



COLBY
FREE PRESS

Big Brothers Big Sisters to launch new programs

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County is introducing two new program ideas — one at the high school level and the other faith-based.

“Many pastors from Oakley, Colby and Brewster said they would like to see a faith-based program incorporated into Big Brothers and Big Sisters,” said Cassandra Britt, the organization’s executive director.

In addition, Britt said she would like to have something in place for high school students when they enroll in August.

Similar to any other Big Brothers Big Sisters relationship, the faith-based program takes it one step further by allowing “big” and “littles” to talk about religion, go to church or do church activities.

The faith-based program can involve different types of religions, she said, meaning

“This program will provide youth in our community with a mentor who is not only a positive role model, but also someone who will help them (littles) with their faith. . .”

Cassandra Britt, executive director
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County

that the “littles” and “bigs” don’t necessarily have to be attending the same church to be matched up.

However, before any match of this kind can be made, the parents of the “little” must agree to this idea or at least be open to their child talking about religious issues, Britt said. For those with questions about the

faith-based program being added, Britt said there will be a meeting next Monday at 7 p.m. in the board room at their office, 1960 W. 4th St.

Britt said that Robert Deleon, the Big Brothers Big Sisters field manager in Garden City, told her there are only a couple of affiliates actively participating in faith-

based programs.

“This program will provide youth in our community with a mentor who is not only a positive role model, but also someone who will help them (littles) with their faith journey in Christ,” she said.

The second program involves high school age students who might want to take an hour each week to mentor a grade school student.

Britt said that high schoolers will meet with children during school either at lunch, study hall or whenever it works for both.

“The high school student would go to the grade school,” she said, “and help with academics, socialization, or other issues.”

The two could either have lunch, attend recess on the playground or study together.

Having recently completed her first two months as the new director, Britt said she has been out in the community talking with

various agencies and businesses about Big Brothers Big Sisters and how to make referrals or how to volunteer.

Right now there are 30 matches in Thomas County and still about 20 “littles” waiting for someone to match up with.

Britt said there are seven volunteers getting ready to complete the requirements for becoming a “big.”

One of the biggest challenges, Britt said, is trying to find men interested in the program. Of the 20 waiting, only two are girls and the other 18 are boys. Since matches are of the same gender or require a couple, that leaves a lot of boys waiting for a match.

Britt asks that anyone interested in learning more about Big Brothers Big Sisters should stop by their office or call 460-9125 so that she can review the process and see if it’s something someone might want to pursue further.

Storytime with puppets



LEFT: Larry Booth of Colby got a little help during a song from Alex Bowers during his performance at Fike Park Saturday. Booth was the opening act for “Dragons Galore and More.” Alex is the grandson of Russell and Stephanie Bowers of Colby. RIGHT:



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Priscilla Howe of Lawrence and her dragon “Belle” chatted with the crowd at Fike Park as part of “Dragons Galore and More.” More than 140 people attended the event, which was part of Colby library’s summer reading program.

Hurricane Dennis brushes past the Keys

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) — Hurricane Dennis dealt a glancing blow to the Florida Keys on Saturday, knocking out power and leaving streets flooded with seaweed as it roared toward the storm-weary Gulf Coast, where nearly 1.4 million people were under evacuation orders.

The hurricane, blamed for at least 20 deaths in Haiti and Cuba, carried a threat of more than a half-foot of rain plus waves and storm surge that could be more than a story high when it makes landfall Sunday somewhere along the coast of the Florida Panhandle, Alabama or Mississippi.

A hurricane warning was in effect from the Steinhatchee River, about 130 miles north of Tampa, to the Louisiana-Mississippi border.

Many Gulf residents were still patching up roofs on their homes or living in government trailers be-

cause of damage caused by Hurricane Ivan just 10 months ago. For them, Dennis meant another tense weekend of long lines for gas and searching for generators and plywood.

“I’m tired of all this packing up,” said Melba Turner, 70, of Fort Walton Beach. “We look like the Beverly Hillbillies when we get all packed up and leave. I’d rather stay. We’re getting too old for all this fussing.”

Dennis had grown to a Category 4 storm with 150 mph sustained wind early Friday, but it weakened when it crossed Cuba. It regained strength Saturday and by evening had top sustained winds just 6 mph shy of Category 4 and still increasing.

“Category 4 is not just a little bit worse — it’s much worse,” said Max Mayfield, director of the hurricane center in Miami. “The dam-

age increases exponentially as the wind speed increases. And no matter where it makes actual landfall, it’s going to have a tremendous impact well away from the center.”

Cuban state radio said hundreds of homes around Cuba’s southeastern coast had been destroyed or heavily damaged, and civil defense officials said more than 1.5 million people had fled their homes.

Dennis largely spared the Florida Keys as the eye passed west of the islands, but more than 211,000 homes and businesses lost power Saturday across the southern tip of Florida, including the entire city of Key West.

Branches, street signs and other debris littered Key West’s streets. Waves washed sand and coral onto a main road, and parts of the tourist drag of Duval Street were under about a foot and a half of water. No injuries were reported.

“We’re holding up,” Key West Mayor Jimmy Weekley said. Residents who evacuated the lower Keys were asked to away until Sunday, and visitors were told they could return Monday.

Several tornadoes in the Tampa Bay area caused minor damage such as downed trees, and more twisters were likely in parts of the Gulf of Mexico coast Sunday.

In Alabama, about 500,000 people were under evacuation orders, as were 700,000 in Florida and 190,000 in Mississippi.

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Alabama Gov. Bob Riley urged residents to evacuate if they were told to do so.

“I do worry about the folks in...places that really got hit hard,” Bush said.

“They’re hurting. I think there is a legitimate feeling, ‘Why me? What did I do wrong.’”

Man uses speeding case to question radar

LAWRENCE (AP) — Lawrence resident Zamir Bavel insists he wasn’t speeding when he was given a ticket in March.

But unlike most people who make the same claim but pay the ticket anyway, Bavel has turned his \$45 ticket into a crusade to change the training requirements for Lawrence police who use radar guns to catch speeders.

Bavel, a University of Kansas computer science professor, said he isn’t fighting the ticket to get out of the fine.

“I want the police department to reform. They claim there is no mandatory training standard for radar operators and as a result they let officers go and issue citations,” said Bavel, who has

spent about \$1,000 on his court case. “I don’t agree with this.”

After a Lawrence Municipal Court judge ruled against him in the fall, Bavel appealed to the Douglas County District Court.

According to a partial transcript from a hearing, the police officer who ticketed Bavel has been an officer for nine years.

He was given on-the-job training to use radar guns at the Lawrence and Larned police departments where he worked, but took no classes or special coursework.

“It was said in court that there was no real training,” Bavel said.

“I find it unimaginable that this can happen.”

Londoners begin using transportation system; return to work

LONDON (AP) — Commuters returned to work in London on Monday, the start of the first full week since bombers killed at least 49 people on a bus and subway trains. Many travelers said they would defy the attackers by using public transportation as normal, but some were too afraid and took taxis instead.

“I... will not let the attacks put me off,” said computer consultant Paul Williams, 42, as he prepared to board an underground train in cen-

tral London. “As far as I am concerned, it is just a normal day at work.”

But Ted Wright, chairman of the British Poultry Council, said he was taking a taxi to avoid the subway system. “In light of what has happened, I have decided to take a taxi. It will probably cost an extra six pounds (\$10.70), but should hopefully put my wife’s mind at rest,” he said.

Three bombs that exploded on subway cars and one that ripped

apart a bus killed at least 49 people and injured 700 last Thursday.

Scotland Yard said Monday it had identified the first of the victims — Susan Levy, 53, of Hertfordshire, outside London. Forensics experts have warned that it could take days or weeks to put names to the bodies, many of which were mangled in the blasts.

Transit officials said the number of passengers using the system Monday morning was back to normal.

However, a few sections of the underground rail system affected by the attacks remained closed, and the number of shoppers in central London has fallen by about 25 percent since the attacks, the British media reported.

Mayor Ken Livingstone took the subway to work Monday to send the message that Londoners should “carry on.”

“We are going to work. We carry on our lives,” he said. “We don’t let a small group of terrorists change

the way we live.”

For investigators, Monday was another pressure-packed day of sifting through subterranean debris, checking tips from the public and identifying the dead and missing.

Police said three men — all Britons — arriving at Heathrow airport were arrested early Sunday, but immediately dismissed speculation of their having a break in the investigation. The three were released late Sunday night.

British intelligence officials met

over the weekend with their counterparts from the United States, Canada and about two dozen European countries to brief them on the attacks and the investigation, police said Monday.

Security officials in Poland said Monday they searched the home of a British citizen of Pakistani origin in the eastern Polish city of Lublin in connection with the bombings. Poland’s Internal Security Agency did not release the man’s name and he was not arrested.

