



COLBY
FREE PRESS

Online game leads teen to run away

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Initial reports by other media sources of a teen being abducted from Colby were flawed. It was a runaway case because of an Internet game.

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones on Monday said his department received a call 1 p.m. Friday to go to a Colby residence regarding a Sharon Springs teen claiming to have run away.

“An individual showed the officer a letter written by the juvenile that he was going to run away and don’t bother looking for him,” Jones said.

Jones said his department secured a description of the teen and contacted other officers to be on the lookout for the 16-year-old male.

“We went to the last place he’d been seen, which was Wal-Mart, but did not locate him,” Jones said.

“He was later located in Limon, Colorado.”

Jones said officers from the Wallace County Sheriff’s Office and Limon Police Department helped arrest two people who are alleged to have lured the teen away from his home through the Internet.

The two suspects picked up the teen in Colby and were spotted in Limon.

Limon Police Sergeant Russell Lengel said he received a call from an officer in Colby to look for the teen.

“I got a call from the Colby Police Department that the teen had called his family in Kansas,” Lengel said.

He said after calling the Quest phone company he was able to determine the location of the payphone the teen used to call his family.

“I went to the Flying J Truck Stop

and the boy was still on the phone and I was able to pick him up,” Lengel said.

“When I was putting him into my patrol car I noticed a male running from the Flying J and I asked the boy if he’d been with the man.”

Lengel said the teen admitted having been in Limon with a man and woman with whom he played an Internet game called Final Fantasy 11.

Arrested in Limon were the 26-year-old male who tried to flee and a 34-year-old female, both from West Jordan, Utah.

“The boy said he was in a chat room and met the male and female and it was set up that he would be picked up at Wal-Mart in Colby,” Lengel said.

Lengel said he and a Colorado State Patrol trooper were able to detain both adults.

He would not release their identity or where they were being detained.

Lengel said the boy was transported back to Kansas by his father and Wallace County Undersheriff Marshall Unruh.

Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend confirmed a hearing regarding the teenager had taken place in Wallace County District Court Monday, but would not talk about the case saying it had “been sealed.”

District Magistrate Steve Unruh said it was his policy to seal all juvenile, child in need of care, protection from abuse and protection from stalking cases.

He refused to say under which nature the teen’s case fell or why the case was sealed specifically.

According to Wallace County Attorney Andrea Wyrick, the two adults waived extradition and were returned to Kansas Tuesday and are awaiting filing of formal charges.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Brewster High School freshman Melissa Crumrine paddled her team’s cardboard boat down the length of the pool at Colby Community College today.

The school’s freshman physical science class constructed boats from cardboard and duct tape.

Brewster kids think inside the box

By Jay Kelley
Colby Free Press

Duct tape can fix a lot of things including boats.

Brewster High School freshmen invaded the Colby Community College pool this morning with five unusual watercraft. Class members were placed into five groups each building a boat from nothing but cardboard and duct tape.

Science teacher Leland Francis said the final general science project was to demonstrate students’ knowledge of the subjects they covered including buoyancy, energy and fluid dynamics.

“(The project) covers everything except electricity,” he said.

Success meant a trip down the length of the pool and back and each group had their own ideas for the best type of boat.

Students were also tested on their ability to communicate and cooperate with each other. The groups wrote a paper stating their hypothesis of their design and one brave soul took their boat out for a test drive.

Designs ranged from the simple

to the complex. One of the last boats to go under was a simple trapezoid made from heavy cardboard with a lot of duct tape on the keel.

The winning entry was a flat-bottomed john boat christened Moby Dick with Chance Cranston at the helm. Cranston, along with Ethan Kammer and T.J. Preston, designed a rounded bow which gave less drag than the other designs.

The entry was faster than the others, so much so that the boys were celebrating while many were still finishing the first leg of their race.

“The three stooges won,” said

Kammer.

Another design was a pontoon boat, designed for stability and light weight, and it came in second.

In all, three boats finished the race, prompting Francis to call it “a very good year.”

The freshman science class included: Jeff Reid, Brittney Kammer, Chance Cranston, Tyler O’Connor, Ethan Kammer, T.J. Preston, Seth Carpenter, Brittney Schuette, Leanna Burkholder, Aleisha Bremenkamp, Boone Huff, Melissa Crumrine and Chelsea Horney.

Graduates to enter next age

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

How Colby High School graduates view the future and the decisions they make were part of the message Sunday given by the president of Fort Hays State University during commencement ceremonies.

Dr. Edward Hammond said commencement is not the end of anything, it is the beginning.

“You are now in charge,” he told the 71 graduates. “You will be making almost all the decisions about your life and those decisions will shape your future.”

Hammond highlighted the four ages of history: hunting and gathering age lasting millions of years; agricultural age lasting thousands of years; industrial age lasting 200 years; and now the information age that started in 1960 and he said will end by 2020. The next age will be in bio-science and bio-engineering, Hammond said.

“Man is manipulating chromosomes and genes and this is an exciting point,” he said.

“With the ages getting shorter and shorter and more compressed, you will live through more change than any other generation so far.”

He told a story from a commencement he gave in Stillwell, Okla., and a question one of the graduates asked him afterward.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby High School senior Shaly Renee Niemeyer, left, and her mother, Sam, right, made their way through the crowd outside the Colby Community Building after commencement ceremonies Sunday.

The student pulled out a jar with a butterfly inside.

“Since you are so smart,” the student told Hammond, “you tell me if this butterfly is alive or dead.”

Hammond said, “if I told the student that butterfly was dead, he would have let it fly away, and if I said the butterfly was alive, the student would pinch just hard enough to end its life.”

His response was, “the future of that beautiful butterfly is in your hands, not mine.”

As for decisions, Hammond reiterated his story.

“The choices you make will determine if that butterfly is dead or alive.”

Other graduation highlights included messages from Valedictorian Elaine Lamm and Salutatorian Robyn Schmid.

Schmid talked about the years

from kindergarten through high school and how everyone had been working toward this day — graduation.

“Go out and make a spot (in the world),” she said.

Schmid also asked the 71 graduates remember one more, Connor Moses, who should have been with them too. Moses died in a car accident.

Lamm talked about the wild and crazy times, the rebelliousness of the class and how it stretched the limits.

She said her classmates and are the artists, musicians and others who dared to think outside the box and how those who risk go far.

In addition to the speakers, a senior video tribute was shown with pictures of each student and produced by Janessa Rasmussen and Sarah Redmond.

Colby Supercenter Wal-Mart opens

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Those who shop at Colby’s Wal-Mart can add more to their list now.

A Wal-Mart Supercenter opened today offering shoppers more than what was in the initial Wal-Mart store that opened in February 1989. Now, shoppers can find groceries, deli foods and more.

Transitioning to a Wal-Mart Supercenter is a job in itself.

“You have got to be organized and have planning,” said store employee Cody Wilson.

Wilson said the new building, at 115 W. Willow, was ready to move into April 10. Construction on the 98,000 square-foot building began last year. As of March, Colby’s Supercenter is one of 39 stores in Kansas.

“Wal-Mart tries to make it like a manual but you have always got to adjust,” he said.

Store manager Roger Voss, who has been with Colby’s Wal-Mart since it opened, said inventory at the first building was divided into two groups.

“We had clearance prices on some items just to get them out of here, but we kept some of the other inventory to move it over.”

Voss said either marking down a price on an item or helping move lawn mowers to the new store could not have been done without the teamwork of the employees.

“They are the backbone,” he said. “We gave them the direction and they got the job done.”

Colby’s Supercenter Wal-Mart has 181 employees, excluding management. One hundred new jobs were created for the Supercenter.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Colby Wal-Mart Manager Roger Voss, left, explained the new Supercenter store to Jo DeYoung and Colby Chamber of Commerce Director Holly Stephens Tuesday during an open house of the new store. The store opened today.

Twenty-eight employees, known as associates, have worked in Colby for more than 10 years.

“This new Supercenter is a great addition to our town,” Voss said. “Colby residents traveled 35 miles to Goodland to experience Supercenter shopping.

“We can now provide that convenience at home.”

Colby’s Supercenter is open 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Complementing the grand opening, Wal-Mart donated a total of \$18,000 to five organizations: Colby Recreation Department, Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, Thomas County Community Foundation, Thomas County Council on Alcohol and Thomas County Historical Society/Prairie Museum of Art and History.