

COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

After driver suffers seizure

Boy, 11, brings speeding car to safe stop

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Not many 11-year-olds can maneuver a car at 60 plus miles per hour through rush-hour morning traffic — and do it from the passenger seat.

But that's exactly what Christopher Brittain, a sixth grade student at Colby Middle School, found himself doing on Friday at 7:55 a.m., when the driver, Jeremy Stoney, 25, of Oberlin, had a seizure.

"Uncle Stoney was driving us to school," said Christopher, "and just as we turned onto Range from Fourth Street toward the middle school, he had a seizure and his foot went down on the accelerator."

The young boy said he saw Stoney slump over and knew he had to do something.

"I don't remember what I was thinking and I don't know how I did it either," Christopher said later that day. "I just knew I had to take the steering wheel."

One motorist, Randy Decker, who witnessed the incident firsthand while driving his son, Joey Melnyk to school, said it was nothing short of a miracle.

"It was unbelievable that somebody of that age, steering a car going that fast and in such tight quarters was able to stop the car safely," he said.

In recounting the situation, Christopher said he knew he needed to figure out how to stop the car while steering and weaving through the traffic, so he pushed the stick shift into neutral as the



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Christopher Brittain, Colby's 11-year-old hero (left), flashed a happy smile on Saturday knowing that his little sister, Alyssa, 1, brother, Garrett, 5,

car continued racing southbound.

He said he put the 1992 Firebird Formula into neutral around Pizza Hut and as it started slowing down the next half mile, he turned into Deep Rock

Cafe. "As soon as we got to the parking lot there, I pulled the emergency brake," Christopher said. "I got out of the car and my first thoughts were to get help for Uncle Stoney."

and his Uncle Stoney (not pictured) were safe and sound following what could have been a disastrous Friday morning.

Christopher said he then helped his 5-year-old brother, Garrett, and 1-year-old sister, Alyssa, out of the car.

Decker, who followed the Firebird into the parking lot, said he called

"911" and stayed until help arrived.

In the meantime, Wes Sherman, owner of the Deep Rock Cafe, came out to also offer assistance.

"I just wanted to get the kids in out

of the cold," Sherman said. "I was so impressed at the way the young boy accomplished this. He was very concerned about the driver and everybody else involved — that little guy did so well under the circumstances."

Christopher's parents, Rob and Beth Craft, said they both knew there had to be some sort of divine intervention.

"There were more ways for this thing to have gone wrong than right," Rob said, "and we were very proud of him."

As for the driver, he was released from Citizens Medical Center later on Friday and is doing well.

"I was just so glad Chris was there to help," he said on Saturday.

Christopher's mother said she was glad Christopher had an interest in cars and had knowledge of how a standard transmission worked.

Beth said she believed it isn't a bad idea for parents to at least show their children the mechanics of how vehicles operate.

"Nobody wants to see something like this ever happen, but I think it's good to show kids how cars work," she said.

"Stoney is our children's Godfather and a good friend," Beth said. "He was watching the children while we were out of town."

On Saturday, Christopher reflected again about Friday morning's events, saying he just wanted to help and how glad he was that everyone — and particularly Uncle Stoney — was okay.

U.S. jets hit suspected bin Laden camp

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — In the biggest daylight raids so far, U.S. jets pounded targets around Afghanistan's capital today and attacked a military headquarters and suspected terrorist training camp near the eastern city of Jalalabad.

The stepped up attacks came one day after President Bush rebuffed the Taliban's latest offer to negotiate the surrender of terrorism suspect Osama bin Laden.

In Pakistan, Muslim militants launched a nationwide strike to protest their government's support for the U.S.-led air campaign in Afghanistan. The strike call, which drew only a limited response, came as U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell flew to Islamabad for talks with Pakistan on the air campaign.

Daylight raids opened with jets streaking across the dawn sky over Kabul, striking in the area of the airport and a military base. Throughout the day, wave after wave of bombers, some too high to be heard in the streets below, pounded suspected military targets in the northwest of the capital.

In Afghanistan's east, a lone jet bombed the western outskirts of Jalalabad as shoppers went about their

"The Taliban just laugh at these bombs."
Mufti Yousef
Taliban representative

errands at an open market in the city center.

Planes returned later and struck a military headquarters near the Jalalabad airport, the bin Laden training camp at Tora-Bora and a third target near the village of Karam. The Taliban say up to 200 people were killed when U.S. jets hit homes in Karam last week.

Taliban soldiers patrolled Jalalabad with rocket launchers and assault rifles during the raids.

"The Taliban just laugh at these bombs," said Mufti Yousuf, a Taliban envoy accompanying international journalists to Jalalabad. "It is nothing. It makes no difference."

Each raid drew anti-aircraft fire from Taliban forces. There was no immediate word of casualties in the two cities. Taliban Information Ministry officials in Kabul claimed 12 people died in a separate strike Monday in Badgus

province in western Afghanistan, but the claim could not be independently verified. Kabul hospitals were without electricity overnight, since the Taliban switch off the power during raids. Doctors said relatives were taking patients home and added they were unable to care for premature babies without electricity for the incubators.

"Please have mercy on us and don't kill us," pleaded Rahim Biba, the mother of an infant born two months premature. "We are innocent. We are not followers of Osama and we are not members of his militant group. We are already in trouble. Don't add to our miseries."

The Pentagon said the U.S. Air Force was trying to gather more intelligence to check out a Taliban claim of large numbers of civilian casualties at Karam. The Taliban escorted The Associated Press and other journalists to Karam and Jalalabad over the weekend

for a first look inside Afghanistan since the U.S.-led strikes started.

In Karam, a number of houses had been damaged or reduced to rubble, and dozens of animal carcasses were strewn about. However, it was difficult to assess casualty claims three days after the attack, since Muslims traditionally bury their dead quickly.

At the Jalalabad airport, reporters were shown the twisted remains of the radar station.

Bush ordered the strikes on Oct. 7 after Afghanistan's Taliban regime refused repeated demands to surrender bin Laden, the chief suspect in the Sept. 11 hijackings that killed about 6,000 people in the United States.

Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Haji Abdul Kabir offered Sunday to surrender bin Laden for trial in an unspecified third country if Washington stopped bombing and provided evidence of the Saudi exile's guilt. Bush said no.

"We know he's guilty. Turn him over," the president said in Washington. In Pakistan, the main shopping areas closed Peshawar and Quetta — border cities where support for the Taliban is strong — though some shops were open in Quetta.

Busy meeting for school board

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Curriculum presentations, an audit report and new policies will take up most of the Colby school board's time at their only October meeting tonight at 7 p.m. in the administration building.

The board will tour the Thomas County Learning Center at 305 N. Franklin, then move to the elementary school for the curriculum presentation about problem solving.

Brian Staats from Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball, the district's accounting firm, will present an audit report for the last year.

A first reading of new and revised board policies is also on the agenda.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said late last week that the changes include spending limits and disciplinary procedures and have been reviewed by the Kansas Board of Education and John Gatz, board attorney.

Anthrax cases prompt fear

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans returning to work today faced anxious moments opening envelopes after the number of people across the nation exposed to anthrax sent through the mail jumped.

Three new cases — a police officer and two lab technicians involved in an investigation at NBC's New York headquarters — tested positive for exposure to the bacteria, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said Sunday. Nevada officials said four people who may have come into contact with a contaminated letter at a Microsoft office tested negative,

while results weren't known for two others.

The new New York cases brought to 12 the number of people around the nation who either have anthrax or been exposed to it. That does not include an NBC employee who is taking antibiotics after displaying possible symptoms of the disease.

"I think twice about opening my mail," said Steve Blum, 54, of Boca Raton, Fla. He said he will discard letters from someone he does not recognize. "You also have to worry about copycats."

we hope to see you there."

Technology class offered

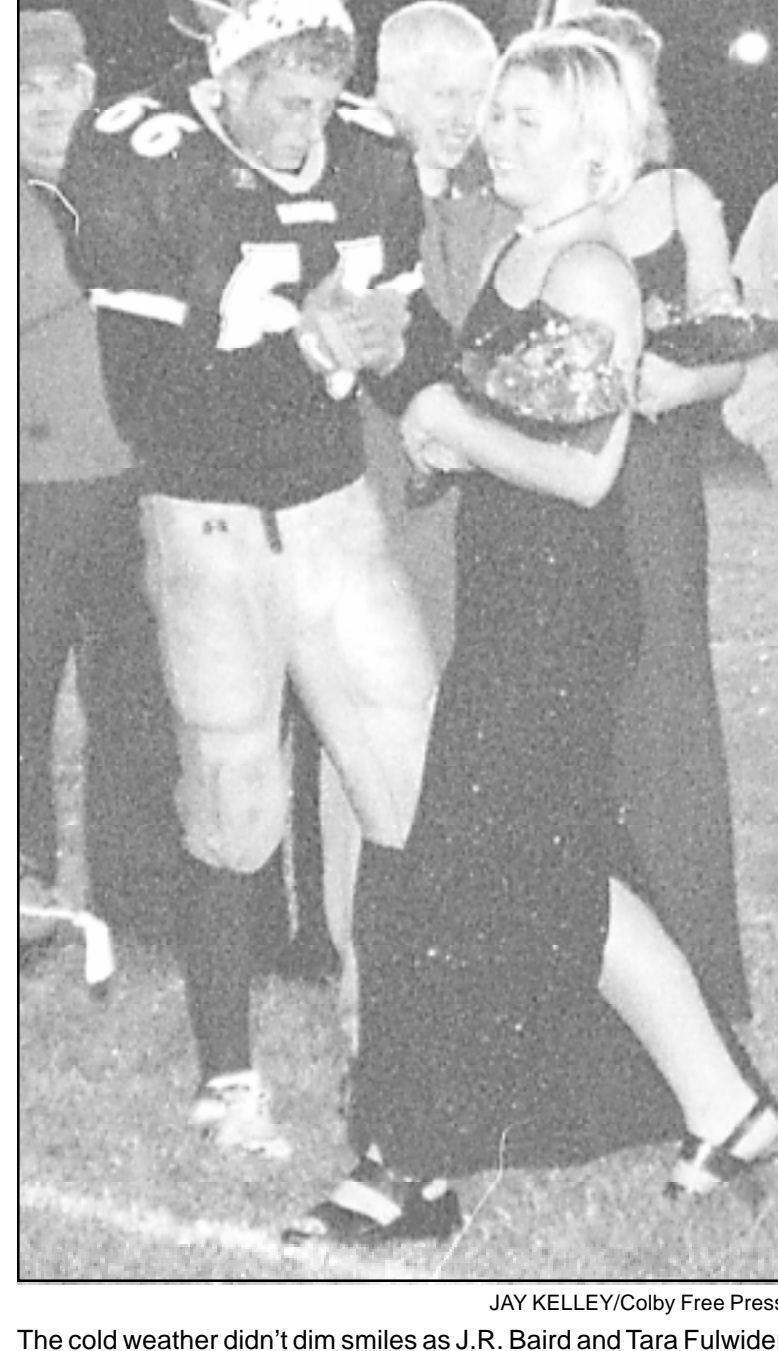
Colby Public Schools is sponsoring a technology class from 4 to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, in the high school auditorium. A representative from Canon Video Cameras will be offering tips and techniques about the wide-range of digital video and video production.

There is no charge for the class, officials said. For information, call (785) 465-5000.

Legion Commander here Tuesday

American Legion National Commander Ric Santos of Maryland will have coffee at the Colby Post, 1850 W. 4th,

The happy couple



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

The cold weather didn't dim smiles as J.R. Baird and Tara Fulwider were crowned homecoming king and queen Friday night at Brewster High School.

from 4:30-5:15 p.m. on Tuesday. During his tour, Santos will discuss the Legion's 2002 legislative priorities, including National Security and Defense, Veterans Health Care, and Flag Protection. Santos will be accompanied by Kansas American Legion State Commander Elgin Wahlborg, Arkansas City, and Vice Commander Russell Shughart, Overland Park.

Blood drive Tuesday

Colby Community College is sponsoring a blood drive from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 16, at the student union, said Wanda Davis, organizer.

For questions on required age and weight for giving blood or to make an appointment, call Davis at 462-4797.

Briefly

Weather: Cold night looms

Look for temperatures here in the Colby area to drop into the upper 20s tonight — a hard freeze night, for sure — cautions the National Weather Service. Temperatures will be moderating some as the week rolls on. Tonight, clear, lows in the upper 20s and southwest winds 5-10 mph. Tuesday, mostly sunny, highs in the middle 60s and south winds 10-15 mph. Tuesday night, clear, lows in the lower 40s and on Wednesday, sunny and highs in the middle 70s. Thursday and Friday should find lows in the upper 30s to lower 40s and highs in the middle 60s. Rainfall over the weekend in Colby measured 0.42 inches, bringing the total for the month to 0.45 inches. The weekend temperatures: highs,

Friday 51, Saturday 65 and Sunday 65; lows, Saturday 30, Sunday 35 and this morning 32. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 56 degrees. The records for Oct. 15: 93 in 1921 and 20 in 1966. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Dedication is Wednesday

The Senior Progress Center of Thomas County, 165 Fike Park, is inviting everyone to its dedication ceremony and memorial service at 2 p.m., Wednesday, honoring Fred Rikoff and Clarence West, said Deb Koon, director. "These dedicated men will live on in our memories," she said, "and

