

Man gets help to recover his friend's bus

By SAM DIETER

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A carrier for the Colby Free Press says he got some stolen property back earlier this month with some detective work and help from his friends, the Thomas County sheriff's office and the Oberlin police.

David Rudy, who along with delivering the afternoon paper, works as a clown and goes to churches and helps renovate them, said he had been using an old school bus belonging to his friend Ron Chase to store some tools and other belongings. He said Mr. Chase bought the bus to store things in and has been keeping it in Gem. Both men said the bus must have been stolen from there sometime around May 20, and Mr. Chase said they figured out it was gone May 27.

They reported the bus stolen to the Thomas County Sheriff's Office. Mr. Chase said, adding, "I don't know if they had any leads or not."

A friend of the men suggested they go online to find if anyone was trying to sell a school bus. On June 11, they found a picture of the bus sitting in Oberlin. They said the thieves apparently had decided to sell it before they actually stole it, since one of Mr. Rudy's pickups was visible in the picture.

"They had taken the pictures of the thing over in Gem," Mr. Chase said. "The background was Gem,

Kan."

That afternoon, they went to the sheriff's office, which secured a search warrant with the Oberlin police department for a site in the 100 block of South York Avenue on June 11.

Officers in Oberlin, including Police Chief Troy Haas, were more than helpful in locating the truck, the men said.

"He knew exactly where it was," Mr. Chase said. "He said he had seen it come into Oberlin."

With the warrant secure, he and Mr. Rudy went to Oberlin that night with Sheriff's Deputy Lance Goodman and Undersheriff Marc Finley. They identified the bus in person, along with the belongings inside that Mr. Rudy had kept a careful record of, including appliances, antique dishes, hand-painted portraits of Mr. Rudy, clown props and hundreds of records and compact discs of folk, Christian, country, western, rock and roll and children's music.

Mr. Chase said some of the items had already been taken out of the bus and into the yard where it was parked. He and Mr. Rudy drove it back to Colby about 3:30 the next morning with an escort from the Thomas County sheriff's office, which estimated the bus and its contents to be worth \$4,992 altogether.

"Within 12 hours after we reported it to the sheriff's deputy, we had it back," Mr. Chase said. "I was impressed."

But Mr. Rudy gives the credit to his friends who suggested looking on the Internet, without whom, he said, "We would have probably lost the bus and everything in it."

Chief Haas said the department has two investigations linked to the crime, adding that he could not release any more information because the charges are still pending and no one has been arrested.

Workers needed for fair

The Decatur County Amusement Authority is looking for volunteers to help with the carnival rides and activities during the county fair the first week of August.

Carrie Morford, one of the volunteers for the authority, said the group needs a lot of help. She said volunteers can choose to work from 7 to 9 p.m. or from 9 to 11 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday, Aug. 6 and 8.

Mrs. Morford said the Amusement Authority expects bigger crowds on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 9 and 10, so the shifts will extend from 7 to 9:30 p.m. and from 9:30 p.m. to midnight.

All volunteer positions for Thursday, Aug. 8, have already been filled, she said.

Mrs. Morford said the group has businesses and organizations signed up to work some rides and games, including the carousel, the ferris wheel, the twist over and the big swings. Everything else is open to volunteers, she said.

Some improvements the authority has made to the carnival, Mrs. Morford said, included reupholstering the seats on the ferris wheel. Last year, the authority repaired the seats on the octopus and put swim noodles on the back of the seats to give more back and neck support to the riders, she said.

Mrs. Morford added that the authority is looking for volunteers to help with the set up at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 20. She said they will have three skid loaders to move equipment as well as set up games, replace light bulbs and paint rides.

"We wouldn't be able to put this together," she said, "not without volunteers."

Anyone who would like to volunteer or any organizations who would like to be a part of the carnival can call her at (785) 475-8308 or Cheryl Metcalf at (785) 475-2251.

Seminar set on openness

The Kansas attorney general's office will conduct a free seminar on the Kansas Open Meetings and Open Records laws from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 23, at the Student Union at Colby Community College.

The seminar is designed for elected officials, reporters and the public, providing information on the basics of Kansas' open-government laws, the office said. It is open to the public, but space is limited and registration is first come, first served. Go to www.ag.ks.gov or call (785) 296-2215.

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