



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Library latest target

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Vandals destroyed a limestone marker and caused major damage to a water fountain in front of Pioneer Memorial Library in Colby either late Wednesday night or early this morning, said Gary Shull, Colby police investigator.

The first to notice the damage was Officer Tom Nickols who was patrolling the area and saw the fountain at 3:49 a.m. today, Shull said.

Nickols said in his report that he noticed the fountain was leaning and in making a closer inspection saw the shattered donation stone.

The donation stone was a gift to the library and initiated by Dick Weston, who was involved with the VFW and did much to educate the public about the use and care of the American flag.

The stone, library staff members said, had the names of the people who donated money, time and materials to place the flag and flag pole in front of the library.

Jeff Friesen, who recently replaced JoAnne Sunderman as the new librarian, along with other Pioneer Memorial Library employees, said they thought the incident was senseless.

"I think it is very, very sad that one or two people decided to destroy a creation that was important not just to the library, but to the whole community," he said.

"I hope that whoever did this will feel the need to make things right before they are caught."

Sunderman, who officially retired from the library on Wednesday, had said in a previous article that the fountain was designed and built back in 1963 when the original building opened.

At that time, she said it is still virtually the same design today although it has gone through a number of new pumps and face lifts over the years — not to mention soapings.

Prior to her retirement, the fountain had been assessed by someone who said it would need



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The fountain at Colby's Pioneer Memorial Library on Fourth Street was vandalized sometime between 10 p.m. Wednesday and 3:49 a.m. today, said Gary Shull, police investigator. Damage to the fountain and a donation stone was estimated at more than \$1,800. Jeff Friesen, the new librarian, and Debbie Tittel, employee, looked at the damage today. **RIGHT:** A limestone marker located near the flag pole was destroyed when vandals tried moving it near the fountain and either dropped it or it crumbled in the process.

some major work in the near future.

The concern now is whether or not that original design can be maintained since the damage included vandals breaking the waterfall cups along one side of the structure.

Sunderman also said last week that in her opinion it was one of the "prettiest parts of Colby, especially at night with the lights beaming on it."



Shull said they are still in the preliminary stages of the investigation; however, he is asking for help from the community.

"If anyone saw someone around the library after 10 p.m. and before the damage was discovered, please contact us," he said.

Shull also said the vandals might have been on bicycles, so the police would be interested in anyone

riding a bicycle as well.

"I apologize to everyone that this had to happen.

"We hope to remedy the situation as quickly as possible," Friesen said today.

Anyone with any information about the fountain or other crimes, are asked to call the Colby Police Department at (785) 462-4460.

## County hears from agencies on budget

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

A budget request and departmental purchases were on the agenda at Wednesday's end-of-month Thomas County commissioners' meeting.

The commissioners also heard a budget request from Nina Carpenter, director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council. Carpenter was requesting \$30,000, which Commissioner Ron Evans said includes \$11,440 from the county with the rest made up by alcohol tax and state money.

Carpenter also updated the group on the organization's activities.

She said they purchased the building their offices are housed in at 1523 W. 4th..

"That was quite an experience," Carpenter said, adding it took nearly two years. "We saw more clients this year, as usual."

The commissioners approved the purchase of an automatic blood pressure wrist cuff in the amount of \$2,395 for one of the ambulances belonging to Thomas County Emergency Medical Services. Director Kathi Wright and Martin Rinehart were at the meeting to request the purchase of the cuff.

Wright said they had been using a demo model and liked convenience of the cuff because it measures blood pressure, pulse and other factors automatically, giving

the technicians a chance to be doing other things.

Evans wanted to know if Brewster and Rexford had cuffs for their ambulances. Wright said both communities already have cuffs and she was only looking to replace one in Colby.

Landfill supervisor Larry Jumper was also at the meeting to discuss purchasing a scraper and other landfill issues.

He said he's looking at a used scraper for \$205,000, which would be used to dig the pit at the new landfill. The county road department would also be able to use the machinery. No action was taken on the scraper.

The commissioners also approved fence work for the new landfill site in the amount of \$9,553.

Rod Rodenbeck of Colby Glass was also at the meeting to discuss refitting a door at the Thomas County Office Complex with power assist and push plates to open automatically to make the building more handicap accessible. Evans said they would table the issue until the commissioners have had a chance to look at it in more detail.

The commissioners also approved letting the Catholic Youth Organization use the Thomas County Office Complex parking lot to sell peaches Aug. 26 and 30.

The commissioners will next meet at 9 a.m. on Monday, July 12.

## Ecstasy pills found

WILSON (AP) — Authorities said they found \$2.25 million worth of illegal drugs, including 69,000 tablets of Ecstasy, after a car crashed while being pursued by a sheriff's deputy.

The Russell County Sheriff's Department said a deputy pulled over the car earlier this week on Interstate 70, 10 miles west of the Wilson exit, for a minor traffic violation. The driver of the car gave the deputy permission to search it after the deputy became suspicious, but the driver then sped off while the car

was being searched, the department said.

The deputy pursued the 2001 Lexus, which got off I-70 at Wilson, then tried to get onto Kansas 232. That's when the car flew into the air and rolled several times before stopping, authorities said. The driver and a passenger were thrown from the car and were taken to hospitals.

Authorities said officers found about 69,000 tablets of Ecstasy and 39 pounds of cocaine while investigating the crash.

## Five dead in latest construction zone crash

PEABODY (AP) — Locals in this small town north of Wichita say most families own a police scanner. They know when something's gone wrong on U.S. 50, and they almost all know someone who has died or been hurt in an accident on the roadway.

Wednesday, the people of Peabody again had to come to grips with a highway tragedy: A six-car accident claimed five lives Tuesday night, a day after a similar collision left two dead at the same location. Since early May, nine people have died along the construction zone near the central Kansas community of 1,500 residents.

"It shook me. I almost threw up from what I heard," said Solomon Nawisew, who works at a convenience store in Peabody.

The highway, Nawisew said, was dangerous even before construction work began. It is not unusual to have a bad accident there every two to three months, he said.

The two most recent accidents both involved a tractor-trailer hitting a passenger vehicle that had stopped or slowed near where the two-lane highway is restricted to one lane, according to accident reports from the Kansas Highway Patrol.

The latest crash happened about 6 p.m. Tuesday, about 40 miles northeast of Wichita, when a west-bound tractor-trailer smashed into a line of passenger vehicles and semitrailers that had stopped for a flagger three miles east of Peabody.

The tractor-trailer pushed a sport utility vehicle into a ditch, injuring

the driver, then rear-ended a minivan carrying three people and a car with two occupants. All five people in the minivan and the car died at the scene as the tractor-trailer came to rest on top of the minivan and pinned the car against a semitrailer at the head of the line, the patrol said.

"Oh, my God. That just sends chills down my spine," said Dawn Newman, who learned of the accident when stopping in at the local convenience store for some cigarettes.

She mostly goes out of her way to avoid the highway, taking back roads instead.

Fearful of the commute, the Newmans made their 17-year-old son, Jesse Jr., quit his out-of-town job after a girl they knew died on the

highway.

Work on the section of U.S. 50 where the recent accidents took place will resume Wednesday. The shaken Texas-based construction crew working on firming up the roadbed, who have witnessed the two fatal accidents, were sent home early for the Fourth of July holiday.

In the meantime, the Kansas Department of Transportation plans to install a citizens band alert system at the site that warns to truckers on their CB radios of road conditions two miles ahead, said Steve Swartz, a spokesman for the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Lt. John Eichkorn, a spokesman for the Kansas Highway Patrol, said investigators are initially looking at the possibility the truck driver in Tuesday's accident fell asleep.

Colby  
Oakley  
McDonald



## Some sun and warmer

**Tonight...**Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 60s. East winds around 10 mph shifting to the west around 5 mph after midnight. Chance of showers and thunderstorms 30 percent. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. Warmer. Highs in the upper 80s. Northwest winds around 5 mph shifting to the south in the afternoon. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 60s. Southeast winds around 10 mph shifting to the southwest after midnight. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 90s. Southwest winds around 5 mph shifting to the southeast in the afternoon. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of thunderstorms in the evening. Lows in the lower 60s.

### The numbers

Wednesday's high, 80  
Low this morning, 61  
Records for July 1, 106 in 1963 and 47 in 1989  
Year ago today, 99 and 62  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.33  
June's total, 3.53  
July total, 0.00  
Soil temperature, 78

### 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.

### Water use

• June 30 = 2,153 million gallons.

### Water advisories

• Water **Watch** is 3.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.  
• Water **Warning** is 4.0 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.  
• Water **Emergency** is 4.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.

## Briefly

### No Free Press on Monday

July 4th falls on Sunday this year, so much like most businesses, the *Colby Free Press* will not publish a paper on Monday, July 5th, the designated holiday. Normal operations will resume on Tuesday, July 6.

### Childbirth classes planned

Colby Childbirth Education will be conducting a class for expectant mothers. This class, said Amy Hutfles, coordinator, is a weekend retreat and will be held on Friday and Saturday, July 9-10.

For information or to enroll please call Hutfles at 460-4344.

### Singles dance Friday

The Colby Singles Group has scheduled its monthly dance from 8 p.m. to midnight, Friday, at the American Legion, said Don Birzer, coordinating the event.

Jim Christiansen of Kearney, Neb. will provide entertainment and all single people and alumni are welcome. For questions, call 462-2127.

### No city trash pickup Monday

The City of Colby Sanitation Department will not be operating Monday, July 5, in observance of the Fourth of July holiday.

For residents who normally have yard waste and trash pick up on Monday will instead have their trash picked up Tuesday, along with the regular Tuesday route.

For questions, call 462-4420.

### Gaither video concert July 4th

Colby Wesleyan Church will feature a special Gaither video Fourth of July concert at 6 p.m. Featured will be "God Bless America" and "Let Freedom Ring."

The concert will be on the big screen and is free and open to the public.

