operator to the hospital.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Kevin R. Browne, 58, Blacksburg, Va., was driving a 2007 Chevrolet Tahoe sport-utility eastbound about 9:47 a.m. (Central Time) when it drifted into the median at mile 23.4. It struck a New Holland tractor owned by the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The Tahoe rolled into the median, landing on its roof. When troopers first arrived, they were unresponsive. Rescue crews had to extricate them from the upside-

down vehicle. Tow trucks had to wait as troopers called in a specialist to map the accident scene and an airplane was sent from Salina to photograph the wreckage. Then the sport-utility was righted.

Browne and passenger Linda S. Browne, also 58, were taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center, then airlifted to Denver Health Medical Center, a major trauma center. Reports from the scene indicated that the driver lost his left hand and his wife complained of a possible back injury.

The tractor operator, Jonathan T. McClung, 23 Goodland, also went to Goodland Regional. All three were wearing seat belts, the patrol said.

Bike across state to raise awareness

By Heather Alwin
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Joe Hickert will attempt a bike ride this summer like he's never attempted before, riding north to south across Kansas on a 225-mile, one-day trip.

The ride will raise money for the American Cancer Society, but Hickert says it is more than just a fund raiser.

"People continue to thrive in the face of adversity," he said. "You don't have to have cancer to be a survivor."

Hickert, who is originally from Graham County but is now the Thomas County Emergency Medical Services director, said he has ridden as much as 100 miles in a day and has participated in Bike Across Kansas a few times, but this will be his longest one-day trip so far.

He has not picked a date for his ride because he wants to ensure the weather is good before he sets out, but he is planning for Aug. 17 or 24, both Saturdays. He said the ideal riding weather includes a 20 mph tail wind.

Hickert, who has been biking since 1997, said he loves the quiet he finds when he bikes.

"You can cruise along and your mind starts to wander," he said, adding that he enjoys the area's scenery and the opportunity to watch seasons changing on area farmland.

"It's beautiful country here," he said. "Northwest Kansas is an amazing place."

When he attended the recent Relay for Life event in Colby, Hickert said, he was inspired by the many luminaries lining the



Joe Hickert's bicycle is a familiar companion as he prepares to ride across the state later this summer.

Mastermind invents secret vacuum

By Adam Goldman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON – Confined to the basement of a CIA secret prison in Romania about a decade ago, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the admitted mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, asked his jailers whether he could embark on an unusual project:

Would the spy agency allow Mohammed, who had earned his bachelor's in mechanical engineering, to design a vacuum cleaner?

The agency officer in charge of the prison called CIA headquarters and a manager approved the request, a former senior CIA official told The Associated Press.

Mohammed had endured the most brutal of the CIA's harsh interrogation methods and had confessed to a career of atrocities. But the agency had no long-term plan for him. Someday, he might prove useful. Perhaps, he'd even stand trial one day.

And for that, he'd need to be sane.

"We didn't want them to go nuts," the former senior CIA official said, one of several who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk about the now-shuttered CIA prisons or Mohammed's interest in vacuums.

So, using schematics from the Internet as his guide, Mohammed began re-engineering one of the most mundane of household appliances.

That the CIA may be in possession of the world's most highly classified vacuum cleaner blueprints is but one peculiar, lasting byproduct of the controversial U.S. detention and interrogation program.

By the CIA's own account, the program's methods were "designed to psychologically 'dislocate'" people. But once interrogations stopped, the agency had to try to undo the psychological damage inflicted on the detainees.

The CIA apparently succeeded in keeping Mohammed sane. He appears to be in good health, according to military records.

Others haven't fared as well. Accused al-Qaida terrorists Ramzi Binalshibh and Abd al-Nashiri, who were also locked up in Poland and Romania with Mohammed, have had men-

tal issues. Al-Nashiri suffers from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Binalshibh is being treated for schizophrenia with a slew of anti-psychotic medications.

"Any type of prolonged isolation in custody – much less the settings described in the press – have been known to have a severe impact on the mental condition of the detainee," said Thomas Durkin, Binalshibh's former civilian lawyer. Durkin declined to discuss Binalshibh's case.

Mohammed was subjected to harsh interrogations in Poland. Agency officers and contractors forced him to stay awake for 180 hours, according to a CIA inspector general's report. He also underwent 183 instances of waterboarding, or simulated drowning.

After the CIA prison in Poland was closed in September 2003, Mohammed was moved to Bucharest, to a black site code-named "Britelite." Soon the CIA was trying to find ways to entertain Mohammed as his intelligence value diminished.

The prison had a debriefing room, where Mohammed, who saw himself as a professor, held "office hours," as he told CIA officers.

