



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢

Wednesday

April 22, 2009
Volume 120, Number 63
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Tigers adjusting to Carolina home

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The two tigers that had been living near the Free Breakfast Inn north of Oakley on U.S. 83 moved to a new home last week. The cats will no longer spend their days together in a cage surrounded by what one official called “a junk yard.” At the Carnivore Preservation Trust in Pittsboro, N.C., officials there say, they’ll each have their own enclosure.

The tigers were picked up by the trust, a sanctuary for wild and exotic cats, last Monday, April 13. They will probably be living in two different habitats, said Pam Fulk, executive director of the preservation trust. She said this probably won’t bother the tigers because they tend to be solitary animals. The habitat at the center will be quite a bit larger than their previous home near the motel, Fulk said. Each animal will live in a natural enclosure, half an acre to two acres apiece.

“They will have a lot of room to run and play,” she said, adding that the cats at the sanctuary either live alone or with one other animal. The tigers had to be sedated at the motel before they were and put into crates and taken to the trust, Fulk said. Workers waited for them to regain consciousness before they drove them back to Pittsboro. Fulk said they had to make sure the animals were OK before hitting the road. The two were placed in a quarantine area when they arrived in Pittsboro. Fulk

said that will last 30 days while veterinarians make sure they don’t have any diseases that could be spread to other big cats. She said most of animals the organization takes in are rescued from private owners who have problems, as happened here. Jeff Harsh, owner of the motel, had three lions and the two tigers until a lion bit an employee Feb. 21. “They don’t know how to take care of the nutritional, security or veterinary needs of the animal,” said Fulk.

She said the owners’ inability to take proper safety precautions with the animals often leads to someone getting mauled or even killed. She said this can lead to the cats being shot for merely doing what their instinct tells them to do. “It’s an unfortunate situation,” she said. People in Pittsboro can visit the site and watch the cats, but they are not allowed to have contact with them, she added. “We provide education for the public and care for the animals,” said Fulk.



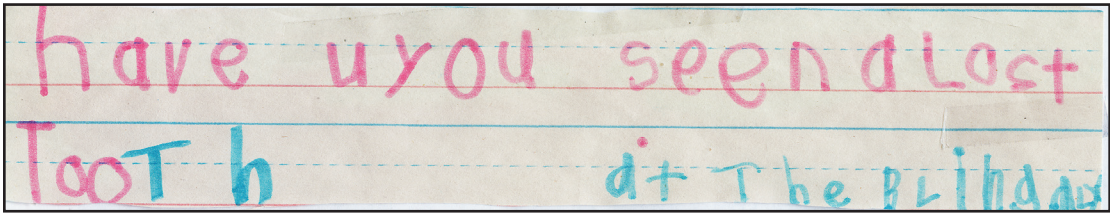
Losing his first tooth was a pretty big deal for Aiden Mai (above), especially when he lost the tooth. He showed his mom, Sheri Crawford, that it’s really gone. He got busy and made signs to put up around town (below).

Tooth Fairy notes boy’s search

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Six-year-old Aiden Mai lost his first tooth. That’s not usually a big deal, but it happened at the bowling alley, and not only did he lose the tooth at the bowling alley, he lost it in the bowling alley. A thorough search “around and under” at the Colby Bowl Fun Center failed to produce the tooth. Aiden was gripped with fear, not so much that he wouldn’t find the tooth, but that the Tooth Fairy couldn’t find him. “We looked everywhere, and couldn’t find the tooth,” said Charles Schwanke, co-owner of the bowling alley, “but I told the



dad that the tooth fairy is sort of like Santa Claus.... He knows Aiden lost the tooth, and if you put a substitute under his pillow, the tooth fairy will come. His dad (Jonas Mai) thought that was a great idea.” Aiden decided he wouldn’t take the loss sitting down, said his mother, Sheri Crawford. He got out his tablet and crayons and began making signs. Soon, the hand-made signs showed up around town: “Aiden

lost tooth at the bling aly,” and, “have you seen a lost tooth at the bling aly.” No reward was offered, but who could resist the desperate, unsteady penmanship of a first grader searching for such a prized possession? The signs appeared at such “likely” places as the Country Club Motel, owned by his Grandpa Scott Crawford, Doc’s on Call where mom works; Kylie Williams Day Care; Maurice’s;

and, of course, the door of Aiden’s house. When the anxious 6-year-old woke up the next morning, that sneaky old Tooth Fairy had left a few dollar bills under his pillow. “Hey, mom,” Aiden yelled, “tell Aunt Nancy (at Dr. Slaven’s) they can take the sign down ‘cause the tooth fairy came.” “He loved the money,” his mother said, “but I’m sure he’s lost it by now. He’s just a little boy who sort of loses things.”

Sheriff’s plea for cars put off

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Sheriff Rod Taylor asked county commissioners Monday to establish a rotation for vehicles, buying two this year and three a year from now on, a plan he said would save the county money in the long run. Commissioners, for their part, said there was no money in the budget right now for two new vehicles, let alone three a year. They told the sheriff to come back in the fall. Taylor appeared with Under-sheriff Marc Finley and Detention Officer Tim McCurdy. Finley told commissioners the department’s aging fleet needs to be put on a rotation program starting in 2009. “We currently put about 45,000 miles a year on each vehicle, and get hit with big repair bills on high-mileage inventory,” Finley said. “A rotation system should have been implemented eight to

12 years ago and we wouldn’t be in the mess we’re in now.” Compared to other area counties, Finley said, Thomas County officers drive a lot more miles just because there’s more going on here. In the past year, he said, the county had 450 criminal cases compared to 150 for Sherman County. “Logan County limits their vehicles to 3,000 miles a month,” Finley said, “but with our outlying areas of Rexford, Brewster, Menlo and Mingo, plus all the other areas we patrol, we can’t begin to cover the county with that few miles.” The department wants to replace two vehicles now, he said, and next year begin a three-vehicles-per-year rotation replacement program. “It all boils down to money, gentlemen,” said Commissioner Paul Steele, “and right now, there is just no place in the budget for

See “SHERIFF,” Page 3

Group recognizes volunteers’ efforts

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

More than 200 volunteers in the Northwest Kansas Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and their guests attended the 36th annual recognition banquet last Wednesday at the City Limits Convention Center. The day’s theme was “RSVP Game Day... Time Out for Fun.” “It was a great turnout on a terribly windy day,” said Laura Withington, director of the program. Colby Community College sponsors the program, which covers Thomas, Logan, Phillips and Sheridan counties. College President Lynn Kreider and President Kenton Krehbiel presented awards for hours of service. Members get an award after volunteering for a minimum of 1,000 hours, said Laura Withington. College classes directed by Mike McVay, behavioral science teacher at the college, helped with games and handed out prizes. Entertainment was provided by Colby High School science teacher Christy Garretson, Colby High junior Jill Withington; Cutter, 8,

Chalea, 6, Cashlyn, 4, and Cay-brie Kvasnicka, 2, of Winona; and the Ramblin’ Andy Band. Garretson sang the National anthem, Jill Withington dressed up as a sports official dressed up like a cell phone who made all the right “calls” to go along with the sports theme and the Kvasnickas sang “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” said Laura Withington. She said the band, from Hill City, played old-time music like waltzes and polkas. Colby residents getting awards included Marguerette Edmondson, 28,000 hours; Mary Carman, 9,000; Melda Moore, 8,000; Rosemary Bange and Mary Weed, 7,000; Carolyn Bird and Cordelia Jespersen, 6,000; Joan Albers, 4,000; Gene Griffin, Murray Adrian and Loretta Meitl, 3,000; Bonnie Plummer, Alvin Volk, Jan Morony, Mary B. Smith and Margaret Dennehrler, 2,000; Sheila Krehbiel, Geri Landry, Don Seyfert and Ramona Weinland, 1,000. Citizens from Brewster honored at the banquet were Cliff Fox and Paula Fox, 1,000 hours, and Zelma Kinkade, 2,000, Selden residents included Lola Cook, 1,000, and Mildred Welter, 2,000.

Colby joins ‘Tree City USA’ forestry program

The city of Colby has joined Tree City USA, a program for communities that care enough about their trees and the appearance of their town to be serious about the health of “one of nature’s marvels.” The Colby Tree Board took the membership idea to the City Council and received a budget increase

to pay for it, said board member Mike Woofter. Other members are Marvin Bickner, Jerry Arnsdorf, Steve Ostmeier and Kevin Juenemann. A recent inventory and evaluation of “street” trees in Colby brought up some alarming statistics, Woofter said.

A 1983 inventory counted 3,740 street trees, those along the curb, he said. The 2008 count is only 2,261, a decrease of 40 percent. Of the 2,261 street trees today, 84 percent are rated only in good or fair condition, with 10 percent poor and 6 percent dead or dying. The good news is that the num-

ber of desirable species has increased, with more diversity. The tree board will observe Arbor Day at 10 a.m. on Saturday by planting seven varieties of trees at the American Youth Soccer Organization fields. The fields are in the Colby Recreation Complex in the northeast part of town.

Briefly

Business After 5 is Thursday

Bickner Electric will hold Business After 5 with the Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 5 p.m. Thursday at 1205 S. Country Club Drive to celebrate 25 years of doing business in Colby. The firm encourages business people to stop by. For information, call the Chamber at 460-3401.

Sale will benefit mental health

A benefit garage sale for High Plains Mental Health of Colby is set for 4 to 9 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday at the 4-H Building on West Cedar Street, with religious items, books and choir robes, furniture and household goods. Sloppy joes will be served Friday and donuts on Saturday. For information, call Rebekah Peterson at (785) 846-7834.

Safety class set for Brewster

K-Step Central and Extension will hold a trac-

tor safety training from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 2, at Brewster High School. This is required for youths 14 or 15 who will be working on a farm for someone other than a parent. Register at the Thomas County Extension office, 460-4582, by Monday. Reading and assignments must be completed before the class. Fee is \$10. For information, call Clint Miliman at 460-4582.

College offers self-defense

Colby Community College is offering a self-defense class from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and on Saturday, May 2. The class, taught by Christine Zedja, will be held in the Student Union, room 108. A self-defense mini baton is included in the \$50 fee. Call the Admissions Office at 460-4690 to enroll.

Food distribution Saturday

Prairie Land food orders may be picked up at 10

a.m. Saturday at the Sacred Heart School gym. For information, call Margene Griffin at 460-3579.

Club plans races on Sunday

The Racing for Christ radio-controlled car club will race at 2 p.m. Sunday at the First Baptist Church, 615 W. Webster. For information, call Kent Higerd, 462-3440.

Eat pizza, help students on trip

Bring your family out for pizza, pasta or sandwiches at a National Forensics fund raiser from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Pizza Hut. Present a coupon (available at the restaurant), and help Gray Henry and Kayla Sloan earn money to go to national competition. For questions, call Donna Henry at 460-6363.

Church offers financial session

Colby Wesleyan Church will offer a televised

“Town Hall for Hope” session at 7 p.m. Thursday at 320 W. Pine, Colby, a nationwide live broadcast with Dave Ramsey on the big screen. Ramsey is a personal money-management expert, a national radio personality and best-selling author of “The Total Money Makeover” and “Financial Peace.” For information, call the church office at 462-8391.

Safe driver program planned

Volunteer instructor Don Keihl will teach the American Association of Retired Persons Driver Safety Program, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday at Trinity Lutheran Church. Register by calling Dwayne at 460-7555 or Don at (785) 890-6638.

