



# Hapke returns from 'ground zero' with renewed hope

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

One Thomas County woman, who recently returned from New York City and saw firsthand the devastation of Sept. 11, hopes this holiday season will bring people closer together in the spirit of love, patriotism, and an overall belief in one another.

Kathi Hapke of Rexford is an American Red Cross volunteer who accepted an assignment to go to New York as a registered nurse in the latter part of November and early December.

"I feel proud and honored to have been there and it was something that I felt I really needed to do," she said. "It's very difficult for me to put into words what it was like — those people are all heroes. The experience in seeing such a tragedy has helped me learn to appreciate my family, friends and what I have here."

Hapke said her work with the Red Cross was in disaster health services at Liberty Park in New Jersey, which was a 10-minute ferry ride from ground zero.

The majority of her work involved either seeing clients who had been in the World Trade Center or family members of those who perished.

Although Hapke is qualified to help those sick or injured, her primary focus during this two-week commitment was to make sure money was made available for medical needs, along with offering emotional support.

"We paid hospital bills and clinic bills for them," she said, "and, in many cases, would pay for glasses, prescriptions, dentures or even make insurance payments."

Hapke said she was also impressed with the compassion of so many companies that offered discounts to those affected by the attack.

Prior to beginning her volunteer duties, she said there was a dentist who gave an orientation. Hapke found out later that this particular dentist, who had a thriving practice in New York, had decided to leave the city immediately after the terrorist attack.

"I heard he wasted no time in grabbing his family and immediately was heading to Philadelphia," she said. What changed his mind, though, was that he heard the city was begging for doctors to assist in the rescue efforts, Hapke recalled. He still put his family on the plane, but told them he was going to stay with his partner and help the other doctors and some 200 ambulances in the first efforts to save as many people as they could.

"Families would come to our facility, known as the Family Assisted Center, and many would want to go to ground zero for lots of reasons," she said.

Each family was required to either be accompanied by a chaplain or a companion, which was another side of Hapke's work.

"These families or individuals would go back to ground zero to feel a closeness to someone they had lost, or



Hundreds and hundreds of memorials lined the area near where the World Trade Center once stood.

maybe to add something to the memorial wall, while others might go to share with other families that were also visiting the site," she said.

During those companion visits to ground zero, Hapke recalled one man in particular who she saw standing and just watching the recovery crews working. She called this man, Roy, and for most of his life — the area destroyed on Sept. 11 was all he ever knew.

"Roy lived about two blocks from the crime scene on the southwest side of the World Trade Center," she said. "He couldn't get back into his home for a month following the attack."

"Roy worked at the World Trade Center. He went out to eat with friends that worked with him in the building and most of those people were his friends."

For this particular man, everything that was once so familiar to him is now gone — his place of employment, his favorite vendors on the streets, his favorite places to "hang out," and many of his friends, she said.

Hapke said she also saw Ariel Sharon, the prime minister of Israel, the day he arrived to view the disaster.

When she wasn't working 10 to 12 hours most days, Hapke said she liked touring other parts of the city and visiting with New Yorkers.

"I would stop people on the street or in elevators just to talk," she said. "It was important to talk and I found the people in New York to be some of the friendliest I've ever met."

Born and raised in Rexford, the trip was Hapke's first to New York and, while she would have preferred it have been under different circumstances, she was nonetheless grateful to have witnessed the kind of courage and strength she saw.

"So many people's lives were changed forever on that day and if there was one thing I would wish for this holiday season," she said, "it would be for all of us to call our families, hug someone, or just tell another person how much we care."

be methamphetamine within 1,000 feet of a school.

Earlier that day, police had arrested another man in a separate case for selling marijuana within 1,000 feet of a school.

The names of two people arrested were released Friday morning, as charges had not been filed on all five.

Sybrena A. Malsom, 31, 1402 Cherry Ave., is being charged with 11

## Making it pretty



Jamie Quenzer (left) and Megan Blatt, Colby High School students, took time to straighten some of the decorations on this year's Christmas tree located in the main lobby area. The ornaments, said Bryan Bullington, high school principal, were made by the Cosmic Crayon group, which is an school-related organization.

# Would you believe a real tractor under the tree?

SABIN, Minn. (AP) — Builders usually had two questions for Jim Briden when he explained his plan to park a 20-ton antique steam tractor in his new family room.

"Are you married?" Then, "Does your wife know about this yet?"

"I'm married to a man that's just always outside the box," Lynette Briden said with a laugh, sitting on a couch under a Christmas tree and tractor that both stand taller than 12 feet.

Jim Briden's 110-horsepower Case tractor was one of 50 the company built in 1913, and one of only five restored

intact today.

Briden said he became interested in old tractors as a child. He finished the restoration on the Case tractor 20 years ago, after six years of work that led him around the country, borrowing parts from other owners so he could have replacements cast for his machine. He and another steam-engine aficionado bought the tractor from a British Columbia saw mill, which was using just the boiler and engine for power.

Now its sole owner, Briden shows the machine at the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion in nearby

Rollag, where collectors of antique farm and construction equipment meet every Labor Day weekend.

The tractor runs fine, although it needs 350 gallons of water to power one hour of work.

The tractor had been stored in Rollag until about a year ago, when the Bridens moved to a ranch house near Sabin, about 12 miles southeast of Fargo, N.D., and began planning to add a family room.

"The room kept getting bigger and bigger until there was room enough for everything," Jim Briden said.

and sale of drugs and the sale of drugs within 1,000 feet of a school, a more serious charge.

Court records say on two occasions Keller had about one ounce of alleged marijuana in a plastic bag, which he sold to a confidential informant for \$100 at 608 W. 14th. The home is two blocks from Grant Junior High School.

Keller reportedly made the sales on July 20 and 30. He is being charged

To support the tractor's weight, 3-by-5-foot footings were sunk into the ground beneath a concrete floor. The floor is 6 feet thick under the tractor's large iron rear wheels, which carry 18 tons of its bulk.

A 13-foot-square door in the wall is camouflaged on the outside with the same blue siding as the rest of the addition. Inside, the door is painted the same dark green as the rest of the room.

A neighbor brought over a modern tractor to push in the old Case. At 11 feet wide and 12 1/2 feet tall, it fit inside with inches to spare, Briden said.

with two counts of sale of a hallucinogenic drug within 1,000 feet of a school, and two counts of possessing drugs without a state drug tax stamp.

Malsom's charges stem from alleged sales on Oct. 17, Nov. 6 and Dec. 18.

Court records say on Nov. 6, she sold about one-half ounce of suspected marijuana to a confidential informant for \$40 at 1402 Cherry, which is 448 feet from the Goodland High School.

## Briefly

### Weather: Flurries, breezy

Don't expect any warm-up this week as Old Man Winter settles in. Tonight, partly cloudy, some snow flurries likely, lows around 15 and northwest winds 10-20 mph. Christmas Day, partly sunny, some flurries likely, highs around 35 and strong northwest winds 15-25 mph. Christmas Night, partly cloudy, again some flurries likely, lows around 10. Wednesday, partly sunny, highs in the lower to mid-40s. Snow could move into the area on Thursday, and a developing system is being watched closely. Colby's dropped to

+9 overnight. Precipitation remains at 0.07 inches for the month. The records for Dec. 24: 83 in 1964 and -14 in 1983. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Wellness Fair wants merchants

With the annual Wellness Fair nearing, businesses are being asked to take part in promoting community health and wellness by covering the cost of the fair registration and or

health screenings for their employees who may want to participate. Screenings will be from 6 to 10 a.m. at Citizens Medical Center on Saturday, Jan. 5 and Jan. 12. The fair itself will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26, 2002, at the student union on the Colby Community College campus.

### Soup supper scheduled next year

The Episcopal Church Women will be sponsoring a soup supper and bake sale on Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2002, from 5:30 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. The

cost is \$3. The soups offered will be vegetable and chili. For questions, call 462-2651.

### Technology group plans dinner

The Colby High School chapter of the Technology Student Association is having a rainbow mystery dinner on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2001, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the high school commons area. The event will offer students a chance to showcase their work and everyone in invited to attend.

# Dr. Jeff Jennings dies at 29

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby community was saddened and shocked to hear over the weekend that their native son, Dr. Jeff D. Jennings, 29, died at his home early Saturday morning.

Dr. Jennings, a graduate of Colby High School, Colby Community College and the University of Kansas, joined the medical team of Colby Medical and Surgical Center in August.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in biology, Dr. Jennings was accepted into the University of Kansas Medical School in Kansas City and graduated in 1998. He did a three-year residency at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita in family practice.

As the newest physician at the Colby clinic, his practice took in the entire scope of medicine ranging from obstetrics to geriatrics. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Medical Association and American Association of Family Practitioners, and the Colby Rotary. Funeral services will be at 10:30 a.m., Thursday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Colby with Father Galen Long officiating.

Burial will be at the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Colby. A wake service will be held at Harrison Chapel, 190 S. Franklin, Colby, beginning at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 26.

Dr. Jennings was born in Colby on March 20, 1972 and is survived by his wife, Angie (Somers), and their daughter, Abby, 21 months old.

Other family members surviving him include his parents, David and Donna (Schipers) Jennings of Colby; his brother, Josh, Manhattan; and his sister, Gina Jennings, Salina.

The family has requested that memorials be made for Abby's education fund and contributions may be left at any Colby bank or Harrison Chapel.

In addition, Dr. Jennings' high school classmates have established a memorial fund and are asking that contributions be made at Sunflower Bank.



Jeff Jennings



