



Burglary botched

Intruder didn't count on resident coming home

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

A Florida man, apparently needing money, burglarized a house in Colby on Monday, but the job was botched when the resident surprised the intruder.



Randy Jones

Jerrame Hoenstine, 29, of Bellvue Fla., was arrested in less than three minutes following the quick response by the homeowner who called authorities seconds after the man fled on foot in the 300 block of S. Chick St., officials said.

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones said Hoenstine had been knocking on doors in that vicinity posing as someone in the medical field. "He was wearing a stethoscope and inquiring about a dialysis patient," Jones said, "which we believe was just a way for him to determine if anyone was home."

When Hoenstine arrived at the victim's residence, he gained entry by breaking a window with a brick he found in the yard, Jones said. Around 12:35 p.m., the victim walked into her home and saw the man.

"They both screamed," Jones said. "Hoenstine then ran out of the house on Chick and headed south on Franklin."

According to Jones, even though the intruder was startled by the resident, he still held on to

the items he had attempted to take.

As soon as the call came into the law enforcement office, Jones, who said he was returning from lunch and was in the area, responded along with Colby Police Officer Scott Sitton.

"I headed south on Chick and Sitton went westbound on Franklin and Pine," he said. "It took only two minutes and thirty-five seconds to catch Hoenstine, who was trying to get back to his vehicle parked in front of the victim's house."

Surprises appeared to be the order of the day since Jones, who in his capacity as chief, does not routinely make the initial arrests — but he did Monday.

"He gave no resistance," Jones said after he caught the man as he ran westbound across the

field in the South Park Apartment complex and tried to come back on Chick.

Hoenstine's explanation for stopping in Colby, according to later questioning, was because he was out of gas and money while traveling to Denver. Prior to his arrest, Jones described the man as white, wearing a blue jogging suit and carrying a flowered pillowcase stolen from the home. Items recovered from the pillowcase included the contents of a jewelry box, an iron and a camera.

The vehicle parked in front of the victim's home was a 1994 Eagle Talon with Florida plates.

Following a check on Hoenstine, Jones said he had numerous arrest warrants in North Carolina and officials there want him extradited as

well.

Hoenstine is currently in custody at the Thomas County jail pending charges here of aggravated burglary, criminal damage to property and criminal trespassing.

"If convicted in Thomas County," Jones said, "and depending on his criminal history, Hoenstine could be looking at anything ranging from probation to 49 months or up to 130 months in a state penitentiary."

The case is being forwarded to the county attorney for prosecution, along with extradition pending in North Carolina.

Jones said he commended the victim's quick response by calling the police immediately, adding it was fortunate that no one was injured in the incident.

Spring is here!



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

First graders in Kim Wolf's class learned about nature as part of spring celebrations at the Colby Elementary School today. From left are Devon Schlageck, Aaron Nichols, Bailey Herron and Franny Gottsch.

Property issues

board's focus

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Property issues continue to be the hot topic for the Colby School Board. The board discussed options for expanding the high school campus to include vocational programs originally intended to be moved, as well as make more room for the expanding technology lab program at its meeting Monday night.

Colby contractor Mike Woofter told the board leasing was becoming a viable option for some government agencies. He said both the Goodland School Board and the Federal Farm Services Agency have recently used lease purchase for new construction.

Board members were divided as to the wisdom of such a move. Gary Walker said he could see a cost savings in moving all of the programs, as well as the administration offices, out to the high school campus. Gerry Fulwider opposed the idea, saying, "Debt is debt, the only real advantage is to circumvent a bond issue."

Walker and Bill Miller, another board member, cited the cost of busing kids to their shop classes, currently near Dennen Field on the west side of town, along with the cost of upkeep on the administration building.

"It costs about \$8,000 a year in fuel to bus those kids," Walker said, "without figuring bus drivers' salaries."

Walker also said he believed moving the administrative offices would result in substantial utility savings. According to district figures, the last utility costs for the high school building were \$3,600 while the administration building cost \$4,300 for the same time period.

"You want a waste of tax dollars, there it is," said Walker. Miller said he would like to see the idea pursued to see

if there were possible savings.

Fulwider said he was still opposed to the idea. "The thing I'm concerned about is that the school doesn't have a good relationship (with patrons)." He said a lease program would look like the district was going behind the voters' backs.

Walker and Miller, along with Cathy Gordon and board president Stan Molstad all agreed cost would be the major issue. "If we can do this without costing the taxpayers any extra money, we should," said Walker.

Woofter also told the board that it might be "possible to do things a better way for less money."

He declined to give any specifics about different construction methods, saying only, "foundation is the key of any building" and recommending the board decide what they need before going out for bids.

The board directed Superintendent Kirk Nielsen to continue looking into the costs and possible savings.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from patron Marvena Chance about a proposal to buy the lots adjacent to their property south of the main campus.

Chance said she and others had been denied opportunity to bid when the railroad had initially deeded the property to the school.

- Heard a proposal from Sue Taylor and Linda Davis Stephens about placing the old high school building on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Made plans for Miller and Molstad to hand out diplomas to World War II veterans at the S.P.I.C.E presentation at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday.

- Heard from Nielsen on the search for a new elementary school principal. The committee expects to begin interviewing candidates soon.

Colby College board is looking at ways to increase enrollment

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Tuition and fees for next year were discussed by the Colby Community College board of trustees at their Monday night meeting.

The board was told that at the present time the top 25 percent of graduates from the Thomas County high schools qualify for Thomas County scholarships. The board considered ways to

increase enrollment by rewriting scholarship requirements.

If the tuition were waived for Thomas County graduates, they would still have to pay fees, which vary with different programs, the board was told. Cleona Flipse, board member, questioned if a long-time resident who had not graduated from a Thomas County high school would be eligible for the tuition waiver.

The board took no action, but asked Dean of Fiscal Affairs Kenneth Johnson to gather more information.

In other business:

- The board decided to change the meeting dates in April because of the North Central Accreditation meeting which will be April 2. The board will meet April 9 and 23.

- Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, said he and Gene Robert, head of main-

tenance, had met with architect Glen Strait to discuss enlarging the commons area in Living Center North (the men's dorm), and the wrestling room. Rick Knight, Americans with Disabilities Act advocate, had suggested the wrestling room should be one story on ground floor to allow access.

If the living center is remodeled, Ary said he wants it done during the summer, with a clause in the contract pro-

viding a penalty if it is not done in time for school to resume.

- Bills in the amount of \$765,770.47 were paid, of which \$210,754.89 were student refunds "for loans and student aid which went back into the economy," according to Johnson.

- Ary said \$106,000 had been transferred to the Endowment Association for the Rural Utility Services grant.

- Ary showed plans for a sign adver-

tising Colby Community College to be erected along the Interstate-70, one west and one east of town. It will be 18 by 8 feet.

- The board went into a 15-minute executive session, but took no action upon returning to open session.

The next meeting of the board of trustees will be Monday, April 9. It, and all other board meetings, are open to the public.

Briefly

Weather: Spring-like

Today ushered in the start of spring and the forecast for the Colby area for the balance of the week is very much spring-like. Tonight, cloudy, lows 35-40 and southwest winds 5-15 mph. Wednesday, cloudy, a 20 percent chance for rain, highs in the 60s and north winds 10-20 mph. Wednesday night and Thursday, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for rain, lows near 40 and highs in the middle to upper 50s. A similar weather pattern is anticipated through the weekend. Monday's high in Colby was 59 and the overnight low this morning was 30. There was no precipitation during the past 24 hours to add to the 0.24 inches received so far this month. The records for March 20: 88 in 1907 and -14 in 1965. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Methamphetamine discussion set

The public is invited to an informational meeting on

methamphetamine and how it affects retailers and the farming community in Thomas County. The meeting is planned from 10:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Wednesday, April 4, at City Limits and is sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center and Thomas County Sheriff's Office. There is no charge for the meeting, lunch will be provided, however due to space limitations, anyone wanting to attend must call the prevention center, 462-8152, no later than Monday, March 26. Information packets will be provided, along with a panel discussion to include a recovering addict and also local producer.

City council meeting today

The Colby City Council will hold its regular meeting today at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers, 585 N. Franklin. Items on the agenda include a report from the recreation commission; discussion on a hydraulic power unit; purchase of snow blade for loader; specifications for parks pickup and approval of tower space for Time Warner Cable Company. In addition, the council plans to discuss a roof

and facade at city hall, along with funding for street projects.

Hospital limits patient visits

Due to Citizens Medical Center's high patient census, Chief Executive Officer Michael Boyles said today that people visiting someone will be limited to 15 minutes and only two visitors will be allowed per patient visit. "We want to thank everyone for their understanding and appreciate their cooperation in enabling us to provide the best care for our patients," Boyles said. The limited visiting time will continue until further notice.

Fund-raiser planned today

A silent auction and soup supper fund-raiser is planned for 5 p.m., today, in the Colby High School commons area.

The purpose of the event, said Roni Dietz, one of the organizers, is to help raise money for Sharon Vap, paraprofessional in special services, who has had a recurrence of lymphonic cancer and faces more chemotherapy and a

stem cell transplant. The auction/supper is in conjunction with the winter awards ceremony and will be followed by a worker auction featuring the senior class. Everyone is invited to attend all events that evening.

Advanced ballots now available

Advanced ballots for the Tuesday, April 3 general election are now available, said Tracey Perkins, Thomas County Clerk. Advanced ballots need to be returned on or before 7 p.m., April 3.

Carnival set, volunteers needed

Colby Elementary School's Parent-Teacher Organization is sponsoring a carnival, Sunday, April 22, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Jurassic Journey is the theme this year, said Julie Price, one of the organizers. In addition to bringing back the egg toss, many other games and prizes are planned. People are still needed to help. For information, call Price at 462-3506.

