



# Basketball coach talks about player and safety issues

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

Many in the towns of Colby and Norton were devastated after Shane Stover's freak accident on Tuesday night.

Shane's coach, Derek Bissett, said he has watched this outstanding player continue to improve over the years, adding that he is terribly sad to see all the hard work and goals that Shane had set for himself end like this in his senior year.

"Shane has given a lot to Colby High School and to the fans with his efforts and it's sad that what excited so many people (about his skill and enthusiasm in the game) for so many years would be the thing injuring him," Bissett said. Although Bissett said he doesn't consider himself an activist, he did say that it should concern everyone that there would be places that still have gymnasiums with all that glass.

"I just hope other schools and people will learn from what happened (in Norton) and never let something like this happen again," he said.

"This should never have happened to even one kid," Bissett said, adding that steps should be taken to prevent this situation from ever happening to anyone else. He also said that schools take precautions such as putting mats behind the basketball goals to protect players from hurting themselves when hitting the walls with his point being that people need to think about what other dangers are around.

Other schools need to look at their gymnasiums and think

about this.

For Colby Public Schools, Kirk Nielsen, superintendent, said the district is continually assessing safety issues at all buildings.

"We are also open to any suggestions on safety problems within the district," he said today.

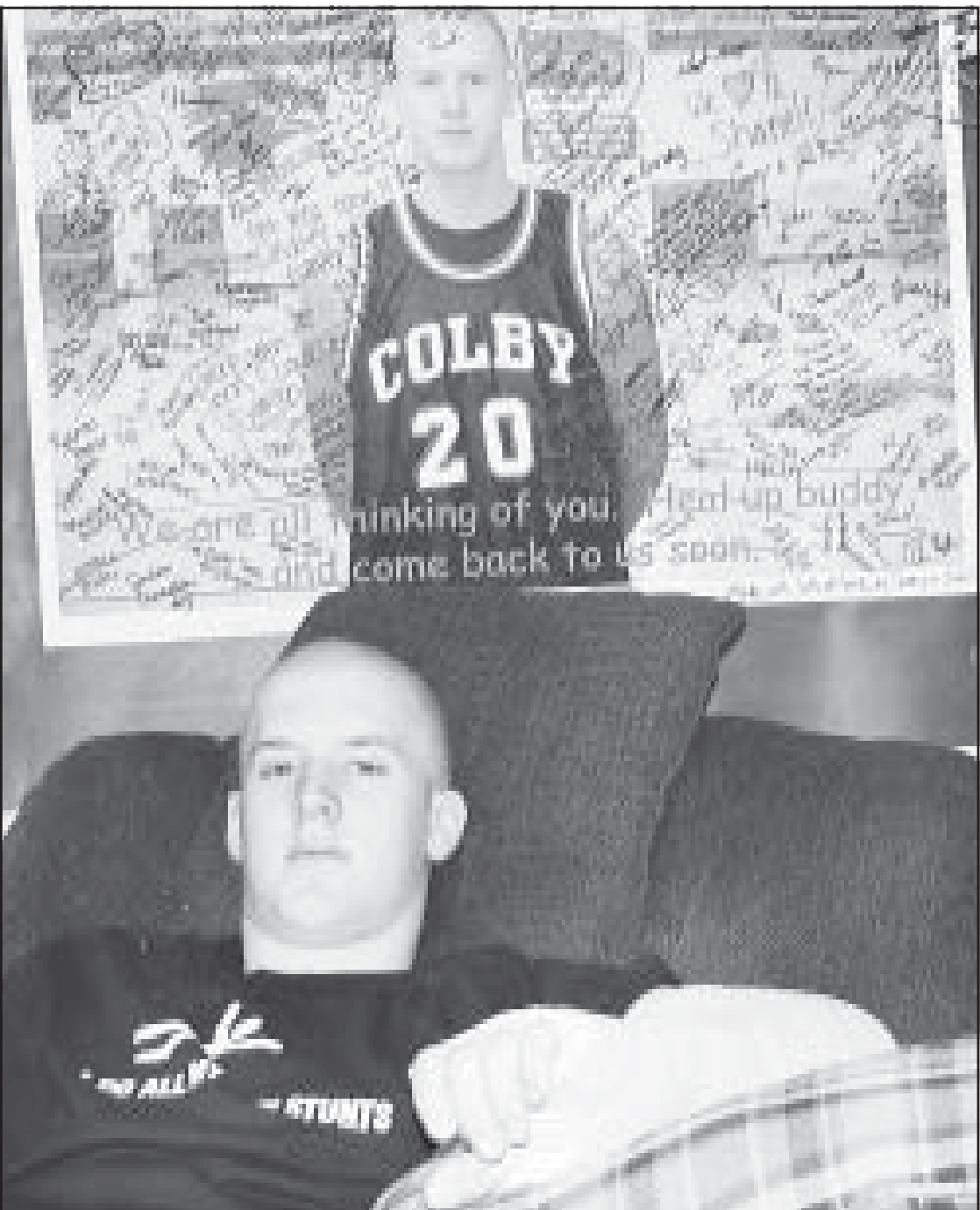
During the time the old high school was remodeled, the architects changed out the glass gymnasium doors and replaced them with safety glass about 4" wide, he said. The reason for the change was to comply with safety requirements. The same type of windows are also at the new high school gymnasium. The slits, he said, are large enough to see into the gym, but safe with respect to what happened in Norton.

Nielsen said the board and administration takes student safety very seriously. Citing one recent example was the playground's merry-go-round. Terrel Harrison, the grade school principal, said the old merry-go-round was a safety hazard and within a short time of her concern, the equipment was removed.

"I will say that I am happy to hear Shane will fully recover from his injuries," Nielsen said, "and I am looking forward to hearing about him in college basketball."

As for the Colby Community Building, there are no windows in the gymnasium, but rather metal the doors, said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager.

"We are constantly staying aware of any dangers," she said. In one particular area, Armstrong said, it was brought to the city's attention that padding was needed in front of the stage at the community building because of the danger to athletes



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press  
Shane Stover said he wanted to thank everyone who has been so supportive. He also said he enjoyed his "get well" poster (pictured behind him) from students at Colby High School.

running into it.

"That was corrected not long after we were aware of the danger," she said. In most instances, if the budget allows, Armstrong said, the city will correct hazards immediately. However, if it is something that cannot be dealt with in the constraints of that current year's budget, the danger would be handled as quickly as possible. As for Tuesday night's sub-state basketball game, Bissett hopes the fans will be out in full force to show support for the team.

"Shane will be there too — he's still a big part of this team and a team player," he said. As for Shane's at-

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

# County approves five radios

By **TISHA COX**  
*Colby Free Press*

The county's emergency medical service will be getting five new radios.

The commissioners approved the request to purchase five 16-channel radios from KN Communications for approximately \$3,800 at their end of the month meeting Friday.

Kathy Wright and Martin Rinehart with Thomas County Emergency Medical Services were at the meeting to request permission to purchase five new radios for additional emergency service technicians.

"We need to get these people radios," Wright said, adding they've had seven volunteers come on board since May, 2003.

On Nov. 17 of last year, the commissioners approved the purchase of nine 16-channel radios and two 160-channel radios from KN Communications.

"We didn't get all the ones we wanted," Rinehart said.

The two also gave a report on the number of ambulance runs completed in the county in 2003. In total, the county emergency medical services made 746 runs last year, up 68 over 678 runs in 2002.

In other business, landfill supervisor Larry Jumper and Dana Daniels, a consultant with Miller and Associates, a consulting firm in Kearney, Neb. were at the meeting to talk about progress on the new landfill.

Jumper said they need to upgrade their operational plan and update their old permit for the new pit. They also plan to open bids in about a month for the excavation work for the new pit.

Also, the commissioners approved to pay Miller and Associates \$7,850 for their services on the project.



**Rain, snow**

**Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area**

**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Not as cool. Lows in the upper 30s. Southeast winds 10 to 20 mph.

**Saturday...**Mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Windy. Highs in the upper 50s. South winds 20 to 30 mph.

**Saturday night...**Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain or snow. Breezy. Lows in the mid 30s. South winds 15 to 25 mph.

**Sunday...**Mostly cloudy with a chance of rain and snow. Cooler. Highs in the mid 40s. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph. Chance of rain and snow 30 percent.

**Sunday night...**Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of snow. Breezy. Lows in the mid 20s.

**Monday and Monday night...**Partly cloudy. Windy. Highs in the mid 40s. Lows in the lower to mid 20s.

**The numbers**

Thursday's high, 64  
Low this morning, 24  
Records for Feb. 27, 77 in 1904 and -10 in 1960  
Year ago today, 35 and 4  
February 2004 precipitation, 0.27 inches  
February 2004 snowfall, 6 inches  
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00  
Soil temperture, 37

**The sources:**

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

# Church abuse reports say 11,000 complaints logged

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two unprecedented studies that document pervasive sex abuse by U.S. Roman Catholic clergy found nearly 11,000 minors have claimed they were molested since 1950, and that bishops bear much of the responsibility for the crisis. One document says their failure to stop predators let the "smoke of Satan" into the church.

The studies — commissioned by America's bishops — found that 80

percent of the alleged victims were male and that just over half said they were between ages 11 and 14 when they were assaulted, a source who read the reports told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The abuse claims were filed against 4,392 of the 109,694 clergy who served over the last half-century — or about 4 percent of all clerics. The National Review Board, a lay watchdog panel formed by the bishops, was scheduled to release

the reports Friday in Washington.

One is the church's first national accounting of molestation claims and was conducted by John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

The other is the board's own investigation into how the crisis developed. The John Jay findings are based on information provided by most of the 195 American dioceses.

Victims said any study by the church is bound to underestimate the number of abuse cases and that

many of those who were hurt still haven't come forward.

Dioceses nationwide received 10,667 abuse claims since 1950, according to a news release from the Diocese of Yakima, Wash. Of those, claims by approximately 6,700 were substantiated. About 3,300 were not investigated because the accused clergymen were dead.

Another 1,000 or so claims were unsubstantiated, the diocese said.

The national report also calcu-

lated abuse-related costs such as litigation and counseling at \$533.4 million. The AP has been tracking reports from individual bishops of their own tallies of abuse costs and so far, 137 dioceses have already said they spent more than \$573.3 million to address the problem.

The report on the causes of the crisis was based on interviews with clergy, victims, experts on sex offenders and others who have studied molestation.

# Senate rejects governor's proposed school finance plan

By **JOHN MILBURN**  
*Associated Press Writer*

TOPEKA (AP) — Republican leaders are promising to look for alternative education funding proposals after the Senate dispatched Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' plan and the House cut short its own school finance debate.

The Senate, on a 25-14 vote Thursday, rejected the governor's \$304 million package to phase in higher taxes on property, sales and personal income over three years and earmark the revenue for specific uses in public schools.

Majority Republicans, including Senate President Dave Kerr, sup-

plied all the votes against the bill. Five Republicans and nine Democrats voted for it, and one Democrat abstained. Senators had expected Sebelius' plan to fail, but Kerr said the chamber's consideration of it was a useful step in the school finance debate.

"It's important to get people

thinking realistically about school finance," said Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

He said he had spoken with Sebelius on Thursday and pledged to continue working on an alternative. A spokeswoman for Sebelius said talks with Kerr will continue.

"She told him that it would be helpful for her to know what the

Republican plan is," said the spokeswoman, Nicole Corcoran. "She suggested it would be unlikely any bill could get passed without bipartisan support."

Democrats refused to abandon the plan, however, pushing at least parts of it in both the Senate and House later Thursday.

## Briefly

### 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, call 460-3931 or 462-7833.

### College board to meet

The Colby Community College board of trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of the Administration Building on the college campus. Items on the agenda include a PowerPoint presentation, approval of contracts and agreements, the Wellness Center and negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

### Commodities distribution Monday

United States Department of Agriculture commodities will be distributed on Monday, March 1 from 4-5:30 p.m. at the RSVP office in the Senior Progress Center, 165 Fike Park.

Commodities available will be canned peas, refried beans, spaghetti sauce and salmon. All eligible persons within Thomas County may attend this distribution. No other distribution will be held in the county on this date. For information, call 462-6744.

### Volunteers need 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.

### Scouts, Rotary plan soup supper

Boy Scout Troop 141 and the Colby Rotary Club are co-sponsoring a soup supper on Monday and Tuesday from 5 to 7:30 p.m., at the Colby Community Building before the Colby High School sub-state basketball games. Cost is a free-will donation. All proceeds will go toward the scouts going to the National Jamboree Camp held in Virginia in the summer of 2005.

### School board to meet

The Colby School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the board room of the administration building. Items on the agenda include principal reports, a report from the curriculum director and superintendent, track resurfacing bids, kindergarten program, republication of the 2003-2004 budget, drug-free schools subcontract and personnel matters. The meeting is open to the public.

### 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.

