



COLBY FREE PRESS

Wanted for attempted murder

I-70 high speed chase ends, suspect arrested

By JAN KATZ ACKERMAN

Colby Free Press

A high speed chase west of Colby on Monday ended with the capture of a Colorado man wanted for attempted murder, kidnapping and stealing a car.



J. Coward

James E. Coward Jr., 23, Colorado Springs, was booked into the Thomas County Jail after being apprehended by authorities near Edson in Sherman County.

According to the arresting officer, Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper John McMahan, he clocked Coward driving 126 miles per hour during the chase.

The chase ended when the car Coward was driving left Interstate 70 at the Levant exit and rolled, coming to rest on its top after crossing U.S. Highway 24.

Coward escaped serious injury and a passing motorist stopped and picked him up and they headed

west. McMahan said someone called 911 with a description of the car which stopped for Coward, and authorities stopped that vehicle near Edson.

"The 911 caller was valuable in getting him caught.

"It took a team effort by Thomas County Deputies Brian Dirks and Mark Finley, along with Trooper Jason Duffy in apprehending (Coward)," McMahan said.

Coward surrendered without incident and was taken to Citizens Medical Center for treatment of unknown injuries before being taken to jail.

Coward allegedly tried to kill his girlfriend sometime Monday in El Paso County, Colo.

Police there believe Coward stuffed the woman into the trunk of her Mitsubishi Gallant and headed east.

At some point, the woman, whose name has not been released, managed to escape and Coward took off with her car continuing eastbound.

A Colorado officer stopped Coward on a routine traffic violation on

the Kansas-Colorado boarder in Kit Carson County, Colo. After issuing a ticket, the officer, who didn't realize the car was stolen, released Coward to continue eastbound.

McMahan said another Kansas Highway Patrol trooper heard Kit Carson authorities talking about a stolen Mitsubishi bearing a temporary tag and they began watching for the vehicle.

Just after 5 p.m., McMahan, who was westbound on Interstate 70 about 13 miles west of Colby, spotted two cars matching the description of the stolen car.

He turned around to see the cars better and one car sped up.

McMahan got close enough to clock the car at 126 miles per hour, but couldn't catch up with it.

According to the Thomas County Sheriff's office, Coward is wanted in Colorado for attempted murder, first degree kidnapping and aggravated vehicle theft.

In Thomas County, pending charges against Coward include speeding, reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident and driving on a suspended or revoked license.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Students from Sacred Heart School and St. Joseph Catholic School danced in the school gym Monday as part of activities for "Catholic Schools Week."

Plenty of iron in this diet

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

An astonishing feat of daring-do wowed students at Colby's Sacred Heart Catholic School and Oakley's St. Joseph School during Catholic Schools Week activities Monday at the Colby school.

Jim Ball of Oakley showed off his sword swallowing skills, an act most people won't see every day.

He started when he was 12-years-old and holds the record for being the youngest and is also the longest-running at 57 years. Ball said he's been swallowing swords longer than any other active swallower.

Being careful has lead to a long, successful career in what is a dangerous field and Ball is one of only about 60 professionals practicing worldwide.

He doesn't perform as often now, and mainly puts on shows for charities and parochial schools.

Ball also has a full-time profession as an insurance salesman.

Sword swallowing was a chance to travel and Ball has been to Korea, Japan, Canada and all 50 states.

Ball performed at Madison Square Garden with Ringling

Brothers Circus.

His mother also performed with the circus and asked him to come along.

She was also the person who got him interested in sword swallowing. His father "Lucky" taught her and in turn, she taught her son.

Lucky started out in show business as a lion tamer, working with big cats, Ball said, but was forced to stop because of an injury. Someone taught him sword swallowing after that, which lead to an appearance in the Shirley Temple film "Wee Willie Winky."

Ball said his father is the sword swallower in the Indian market.

Ball has taught one person the family trade, but hasn't passed it on to anyone else.

"The risk is too great," he said.

Swallowing doesn't hurt, he said, but he can feel the pressure of an object going down. However, Ball has been injured several times, including an incident when he was 16-years-old.

During a performance in California, Ball was trying to swallow a bayonet and decided to "force the issue."

He ended up cutting the inside of his throat and since has been very careful.

Ball said since he's always made sure to be careful and not get hurt.



Jim Ball, Oakley, swallowed a sword during the Catholic Schools Week celebration.

City, Lantern Park resolve utility bill discrepancies

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Lantern Park Manor, an elderly care facility in Colby, and the city council resolved the utility bill problems at their meeting Tuesday night.

Prior to the regular council meeting, Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said she met with David Goldner of Premiere Healthcare Management of North Hollywood, Calif. and overseer of Lantern Park's operations.

"We had a good meeting," she told the council last night. "After reviewing the utility bills, we did find an overcharge for water resulting in an adjustment of \$567.04."

Once the discrepancy was corrected, Armstrong said the adjusted bill went from \$13,224.86 to \$12,657.82, which was paid in full by Goldner on Tuesday.

"It is now all settled, all paid, and we have found Mr. Goldner and his management group excellent to work with," she said.

Armstrong also told the council that in addition to the error by the city, the rest of the problem was corrected when Goldner provided corrected billing information, which had been in error since the changeover from HP Management Services in Alpharetta, Ga., at the end of April, 2004.

Along with meeting Armstrong earlier on Tuesday, Goldner also stayed for the council meeting with many employees from Lantern Park in attendance as well.

Goldner said he publicly wanted to thank Armstrong, Mayor Warren Hixson, Debbie Zerr, financial director, and other city officials for the friendly way they handled resolving the utility bill issue. He also said he wanted to thank the Lantern Park Manor staff who were present to show their support for the management group.

"Premiere is here for the long-term and now is in its third generation of healthcare," he said. "We plan to continue renovating, re-

decorating and improving the facility."

In a separate action, but somewhat related to the Lantern Park issue, Armstrong advised the council of a discovery that was made during the review process regarding the procedure for delinquent and termination notices. In the ordinance, she said, the wording states that notices are sent "exactly" five days after the bill becomes delinquent.

Since bills are delinquent on the 15th of the month and disconnect is the 25th of the month, the city is in violation of its own ordinance.

"We have always sent the notices out as soon as possible," she said, "and that's (usually the 16th or 17th of the month) to give our customers as much notice as possible."

The change in the ordinance is in the first full paragraph, she said, and the change is one word, "in." Instead of reading: A delinquency and termination notice shall be issued in five days after the bill is delinquent ... it will now say "within."

Burglary suspects charged with 51 offenses

By JAN KATZ ACKERMAN

Colby Free Press

Multiple felony and misdemeanor charges have been filed against two Colby teens for a crime spree which took place early last month.

Levi Jones, 19, and Donald Clapper, 16, have been charged with over 50 crimes they allegedly committed Jan. 3 and Jan. 5.

While Jones has been charged in Thomas County District Court as an adult, Clapper has been charged as a juvenile.

Jones is scheduled for a preliminary hearing at 10 a.m. on Feb. 18.

Clapper is scheduled for an adjudication hearing at 10 a.m. on March 2.

According to court records, the two have been charged with 27 felonies and 24 misdemeanors.

Depending on the outcome of a presentence investigation, Jones faces a possible sentence of probation or a jail term between 22 months and 68 months.

Clapper's sentence will come under different guidelines outlined by state law specifically for juveniles. He could receive probation, or a sentence to a juvenile correctional facility for a maximum term of 18 months, with an after care term of up to 24 months.

According to complaints filed against Jones and Clapper, each has been charged with 12 counts of burglary for entering multiple properties located throughout Thomas County. Mattson Farms, Ferguson Farms, T-T Farms, Neal D. Rush, Ronald L. Haremza, Charles D. Saddler, Colby Trap Club, Bartlett Grain Company and Sod Town, a

grouping of sod structures just east of Colby, are listed as victims in both cases. A preliminary report filed by arresting officers indicates property damage and thefts reaching over \$100,000, including a race car valued at about \$6,000.

Damage includes nearly \$30,000 to windows of five combines, numerous trucks and tractors shot out by firearms.

Jones and Clapper are each charged with 12 counts of felony theft of property they allegedly took during the crime spree.

All burglary victims are the same as the theft victims, with the addition of Bartlett Grain Company, Levant, which is listed as a theft victim.

Jones and Clapper are also charged with 12 counts of criminal damage to property valued under

\$500, and 12 counts criminal trespass at all victims' locations.

They are charged with three counts of criminal discharge of a firearm for shooting into three unoccupied buildings at Sod Town.

In addition to these charges, Jones has been charged with an additional count of criminal damage to property over \$500 for damage to the front windshield of four John Deere combines owned by Paul Stephens.

Court documents say "fire or (an) explosive" destroyed the combine windshields.

Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick said Clapper is in the custody of the Juvenile Justice Authority and is being detained at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, Oberlin.

Jones is being held in the Thomas County Jail on \$150,000 bond.

Briefly

Free income tax help available

For those retired and over 60 or with people with low-income, a special free service is available for filling out 1040s or uncomplicated income tax paperwork. Anyone who would like assistance on their 2004 Income Tax is asked to bring all W-2 information and other related documents to Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, Colby from 1 to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays only. For questions, call Alvin Volk at 460-2645.

'Day in the Life' photographs on display

The Cultural Arts Center Gallery on the Colby Community College campus will be displaying selected photographs from "A Day In the Life Of Thomas County," during the month of February. The photographs are from three different seasons taken by amateur photographers who participated in the contest. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. For questions or general information about the college gallery, call Cathy Gordon at (785) 462-3984 (Ext. 310).

Colby
Hoxie
Oakley



50s to give way to 60s

Tonight...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 20s. West winds up to 10 mph. **Thursday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s. Northwest winds 5 to 15 mph. **Thursday night...**Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 20s. West winds up to 10 mph. **Friday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph. Gusts up to 30 mph in the afternoon. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 50s.

The numbers

Tuesday's high, 39
Low this morning, 22
Year ago today, 35 and 3
Records for this date, 71 in 1963 and -15 in 1902
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
February total, 0.00
February snowfall, 0 inches
Soil temperature, 35

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.

