



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Vet tech proposal discussed

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Dr. Cathy McMulkin, an instructor in the Colby Community College's veterinary technology department, presented a proposal to offer vet tech classes at Kansas State University in Manhattan through the Colby program, at the board of trustees meeting Monday.

She said a potential satellite program at K-State would be a cooperative effort between the two colleges and they already have backing from the Kansas Veterinary Medicine Association, which has given its unanimous support.

"We're very pleased they're on board with this," McMulkin said.

She said having their support is a big asset because the association has to approve a vet tech school if it wants accreditation.

"I think that's a big positive on our side," McMulkin said.

Lectures would be given from Colby to Manhattan through ITV or other methods, and labs in Manhattan would be supervised by a veterinarian and vet tech employed by Colby College.

McMulkin said such a plan would help protect the integrity of the program at the Colby campus because it is currently the only veterinary technology curriculum in the state. She said the college needs to stay on the forefront of offering such a degree to students in Kansas.

She said the job outlook in the field remains strong because there are currently more jobs than graduates. McMulkin said there is no formal agreement between the two schools yet and there are still several issues to work out, including facilities, equipment, access to animals, start-up costs, operational program, lecture delivery, faculty and how it would impact enrollment. If the program is implemented, McMulkin said the earliest class would be accepted in Manhattan for fall 2005. She said a year is an "optimistic" estimate.



## Warm's the word

### Colby-Oakley-Hoxie

**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s. South winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the southwest after midnight.  
**Thursday...**Mostly cloudy in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 70s to around 80. Northwest winds 5 to 15 mph shifting to the northeast in the afternoon.  
**Thursday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s. Southeast winds 5 to 15 mph.  
**Friday...**Partly cloudy in the morning then clearing. Warmer. Highs around 90. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph increasing to 15 to 20 mph in the afternoon.  
**Friday night...**Mostly clear. Lows around 50.

**The numbers**  
Tuesday's high, 62  
Low this morning, 56  
Records for May 19, 97 in 1934 and 28 in 1894  
Year ago today, 57 and 51  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.07  
May total, 0.65  
Soil temperature, 60

**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.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School students Nick Howard (on ladder), Kyle Harold (above him), Jed Kurth (left) and T.J. Powell (right) worked to hang siding at the future home of Shawn and Cody Dale Tuesday.

## Colby students graduate from bird houses . . . to real houses

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Students in the Colby High School wood IV class this year worked on more than just bird houses, as one student put it. The students got the chance to build a real house for Shawn and Cody Dale of Colby.

Shawn said high school woods instructor Don Balluch actually approached them about building the house.

He said Cody had taken woods from Balluch in Quinter so they were familiar with what would be going on. The family was looking to buy but decided to give the high school class a chance.

Shawn said the house, in the La Hacienda area north of Colby, should be ready to move in by the beginning of July. He said he and his wife, with a little help from a contractor who will do drywall and other work, will finish out the house themselves.

The students, Balluch said, started working on the house in mid-September after the basement was finished. He said they managed

to accomplish a lot of work in just eight months.

"They had some fun and they learned quite a bit," Balluch said. "It's always a little different setting when you get away from school."

Nick Howard, one of the students in the class, said it's the first house any of them have built. He, along with T.J. Powell, Jed Kurth, Kyle Harold and Nick Rohr will be taking the class again next year. Balluch said other students taking the class this year were Jeremy Dietz, John Morgan, Chris Gatz and Travis Siebert.

Powell said being away from the classroom and on a real job site, working with all of the tools and being with his classmates was what he enjoyed most about the class.

The students got the chance to get involved in the project a year ago. "He (Balluch) told us last year at the end of the year and we signed up," Howard said.

Harold added the reason many of them did sign up was to work together and have fun doing it, and also to get the hands-on experience in building a house.

Balluch said the group got at least a taste of everything that goes into building a house.

"They've got a taste of most aspects of building residential construction," he said, including framing, hanging sheet rock, insulating and putting up shingles.

Balluch said this is the first time in several years the class has been offered. In order to get into the woods IV class, students must take woods I and II.

Monday night, the Colby School Board had a chance to tour the home during their meeting.

Cody Dale said she and Shawn were happy with the way the house was coming along and thanked the board and students for getting involved.

"These guys have done an incredible job," she said. "It's been an experience. I think it's gone great."

With only two days of school left, there isn't much left for the students to do out at the house but they have another project to look forward to. The class will be building another house next year for Scott and Bridget Murray of Colby.

## Freedom short-lived for escapee

By PATTY DECKER and  
KIMBERLY BRANDT

Colby Free Press/Oberlin Herald

It was all for naught when an 18-year-old former Colby resident went to a lot of trouble escaping from the Decatur County Jail in Oberlin only to later that same morning be recaptured in Colby.

Dustin Dean Rhodig was believed to have vacated his cell sometime between 2 and 4 a.m., said Ken Badsy, Decatur County sheriff. The dispatcher on duty, he said, checked on Rhodig about 2 a.m. and he was there.

Although the jail in Oberlin has cameras monitoring activity, there isn't one for that particular cell, Badsy said, but he added that will change very soon.

Rhodig was jailed on the fourth floor, the sheriff said, and in order to escape he needed a rope to climb down. Badsy added that before Rhodig could climb out he believed he first detached a piece of metal from inside the cell window, then used it to cut out a small box-shaped part of the security screen, and finally kicked out the window with his feet, leaving some jagged edges.

The prisoner then ripped his two bed sheets into strips, tied them together, tossed the rope out the window and climbed out, Badsy said.

The first indication that Rhodig had escaped was at 4 a.m. when a call was received at Oberlin's law enforcement center from a woman in Nebraska who said she got a call from Rhodig saying he was out of jail and needed a ride.

The call was made from inside the Decatur Community High School where Rhodig allegedly entered the facility through an unlocked door in the teachers' work room.

Once notified, Oberlin police went to the school, but Rhodig was gone. Authorities then checked with the local telephone company and discovered that Rhodig had made other calls to Colby probably trying to arrange for someone to pick him up. Despite calls for assistance, Rhodig is alleged to have stolen a Toyota pickup, owned by George Ruzicka, located 2 1/2 miles east of Oberlin and a mile south.

Colby officials were alerted at 6:30 a.m. about Rhodig's presumed plans to make arrangements for a ride after the calls to Colby.

Almost three hours later, Colby Police Officer Kevin Dierks located a pickup on the east side of town that



D. Rhodig

"... an emergency search warrant was obtained so that officers could search the residence."

Gary Shull, investigator

was abandoned and whether or not it had been previously reported stolen.

Dierks told other officers that an open box of ammunition was found in the pickup.

Soon after, many officers from the police department and Thomas County Sheriff's office went to 170 Thompson Ave. (based on telephone calls). There they searched the home and spoke with a woman who told them she took Rhodig to another location at 620 N. Grant Ave.

"Since officers got no response from the Grant Avenue residence," said Gary Shull, police investigator, "an emergency search warrant was obtained so that officers could search the residence."

While conducting the search, officers then located one of the renters who led police to 225 W. 2nd St. That residence appeared to be vacant, Shull said.

Again, an emergency search warrant was issued and after looking in that location, Rhodig was again not there. Shull did say, however, that additional information led them to two other residences located one block from the Colby Public School campus.

Shull said he called the school's principal, Terrel Harrison, at 10:45 a.m. requesting a lockdown just in case Rhodig was armed and might be looking for a place to hide.

Almost 30 minutes later, the two locations near the school were cleared, but that Rhodig was still at large. Then at 11:28 a.m., Alan Wade, the school bus transportation director, said one of his drivers radioed that a man matching the description was walking between the school's administration building and Colby Middle School on Third Street. Both the Colby and Thomas County authorities moved in at 11:31 a.m. and arrested Rhodig. On Tuesday afternoon, he was taken back to Oberlin to face charges of escaping from custody, criminal damage and possibly theft and burglary, Badsy said.

"Once Rhodig completes his court hearing in Decatur County," Shull said, "he will be returned to Thomas County to face charges of aggravated indecent liberties with a 15-year-old child, which was a crime alleged last year on Aug. 13."

## Briefly

### Monument reunion next Sunday

The Monument Alumni School Reunion will be held Sunday, May 30, with a potluck dinner at 1 p.m. at the Monument School. All graduates and their families, teachers and those who attended Monument School are encouraged to come and renew old friendships, organizer said.

### Piano recital Thursday

Piano students of Pat Ziegelmeier will perform in a recital Thursday at 4:30 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College. The program will feature a variety of solos and ensembles. Everyone is invited to attend.

### West Nile tips issued

The Thomas County Health Department is reminding everyone to be aware of the West Nile Virus and mosquito population through prevention efforts. For example, when outdoors officials said to use a repellent with DEET and extra clothing. *Off* brand bug spray has proven to be the best repellent and it comes in all strengths for children and adults,

said Juanita Dewey, administrator at Thomas County Health. She also suggests that standing water in yards should be removed since this is a breeding ground for mosquitos and people should avoid wearing perfumes or fragrant lotions or powders to attract mosquitoes.

Don't burn any fragrant candles outdoors, but rather use citronella or candles made for mosquito control.

### Share distribution Saturday

The monthly Heartland Share distribution will be Saturday, starting at 10:30 a.m. in the Sacred Heart School gymnasium. There will be extra shares available for those interested.

### Oakley announces dedication

Dedication ceremonies of the birthplace of the legend of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody will be at 11 a.m. on Saturday in Oakley with the unveiling of a more than two-times life-sized bronze statue by sculptor Charlie Norton. In conjunction with the dedication is an exhibit of western art by Charlie and Pat Norton at the Fick Fossil and History Museum in Oakley.

### Amusement meeting rescheduled

The Thomas County Amusement Association meeting scheduled for tonight has been rescheduled to next Monday, May 24, at 8 p.m., in the Thomas County Office Complex.

### Flea market donations needed

The Thomas County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council is sponsoring its annual flea market. This year's flea market will be held Saturday, beginning at 8 a.m. For questions, call 462-6111.

### 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.

Jessica Kennedy and Sarah Oesterreich, girl scouts, have left boxes at Colby Photo, Pioneer Memorial Library, College Drive Assembly, the Berean Church or the *Colby Free Press*, for donations until Friday. For questions, call Deanna Oesterreich, 462-3267.

