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PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Nick Larmer, 9, went the distance during the tractor pedal pull for children at the Thomas County Fair Wednesday night. Larmer pedaled his way to first place having completed a full pull (30 feet) in his age division. He, along with the second place finisher in the 9-year-old category, are now invited to compete at the state fair in Hutchinson on Sept. 7 and, if successful, they could continue on to the nationals in Omaha, Neb. on Sept. 20. Second

place went to Andy Wood and third place to Marcus Colson. The event was open to children 4-12 and all first and second place winners in each of the divisions are now invited to complete at the state fair. Larmer attributed his win to riding his bike a lot. What was also interesting about the three winners in his age group, his father said, was that they are all in the same Webelos Den. Nick is the son Mike and Karen Larmer of Colby.

Late night fair fire only wrinkle in events so far

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

Other than a small fire that caused no damage on Monday night, things are going smoothly at this year's Thomas County fair.

Fire Chief Bob McLemore said today that there was a small fire at Dennis Clifford's food booth located just north of the grandstands.

The fire started after the owner went to one of the local Laundromats to clean and dry some oil-stained clean-up rags, he said. Apparently the rags, which were in a bag, were still warm from the dryers.

After returning to the booth, Clifford laid the bag in the booth and because of the heat generating from the food stand, along with the heat still in the bag, it was determined that spontaneous combustion occurred, McLemore said.

The incident happened at about midnight and was contained immediately with no damage reported, he said.

Other than that, fair officials are saying that things have been going according to plans. Wednesday night's free barbecue saw a good turnout and the rodeo was well at-

tended.

The tractor pedal pull action saw many young people testing their strength by pedaling a trailer the length of the course or 30 feet. As part of the activity, the top two winners will have an opportunity to attend the state and possibly national fairs. Top placers received trophies as well.

Along with the children's version, the adults also took part in the annual tractor pull Wednesday and tonight spectators can view the demolition derby. Car races begin Friday and conclude Saturday for a \$5,000 winner's purse.

Dick Parnell, with the Thomas County Amusement Association, said everyone in their group is pleased with the crowds.

Parnell said the group hopes to add two or three more adult rides for next year. He also noted that the "Zipper," was getting repaired on Wednesday night, but the hope is the ride will be back up and running for the remainder of the fair.

"We (the group) wanted the carnival for the community," he said, adding that seeing everyone enjoying themselves has made the time and effort worthwhile.

Public hearing is Aug. 11

County commissioners approve budget for publication

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners approved their proposed budget for publication at their meeting this morning. The budget will appear in the Friday issue of the *Colby Free Press*.

The public hearing will be held at 9 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 11 at the Thomas County Courthouse.

The budget for 2004 is \$5,590,648, and is up only 1.194 mills over last year.

It also includes \$860,716 under building maintenance but Commis-

sioner Ron Evans said \$700,000 of it is for the new landfill pit construction. He said the money could be spent this year or next but it will not be used for anything else.

Some of the areas in the budget are up slightly, like health insurance but overall, the commissioners are

pleased with it.

"We froze every budget from last year," Evans said. "We worked harder on this budget than any we've ever had."

Commissioner Duane Dawes said all of the departmental budgets stayed almost exactly the

same as last year.

Evans also said the accounting firm of Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball, did a "wonderful job" on the 2002 audit, which the commissioners approved during the meeting.

"It really makes our lives a lot better," Evans said.

Date corrected

The date for Colby Community College public hearing on its proposed budget is 5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 11. The date in Wednesday's paper was in error.



Maybe showers

Tonight...Mostly cloudy. A chance of showers and thunderstorms through early morning. Lows in the lower 60s. South wind 5 to 15 mph becoming northeast late this evening. Chance of rain 30 percent.

Friday...Partly sunny. Highs in the lower 90s. East wind around 15 mph.

Friday night...Partly cloudy. A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms through early morning. Lows in the lower 60s. Chance of rain 20 percent.

Saturday...Partly sunny. Highs near 90.

By the numbers
Wednesday's high, 90
Low this morning, 60
Year ago today, 104 and 63
Records for the date, 108 in 1935 and 44 in 1925
24-hour precipitation to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Month's precipitation, 0.42
Year's precipitation to date, 11.29
2002's precipitation to date, 5.67

Water Usage/Colby
July 30 = 2.445 million gallons

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other figures from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby.

Kansan wanted in missing child hoax

THORNTOWN, Ind. (AP) — It sounded too good to be true: The parents of Shannon Marie Sherrill, missing for 17 years, received calls purportedly from their daughter hoping to reconnect. In the end, it turned out to be nothing more than a cruel hoax.

William Michael Sherrill, the father of the 6-year-old girl who was abducted in 1986 while playing hide-and-seek, collapsed in tears when he learned of the hoax only minutes before it was announced during a news conference Wednesday.

"I wasn't expecting this at all. I thought they were going to bring Shannon in here," Sherrill told reporters.

Police issued an arrest warrant for Donna L. Walker, 35, of Topeka, Kan., who faces a felony charge of identity deception and a misdemeanor charge of false reporting.

Police said Walker called the parents of the missing girl last weekend, claiming to be their daughter.

She may also have contacted news organizations to spread word about the possible break in the case, said state police 1st Sgt. Dave Bursten.

Walker has not been arrested, and police were uncertain of her whereabouts. Neighbors have given varying dates when they last saw her in the red-brick condominium in a middle-class Topeka neighborhood where she lived.

Bursten said Walker had given three different fictitious names to investigators in recent days.

"We don't know what her motivation was and it is impossible for us to guess," Bursten said. "We live in an age today where people like to receive attention."

Bursten told ABC News "Good Morning America" on Thursday that at first, authorities "thought it was very plausible" that the caller could be Shannon.

But over the next few days, the caller began postponing meetings with authorities, who wanted to conduct DNA testing. Authorities

think Walker even called and posed as the caller's husband, offering more excuses on why a meeting had to be postponed, Bursten said.

Both Bursten and William Sherrill said the caller appeared to have researched Shannon's case.

"She had a bunch of real answers," Sherrill told ABC. "She knew stuff that nobody did. I didn't doubt it, not at that time, not at all." He recalled she did ask him what her birthday was, and, learning Shannon was born in August, said, "Good, it's close. Maybe I'll get to spend my real birthday with my real family."

The family had become the center of a media storm when the possible break in the case was reported and appeared emotionally drained when their hopes collapsed.

"It tore me apart," William Sherrill said Thursday. "It's like living 1986 all over again. I wanted it to be her so bad."

"I am very disappointed the case has taken this turn," said Boone.

Briefly

Rexford flea market is Saturday

Rexford PRIDE will be holding its Farmers/Flea Market on Saturday at 8 a.m. at the park. For August only, vendors will receive double the space for the same low price of \$10 (\$5 deposit and \$5 booth space). A lunch stand will be provided. Anyone interested as a vendor or needing more information call Evelyn Johnson at (785) 687-3925.

Nine-Run-Run planned Saturday

The Thomas County Emergency Medical Service is hosting its 8th annual Nine-Run-Run and the second annual Nine-Ride-Ride events on Saturday at Fike Park. This year's event will help raise money for ambulance equipment. Registration will begin at 6 a.m. for bikers and 7 a.m. for the runners. Fire department fund raiser set

Sacred Heart to enroll

Sacred Heart School enrollment will be Tuesday, Aug. 12

from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information call 462-2813.

Mud volleyball tourney planned

The Colby Jaycees are planning a co-ed mud volleyball tournament on Saturday, Aug. 9, beginning with registration at 9 a.m. There will be no pre-registration and the event is open to those 21 years and older. The tournament will be held behind the Jaycee Center located just southwest of the Colby Animal Clinic, 810 E. 4th St. For questions, call 462-7781.

Railroad club open during fair

The Northwest Kansas Model Railroad Club will be open again this year during fair time, said John Donelan, club member. Visitors are welcome to stop by their display from now through Friday, from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Colby School District's administration building, 210 S. Range. Anyone planning to view the model trains are asked to enter through the fire exit on the west end of the building.

Colby schools enrollment set

Enrollment for students returning to Colby Public Schools is Tuesday, Aug. 5, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the commons area of Colby High School. Information packets will be mailed next week and school officials ask that if someone doesn't receive it to call 460-5000. Enrollment for new students is Wednesday, Aug. 6 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the respective buildings.

Extension closes during fair

The Thomas County Extension Office is closed this week for the fair.

School district has new prefix

Colby Public Schools has changed all telephone numbers from the "465" prefix to "460" prefix, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent. The change went into effect earlier this month.

Thomas County Fair SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Today, 8 p.m. - *Demolition Derby*

Friday, 9 a.m. - *4-H Round Robin*

3:00 p.m. - *Buyers's Appreciation BBQ - 4-H Livestock Sale*

7 p.m. - *Thomas Co. Fair Races*

Saturday, 10 a.m. - *Parade. The parade will start south on Franklin to 5th St., east on 5th to Lake Ave., south on Lake to 2nd St., west on 2nd St. to Franklin Ave., south on Franklin to Cedar St., and west on Cedar to the fairgrounds.*

Make "Fair Week — Family Week"

Want full report released

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Sam Brownback asked President Bush Wednesday to release 28 classified pages of a congressional report on the Sept. 11 hijackings, arguing that Americans should not be kept in the dark about other countries that may have aided in the attacks.

Brownback, R-Kan., and Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., wrote

the president asking him to declassify passages from the 850-page report about possible links between Saudi Arabian government officials and the Sept. 11 hijackers.

"The decision to classify this information sends the wrong message to the American people about our nation's anti-terror effort and makes it seem as if there will be no penalty," they wrote.

