



# COLBY FREE PRESS

Two Sections  
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## Pleasing to the ear



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Another large crowd roared its approval Tuesday night in the Colby Community Building as the United States Navy Band, Washington, D.C., presented a varied program under the baton of Commander Ralph M. Gambone (pictured). This was the first

appearance in Colby by the band in 14 years. The Western Plains Arts Association and the *Colby Free Press* joined forces to bring the military musicians to Colby and northwest Kansas during their Midwest tour.

## Chase, spikes, tires spells weird night on I-70

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

*Colby Free Press*

They were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Drivers of four different vehicles moving along I-70 Tuesday night had an unexpected delay and have brand new tires this morning after being inadvertently spiked by law enforcement officers attempting to put an end to a high-speed chase.

Lt. Kevin Winston of the Kansas Highway Patrol said the chase started shortly before 10 p.m. as a trooper attempted to pull over an east-bound speeding van.

It was later discovered that the late-model Chrysler was stolen and being driven by a 16-year-old runaway Arizona girl. Also in the van was an 18 year-old Colorado man identified as Ricardo Alex Gonzalez. The juvenile female tried to escape troopers at speeds over 100 miles per hour, said authorities.

As the chase neared Colby, police officers took action to assist the highway patrol, unaware troopers had already made plans to spike the van at mile-marker 62.

"It was a surprise to us," said Winston. "since we didn't request it."

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones said when officers heard about the chase, the troopers and stolen van were already at the roadside park at mile-marker 48, and they needed to act quickly. Colby officers did not receive the information from the highway patrol about the set spikes further down the road.

"You don't always know why they are running (in a high speed chase)," Jones said.

He said for safety reasons, officers are trained to prevent a chase from coming into Colby if at all possible.

Colby officers on the east side of town set up spikes at exit 54. As the van crossed the spikes, it was immediately disabled.

Jones said road spikes are manufactured with a cable to retract them from the highway after they are used. The van hit the spikes at such a high rate of speed that they were moved and the officer lost sight of the cable in the dark.

There was a lot of traffic which was not slowing down, Jones said, so the officer did not risk trying to find the cable in the roadway. Consequently, a sports utility vehicle, a pick-up, a car and a semi truck ran over the spikes and ruined their tires as well.

Jones said all the tires were replaced with new ones and the money to purchase the tires will come out of the police department and sheriff's office impound lot account.

"It was unfortunate, but we are pleased no one got hurt," he said.

Thomas County Undersheriff Mike Baughn said today the two were arrested and booked into the Thomas County jail and are awaiting the formal filing of charges by Thomas County Attorney Allan Taylor.

The juvenile female was charged with fleeing and eluding an officer, driving in violation of a restriction and reckless driving. Gonzalez was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and conspiracy to commit a crime.

## Court acts in wake of area judge's conviction

TOPEKA (AP) — A judge convicted of intimidating a witness has been prohibited from performing any judicial duties.

Chief Justice Kay McFarland issued an order Monday restricting Judge Tamera Zimbelman of St. Francis to performing administrative assignments as directed by the chief judge of the 15th Judicial District.

Zimbelman had accused Christopher Merklin, then 21, of stealing her purse on Dec. 22, 2001, from

Cheyenne Bowl. The judge said she had "circumstantial evidence" that Merklin, of St. Francis, took the purse.

A police search of Merklin's pickup the day of the alleged theft turned up nothing.

A few days later, Zimbelman's estranged husband, Rell Dean Zimbelman of St. Francis and Scott Allen Baumfalk of Kanorado showed up at a house where Merklin lived with his parents and sister. They allegedly demanded the

purse be returned.

During Zimbelman's trial, Assistant Attorney General Athena E. Andaya said the magistrate judge had acted "unprofessionally" and was not able to separate her personal life from her professional life.

Zimbelman's defense attorney Roger Falk of Wichita told jurors she had acted with "stupid or in appropriate behavior" but that it was not criminal behavior.

Zimbelman could face up to six months in jail and a fine up to

\$1,000. Her sentencing is set for 1 p.m. on April 24. Zimbelman faces disciplinary action by the commission on Judicial Qualifications, an advisory and investigative panel to the Kansas Supreme Court.

Ron Keefover, spokesman for the court system, said Tuesday morning the judge will not be paid for judicial duties but will be paid for administrative duties until the outcome of her review is complete.

He does not know how long the process will take.

## Iraq's elite heading for clash with Marines

By DAVID CRARY

*Associated Press Writer*

A large contingent of Iraq's elite Republican Guard headed south today in a convoy of at least 1,000 vehicles toward U.S. Marines in central Iraq — an area that already has seen the heaviest fighting of the war. In Baghdad, Iraqi officials said two cruise missiles hit a residential

area, killing 12.

Intelligence officers with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said the Republican Guard units were headed from Baghdad on a route that avoids advancing U.S. Army forces and leads them directly to the Marines who have been fighting in recent days around An Nasiriyah.

The advance appeared to signal

that the Republican Guard, Saddam Hussein's best trained and most loyal force, was still prepared to go on the offensive despite several days of allied air strikes and missile attacks on its positions.

In the far south, British forces fought on the fringes of the beleaguered city of Basra, while the first substantial relief convoy reached

Iraq today after weathering a blinding sandstorm.

To the west of where the Republican Guard was advancing today, the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division drew to within 50 miles of Baghdad, and other American forces were expected to join soon in squeezing the capital from several directions.

## College endowment ready for banquet, auction

By PATTY DECKER

*Free Press Editor*

The Colby College Endowment Association's annual banquet and auction is only days away and there's still a few openings for those wanting to attend, said Nick Wells, administrative director of the association.

The doors open at 5 p.m., Satur-

day, at City Limits Convention Center with dinner at 5:30 p.m. and the live auction getting started at 7 p.m., he said.

This year's theme is "Groovin' to the 70s," and many of the items that will be auctioned off are on display at four different locations — His Shop, Colby Photo, Personal Touch and Sears.

Items range from gold coins and trip packages to hand-made quilts and wall hangings, Wells said.

The purpose of the annual event, he said, is to help raise money for scholarships with the goal for next year being able to fund 265 academic and athletic awards.

"We try to target as many students as we can from the northwest Kan-

sas area," Wells said, "and our goal for this year's auction is \$50,000 which would provide part of next year's scholarship budget."

In addition to the people that will be attending the banquet and action on Saturday, Wells wanted to thank the many area merchants and individuals who have donated items for the event.

Wells returned to Colby to accept

the administrative director position in January. Prior to that, he was with the college's agriculture department and coached the livestock judging team for 18 years.

For questions about the endowment association or if interested in making a reservation for Saturday's auction, call Wells at 462-4684.



### Showers possible

Tonight...cloudy and mild. Lows in the upper 30s. Southwest wind 15 mph becoming north late. Thursday...cloudy with a chance of rain showers. Cooler and windy. Highs in the lower 40s. North wind 10 to 20 mph increasing early to 20 to 30 mph with gusts to 40 mph. Chance of precipitation 40 percent.

Thursday night...mostly cloudy with scattered flurries until midnight, then partly cloudy. Windy. Lows in the lower 20s. Friday...partly sunny and breezy. Highs in the 40s.

#### The numbers

Tuesday's high, 61  
Low this morning, 34  
Soil temperature, 52  
Year ago, 59 and 12  
24-hour precipitation, 0.00  
Month's precipitation, 1.38  
Records, 94 in 1907 and +1 in 1965

## Briefly

### Preschool notes enrollment

Puddle Duck Preschool is planning its enrollment for Wednesday, April 2 and Thursday, April 3 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the school, 520 W. 5th St. in Colby. For questions, call Amy Jennings, director at (785) 462-2603 or (785) 462-8388.

### Group sets Colby session

The Kansas Advocacy and Protective Services will be holding a question and answer session on Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. at Wings Upon the Prairie, 485 N. Franklin, Colby. The Kansas Advocacy and Protective Services advocates for the legal and civil rights of individuals with disabilities and is authorized by federal law. For information call 462-7477.

### Fund raiser planned for Colbyite

The First Christian Church at 385 W. 3rd in Colby is sponsoring a fund raiser on Sunday for John Lee of Colby, who

will be traveling to the University of Kansas Medical Center in early April for consultation on his debilitating arthritis. The potato bar will be held at noon at the church.

### Music contest is Saturday

Colby High School students will be participating in the regional music contest for solos and small ensembles in Oberlin on Saturday. The event is for both vocal and instrumental music students.

### Conservation District selling trees

The Thomas County Conservation District has bareroot trees and shrubs available for ordering. There are 17 varieties to choose from, said Laura Davis, of the district office. The trees range in size from 12" to 3 feet, depending on the variety. The deadline to order the trees is Monday and the delivery date is Saturday, April 12. For questions or to place an order, call (785) 462-7482, ext. 3.

### Bluegrass feed just days away

The Colby Bluegrass Committee is sponsoring a pancake and sausage feed on Saturday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Free-will donations will be accepted and all proceeds will go to defray costs of the annual Bluegrass Festival, said Leilani Thomas, one of the coordinators of the event.

### Turkey permits arrive

Spring turkey permits are now available at the Thomas County Clerk's office, 300 N. Court Ave., Colby. For questions, call 462-4500.

### Free seminars for job seekers

Job seekers are invited to attend a free employability seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. each day this week sponsored by Colby Community College in the Adult Education Center in the basement of the H.F. Davis Library.

