



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Council introduced to city's new police dog

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

The newest member of the city's police department was introduced to Colby City Council members at Tuesday night's meeting — a 23-month-old German Shepard.

Police Officer Scott Sitton said Capone arrived at Denver International Airport last week from California at a cost of \$5,000 and hopes he will be ready for duty by June.

His current canine partner, Blitz, will continue to be on active duty until the younger replacement can be trained.

Blitz went on duty in March of 1995 and is now 7 years old, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. However, Blitz is beginning to suffer from arthritis and will be retiring. Sitton said he plans to buy Blitz from the city once Capone is ready for work.

Prior to his arrival, Sitton said, children at Colby Grade School and Sacred



Capone is the newest member of the canine unit and will soon be replacing Blitz, who has served since March of 1995.

Heart were asked to vote one one of three names for the German immigrant. The choices were Capone, Axel and Nitro, he said.

"Capone was voted the best name," Sitton said. Although the new dog has gone through obedience school, Sitton explained to the council that he will

need further training in police work.

Donn Yarnall with the Los Angeles Police Department will be in Colby on Saturday to begin assisting Sitton with training Capone.

"Yarnall is world renowned for his training and travels extensively assisting law enforcement agencies with their canine units," Sitton said. "In June, he will be in Australia."

For Sitton, the task of preparing a new canine unit takes a lot of time as well. In addition to the in-house training, he will spend much of his own free time working with Capone.

"Compared to his older counterpart, Capone at 85 lbs., already outweighs Blitz by 10 pounds," Sitton said, "and he's not done growing yet."

In other council business:  
• Four newly elected council members were sworn in and Hal Kistler, who chose not to seek another term in Ward II, was recognized with a plaque

for his seven years of service to the city. The new officials are Herb Sunderman in Ward I; John Bremenkamp in Ward II; Eugene Wieland in Ward III; and Mark Beringer, Ward IV.

• Nominations for a new council president resulted in Wieland and Beringer both being selected to serve. After a vote by the entire council, Wieland was elected president.

• A five-year airport lease with Kenneth Bixenman for commercial aerial spraying service was approved.

• Sue Taylor, director of the Thomas County Historical Society, spoke about the benefits of putting the city hall building, municipal pool and bathhouse on the state/federal historical registry.

"These are still the city's buildings," she explained, "which means they can be sold, torn down or repainted." In addition, once the structures are on the registry, Heritage Trust Funds are

available to help with items ranging from roofing, repointing bricks or repairing windows. The council approved the registry application.

• The city council agreed to vacate the north/south alley near N. Grant. According to Armstrong, there have been ongoing problems in that area and Jim Oliver has agreed to buy the property and put in a new fence. "There are no utilities in the alley," she said, "and I believe vacation would improve the appearances there."

• Approval was given to permit the Prairie Museum of Art and History to hold its petting and feeding display from mid-May to mid-October, 2001.

• The council tabled discussion regarding the preliminary and final plat located east and south of Comfort Inn, along with annexing that area and rezoning it from a single family dwelling district to neighborhood commercial district.

## Weather mod refund

## County answers question referring to district's letter

By **MAXINE NELSON**  
*Colby Free Press*

Thomas County landowners Tim Adrian and Fred Rikoff presented the following question to the county commissioners at their Monday meeting: Why the money which was collected by the Groundwater Management District No. 4 for weather modification was not being refunded as a check to each taxpayer?

The commissioners told the two that if they had to issue tax abatements for all taxpayers, it would take about six steps for each abatement, and involve the county clerk, county appraiser, and county treasurer filling out forms, and would require hiring additional help

for the "thousands" of forms which would need to be filled out.

The commissioners referred to a letter from Groundwater Management District #4 sent to the Thomas, Sheridan, Graham, Wallace, Logan and Gove county clerks and treasurers on Jan. 2 which said, "The board had discussed this issue at their December meeting and has decided that the funds should be returned, with interest, to the same taxpayers (water users) from which they were collected."

The letter continued, "The board has only one way to directly accomplish this. They must: 1) collect the money this year as planned; 2) carry it all forward into next year's budget (not spend

it); and 3) reduce subsequent years water user charges enough to bring in \$181,000 less than the district's anticipated future expenditures.

"The only other way to return these funds would be for the counties to do so through 2000 tax year abatements for every water user in the district. This would return the money in a more timely fashion, but would be extraordinarily time-consuming and expensive for the counties.

"The board decided to set the November, 2001 and 2002 water user charges at levels designed to bring in \$97,508 less money than budgeted for in these two ensuing years."

## Orchestra prepares for season finale

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will be presenting its final concert of the season on Sunday at 3:30 p.m. in Frahm Theatre on the campus of Colby Community College.

"Broadway in the Afternoon" is the theme and will feature hits from the *King and I*, *Grease*, *Annie*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *My Fair Lady* and a Beatles Medley. Vocal soloists will include Amie Kendrick, Richard Groetzinger, John Walls, and Abigail Minge.

In addition, a special appearance

will be third, fourth and fifth grade students from Colby Grade School under the direction of Laura Krejci. These students are Justina Asuncion, Karyn Gillispie, Keesa Wright, Jessica Jones, Brock Wagoner, Leah Sharp (soloist), Tess Brown, J.J. Valdez, Stephen Schmidt, Ashley Kappenman (soloist), Audrey Keller, Chelle Shoemaker, Ashley Schippers (soloist), Kelly Gerstner, Katie Strange (soloist), and Ebony Creighton.

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will be under the baton of Juliann Groom who is beginning her twelfth

year as the director of bands at Colby Community College and her first year as the Colby High School director, with brass and percussion at the Colby Middle School for grades fifth through eighth.

The orchestra was organized twenty years ago by a group of musicians interested in providing a cultural outlet for performers as well as audiences in the area. The orchestra is supported by an organization called Friends of the Orchestra. Admission to the concert is by Friends membership or tickets available at the door.

## Beatlemania returns



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

No, the Beatles haven't returned. Colby High School students recalled the 1960s during a S.P.I.C.E. presentation in the high school auditorium this morning. John, Paul, George and Ringo are, from left to right; Terry Cox, Ryan McLemore, Brett Mariman and Jason Simmering.

## Senator's plan to increase taxes criticized; budget plan in works

TOPEKA (AP) — House leaders prepared their own budget plan after a Senate proposal drew criticism for increasing taxes while cutting planned spending too little for some legislators.

The House proposal, to be released Wednesday, was expected to rely more on spending cuts.

Legislators are trying to reconcile appropriations with expected revenues.

During a Senate Ways and Means Committee meeting Tuesday, Chairman Steve Morris proposed cutting \$32.8 million from spending already approved for the state's 2002 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Only \$10 million would come from general government programs.

Morris, R-Hugoton, would increase

taxes on insurance companies by \$10 million, with the burden falling on out-of-state companies.

He also would step up the collection of delinquent taxes, reach into pots of money that the state doesn't normally use to pay general government expenses and make an accounting change.

Morris' plan would come close to eliminating a \$205 million gap between expected revenues and spending that legislators have already approved for fiscal 2002.

Both the Senate committee and the House Appropriations Committee began working Tuesday on the year's last spending bill, which will reconcile spending and expected revenues for fiscal 2002.

**I don't think any tax increase is going to fly in the House."**

Rep. Doug Mays, R-Topeka

The proposals in both chambers anticipate raising an additional \$45 million in fiscal 2002 by increasing the collection of delinquent taxes.

But opposition to higher taxes remained strong in the House.

"I don't think any tax increase is going to fly in the House," said Rep. Doug Mays, R-Topeka.

Before they recessed April 6, legislators approved a \$9.11 billion budget that included \$4.66 billion from the general fund, which holds most of the state's tax revenue spending.

The increase in general fund spending would be about \$230 million, or 5.2 percent.

However, revenue projections will

permit legislators to increase general fund spending only about \$25 million, or 0.5 percent — unless they find additional sources of revenue.

Morris' plan would raise \$55 million in new revenues for the general fund.

It would save the general fund another \$86.5 million by paying for that amount of spending with other sources of money — highway funds, extra federal nursing home payments and money from the state's settlement with tobacco companies.

Morris' proposal would remove \$4.4 million of a planned \$6.2 million increase in aid to cities and counties from the fiscal 2002 budget.

It also would suspend \$18.4 million in payments for a year into a state employees' death and disability fund.

An accounting change proposed by Morris would save the general fund \$20.3 million.

Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, said the cuts are too small.

"What I hear from folks back home is, 'Hey, there are places you can cut some fat,'" he said.

In other action, the Senate Education Committee identified the key ingredient for its new recipe for public education — \$56 million in tax increases.

Also, Gov. Bill Graves signed a bill making the Emporia home of legendary editor William Allen White a state historic site.

*Editor's note: Highlights can also be found on internet for the Kansas Legislature: <http://www.ink.org/public/legislative/fulltext.cgi>*

## Briefly

### Weather: Continued warm

The Colby region can expect continued warm temperatures through the weekend, advises the National Weather Service. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows 45-50 and west winds 5-15 mph. Thursday, some clouds, some sun, highs near 85 and west winds 5-15 mph. Thursday night, partly cloudy, lows in the 40s. Friday, dry, partly sunny, highs near 80. Saturday and Sunday, dry, partly cloudy, highs near 80 on Saturday and in the 70s on Sunday. Tuesday's high in Colby was 55 and the overnight low this morning was 26, rapidly climbing to 37 by 8 a.m. Precipitation for the month to date remains at 2.19 inches. The records for April 18: 92 in 1948 and 18 in 1953. (*The daily temperatures, precipitation and*

*records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

### Negotiations discussed

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees met in open session with representatives of the Faculty Alliance Tuesday night for discussion of negotiations. No action was taken and no conclusions reached because there was not a quorum of the board, according to Joe Mildrexler, dean of community services.

The next regular meeting of the board will be at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of the administration building. A special meeting to discuss negotiations will be at 5 p.m.

Tuesday, April 24. The meetings are open to the public.

### Aviation safety program near

The Colby Municipal Airport will host an aviation safety program from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 21, in the terminal building.

Some highlights of the program include land survival, how to navigate around the airport surface, convective activity, and surviving your airport. For information, call Mark Ostmeyer, airport manager, at 462-4438.

### Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Free Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m.

Thursday at the 4-H Building to make plans for this year's fair. The meeting is open to the public.

### Hospice banquet is April 28

The "We've Got A Heart" Banquet and Auction to benefit Hospice Services in Thomas County is planned for Saturday, April 28, at the Colby American Legion, 1850 W. 4th St. The event starts at 5:30 p.m., with a social hour sponsored by the Kansas Association of Life Underwriters. Dinner will follow at 6:30 p.m. with a live auction starting at 7 p.m. For information or to purchase tickets, call 462-6710.

