



COLBY FREE PRESS

He did it

Perfect K-12 attendance achieved

By **DARREL PATTILLO**

Colby Free Press

'Iron Man' Lou Gehrig played in 2,130 straight baseball games. 'Iron Man' Cal Ripken Jr. played in 2,632 straight baseball games. Add 19-year old Phil Schindler of Colby to the 'Iron Man' list.



Phil Schindler

Phil made it to school 2,237 days in a row.

Starting in kindergarten, way back in 1989, and ending this week with his last day of high school, graduating senior Schindler never missed a day of school.

They tried to send him home in the first grade, when he came down with chicken pox.

"I got a call from the nurse," Phil's mother, Anna Buhl said. "They wanted to send him home, but he refused to

leave."

He got sick in the classroom in the sixth grade, but instead of going to the nurse, whom he thought might send him home, he hid out in the bathroom for ten minutes, then returned to class. "I thought it was natural for people to get up every morning and go to school," Schindler said.

Colby High School Principal Bryan Bullington said that Schindler is "a great kid. We're really proud of him."

Phil's tennis coach, Mike Sprenkel, says that Phil's school attendance ethic carried over to tennis.

"I know there were times when Phil was sick, and he would come to practice," Sprenkel said. "He just has never wanted to miss what's going on."

Knowledge of 'The Streak' has been widespread for many years. "One day a bunch of seniors kidnapped me and held me down in the band room, so I'd be late to school," Schindler said. "But (then principal) Mr. Krebs saw what happened and told me that it wouldn't count against me."

"I think it's an incredible accomplishment," Anna says. "He's an exceptional young man who has been a joy to raise."

"We always encouraged him to be involved in things. He definitely deserves recognition for this."

Phil says "I never really thought much about it," but since the fifth grade, he's taken steps to ensure that he wouldn't be late to school.

"Everybody helped out, giving me rides to school," he said.

Phil also keeps five alarm clocks in his room, to make sure he gets up.

"I'm a sound sleeper. I wake up all the time and some family member is turning one of them off."

"Phil is a dedicated young man," Anna says.

So will 'The Streak' extend to college?

"My girlfriend Kelli (a freshman this year at Kansas University) wants me to miss a day right off the bat, so this thing will be over with," Phil says.

"I'm not too sure about that."

Young graduates



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Sacred Heart Elementary School held its kindergarten and pre-kindergarten graduation ceremony Thursday evening. A musical performance by the graduates was part of the evening's festivities. Picture, left to right, are Zach Wallin, Logan Black, Reed Stephens and Andrea Zerr.

A real eye-catcher



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Unbeknownst to many of the administrators at Colby Community College, the statue located at the entrance, which depicts the Capital Dome sculpture, was wearing boxers and a tank top on Thursday afternoon with wording on the shirt that said: "M & M Strikes Again." Debbie Schwanke, public information officer, said this is the first time she is aware of the statue having clothes on. Since the clothing was gone early today, she suspected that maintenance crews had already seen it and restored the statue back to its original condition.

By **TOMA DREILING**

Free Press Publisher

Jim Morrison said he was satisfied. Morrison, Colby Republican representing the 121st House District, offered that response this morning in assessing the Legislature's approval of a \$252 million tax package.

Approval came shortly after 3 a.m. today, on the 106th day of the session, the longest in Kansas history.

Morrison said the House gave its approval to a compromise tax bill on a 63-59 vote — "the absolute minimum needed for passage." The Senate followed up with a 23-15 vote for approval, thus sending the bill to Gov.

Bill Graves.

Associated Press reporter John Hanna said both chambers also approved a compromise budget cleanup bill before legislators went home around 4 a.m. They plan to return May 31 for a brief ceremony marking the end of business for the year.

Morrison said approval of the tax plan means the governor won't need to call a special session, something Gov. Graves said he was prepared to do if the Legislature failed to reach agreement.

Morrison said the package would increase the sales tax to 5.3 percent on July 1 from the current 4.9 percent. It would then be reduced to 5.2 percent

in 2004 and 5.0 percent in 2005.

Morrison said the cigarette tax will climb by 46 cents a pack on July 1 to 70 cents, and on Jan. 1 will increase 9 cents more to 79 cents per pack. Additionally, the fees corporations pay to do business in the state would double.

He said public schools, K-12, came out in pretty good shape with an increase in the base of \$20. "Higher education fared well, too, getting pretty much what they wanted," he said.

Morrison said a tax of up to 15 percent would be imposed on property inherited by nieces, nephews and non-relatives.

Hanna said offsetting those tax in-

creases would be breaks for businesses and a 50 percent increase in income tax credits for the poor, working families. He said that even with the tax package, legislators probably will not eliminate the gap completely in the budget to finance state government starting July 1. They needed \$290 million to balance the \$4.4 billion budget they had earlier sent to the governor.

Morrison said the governor won't veto the package, but thought he will probably use this line item veto power.

Morrison said he would be returning home early next week and would have a more detailed report to share with his constituents.

Colby principal guest at Brewster graduation

By **DARREL PATTILLO**

Colby Free Press

Brewster High School will hold its commencement ceremonies Sunday at 4 p.m. at the school's gymnasium. Following the procession, Class President Tara Fulwider will give the welcome.

There will be a music presentation, and then Superintendent Sheri Edmundson will introduce the speaker, Sacred Heart Elementary School Prin-

cipal Dave Evert.

Katherine Mills, valedictorian, will give her speech, followed by Tara Fulwider, salutatorian.

Tanya Gray will give a slide presentation, and then the Class of 2002 will be presented by Superintendent Edmundson, followed by the presentation of diplomas by school board president Greg Mills.

The Class of 2002 includes Jarrod Robert Baird, Daniel Day Dewey, Tara

Marie Fulwider, Amanda Lee Johnston, Jess William Long, John Fredrick Luckert, Katherine Ann Mills and Christi Marie Somers.

Accomplishments and awards for the graduating seniors include: Baird, letters in basketball and football; Dewey, Kansas State High School Activities Association Citizenship Award, and FFA letter; Fulwider, All-Academic Team/WKLL, Flag Team letter, Reading Assessment Award,

Senior Honor Society, and volleyball letter; Johnston, cheerleading letter; FFA letter, and Senior Honor Society; Long, football letter; John Luckert, letters in basketball and football; Mills, All-Academic Team/WKLL, cheerleading letter, Flag Team, and Kansas High School Activities Association Citizenship Award, and Senior Honor Society; Somers, Academic Team letter, Senior Honor Society, and volleyball letter.

Coalition troops fighting al-Qaida or Taliban

By **TODD PITMAN**

Associated Press Writer

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) — About 1,000 mostly British troops backed by U.S. airplane gunships and helicopters were deployed Friday to battle a "substantial enemy force" in mountainous eastern Afghanistan, commanders said.

Brig. Roger Lane said the troops were sent to eastern Paktia province after an Australian special forces patrol came under fire on Thursday. No coalition casualties were reported, but some enemy fighters were killed, Lane said.

Elements of the British 45 Commando group, "equipped with the full

range of combat power," were sent by air and road to "close with the enemy and destroy them in an area historically used by the Taliban," Lane said.

He said a number of air attacks had already been launched.

U.S. military spokesman Maj. Bryan Hilferty said the operation was taking place north of the eastern city of Khost.

He said American forces had not sent ground forces, but were backing the mission with U.S. Air Force AC-130 gunship airplanes and Chinook and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters.

In Australia, Brig. Mike Hannan said the first group of Australian troops came under heavy machine gunfire in hilly terrain Thursday afternoon.

A second group of soldiers trying to reach them also came under fire about four miles from the initial exchange, he said.

They were able to fight their way through and join up with the help of U.S. air support. Hilferty said AC-130s were used.

The two units were then able to move to safety, Hannan said in Canberra.

No Australians were hurt, but at least one suspected enemy fighter was killed, he said.

Lane said suspected al-Qaida or Taliban fighters had been behind the attack on the patrol.

He declined to say how many enemy fighters there were, but said "it is clear

that it is a substantial enemy force" and coalition forces, backed by a British artillery battery, had identified several enemy positions.

Lane said the fighting was taking place in a mountainous area at an altitude of 8,000 feet, but declined to be more specific. He said the mission could take days.

The U.S.-led coalition has been stepping up its search in eastern Afghanistan for al-Qaida and Taliban holdouts, who they say have dispersed into small groups and blended in with local residents or fled across the border to neighboring Pakistan.

Coalition troops had reported no enemy contact for weeks.

Briefly

Nice rainfall for area

Colby received 0.36 inches of rainfall Thursday night and that brings the month's total to date to 0.55 inches. Chances for more precipitation aren't very favorable over the next couple of days, according to the forecast issued at mid-morning by the National Weather Service. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows around 40, southeast winds 10-15 mph. Saturday, mostly sunny, highs in the upper 60s to around 70, southeast winds 10-20 mph. Saturday night, clear, lows in the middle 40s. Sunday and Monday, partly cloudy, highs in the lower 70s and lows in the upper 40s. Colby's high Thursday was 69 and the overnight low this morning was 42. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging

63 degrees. The records for May 17: 102 in 1927 (hottest May temperature ever for Colby) and 29 in 1976. (*The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

Baccalaureate Sunday

The Colby High School Baccalaureate will be held Sunday at 1:30 p.m. in the Community Building. All are invited to attend this time of worship, praise, and encouragement, officials said. Baccalaureate is being sponsored by the Thomas County Ministerial Alliance. Commencement ceremonies will begin at 3 p.m., also in the Community Building.

College meeting Monday

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building. Agenda items include discussion of a computer server, resurfacing of a parking lot, and use of the Colby High School track facilities. The board will hear of a resignation and approve contracts. The meeting is open to the public.

County has full agenda Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse. Karen Beery and Kermit George of the High Plains Men-

tal Health Center, will make their annual visit at 9 a.m. Ross Rodenbeck and B.J. Melvin will discuss the new road south of the Comfort Inn at 9:45 a.m.; Pat Hartford will come to talk about Wings Upon the Prairie at 10:30 a.m. Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper is on the agenda at 11:15 a.m. to discuss totals for the city and county clean-up week. Steve Shaw will discuss Rural Fire District 4 at 11:30 a.m.

School board meets Monday

The Colby School Board will hold its regular meeting at 7 p.m., Monday, in the administration building to discuss insurance, woods program project, and administration building alternates. All meetings are open to the public.

