



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Flipping . . . eating



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Sacred Heart student Zach Wallin prepared to flip a pancake during Sacred Heart School's pancake races Tuesday. Before the races, second graders Sami Sicard and Morgan Vap enjoyed pancakes in class. Kindergarten, first and second grade students ate pancakes in celebration of Shrove Tuesday and also voted for their favorite pancake topping. The activities were part of learning about the annual pancake races held in Liberal each year. All of the students received a badge for participating in the races, which were held on the school's playground. They had to flip the pancake twice without dropping it, once before they ran and once on the way back.

## Fugitive wants to return to California

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

After spending almost three weeks in the Thomas County jail, a 36-year-old California man who refused extradition to California on an attempted murder charge is now going back.

Edward Ortiz, Jr. told authorities here he would sign the waiver of extradition and return to California to face charges for allegedly shooting a victim following a verbal argument on Dec. 31, 2003. The victim in the shooting was shot in the

chest. Ortiz was arrested in Colby after police became suspicious of a woman, Colleen Crispin, who went to the law enforcement center asking for traveler's assistance on Jan. 30, said Gary Shull, Colby police investigator.

Crispin, at that time, told Colby police, she and her two children were staying at the Country Club Drive Motel.

As a matter of routine, the police then checked the nationwide database and discovered that Ortiz was wanted by the Paradise Police De-

partment, located in Butte County, on an "evading police" warrant and that Crispin was associated with Ortiz. After getting a search warrant for the motel and pickup truck Ortiz was traveling in, Colby police found some items but said no handgun was found at the motel here.

"Riverside County California Sheriff's Office in Riverside," Shull said, entered Ortiz into the Nationwide Wanted Person computerized files on Wednesday, Feb. 4.

"He was wanted for evading police," he said. From the computer

system information, the Colby Police Department was automatically notified that Ortiz was wanted by Riverside County.

A complaint and arrest warrant was issued in Thomas County District Court charging Ortiz with being a fugitive from justice and a \$1 million bond was set. Ortiz changed his mind last Friday, Feb. 20, and signed the waiver of extradition and now the district court has allowed law enforcement authorities in Paradise, Calif. 10 days to make arrangements for his return, he said.

## Legislative bill allowing quick school finance appeal goes to governor

TOPEKA (AP) — Legislation intended to speed Kansas Supreme Court review of a judge's ruling on school finance is headed to the governor, and Attorney General Phill Kline is seeking the plaintiffs' support for the move.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has said she would sign the bill, which

cleared the House on an 86-37 vote Tuesday and won unanimous Senate passage last week.

The measure allows the state to appeal a preliminary order by Shawnee County District Judge Terry Bullock holding Kansas' school finance formula unconstitutional.

Appeals can normally be filed only when an order becomes final or a district agrees to release a case early, which Bullock has declined to do. Bullock's preliminary order, issued in December, gave the state until July 1 to repair the law.

Ruling in a 1999 lawsuit filed by parents and administrators in Salina

and Dodge City, Bullock said state aid for school districts is distributed unfairly and is inadequate to meet the needs of all children. He suggested that the roughly \$2.6 billion in annual state aid should be raised by as much as \$1 billion.

Many legislators want the Supreme Court to hear and rule on the

case before they decide how and whether to revise the formula, which was adopted in 1992 after Bullock declared the previous finance law unconstitutional.

Kline wrote to the plaintiffs' lawyers and legislative leaders on Monday saying he was prepared to appeal Bullock's preliminary ruling as

soon as the legislation was signed into law. "The Legislature and the governor are currently struggling to bring forward state policy in the shaping of the state general fund budget," Kline wrote. "Their job is already difficult, and the uncertainty brought about by this litigation complicates that process."



### Rain mentioned

**Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. South winds around 10 mph. **Thursday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. South winds 10 to 20 mph. **Thursday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s. South winds 15 to 20 mph. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. South winds 15 to 20 mph. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s. **Saturday...**Mostly cloudy. A slight chance of rain in the afternoon. Breezy. Highs in the mid 50s. Chance of rain 30 percent.

**The numbers**  
Tuesday's high, 38  
Low this morning, 15  
Records for Feb. 25, 77 in 1917 and -20 in 1960  
Year ago today, 15 and -4  
February 2004 precipitation, 0.27 inches  
February 2004 snowfall, 6 inches  
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00

**The sources:**  
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby.

## Fresh from more wins, Kerry challenges Bush on issues

CLEVELAND (AP) — Fresh from three more easy victories in the Democratic presidential race, John Kerry looked to a fight with President Bush over jobs lost to foreign countries.

Kerry defeated Sen. John Edwards by large margins in Utah and Idaho, and also won in Hawaii, where Edwards ran third. That gave Kerry 18 wins in 20 contests.

The two leading candidates bypassed the three states to focus on the huge delegate prizes at stake

when 10 states vote next week on Super Tuesday.

Two weeks after the president's chief economic adviser described the shipping of American jobs abroad as "just a new way of doing international trade," Kerry was announcing his plan to address that situation.

Although Kerry frequently tells audiences that no president can stop companies from leaving the country, the Massachusetts senator said he will require companies that ship

jobs offshore to disclose their plans to the government.

"Companies will no longer be able to surprise their workers with a pink slip instead of a paycheck — they will be required to give workers three months notice if their jobs are being exported offshore," Kerry said in a speech prepared for delivery Wednesday in Toledo, where he also was picking up an endorsement from former astronaut and retired Sen. John Glenn.

Kerry said that during the three

years Bush has been in office, 270,000 workers have lost their jobs in Ohio, site of one of the 10 nominating contests on Super Tuesday. He is looking for a decisive victory that day to bring an end to the campaign of his last remaining major rival, Edwards.

Kerry was spending Wednesday in Ohio and Minnesota, and was to launch a new campaign ad in the Buckeye State in which he describes Bush's economic policy as "an astonishing failure" and prom-

ises to protect U.S. jobs. The commercial, which also was to run in upstate New York, was meant to soften criticism of Kerry's vote for a free-trade pact as he campaigns in states that have been hit hard by job losses.

Counting returns from Tuesday's contests, Kerry's lead in the Democratic delegate chase swelled to 663 in the Associated Press tally, with Edwards at 199, Al Sharpton 16 and Kucinich eight. Nomination requires 2,162 delegates.

## Briefly

### Volunteers needed for tournament

Volunteers are needed for the Colby High School Eagle forensics team tournament, Thursday, March 25, starting at 2 p.m. All competitions will be held at the high school and more than 20 schools are expected to participate, said Nancy Rundel, head coach. For those who can volunteer their time, Rundel and Linda Jones, assistant coach, urge them to call (785) 360-5300, ext. 3504 and leave a message or stop by the high school and pick up a judging form.

### Benefit soup supper Saturday

There will be a benefit soup supper and silent auction for Charles (Chuck) Colson from 4 to 7 p.m., Saturday at the Colby Jaycee Center (located west of Colby Animal Clinic). Colson, who lives in Colby, has been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Proceeds from the supper and auction will go to defray medical expenses. A free-will donation will be accepted. Menu items include chili, vegetable and chicken noodle soup, vegetable trays, cakes, coffee and tea. Musical entertainment is being provided by the McLemore Family from 5 to 6 p.m. For questions or information, call 460-3931 or 462-7833.

### Gem Lions plan soup day

The Gem Lions Club is sponsoring its annual winter soup day Saturday, March 6, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Gem

Community Building. The event is featuring chili, veggie and potato soups with all proceeds from the free-will donation going toward service projects. Club members are also reminding everyone that the Lions recycle eyeglasses and hearing aids.

### Sacred Heart pre-enrollment planned

Sacred Heart School will have pre-enrollment for its kindergarten and preschool from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, March 3, in the school lobby, 1150 W. 6th St., Colby. Pre-enrollment is for the 2004-05 school year and parents are asked to bring their child's birth certificate, immunization records and social security number with them, said Dave Evert, principal. For questions, call the school office at 460-2813.

### School board meets earlier Monday

The regular meeting of the Colby Board of Education will begin at 5:30 p.m. instead of its normal time of 7 p.m., Monday, in the administration building. The reason for the change in times, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent, is due to sub-state girls basketball when the Lady Eagles face off with Ulysses at 7 p.m. in the Colby Community Building. All board meetings are held in the new administration building on the corner of Third St. and Grant St. and open to everyone. For questions, call 460-5300.

### Program's cutoff date set

The cutoff date for the Natural Resources Conservation Service "Environmental Quality Incentives Program" is March 13. Agricultural producers interested in participating can apply at any time at their local Conservation Service Office or the United States Department of Agriculture Service Center. For more information, call 462-7671.

### Daffodil fund raising event begins

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Cancer Society is once again taking orders for daffodils as a fund raising event to benefit research and a cure. Bundles are 10 for \$5 and orders can be placed by calling either Tina Dreiling, (785) 460-8677 or Stephanie Stones at (785) 462-8076. The deadline for ordering is Monday, March 1.

### Send-off planned for wrestlers

The public is encouraged to attend a send-off for the Colby High School state-bound wrestlers at 9:30 a.m. at the high school auditorium on Thursday.

The Eagles qualified six wrestlers for the 4A competition at the Kansas Coliseum in Wichita.

The state gets underway Friday morning with the finals on Saturday.

