



10 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

Friday
August 24, 2001

50¢

Volume 112, Number 166
Serving Thomas County since 1888

All agree on cause of the fire

By JAY KELLEY
Colby Free Press

Insurance investigators ended up agreeing with the conclusions of the Colby Fire Department and the State Fire Marshal's office after spending Wednesday at the site of last week's fire that destroyed Hutfles Construction and Northwest Kansas Telecommunications in Colby.

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore said, "both investigators agreed with our initial assessment, that (the fire) started in a pickup in the Hutfles building."

McLemore said the pickup was too badly destroyed to determine an ignition source more closely.

Melvin Dale, an investigator for the state, had also looked at the scene and came to the same conclusion.

The fire was reported at 10:23 p.m. on Aug. 16 and, at the height of the fire, five pumpers and one ladder truck were at the scene. McLemore estimated more than one million gallons of water were used in the effort.

Although the two buildings were total losses, the fire was checked before it claimed the building to the east, housing P&D Auto Repair.

McLemore said estimates on the dollar loss were still being totaled, but he hoped to have the figures from insurance company adjusters soon.



Ron Hutfles, owner of Hutfles Construction, sifted through the wreckage today in hopes of salvaging whatever was not destroyed in last week's fire. Assisting Hutfles was one of his employees, Erik Gowland, not pictured.

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Preliminary enrollment announced

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

Preliminary enrollment numbers presented at this week's Colby school board meeting showed some gains and some losses this year, but overall building principals said they were pleased with the count. In the grade school, Terrel S. Harrison, principal, said the number of kindergartners were up, but numbers overall were slightly lower. Robb Ross, principal at the middle school, said he had 13 new students with 11 moving out of the district for a gain of two. Bryan Bullington, principal at the high school, also said he had 20 new students, but transferred out 13.

Bullington added that he had a total of 382 students enrolled at the high school thus far. However, other numbers were unavailable at the meeting.

Jeff Quenzer, activities director/assistant principal at the high school, said 38 percent of the student body is participating in one of the five fall sports.

"There are 51 boys out for high school football, 20 in volleyball, 11 in tennis, 41 in cross country and 13 in girls golf," he said.

In the middle school, Quenzer said there are 40 students out for 7th grade football and 30 out for 8th grade.

The board also recognized Sonja Kough, second grade teacher, for her recent recognition by Colby Wal-Mart as "teacher of the year." Along with the honor, Kough was awarded \$500 to be used to buy supplies, equipment, or other items for the grade school.

Bush to name Kansas State graduate as Joint Chiefs chairman

CRAWFORD, Texas (AP) — Forging ahead with plans to build a missile defense shield, President Bush has tapped a staunch supporter of this administration's priority for his new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Bush was to announce today that he will nominate Air Force Gen. Richard Myers as Joint Chiefs chairman after meeting with Myers and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld for an update on continuing efforts to overhaul

the nation's military.

A native of Kansas City, Mo., Myers is a fighter pilot by training. He entered the Air Force in 1965 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan., where he earned a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering. He also holds a master's degree in business administration from Auburn University.

He has been vice chairman of the

Joint Chiefs since March 2000.

The announcement comes as Bush says he's on the verge of withdrawing the United States from the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty.

"I have no specific timetable in mind," Bush said Thursday.

"We will withdraw from the ABM treaty on our timetable, at a time convenient to America."

Bush's commitment to missile defense was a factor in his deliberations

on a nominee to replace the retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Army Gen. Henry H. Shelton, who steps down Sept. 30.

"We've been looking for someone who will bring the highest standards of excellence to the office, someone who is willing to think differently about the missions of our military.... The fundamental question is how do we conform our defense to the true threats that face America not only now but in the out-

years," Bush said.

Bush was close-mouthed with reporters Thursday when asked whether Myers was indeed his choice for Joint Chiefs chairman. But Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said an Air Force contact told him that Myers had been selected.

"It's far enough along we can call it official," Inhofe said in an interview. He said Myers' strong support of mis-

sile defense enhanced Myers' chances.

"I wanted to be sure we got someone who understands we're under a very great stress today because we have no defense system," Inhofe said.

The selection of Myers, former commander in chief of the U.S. Space Command, would also reflect Bush's desire to emphasize newer technologies in the military, the importance of space and computers in warfare and emerging threats around the globe.

Harrison is new principal at Colby Elementary School

By MAXINE NELSON
Colby Free Press

A new school year brings a new principal for one Colby public school.

Terrel S. Harrison is the new grade school principal, replacing Rebecca Holtwick who resigned last spring to take a position as fourth grade teacher at Paola, allowing her to be closer to her children.

Harrison's husband, Tom, is a branch broker with Homeland Real Estate in Goodland. They have three children. This is Mrs. Harrison's first year as principal.

She served as administrative assistant for the Sharon Springs Public Schools from 1995-2001; K-12 library media specialist from 1994-2001; and 5-8 classroom instructor/K-8 library media specialist from 1989-1994.

Mrs. Harrison received her bachelor's degree in elementary education at St. Mary of the Plains



Terrel Harrison, new principal

College, Dodge City; and her master's degree in education at Fort Hays State University.

Condit talks, gets frosty reception from many

CERES, Calif. (AP) — Rep. Gary Condit's emphatic denial of any involvement in the disappearance of Chandra Levy received an icy reception from constituents and analysts who believe the embattled lawmaker's assertions will do little to revive his political career.

In his first broadcast interview since the intern disappeared, Condit, 53, sidestepped questions that he had a sexual affair with the 24-year-old, saying only that they had a "very close" relationship.

Regents plan to examine costs

TOPEKA (AP) — Higher education officials say they want to know whether the state's public universities are spending too much on administration. One of the goals for the state Board of Regents this year is to create an administrative efficiency index to measure the effectiveness of administration at the state universities.

"All institutions have bureaucratic creep," Regents Chairman Clay Blair told The Lawrence Journal-World. "Having an index will give us a stan-

dard to judge administrative efficiency. Right now, our standards are not well defined."

Blair said legislators, who appropriate \$1.5 billion to higher education, want such information. State revenues are expected to fall far short of demands for increases in spending on education and other state services.

The index is supposed to show whether the costs of running the university are in line with the achievements of the university.

sive, uncooperative."

Throughout the day and into the night Thursday, that conclusion echoed as constituents first received a letter from Condit designed to explain his months-long silence about Levy, who was last seen April 30.

"The letter actually started me thinking this was going to be a disaster," said UCLA political analyst Nancy Snow. "It was just hardhearted; it lacked a certain personality."

In Merced, in the heart of Condit's district, bar owner Mike Maloney

watched Condit on TV with his patrons. He called Condit "overprepared and a bit too slick."

The seven-term Democrat's account of the Levy saga was immediately challenged by both Washington, D.C., police and the intern's family, who balked at Condit's claims he cooperated early and completely with authorities.

"He came forward only after pressure began to build and the facts of his relationship became public," said Billy Martin, the Levy family lawyer.



Thumbs Up!



- ✓ Terrel Harrison — new grade school principal.
- ✓ Ryan Bland, Tim Knox and Ryan Allen — top photographers in the "A Day in the Life of Thomas County" project.
- ✓ Sharon Steele and Committee — on your wellhead protection plan approved by the city council.
- ✓ Colby Community College — the early figures are very promising.
- ✓ Dennis Chandler and D'Ette Scholtz — busy Extension agents.
- ✓ Wes & Rhoda Sherman — on your newest venture.
- ✓ Colby Country Club — on your fourth straight golf classic win at Goodland.

Briefly

Weather: Rain welcomed

Colby received 0.96 inches of rain in Thursday afternoon's severe thunderstorm, moving the month's total to 1.69 inches. The forecast through Monday calls for lows in the middle 50s to around 60 and highs generally in the lower 80s. Winds will be out of the north 5-15 mph with thunderstorms possible each day. Thursday's high in Colby was 83 and the overnight low this morning was a comfortable 55. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 77 degrees. The records for Aug 24: 108 in 1943 and 41 in 1928. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Crop seminar planned

Kansas Farm Bureau will be hosting a Crop Insurance

101 seminar at the Thomas County Office Complex conference room on Wednesday, Aug. 29 at 7:30 p.m. Mark Nelson, commodities director for the Farm Bureau, will be the featured speaker.

He will discuss choices of crop revenue coverage, multi-peril coverage or revenue assurance. Anyone interested is welcome. For more information call Rich Callihan at 462-2459.

Program volunteers needed

If anyone would be interested in service on any of the program development committees for the Thomas County Extension Office, please contact either the Thomas County Extension Office at 462-4582, or Peg Tole at 586-2323 by Sept. 5. These committees help identify issues with the county and help decide on programs for the upcoming Extension year.

Landfill to close for holiday

The Thomas County Landfill will close at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 1. The landfill will be closed on Sunday, Sept. 2, and Monday, Sept. 3. The landfill will resume its regular hours at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 4. For any Landfill information please call Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor at 462-8139.

Checks awaiting winners

Anyone with a premium check for an open class or 4-H entry at the Thomas County Fair needs to pick it up at the Thomas County Extension Office in the county office complex at 350 S. Range, Colby. Fair board secretary Laura Cook said checks will not be mailed. The office phone is 462-4582.

Boot Drive Saturday

Colby firefighters will be manning the annual Muscular Dystrophy Boot Drive on Saturday morning. They will be collecting donations for Jerry's Kids at 4th and Franklin and in both the Dillons and Wal-Mart parking lots. Sonic Drive-in will be giving away a free medium soft drink in exchange for each sticker given to those who donate.

Siren tests set for Colby

Thomas County will be testing tornado sirens at 10 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 27 and Sept. 10, said John Lygeros, emergency management director. "These aren't our usual times and we won't be testing on Labor Day (Sept. 2)," he said. Questions may be directed to Lygeros at 443-7031.

