



COLBY FREE PRESS

Meeting tonight

Emergency room staffing back on the burner

By JAY KELLEY
Colby Free Press

The decision by the Citizens Medical Center board of trustees to hire an outside service to provide physician staffing at the emergency room is apparently not a done deal.

Hospital administrator Michael Boyles said the board will meet tonight with representatives of both clinics. "Colby Medical and Surgical has asked to speak to the board," he said, adding that the board had asked Family Center for Healthcare representa-

tives to be there also. Boyles said there had been a meeting between a representative of each clinic and the hospital chief of staff, Dr. Stephen Grillot, but the board had not met with all of the doctors. "Some doctors told me, individually,

that they were in favor," he said. "The doctors against it didn't share their opinions."

As a private board, the meeting is not open to the public. Board chairperson Greg Schafer said, after a poll of the board members, that the *Free Press*

would not be allowed to cover the meeting.

"We have no precedent," he said. Schafer said the board has considered changing the policy, but "now is not the time."

Schafer also said the board is consid-

ering a public meeting, but has made no decision yet.

Members of the board of trustees are Greg Schafer, Judith Sears, Vern Schwanke, Kay Weston, Kristie Cox, Terry Cousins, Kevin Kriss, Doug Munderloh and Curt Stephens.

Disease identified in wheat

WICHITA (AP)—Discovery of the first confirmed cases of Karnal bunt in the nation's wheat belt has sent agriculture regulators scrambling to contain the disease before it is spread by custom cutters following the winter wheat harvest northward.

At stake is the United State's ability to export wheat and wheat products to more than 80 countries, ag regulators said.

On Tuesday, the Kansas Department of Agriculture urged wheat growers to question harvest crews about where they have been before letting them come onto their fields.

The agency said crews who have been in the infected areas must be able to show farmers a USDA certificate proving that their equipment has been properly cleaned.

Karnal bunt, a fungus which cuts crop yields, also discolors flour and gives it a harmless but unpleasant odor and taste. The disease, which originated in India, arrived in the United States in 1996, when it was found in Arizona and California. The next year it was found in Texas.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture imposed a strict federal quarantine on infected areas, successfully keeping the disease confined and out of the nation's wheat belt—at least until last week.

On May 31, the fungus was found in Throckmorton and Young counties in northern Texas by alert elevator workers who segregated the infected wheat and notified USDA, said Tom Sim, program manager for plant protection at the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

"This find in northern Texas this past week is significant in that it is the first report of the disease in the wheat belt—so it is a little bit of a concern to us," Sim said.

The nation's wheat belt extends north from central Texas to Alberta, Canada and includes Kansas. Winter wheat harvest has begun in Texas and is slowly moving northward as crops mature.

"Karnal bunt is a plant disease that could severely restrict our ability to export wheat and wheat products," said Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jamie Clover Adams in a news release.

For growers, the fungus cuts production about 1 percent on average, Sim said. But if it is found in Kansas, the economic losses could be significant if the state is unable to certify its wheat for export. Kansas is the nation's biggest wheat producer.

The U.S. is the only major wheat-exporting country in the world that has found this disease, Sim said. The United States has thus far been able to reassure its global markets that its exported grain is free of the disease because the fungus had not been found in the nation's major winter wheat growing areas, he said. "Anything that is a concern to our customers is a very strong concern for us," said David Frey, administrator of the Kansas Wheat Commission. "The United States is doing more than any other country to regulate this type of thing."

Bombs away!



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

As temperatures warm up, the Colby Municipal Pool has become a popular hangout for local kids. Nolan Hull demonstrated a "cherry drop" off the diving board on Wednesday. The pool is open afternoons all week long.

McVeigh's defense prepares hurried appeal

DENVER (AP)—With Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh's execution just four days away, his attorneys worked furiously on an appeal after a judge refused to grant another delay.

McVeigh's attorneys were expected to file the appeal Thursday with the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. A spokesman has said a panel of three judges could reach a decision within hours.

Depending on how the court rules, either McVeigh or government attorneys may appeal to the Supreme Court, which has been mostly unsympathetic to 11th-hour pleas.

McVeigh's execution was delayed last month by Attorney General John Ashcroft after the government found some documents hadn't been turned over to the defense, but Ashcroft opposes further delays.

"We've never had a doubt about the guilt of Timothy McVeigh," Ashcroft said Wednesday.

McVeigh, 33, is set to die by injection Monday morning at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind.

Legal analysts said U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch's decision Wednesday was a major setback for McVeigh and predicted he would have a difficult time convincing the appeals court that he deserves a postponement.

"The only thing that made life worth living for Timothy McVeigh was the prospect of an evidentiary hearing to put the federal government on trial.

If Mr. McVeigh is allowed to be executed five days from now, the integrity of the process will have been destroyed."

Rob Nigh,
attorney for Tim McVeigh

Now that has been taken away from him," said Denver legal analyst Craig Silverman.

During Wednesday's hearing, McVeigh's attorneys argued they needed more time to review nearly 4,500 pages of FBI material released in the past month.

They said the information may point to others who may have been involved in the bombing, which could have affected the outcome of McVeigh's trial.

Matsch said he was shocked to learn of the newly released material, but he said the jury's verdict should stand.

The FBI had a duty to let prosecutors know about the evidence, while McVeigh had a similar duty to let his attorneys know about others who may have been involved, said Matsch, who also presided at McVeigh's trial.

"Whatever role others may have played, it's clear that Timothy McVeigh committed murder and mayhem as charged," the judge said. "Whatever may in time (be) disclosed about possible involvement of others in this

bombing, it will not change the fact that Timothy McVeigh was the instrument of death and destruction."

McVeigh was convicted in 1997 of conspiracy, using a weapon of mass destruction and murdering eight federal law enforcement officers.

The April 19, 1995, explosion at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building killed 168 people and was considered the deadliest act of terrorism on U.S. soil.

In seeking an execution delay, McVeigh accused the government of committing a "fraud upon the court" for failing to turn over all information before trial as Matsch had ordered. The Justice Department presented the new documents to the defense six days before the original May 16 execution date.

McVeigh attorney Rob Nigh said one of the newly released documents included information on a potential witness who was unknown to the defense.

The defense also contends some

FBI agents knew of other possible conspirators but allowed McVeigh to shoulder the blame alone.

"If Mr. McVeigh is allowed to be executed five days from now, the integrity of the process will have been destroyed," Nigh said Wednesday.

Prosecutor Sean Connelly said the information in the documents was contained in FBI interview reports made available before trial.

He noted that McVeigh had confessed to the bombing in a recent book.

In Oklahoma City, Martha Ridley, whose daughter Kathy died in the bombing, said: "I just want to get this thing over with and be done with it. It's time for him to go."

Jannie Coverdale, who lost two grandsons in the explosion, had hoped for a delay. She believes McVeigh and co-conspirator Terry Nichols, who is serving life in prison, didn't plan it alone.

"I'm wondering now that if Tim is executed, will we ever know?" she asked.

"We have been fighting so long for the truth. I have no confidence in the government now."

In Pendleton, N.Y., McVeigh's father, Bill, wasn't surprised.

"He's going to get executed sooner or later," he said.

"Most people know he did it, so I think the longer he lives, the better. It's easiest on me.

"But, like I said, it's going to happen eventually."

College, faculty at impasse

By MAXINE NELSON
Colby Free Press

Negotiations for the school year beginning July 1 at Colby Community College are at impasse. Negotiators for the Faculty Alliance and the College Board of Trustees have agreed on some points, but not on others. They have agreed on mileage reimbursement, and sabbatical leave, according to Shelly Huelsman, faculty alliance negotiator, but are deadlocked on other issues.

"Mileage will be reimbursed at the state rate, and instructors can take one semester of sabbatical leave for advanced study or research after being at the college for 10 years. They are eligible for another sabbatical after seven more years. The board will still have the authority to approve or disapprove," said Huelsman.

The board and the Faculty Alliance agreed early on the definition of the unit, which deals with who in the alliance gets to vote on approving the agreement, based on number of hours taught.

"Still under negotiation are compensation (salary and benefits), and the penalty for damages if an instructor terminates their contract early; and there are issues on the table over working dates and the length of the contract," she said. "The board has proposed a three-year contract, and we haven't agreed on that yet," Huelsman added. The Faculty Alliance met with the board team six times starting in April, and presented proposals and counter-proposals. They discussed insurance and have come to a tentative agreement on that issue, according to Huelsman. Once negotiations are at impasse, the next step is to have a federal mediator come in. "The mediator will try to get us to reach an agreement. He will probably not come until the middle or end of July at the earliest," said Huelsman. The new fiscal year starts July 1. The faculty will get paid the same as last year under a continuing contract, according to Huelsman. The mediator will make a non-binding recommendation, and the board and Faculty Alliance will try again to come to an agreement, she said.

Huelsman and Pat Erickson are negotiators for the Faculty Alliance. Board members Kenton Krebbiel and Ken Poland, and Dean of Instruction Grace Mary Melvin are the negotiators for the college board.

"The big issue is salaries. This year we opted not to use 'Win-Win' because of negotiations being just on salaries, and it doesn't work very well on salaries," said Erickson. Ken Poland says the problem is balancing available money with the needs and wants of everybody. He stresses this is his opinion, and not that of the college board. "We do not have unlimited resources."

The money that we have available has to cover all of the college expenses. And we can't funnel it all into one group or area. I don't know of very many taxpayers who want their taxes raised. This does not necessarily reflect the views of board or administration bargaining team or of the board as a whole," said Poland.

Briefly

Weather: Warm

The Colby area weather through the weekend can be summed up in one word: Warm! According to the National Weather Service, tonight will bring mostly cloudy skies, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms, low 60-65 and southeast winds 5-15 mph.

Friday, sunny, high in the middle 80s and south winds 10-20 mph. Friday night, partly cloudy, dry, low around 60. Saturday and Sunday, continued dry, lows 60-65 and high

in the 90s. Wednesday's high in Colby was 79 and the overnight low this morning was 59.

The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 75 degrees. There was no additional precipitation, leaving the month's total at 0.09 inches. The records for June 7: 103 in 1969 and 35 in 1916.

(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)



COLBY'S Cruise to the Past



June 8 – 10, 2001

See pages 3, 4, 5 for details

