



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

SAM DIETER/HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press  
TONY PECELLI

A small group of bicyclists left town on U.S. 24 this morning on their way to Prairie Dog State Park in Norton (above). One member of the group, Henny Drost of Frederickton, New Brunswick, Canada, took a stretch on the grass at Fike Park (top). She was one of 85 who wound their way through Colby (above right) on their way from Los Angeles to New York City, by way of Toronto and Montreal, Canada, camping at Fike Park Wednesday (below).



## Bicyclists here for Sea to Sea

By Heather Alwin  
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Around 80 bicyclists camped in Fike Park Wednesday night, making Colby a stop on their nine-week coast-to-coast trip raising money to end poverty.

The group enjoyed the music of Sappa Strings at Picnic in the Park while they set up their tents on the south end of the park.

The cyclists are mostly members of the Christian Reformed Church, each raising over \$10,000 to donate to charities working to end poverty. Together, they have raised over \$1.6 million dollars so far for charities like World Renew and Partners Worldwide.

Albert Cramer of Medicine Hat, Al-

berta, Canada, said the cyclists began their journey in Los Angeles, but they are from all over Canada and the U.S.

Though this trip is Cramer's first for the Sea to Sea organization, there have been two prior trips, one in 2003 and one in 2008. The 2003 Canada-only ride raised money for church planting while the 2008 trip raised money for poverty elimination programs.

Jake Kuipers of Trenton, Ontario, is the biggest fund raiser of the group, earning over \$34,000 in donations.

Kuipers' cycling was put on hold Monday when he began feeling tired and weak. During a stop in Limon, after biking 75 miles that day, he voiced his concerns to the group's nurse and

See "BICYCLISTS," Page 2



## Commissioners study proposed budget

By Heather Alwin  
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Pencils and rulers in hand, the Thomas County commissioners began wading through the county's budget Monday at a special budget working session following their regular meeting.

At the "shirtsleeve session," as Commissioner Paul Steele called it, the commissioners reviewed every line item in the county's 2014 budget. Budget requests were submitted earlier this year by each county department

and each agency to which the county provides funding.

"You can't do budgets without food in your stomach," joked Linda Sowers as she brought in pizza and dessert for the commissioners to enjoy while working.

The commissioners worked through lunch and well into the afternoon, wrestling with decisions such as how much money to put toward student loan repayments under the Rural Opportunity Zone program. For the program to fully fund all approved applications from Thomas County, the county would have to contribute over \$25,000, up significantly from

the \$1,500 contributed last year. This year, the commissioners decided to spend \$7,500.

Amounts for other programs remained the same, such as the \$1,000 the county contributes to Options, a domestic violence program.

Though the commissioners do their best to accurately estimate revenues for the next fiscal year, it is impossible to be completely accurate, said Steele, because tax revenues vary.

The commissioners designated \$150,000 to the new county administrative complex and jail, but that amount could be reduced, he said, if tax revenues do not come in as estimated.

## Trustees begin work on budget

By Sam Dieter  
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The Colby Community College Board of Trustees prepared to set up a budget for the coming year at its meeting Monday.

The trustees voted to have a special board meeting at 8 a.m. Saturday, July 27 and a budget hearing at 7:30 a.m. Monday, Aug. 12 after hearing a report from financial vice president Alan Waites and discussing the budget for the coming year.

Waites said that a report to the Higher Learning Commission, which had been monitoring the college's finances, was accepted. This keeps the college out of trouble with the commission, but the college is still in a critical position with its cash reserves.

"For now we're out of the deep water but we need to stay on task

and do what we say we're going to do," Waites said.

He added that cash flow in the college budget will be a problem for a long time.

The college spent \$13,792,000 out of its \$13,880,000 last year, and plans to spend \$14,520,000 this year. The college had a cash balance of \$847,000 at the end of June, as opposed to \$973,000 at the same time last year, Waites reported. It owed \$127,000 in its accounts payable at the end of last month, as opposed to \$336,000 at the end of June last year.

Waites said the biggest issue was funding based on student enrollment. He was confident about the budget for coming years, he said, until last winter, when he saw an "abysmal" student retention rate between fall and spring.

For every percent the col-

See "TRUSTEES," Page 2

## Embezzlement charges made

WICHITA (AP) — Three southwest Kansas women staged a bank robbery in 2010 to cover up the embezzlement of more than \$84,000 from their employer, federal prosecutors said in an indictment unsealed Thursday, while a fourth woman joined two of the others in stealing nearly \$25,000 more over the next two-and-a-half years.

Ulysses residents Amber Gutierrez, 32; Hattie Wiginton, 32; Ashley Cravens, 28; and Linda Wise, 59, received a summons to appear in court on several felony charges July 31.

Gutierrez, Wiginton and Cravens each are charged with two counts of embezzlement by a bank employee and one count of bank robbery. Wiginton also is charged with making a false statement to the FBI. Wise is charged with one count of embezzlement.

Gutierrez was head teller at Western State Bank in Ulysses and Wiginton and Cravens were clerks when the three embezzled \$84,200 from the bank by creating false cash deposit slips and putting the money into their personal accounts.

Prosecutors said the scheme ran from sometime in 2008 to July 24, 2010, when the three staged a bank robbery to cover up their crimes. An FBI news release that day said two people entered the bank around 7:30 a.m. as it was opening for business, with one of them wielding a knife and both wearing a black mask.

Wiginton lied when she told FBI agents later that day she didn't know who robbed the bank, there were two robbers and one of them was a man with a Hispanic accent, prosecutors said.

From late 2010 until March 2013, Gutierrez, Cravens and Wise embezzled \$24,450 more from the bank using falsified deposit slips, prosecutors said.

Jim Cross, a spokesman for U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom, said none of the women were in custody and no lawyers had appeared in court on their behalf.

If convicted, the women face a maximum of 30 years in federal prison on each embezzlement count, 25 years and a \$250,000 fine for robbery, and five years and a \$250,000 fine for making a false statement to the FBI.

## Oberlin man killed in Wednesday crash

By Ramell Taylor  
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An 87-year-old Oberlin man was killed there in an accident after being struck by a semi truck on U.S. 36 Wednesday.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported Gleason Dryden was driving a 2004 Toyota Camry, turning west onto U.S. 36 from North Wilson Avenue when Steven Ternes, Wichita, driving a Kehe Food tractor truck, heading west, hit him on the passenger side. Both were wearing their seat belts during the collision.

The Decatur County Emergency Medical Technicians arrived on the scene of the accident around 10:41 a.m. The Oberlin Police

Department and the Decatur Fire Department were on the scene to assist with traffic, and the Kansas Highway Patrol mapped the crash.

Emergency medical technicians performed CPR on Dryden before taking him to Decatur County Hospital. From there, he was to be flown to Good Samaritan in Kearney, Neb., though he died before he could be flown out.

Paul's Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Ternes was not injured nor was there damage to the semi. Dryden's car had severe damage on the passenger side and the front bumper.

