



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Kids busy with fall activity

It was a busy 24 hours in Colby. About 150 Colby Community College students gathered around a bonfire (right) Wednesday night after a homecoming pep rally in the college gym. This morning, Colby Grade School students Collin Geihlsler (below, left) and Colt Moore scooped up leaves at Janice Dowell's house. Kylie Dinning (bottom left) used her hands to scoop the leaves into a bag. Dowell was a kindergarten teacher at the grade school for about five years starting in 1962. Then she started working as a substitute teacher, retiring about five years ago. Jacob Wetter (bottom right, center) and the rest of the grade school fifth graders were there as part of a series of community service projects the teachers planned this year to build character.

SAM DIETER and KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



Rotary honors area veterans

Area military veterans were honored Tuesday at a special luncheon meeting of the Colby Rotary Club. Veterans from World War II through those currently serving were present, including the head of the Colby National Guard unit and the area's Army recruiter.

President Marilyn Unger welcomed the group, saying she was glad to have a chance to honor veterans for their service in the military and continued service after they came home.

Rotary's focus is service before self, she said, and the veterans have exemplified this with their service.

Each Rotarian welcomed his own military guests, giving a brief summary of each veteran's service.

Rotarian Mike Tubbs, who brought four of his veteran friends, also thanked the veterans for their service.

"I want them to know that I appreciate everything they have done for us," he said.

The American Legion Honor Guard opened the service with a posting of the colors.

Students from Sacred Heart Catholic School, dressed in red, white and blue, sang patriotic songs for the attendees.

World War II veteran and Levant farmer Dale Deaver led the group in a robust chorus of "God Bless America" to close the event.

Other local Veterans Day events included a Kiwanis Club luncheon today at the Colby Community College Student Union and a parade scheduled for 4 p.m. Monday from Fike Park to the courthouse for a Veterans Day ceremony.



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press
John McDermott (left), Pat Toth, Darryl Henry and Brian Staats finished their meal at the special luncheon Colby Rotary held for guests Tuesday, while the color guard prepared to start the ceremonies.

Council talks about water tower

By Sam Dieter

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The Colby City Council tabled a decision Tuesday night on letting an Atlanta-based firm with offices in Pittsburg take over maintenance on the city water tower.

City Manager Tyson McGreer said he worked with the firm, Utility Service Group, when he was the city administrator in Grant, Neb. He said they provide a good service by taking over maintenance of a city's water tower. The council tabled the discussion, deciding to get price estimates from

other companies on painting the tower.

The city has about \$300,000 set aside for the paint job, McGreer said, for a project that Utility Service estimated will cost about \$550,000.

A company representative, Jake Dugger, explained the services the firm offers. The company can paint a tower once, which would have to be done about every 10 years, he said, or the firm could take over maintenance and fix anything that goes wrong with its work. The company would not

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Car chase ends with spike strips

A woman led law enforcement officers on a 30-mile car chase Wednesday afternoon after threatening a Kansas Highway Patrol trooper who pulled her over.

Lt. Greg Jirak with the Highway Patrol said the chase began at 1:53 p.m. Wednesday, after a trooper pulled the woman over for a minor traffic violation. His understanding was that the woman had a disagreement with the company she rented her car from.

Colby Police Chief Ron Alexander said the woman called 911 and made a threat to the trooper who had pulled her over. The dispatcher who took the call at the Law Enforcement Center in Colby called a Thomas County Sheriff's deputy who was on the road and told them about the threat, Alexander said. That deputy then called the trooper who made the traffic stop. Alexander would not say specifically what the threat was.

"It's not our case, so I don't feel it's our authority to release that information," he said.

She then led Highway Patrol

troopers and Gove County Sheriff's deputies on a chase along Interstate 70 into Gove County. The deputies put spike strips out on the highway in Gove County, Jirak said. The strips flattened two of the woman's tires, and she stopped the car just after 2:10 p.m. at exit 99 outside Park.

After she stopped, Jirak said the woman got out of her car and attacked the officers. She was tased before she could hurt any of them. An ambulance was called to the scene "just to check her out," he said.

A Highway Patrol plane was ready to take off and help with the pursuit, which Jirak said is standard protocol for car chases. He was not sure if it had left the ground when the chase ended. The planes usually take off from Hays Regional Airport.

Since the case is still being investigated, Jirak would not say if she was under the influence of any alcohol or drugs. He did not know the name, and the Gove County Sheriff's Office was not able to comment in time for this story.

Barn Aid campaign ends with \$80,000

The Prairie Museum of Art and History has concluded its Barn Aid campaign, a year-long effort to raise money for the Cooper Barn, after bringing in more than \$80,000.

The campaign included donations by sponsors, a barn dance and a barbecue.

The \$80,000 is enough to cover remodeling and improvement expenses for the historic barn, now fully equipped for social functions and exhibits, said Ann Miner, the museum's education director.

"The Cooper Barn represents the larger-than-life hopes and dreams that have kept our communities going through the years, often against stiff odds," she said. "In a smaller way, it has served much the same representative purpose for the Prairie Museum and Thomas County Historical Society, since it came here on its epic journey in 1992."

Improvements included bathrooms, new windows and a kitchenette, she said. Financial constraints frustrated the effort at first, particularly the cost of hooking up a sewer line.

Then, a \$20,000 gift from the Helen Frahm estate helped kick start the fund-raising efforts, allowing the museum to connect the barn to the city sewer, run water lines and add electricity.

A donation from Sharon Stramel made a chairlift possible, enabling handicapped visitors to tour the loft.

Larry Dilts, the museum's maintenance man, spent most of the summer working on the barn, building new benches and installing new lights.

"Support from members of the community was overwhelming, in the form of funds, supplies, services and hard work," said museum director Sue Taylor.

"We have heard nothing but good things about the party, and it took every single person who had any kind of hand in this at all to pull it off."

"We hope everyone will feel pride in the barn," said Miner. "It is truly the community's barn, rooted in our past and representing what has been and can be accomplished in the present and future with combined effort."



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