



12 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Young man says he was battered, kidnapped here

By PATTY DECKER

*Free Press Editor*

An 18-year-old Colby man was taken by force from his home early Wednesday morning after being threatened with a knife by a 24-year-old, said Gary Shull, investigator with the Colby Police Department.

The alleged kidnapping happened at 4:30 a.m. when Joseph Lupton was taken from his apartment in the 200 block of N. Mission by Wayne Lee Hogan, 23, also of Colby.

He told authorities that prior to being taken to the alleged kidnappers' apartment at 640 W. 4th St., Lupton said he was first threatened with a knife and forced to sign a document giving up all of his property to Hogan.

Shull said that Lupton also told police that he had been choked by Hogan. After the threat and choking in his house, Lupton said he was then taken to Hogan's apartment

where he was expected to give all his property to Hogan. Shull did not offer any details as to what the property was or why Hogan was alleged to have accosted Lupton.

In less than two hours, Lupton told police he was able to escape from Hogan and immediately called 911 to report being abducted by force, Shull said.

Police located Hogan at 360 W. Webster St. about 20 minutes after the emergency call was made. He was then arrested on charges of kidnapping, aggravated assault, criminal threat, criminal restraint and battery.

Following the charges, Hogan was taken to the Thomas County jail. Shull said a report was forwarded to the Thomas County Attorney's office for his consideration in filing formal charges. Hogan is currently in jail.

Lupton did not have any serious injuries following the alleged assault, Shull said.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Gas prices on the signs at Colby gas stations today show the increase went from \$1.79 earlier in the week to over \$2. Fuel prices could hit \$3 over the summer, said one station operator. People have been surprised by the sudden increases.

## Graduation events coming up in area

By TISHA COX

*Colby Free Press*

Graduation time is here and seniors around the county are getting ready to say good-bye to high school.

Golden Plains will be the first graduation in the county for 2004 with commencement starting at 2 p.m. at the high school gym in Rexford. Rev. Lance Purcell, pastor at Rexford Community Church, is speaker.

Seventeen students will be graduating from the school.

Brewster will be holding commencement starting at 2 p.m. Satur-

day, May 15 with a Baccalaureate ceremony at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Brewster. Graduation will follow at 4 p.m. in the high school gym.

Brewster will also be holding kindergarten and eighth grade graduation ceremonies on Monday, May 17. Kindergarten graduation will be at 9 a.m. in the gym and the eighth grade ceremony will be at 7 p.m. in the gym.

Colby High School commencement activities will start with a Baccalaureate ceremony at 1:30 p.m. at the Colby Community Building and graduation at 3 p.m.

By TISHA COX

*Colby Free Press*

Motorists filling up at the pumps Friday morning in Colby weren't happy with \$2 gas.

A glance at the prices around town revealed most hovering at just under the \$2 mark at \$1.95-1.99 for regular unleaded.

Scot Hoffman of Lawrence was stopped at the Oasis Travel Center on his way to Colorado. He said it had cost nearly \$200 so far to put gas in his Chevy Tahoe.

"I think we should invade the oil companies instead of Iraq," he said. "The thing that gets me is the oil companies keep conditioning us to higher prices. I think it's just hor-

rible."

Hoffman said the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the oil companies keep saying they aren't to blame for the high prices but he said someone should step up and take responsibility. He said he's tired of everyone passing the blame on.

"Somebody's at fault," Hoffman said. "I'm wishing for someone to step up and say it's their fault."

Jayson Woofter, general manager at the Oasis, said the rising cost of crude is the reason behind soaring gas prices.

"That increases the price per gallon on fuel," he said. "How long that's going to last I don't know."

Woofter said increased fuel prices are a trickle-down from the producers.

"We have no control over the price," he said, adding he's heard the price could go as high as \$3 a gallon over the summer.

Despite higher costs at the pump, Woofter said he hasn't really heard any negative comments about prices.

"We haven't heard too many," he said. "People still have to have fuel. People are still going to buy it."

Woofter added part of the cost of a gallon of fuel includes state and federal tax. In Kansas, the state tax is 24 cents per gallon and the federal tax is 18 cents a gallon.

Customers at J & J Oil on South Range weren't blaming the filling station. They just wanted to know the real reason behind the increased prices.

D.J. Bosserman of Colby was one of them.

"They're way too high," he said. "I can't see any reason for them going up."

Gale Chapman of Denver also wanted answers. She was filling up on her way through town.

"It's ridiculous," she said. "It's just another way for the government to pull the wool over our eyes."

She said it's costing more money than ever to travel but she said she couldn't see any way around it.

## County commissioners approve landfill project bid

By TISHA COX

*Colby Free Press*

The Thomas County Commissioners approved a bid for a landfill excavation project at their meeting Monday. They received four bids and approved the low bid of \$122,083 from Dirks Earthmoving in Scott City.

The high bid was for \$143,420

from Sporer Land Development in Oakley.

BSB Construction in Curtis, Neb. submitted \$130,512 and Mitch Tiede of Goodland submitted \$140,300.

Landfill supervisor Larry Jumper said it's basically a reclamation project to restore land the county was using to get cover dirt for the

landfill.

Dirt will be removed from another piece of land near the landfill and used to restore the field belonging to O.D. Calhoun, who had a contract with the county to let them take dirt from his land.

Jumper said the excavation project will consist of removing 55,600 cubic yards of dirt from a

field near the landfill. In turn, that dirt will be used as a cover of six inches of top soil and mixed with compost to make Calhoun's field farmable again.

"We got all the dirt we need off of it," Jumper said.

"He was gracious."

Any extra dirt from the excavation will be stockpiled for use when

it's time to close out the old landfill pit when a new one is dug out. Jumper said that won't happen for some.

If more dirt is needed for covering the old pit during closure, he said it will be taken from a field west of the landfill.

The restoration project is slated for completion by November.



### Continued warm

**Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...**Partly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms in the evening. Lows in the mid 50s. South winds 5 to 15 mph and gusty. **Saturday...**Mostly sunny. Highs around 90. West winds 5 to 15 mph. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. A chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the mid 50s. North winds 5 to 10 mph. Chance of thunderstorms 20 percent. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 80s. North winds 10 to 15 mph. **Sunday night and Monday...**Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 80s. Lows in the mid 50s.

#### The numbers

Thursday's high, 96 (tied record high for May 6 set in 1916)

Low this morning, 45

Records for May 7, 94 in 1934 and 24 in 1917

Year ago today, 71 and 43

Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00

May total, 0.07

Soil temperature, 69

#### 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.

## Briefly

### Bluegrass group here tonight

Spontaneous Combustion from Kansas City, Kan., will perform at 7:30 p.m., tonight, at the City Limits Convention Center in Colby. The event is a fund-raising event for this summer's Pickin' On the Plains Bluegrass Festival, said Jo Booth, one of the coordinators. In addition to Spontaneous Combustion, the McLemore Family. Those planning to attend should use the entrance on the east end of the Comfort Inn, just off Interstate 70 at exit 53 south. Spontaneous Combustion, she said, is a lively '60s bluerock band and the group's fiddle player is also part of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra. Admission is \$10 per person with money going to defray expenses for the 2004 festival. For questions, call the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau, 460-7643 or (800) 611-8835.

### Colby College commencement nears

The Colby Community College will celebrate its 39th annual commencement starting at 2 p.m., Saturday, May 15, in the Colby Community Building. This year's commencement speaker is Sen. Stephen Morris of Hugoton. In addition to degrees and certificates being presented to students, the honorary associate degree will be given to Kenton and Sheila Krehbiel. Other awards include the Mosier Award to the year's outstanding graduate and the Tangeman Award to the college's distinguished teacher in 2004. For questions, call Debbie Schwanke, 462-3984, ext. 249.

### Two school concerts planned

Colby Public Schools will host two "Pops" concerts on Tuesday at both the grade school and high school auditorium, said Amanda Kidder, music instructor. The first concert will begin at 6 p.m. at Colby Grade School's auditorium with middle school singers and band members presenting, "A Night of Disney Favorites." The second concert begins at

7:30 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium with high school singers and band members presenting, "Chart Toppers." Those participating in the two concerts were selected from auditions, she said. For questions, call either 460-5200 or 460-5300.

### Scouts seeking donations

Two Colby girl scouts from Troop 162 are making hygiene and comfort disaster relief packages to benefit the Thomas County Red Cross and to help them earn their bronze award, which is the first award junior girl scouts are eligible to receive. Jessica Kennedy and Sarah Oesterreich are requesting that anyone interested in donating items for the packages can do so by dropping them off in the designated boxes located at either Colby Photo, Pioneer Memorial Library, College Drive Assembly, the Berean Church or the *Colby Free Press*. The scouts are gathering items to include child and adult size toothbrushes, travel-size deodorant and toothpaste, combs and white wash clothes. In the children's packages, they are requesting coloring books, crayons, small tablets of paper, colored pencils and small stuffed animals. For questions, call Deanna Oesterreich, 462-3267. Deadline for donating items is Friday, May 14.

### College spring concert

The Colby Community College Vocal and Instrumental Music Departments will present their annual "Spring Concert" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday. There is no charge to attend this concert which will be held in the Cultural Arts Center on the college campus.

### Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include Thomas County Extension Agent report, fi-

nancial report and bills, committee reports on the buildings and grounds, carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising. Old business includes barbecue bids and the queen and princess contest and new business a monster truck show and on-ground storage. The meeting is open to the public.

### Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. The agenda includes a representative from Midwest Energy. The meeting is open to the public.

### Singles dance tonight in Colby

The monthly Colby Singles Dance is scheduled Friday from 8 to midnight at the American Legion. Entertainment will be provided by the Rusty Lammert Band, Kearney, Neb., said Don Birzer, coordinator. For questions or other details, call Birzer at 462-2127.

### Hospital invites everyone to 'walk'

Citizens Medical Center, Inc. will celebrate National Healthcare Week from Monday, May 10 through Saturday, May 15, said Carla Sharp at Citizens Medical Center, Inc. Employees at all Citizens Medical Center facilities (Citizens Medical Center, Prairie Senior Living Complex, and Family Center for Healthcare) will participate in a variety of activities throughout the week. Events kick off Monday with a walk and employees at all facilities are inviting everyone to join them in a *Walk for Health*. Interested persons should meet in the Citizens Medical Center parking lot at 5:15 p.m. From the parking lot, the group will walk north on Franklin Avenue to Fike Park where participants will enjoy refreshments. For information or questions, call Sharp at 460-4881 or Jeanene Brown at 460-4850.

