



COLBY FREE PRESS

'...and the band played on'



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

The Colby High School marching band practiced at Dennen Field this morning in preparation for tonight's season opening football

game between the Eagles and the Atwood Buffaloes at 7:30 p.m. The Colby Booster Club will host a tailgate party starting at 5:30.

Levant incident should be noted by other landlords

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Landlords might take note on what happened to one landowner in Levant who rented property to someone who was later charged with manufacturing methamphetamineamines.

Although Tom Hillary, the landlord, was not implicated in any wrongdoing, said Doug Murphy, coordinator with the Quad County Task Force, it does present problems to the owners when this type of situation occurs.

In this particular situation, Murphy said, the renter at 115 Fourth St. in Levant was served with a search warrant earlier in the summer. The warrant, in turn, led authorities to discover drug paraphernalia with intent to manufacture a controlled substance.

There was also evidence that methamphetamine manufacturing was taking place.

No major damage was done to the house after the team entered; however, what damage did occur was not the responsibility of the Quad County Task Force, but rather belonged to the renter and ultimately the owner of the property.

Murphy said that not long ago in Salina a landlord ended up spending thousands of dollars to remodel a rental property damaged by methamphetamine production.

"We don't try to tear things up when executing a search warrant," he said. "We try to leave a home as close to the condition it was in before we entered."

In the event that meth production

has been taking place and the damage is severe, Murphy said a HazMat team will do the remediation by taking care of the physical items associated with meth labs and toxic substances.

The problem for landlords is that once the HazMat team completes its work, there is still going to be a smell permeating in the walls that could require tearing out the dry-wall and remodeling.

Landlords need to be careful once a renter has been arrested for meth production or manufacturing other controlled substances, Murphy said.

Most landlords, like Hillary, at first wouldn't be aware of illegal activity until the police become involved. However, once a renter is charged with selling drugs or operating labs, the landlord might think twice about continuing to rent to that person.

The main reason is that if the renter continues these types of illegal activities, the landlord could be put in a position to have his/her property forfeited, Murphy said. The first time it comes to the landlords attention, though, there is an "innocent owner defense," which protects the landlord, but after that first time the property owner is taking greater risks by keeping the renter on the property.

Hillary also wanted to let other landlords know about the risks so that they could be more aware of the laws in place.

For questions, Murphy encourages landlords and others to contact local law enforcement offices.

Kansas' new sales tax law grace period is extended

TOPEKA (AP) — Bowing to continuing criticism from merchants over a new sales tax law, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has extended indefinitely a grace period preventing the Department of Revenue from enforcing the law.

The law, which took effect July 1, changes the state's long-standing practice of having merchants collect the tax at the rate in effect where stores are located. Now, merchants are supposed to collect the tax at the rate in effect where goods are delivered.

The change is designed to put Kansas in a position to collect taxes from Internet and catalogue sales, which some officials believe could amount to more than \$100 million a year.

The state imposes a 5.3 percent sales tax, but cities and counties can add their own levies on top of it, with rates varying from location to location. Some merchants argue the change imposes burdensome record-keeping requirements, because they have to track what they deliver to other communities.

In July, Sebelius and legislative leaders announced a grace period for merchants until Jan. 1, during which they would not face sanctions from the department if they

failed to comply with the law. In a letter to retailers dated Thursday, Sebelius said the period would be extended "until further notice."

"You will be notified when this period will end," Sebelius wrote.

She added: "Small business is the backbone of the Kansas economy. Those businesses are supposed to be the beneficiaries of these new rules. I will not rest until I am satisfied that purpose is fulfilled."

The governor made her letter public the same day a legislative committee had a hearing on the sales tax law.

However, Sebelius' action did not appease some critics, who argue the law should be modified or repealed.

We need to suck it up, admit we made a huge mistake and have a one-day special session to either repeal it or delay implementation," said Karin Brownlee, R-Olathe.

The Department of Revenue estimates that between 25 percent and 30 percent of the state's 100,000 retailers were significantly affected by the change. Agency officials have acknowledged that businesses delivering much of their products — florists, newspapers and furniture stores, for example — are the hardest hit.

Bush under fire from debating candidates

By RON FOURNIER

AP Political Writer

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Struggling to stand out in a crowded field, seven Democratic presidential candidates avoided conflict with front-runner Howard Dean and focused instead on a more familiar target — President Bush.

"This president is a miserable failure," Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri said Thursday night during the first major debate of the 2004 campaign.

Dean, the former Vermont governor who achieved front-runner status after a summer surge in the polls and in fund raising, had expected to be a primary target of his rivals. But he emerged from the 90-minute debate relatively unscathed.

"Dean kept his shine on," said Democratic strategist Donna Brazile, who managed Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign. "Nobody took any of the gloss from the type of message and the type of campaign he's been running."

Joe Lieberman tried.

The Connecticut senator accused Dean of pressing for fair trade standards that would scuttle existing treaties and cost millions of jobs.

"If that ever happened, I'd say the Bush recession would be followed by the Dean depression," Lieberman said.

It was the type of shot Democratic activists had expected since Dean surged this summer to the head of the nine-candidate field. A day before the debate, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson spoke for the entire party when he predicted verbal "fireworks."

But there was more fizzle than fireworks. Democrats targeted Bush, not each other.

Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts accused the president of a "failure of leadership" in the world.

Lieberman said Bush has been a "powerful failure" on the economy.

Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina and Dean accused Bush of refusing to tell the truth about the

conflict in Iraq — both its costs and risks.

Said Republican Party Chairman Ed Gillespie: "The one thing they were unified on was their negativity and their attacks on the president."

The candidates' reluctance to attack each other may have best served Dean, but some Democrats said he lacked his usual passion.

"He was pretty laid back," said Waring Howe Jr., a Democratic activist in South Carolina.

"The man looks like he's running like a front-runner," Brazile said. "That was not the real Dean. He was too cool. Maybe he missed Al Sharpton."

he civil rights activists from New York did not participate in the debate, a victim of bad weather on the East Coast.

Campaigns are unsure how to respond to Dean's rise.

Some strategists fear the former Vermont governor will pull away with the nomination unless he is

confronted. Others worry that aggressive tactics will make their candidates look mean while firing up Dean's backers.

"They all have to be careful" about attacking each other, said Kathleen Sullivan, head of the Democratic Party in New Hampshire. "Their job tonight was to introduce themselves to voters."

Each candidate could declare small victories in pushing forward their themes or massaging their images.

Gephardt, accused of being bland and lacking in passion, waved his hands and spoke in red-faced anger about Bush.

Kerry, his campaign rocked by Dean's rise, has a reputation of being aloof but he drew laughter with two jokes at Bush's expense.

Sen. Bob Graham of Florida, former governor of his battleground state, called his experience a great asset. While others talk about solving problems, "I have done it," he said.

College meeting

Policies, contracts keep trustees busy

The Colby Community College board of trustees faced a full plate when they meet earlier this week at the college for their first regular meeting of the month.

A packet with proposed changes to the college's Policies and Procedures Manual was distributed to board members. Program Assistant Danielle Freeman and Dean of Instruction Gracemary Melvin briefly explained that the manual had not been updated for several years.

Revisions were needed to show current information, to make it comparable to the master agreement and to add changes in policies. Board members were asked to review the information prior to the next meeting on Sept. 15.

Employment contracts were approved for Connie Davis (paraprofessional in the Comprehensive Learning Center), Chuck Heinrich (maintenance), Shelly Rodenbeck (outreach workshop), Ginger Rupp (Telenet 2) and Linda Davis-Stephens (EduKan).

Two physical therapist assistant agreements and the annual Northcentral Technical College agreement were approved.

Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, reported that the dental hygiene agreement between Colby College and Northcentral Technical College in Wausau, Wis. has been very satisfactory for both schools.

Rates on the annual insurance coverage from F & M Insurance

Store were presented and explained by Ary and Dean of Fiscal Affairs Ken Johnson. The insurance premium of \$64,488 increased approximately 10 percent from the previous year.

Board members approved the purchase of a replacement Grasshopper 721D2 mower for \$8,732.75 from Lang Diesel, Inc.

Ary distributed a handout with possible topics for discussion at the Sept. 29 board retreat. Board members will host a dinner for new faculty members on that evening prior to the retreat.

Their next meeting is Monday, Sept. 15, at 5 p.m. in the Board room. All meetings are open to the public.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. on Monday at the Thomas County Courthouse. Items on the agenda include consultation selection on the "South of Levant Project," Brent Ginther on a Menlo city issue, Kathy Ryan, R.N., of the County Health Department with her report, and the monthly landfill report.

Center enrollment underway

The Thomas County Learning Center, 305 N. Franklin in Colby, is now taking enrollment applications. One function of the center is to give students a chance to get their high school diploma. For those wanting to enroll or for eligibility information, call 465-7900.

Free car wash Saturday

The Colby High School band will hold a free car wash on

Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Luck's Car Wash (north of J-J Oil). The event is sponsored by J-J Oil and the Colby Free Press.

Local Democrats to huddle

Pat Murray, state executive director and Joey Bahr, field director of the Kansas Democratic Party will be in Colby to discuss plans for the 2004 election on Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 107 in the Student Union at Colby Community College. All Democrats are encouraged to attend this important meeting.

Art show planned at celebration

The High Plains Art Club will have its first art show during "Celebration on the High Plains," at Southwind Plaza from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Singles dance tonight

The Colby Singles Club is sponsoring a dance from 8 p.m.

to midnight on Friday, with Swingin' Country of Imperial, Neb., providing the entertainment. The dance is open to all single people and alumni. For questions and other details, call Don Birzer at 462-2127.

Final market of the summer

The Rexford PRIDE will be holding its final Farmers/Flea Market of the summer on Saturday starting at 8 a.m. Vendor space will be \$20 (\$5 refundable deposit and \$5 booth space). A lunch will be provided. The event will be held at the park. Those interested in participating as a vendor or needing additional information can contact Evelyn Johnson at (785) 687-3925.

Job Service open during noon hour

The Colby Work Force office (formerly known as Job Service) at 485 N. Chick is staying open during the lunch hour. Linda Groff, local supervisor, said the change went into effect this week and is expected to be a permanent situation.



Weather Watch

Tonight...mostly clear, lows in the mid 50s, southwest winds 10-15 mph. **Saturday...**mostly sunny and warm, highs near 90, south winds 5-15 mph. **Saturday night...**thunderstorms possible, lows in the upper 50s, chance for thunderstorms is 20 percent. **Sunday...**partly sunny, highs in the mid 80s. **Sunday night...**partly cloudy, lows in the mid 50s. **Monday...**partly cloudy, highs in the mid 80s.

By the numbers

Thursday's high, 86
Low this morning, 58
Records for the date, 108 in 1931 (warmest September temperature on record in Colby) and 40 in 1962
Year ago today, 93 and 60
24-hour precipitation to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Month's precipitation, 0.00
Year's precipitation to date, 14.00
2002's precipitation to date, 8.78

Water Usage/Colby

Sept. 4=2.778million gallons
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other figures are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby and the Colby Public Works Department..

