



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Former Colby College employee arrested

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A former Colby Community College employee was arrested Sunday night in connection with burglary and theft at the college, said Colby Police Department investigator Gary Shull today.

Charles Heinrich, 43, of Colby, a former custodian at the college, had been stealing from the college for at least several months, Shull said, but it could turn out to be a couple of years.

Heinrich was caught Sunday when college officials were watching for him. They called the police, who did a search of his apartment which turned up “hundreds and hundreds” of items.

“It’s a big, convoluted mess,” Shull said, adding everything from clothing, computers, power tools and more were found in his apartment, including one item valued at \$50,000 but he declined to say what it was.

He said most of the items belong

to the college or its staff and instructors and has had nothing come up missing yet from the dorms. Shull has been busy today with people coming in to identify items.

Shull said Heinrich hasn’t been charged yet because the police are still compiling the report but he expects they’ll have it turned in to County Attorney Andrea Wyrick some time today.

Heinrich is being held at the jail, pending charges of theft and burglary.

## Preliminary hearing waived

## Child abuse case involving Colby woman continues

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A Colby woman charged with attempted second degree murder waived her right to a preliminary hearing 20 minutes before it was scheduled to take place Friday morning, said County Attorney Andrea Wyrick.

Amanda Harris’ arraignment will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 1.

Wyrick said Harris will enter a plea at the arraignment, which is when the judge will also decide if the case will go to a jury trial or sentencing.

Harris was charged with attempted second degree murder, aggravated battery and child abuse of her then 23-month-old daughter.

The charges came from a Feb. 12 incident where Harris’ daughter was hurt and then airlifted to a hospital in Denver. Her two-year-old daughter and her younger sister are still in protective custody, said Colby Police Department investigator Gary Shull.



A. Harris

He said the last report he received on the older girl last month said she was doing well and continues to recover.

The February incident was originally reported to the police by the Protection Report Center, Shull said, and they later arrested Harris on Feb. 23. Harris is currently out on bond awaiting the June arraignment.

## Sunflower industry worries

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Sunflower industry officials are working to restore federal funding for research they say is crucial to the future of the crop and a hoped for reversal in the nationwide shortage of snacking seeds. The budget President Bush sent to Congress eliminates funding for a molecular geneticist position at a federal lab in Fargo and for a multistate research initiative dealing with a crippling

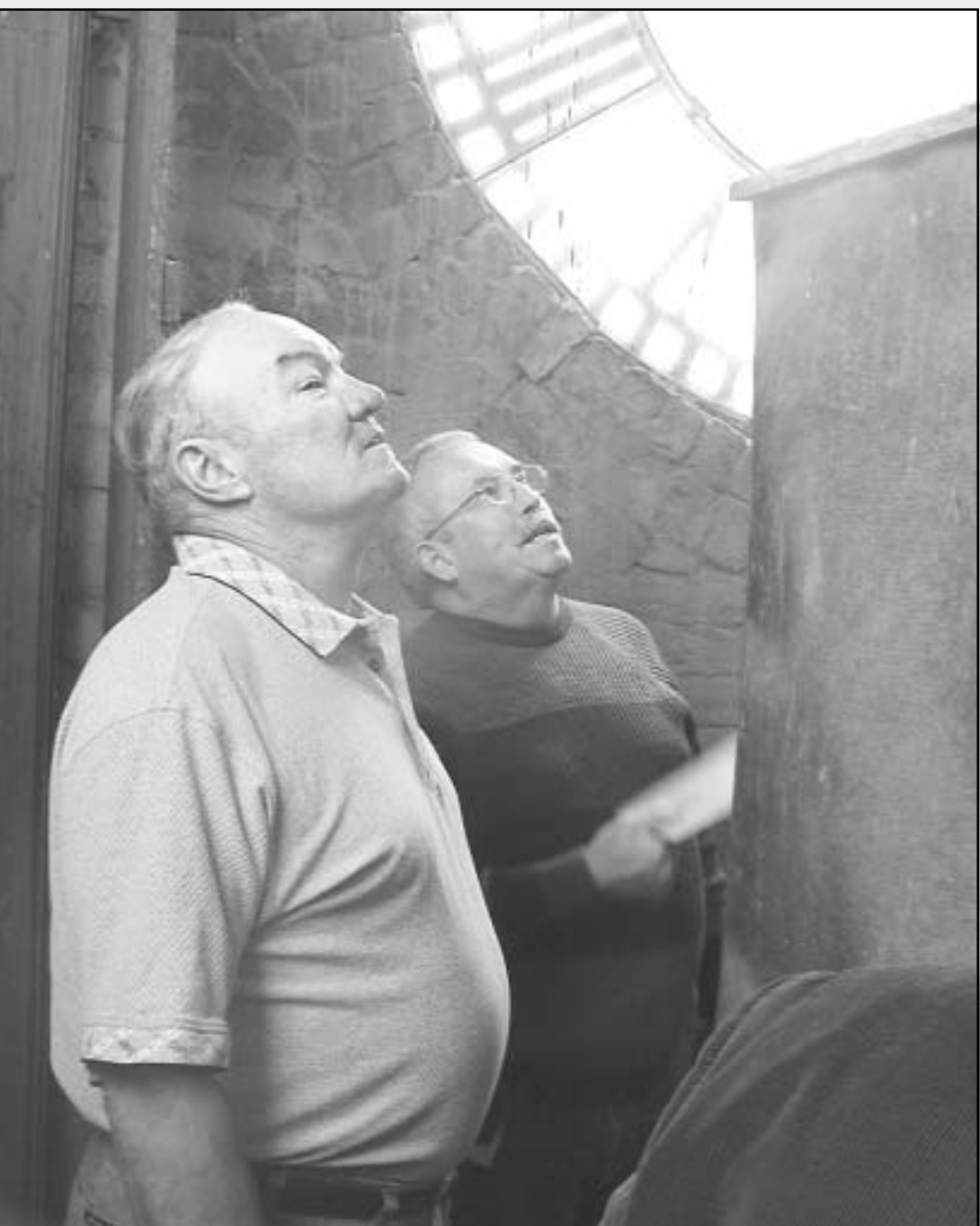
sunflower crop disease.

“It’s got to be restored; otherwise we’re in big trouble,” said Brady Vick, sunflower research leader at the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo.

The effort to convince Congress that the money is critical comes at a time when the nation’s sunflower crop is expected to rebound from a disastrous 2004 growing season. The U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture is projecting 2.75 million acres of all types of sunflowers, a 47 percent increase from last year and the biggest crop in five years.

Higher prices and strong demand are driving the increase. But Vick and Larry Kleingartner, executive director of the National Sunflower Association, said the long-term vitality of the industry could be damaged if the budget cuts are not restored.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Commissioner Ron Evans and county employee Jim McGuire looked at weather damage to the frames holding up the clock faces at the courthouse Friday morning.

## Clock tower needs repair

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners went on an adventure at their end-of-month meeting Friday.

The intrepid trio took a climb up to the clock tower to look at the condition of the wood around the clock faces.

Jim McGuire, who does maintenance at the building and the Thomas County Office Complex, wanted the commissioners to see the shape of the wood

frames around the glass clock faces, which he said are rotting and daylight is visible in some places.

He wanted permission to go ahead and see how much repairs would be and what could be done to fix damage done by wind and rain.

The commissioners told him to get estimates from Colby Glass or a carpenter.

The clock hasn’t been working for some time now and McGuire has been concerned about its condition because of the elements, which haven’t been kind to the old

clock. Wind, rain and blowing dust have been a concern, and while in the tower, he also pointed out the graffiti on the clock faces where people have carved their names and initials.

McGuire said if anything happened to the faces, they probably can’t be replaced so getting repairs done soon will head off any further damage. He suggested caulking or replacing the wood, but is going to bring back his findings to the commissioners at a later date.

## Council could approve \$1.585 million in obligation bonds

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

With major projects looming, the Colby City Council at its Tuesday meeting, beginning at 7:30 p.m., will consider approving \$1,585,000 in general obligation bonds.

The projects in the resolution include airport improvements, street construction on Willow/Franklin and Horton Avenue for this year, along with W. 4th Street and Chick to School in 2006 and will mean an increase in next year’s mill levy for city residents and businesses of about 2.5 mills.

“We have scheduled the principal and interest payment to minimize the increase in the mill levy,” said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager.

Another issue the council will consider are options or updates regarding the creation of a softball field.

“We have scheduled the principal and interest payment to minimize the increase in the mill levy.”

Carolyn Armstrong,  
Colby City Manager

The council first heard about the idea to create a new ballfield from Ryan Sturdy, director of the recreation department, who talked about the details at the April 19 meeting, noting that the Sweet Thunder organization was willing to pay for the project.

It was decided that Tim Huffles, newly-elected councilman, would review the plans and provide follow-up at this meeting.

In addition, the council will hear a request from Troy Hockersmith asking for electrical service to his new residential construction located outside the city limits. The council will need to approve or deny Hockersmith’s request when it meets.

The council will also consider approving a contract for hazardous materials emergency response team.

If approved, said City Manager Carolyn

Armstrong, the agreement would allow the haz-mat team to request cost recover for personnel on duty responding to haz-mat incidents on behalf of the Kansas State Fire Marshal’s office.

Last year while preparing the budget, council members indicated that they would consider approving a new street sweeper and Marc Gilman, public works director, will be available to discuss the issue.

Armstrong also said acceptance of the Federal Aviation Administration’s grant offer on the airport taxilane and improvement at Shalz Field will be ready for approval.

By accepting the grant offer of \$150,000 in discretionary funds for the project, this would still leave the city in need of \$130,000 in look-back funds, which FAA officials said they hope to have the major-

ity available before the end of 2005. An update about the Horton Street Improvement Project; scheduling a special council meeting; reviewing a lineman training program; and real estate purchase are also on the agenda for Tuesday.

Doug Lewis, building official, will also provide reports to the council on violations of the environmental code and it will be up to the members to authorize Mayor Warren Hixson to sign orders of violation.

Among those properties that are in violation of the code are: 440 W. Plum (Jay A. Epard); 903 Court Terrace (Wesley Rathbun); 660 N. Franklin (Greg Griffin); 955 W. 5th (James H. Bliss); 360 W. Webster (Lloyd G. Lunsway); 505 S. Lincoln (Michael D. Lewallen); 445 S. Range (Donald Thieler) and 480 N. Country Club Dr. (Birkley A. Barnes).

## Gem Lions Club celebrates 50 years

Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Fifty years of the Gem Lions Club were celebrated Saturday, along with honoring one of the club’s charter members. D.J. Bugbee, who helped start the club, was also honored for his 50 years of membership.

Lions from the Gem and Colby clubs and around the area gathered at the Gem Community Building for the celebration.

Bugbee received a couple of plaques and was made a Claude M. DeVorss Fellow for his work in the club’s sight program. He was moved by the honor as well as the standing ovation he received for his years of service.

He said he had hoped he would be

with the club many more years and wasn’t surprised it’s already been 50 years.

“I’ve enjoyed every minute of it,” Bugbee said.

His interest started after his 1955 discharge from the U.S. Navy. Bugbee said he’s been president two or three times and held every club office imaginable.

His family was part of the celebration with his daughters and granddaughter providing the entertainment and dedicating a song to him, and his son-in-law Jared Haggard helping with the evening’s presentations.

The evening also included presentation by Lion Claude DeVorss, a past international president from Wichita.

He said the club should be proud of what it’s accomplished in its first 50 years.

Gem club member Wally Severson said he was pleased with how the event turned out.

He said it was an important event for Gem and was also a big draw for the Lions.

Severson said some Lions chose to come to their anniversary celebration instead of their district convention.

The club also received a clock from the Rexford Lions Club, which sponsored and helped the Gem club get off the ground 50 years ago.

Darrel Dible, member of the Rexford organization, presented the Gem Lions with the clock.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Former Lions International president Claude DeVorss congratulated Gem Lions Club member D.J. Bugbee on his 50 years with the organization Saturday during the club’s banquet to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Bugbee helped start the Gem club and was one of its first members.

