



COLBY FREE PRESS

Brewster man injured in Iraq

Prognosis looks
good for recovery

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A former Brewster resident is recuperating after being injured in a mine explosion in Iraq in July.

Specialist Sean Bryant, the grandson of Duane and Judy Headley of Brewster, is doing well after the truck he was in hit a landmine.

His grandmother said he was recently released from the hospital.

He spent the past weekend with his parents, Kelly and David Branam in Monroe, N.C.

He is now at Hunter Air Base in Savannah, Ga. where he will undergo rehab.

Headley said he has to use a walker now but he should make a full recovery.

"He's got a good attitude," she said. "We expect him to make a full recovery."

Bryant lived with his grandparents his last two years of high school and graduated from Brewster High in 1999.

Bryant was on his second Iraqi tour of duty.

His first was a year long and he was 10 months into the second when he was injured. Headley said his unit is due to come home in October.

She said his recovery will take time.

He is an Army truck driver, but in Iraq he was helping crew a gun truck to guard convoys.



S. Bryant

"He's got a good attitude. He always had it in his mind he wanted to be in the Army."

Judy Headley,
Sean's grandmother

The day he was injured he wasn't supposed to drive but Headley said Bryant took over right before the vehicle hit the landmine.

Bryant took the brunt of the explosion and the other soldiers with him were also injured, but not as badly.

"We thank God he was maybe able to save another family from grief," she said.

She said they talked by phone on Sunday and are keeping in touch. As soon as he's able to travel, Bryant is planning to visit his grandparents.

He enlisted about a year out of high school and Headley said there never really was anything else he wanted to do with his life.

"He always had it in his mind he wanted to be in the Army," she said.

Headley is hoping maybe now he'll want to go to college when he gets out of service.

She said they're proud of him, and also all of the soldiers in the service, and support them all.

Headley also wanted to thank everyone for the cards and calls. She said many people have written and called Bryant during his convalescence.

"The cards and calls have really been a big help to Sean," Headley said.

"We appreciate that support."



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Pat Schiefen, the new interim publisher at the *Colby Free Press*, reviewed procedures today from retiring publisher Tom Dreiling.

New interim publisher named

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The *Colby Free Press* says good-bye to long-time publisher Tom Dreiling today and welcome to its new interim publisher, Pat Schiefen of Goodland.

At age 70, Dreiling is retiring to his hometown of Hays. He plans to leave quietly, with a small party for the staff, after seven years.

He earlier has been editor of the old *Goodland Daily News* for 23 years and editor of the *Sheridan* (Wyo) *Press* for three and one-half years.

While the search continues for a permanent publisher, Schiefen

agreed to leave her position as copy editor with *The Goodland Star-News* to assist in the day-to-day operations of the *Free Press*, said Steve Haynes, owner of both publications and president of Nor'West Newspapers.

Over the past seven years, Schiefen said, she has become proficient in most aspects of newspaper operations, including circulation, ad design, proofreading, bookkeeping, page building, copy editing and writing.

She said she is looking forward to the challenge of a daily newspaper, which will be a little different than the bi-weekly Goodland operation. Schiefen is also no stranger to the

area, having lived most of her adult life in Goodland.

Her parents, the late George and Henrietta (Rudell) Homm, have roots in Oakley.

After finishing college at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina, Schiefen returned to Goodland in 1972.

With a degree in biology and chemistry, she got a job in quality control and testing at the sugar beet factory in Goodland in 1976.

After the factory shut down in 1983, Schiefen said, she started putting more time into a family-owned dry cleaning business, Wardrobe Cleaners. She still oversees the cleaners.

Schiefen has a son, James, 23, a senior at the Colorado Technical University in Colorado Springs.

She is secretary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Goodland and plays the bass recorder. She is a member of the Goodland Federated Music Club and part of a four-member recorder ensemble that plays for churches and other groups on request.

Schiefen's skills and diversity as a journalist, volunteer and business owner, and community involvement will all be assets as she works to build an even stronger newspaper in Colby, Haynes said.

Hazardous material drill teaches strengths, weaknesses

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

MENLO — The town of Menlo had the same number of emergency personnel in it Monday evening as residents.

Sirens, fire trucks and ambulances responded to the town of 35 residents for a multi-agency hazardous materials drill.

Sheridan County Fire Department Trainer Steve Hirsch organized the drill.

"Sheridan County Fire Department has wanted to have a multi-agency drill for some time," Hirsch said. "We actually get points on our fire insurance rating for the whole county by doing drills with mutual aid agencies so we need to do these from time to time."

Agency personnel besides fire fighters from Sheridan County based in Hoxie and Selden included fire departments from Menlo, Rexford and Colby in Thomas County, Rexford based emergency

medical services, Sheridan County emergency medical services of Hoxie, Sheridan County Health Complex, and emergency management personnel from both Sheridan and Thomas Counties.

Hirsch said there are several benefits to having a drill like the one posed Monday evening.

"The drill involves an incident where someone had attempted to break into the anhydrous tanks at Co-Ag in Menlo," Hirsch said. "In the process, something will go wrong and a cloud of anhydrous ammonia will be released over the town."

Simulating a southwest wind, Hirsch said two children were exposed to the chemical.

Colby Fire Department is involved because it is the regional hazardous materials team.

"Unfortunately, in this age of stealing anhydrous for making methamphetamine, this drill is probably very realistic. Fire and

emergency medical service personnel are getting the opportunity to train to remove victims from situations such as these, and to work together to accomplish our goals of a safe conclusion to the incident," Hirsch said.

Hirsch said none of the agencies is large enough to handle a full scale incident, but working together the units can pool resources for a successful outcome to stopping a leak should one illustrated in the drill occur.

"Sheridan County's hospital was chosen to participate because it would likely be involved in a real incident," Hirsch said. Drills such as the one which took place Monday evening present challenges which have to be overcome.

"The major challenge of the drill was to keep accountability of all of the responders," Hirsch said. "This is an incident that we cannot have get out of control. One of the things that can make it get out of control is

Menlo residents create fire department

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

MENLO — Three of Menlo's residents saw the need for a fire department for their town so they stepped up to the plate and created one.

Andy Munk, along with his brother, Jeff Munk, and friend Robbie Meyer, are the three-man Menlo Fire Department.

"There wasn't anything here," Andy Munk said, "and my wife and I just built a new house with two fireplaces in it and I thought I better know what to do in case of a fire." Created less than two years ago, the Menlo Fire Department building is located one

block inside of Thomas County.

"The county line runs right down that street," Andy Munk said.

"I live in Sheridan County and the other two guys live in Thomas County."

All three men train live within one block of the fire department in Menlo, but they train under Steve Hirsch, who, while a resident of Decatur County, is the Sheridan County Fire Department Training Instructor.

Both Andy Munk, who serves as Menlo's fire chief and Jeff Munk participated in Monday evening's hazardous material drill. Meyer was unable to participate due to previous commitments which could not

be changed. After the initial drill call was made to the Sheridan County Sheriff's Office dispatcher, Hirsch assisted the Munk in setting up the drill.

About 35 firefighters, emergency medical service personnel and the area hazardous materials response team from Colby converged on the town.

After setting up a staging area, the crews from Colby, Rexford, Selden and Hoxie, assisted the Munks with the drill.

"The number one thing to think of is the safety of your responders," Jim Engel, Thomas County Emergency Management director, said.

to have responders doing their own thing, or freelancing."

Hirsch said that "freelancing gets

responders hurt. That is something we are not going to have happen. We will be practicing with an

incident command officer in a more realistic setting than just on a chalkboard."

Between the lines



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Shanae Calkins painted a cross walk on Range Avenue by Colby Middle School Wednesday. City crews have been repainting curbs, cross walks and parking lines around the community since the beginning of summer.

Commissioners approve salary increase

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services volunteers will be getting a little more money for patient transfers. The Thomas County commissioners approved raising transfer fees at their meeting this morning.

Director Kathi Wright and Martin Rinehart gave their monthly report on the emergency medical services, which showed the salaries for patient transfers. Rinehart said local runs are \$20; Hays, Salina and Denver are \$85 and Wichita and Kansas City \$110.

The commissioners approved raising the salary for Denver and Salina runs to \$100 for volunteers and also upped Kansas City and Salina runs to \$115, an increase of \$5. The increase was effective as of

"What we are hoping to do is make the county accessible to everybody . . ."

Nonnie Trail, county employee

today. Rinehart said raising the \$85 salaries to \$100 wasn't a bad idea, although he wouldn't want to go any higher.

Paul Steele wanted to know if the \$85 was fair to volunteers.

"That's why I think this needs to be looked at," he said.

Wright said Hays used to be \$60 but was raised up to \$65 several years ago.

The commissioners also heard a proposal to build a county Web site to put all of its departments online. Nonnie Trail, who works in the

county treasurer's office, gave a presentation on the future potential Web site.

"We are hoping to do is make the county accessible to everybody all the time," she said.

The commissioners didn't take any action on the issue but told Trail to come back with more information.

Trail handed out folders to the commissioners and explained they could put all the county departments online, along with forms and other information.

She said the point would be to help reduce traffic, phone calls, paper work, faxes and printing. It would also allow the different departments to work on their own Web pages if they want. If not, Trail or whoever is appointed administrator, would do it and departments would only have access to their own pages. Trail said they can put all the departments on the Web and the public would have access to information they would normally be able to get at the courthouse. Other information that isn't public access would have fees to make it available, like mortgage companies or other seeking such information.

The commissioners also heard a request from Sherry McDonald to vacate Heather Lane in Sunflower Acres. The commissioners told her to submit a formal request.

