



COLBY FREE PRESS

Citizen group forms in support of Dr. Victor Hildyard

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

In preparation for a town meeting expected to be held the first week of October, a group of local supporters of Dr. Victor Hildyard gathered on Wednesday afternoon at the Colby Community Building.

Approximately 50 people attended the two-hour gathering, primarily out of the sheer frustration in not knowing

all the facts that have transpired over the last six months beginning with the first restraining order placed against Hildyard, according to those organizing the new group.

The group, which is now being called "Area Citizens for Healthcare," is in the beginning stages of coordinating efforts to insure that the doctors in the Colby area continue to practice here, promoting unity between the

hospital patients and physicians, and allowing people here to have a voice into their hospital.

The group also established a subgroup to help defray the legal costs being incurred by Hildyard, or support him in other ways.

The start of an official board was set in place by the group, naming John Kern as president, Henry (Hank) Vette as vice president, Dennis Horney as

treasurer, and Carol Voison as secretary. At large members include: Jennifer Woofter, Dave Jennings, Angie Jennings, Doyle Zimmerman, Jim Smith, Fawna McFee and Max Melvin.

"The group is very concerned that Citizens Medical Center is manipulating the physicians and practitioners," said Kern

Hildyard told the group that a court

hearing, a result of the recent motion filed in Thomas County District Court by the Board of Trustees of Citizens Medical Center — previously scheduled for Oct. 10 — has been changed to Oct. 9.

It was decided to hold the town meeting before the court date. After location arrangements are made, the date and time will be released.

The group decided to have a mission

statement drafted. Ideas from the crowd were given on what they felt the purpose of the group should be and Joan Albers was asked to collaborate with others to put the ideas together to form a possible mission statement.

"This group has the public interest solely in mind and we want to foster unity to keep our medical community strong, while inviting new physicians," Kern said.

School numbers are down

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

The Colby School District's final enrollment figures are in, and the head count is 19 fewer than last year.

If only it was that simple budget-wise.

With F.T.E., or Full Time Enrollment, weighting, and factoring in enrollment figures from the Thomas County Learning Center, and shaking a Magic 8-Ball to see if Gov. Bill Graves will hit the schools one more time before he says farewell in January, the school district's business manager, Jo DeYoung, is ready to say, tentatively, that Colby might just come out slightly ahead of last year in the money department.

"We budgeted for a four percent decrease," she said this morning. "That's about what we had. But then you have to factor in the Thomas County Learning Center, where enrollment is up twenty-five students. That balances out our loss."

Sounds easy, so far.

But, with Kansas schools facing budget shortfalls, the state is doling out money in allotments.

"With the three-year averaging that we do," DeYoung said, "we should be around \$75,000 higher than last year. But the state is only going to give us \$50,000 of that. So that's a net gain of \$25,000."

"But," she added, "we may or may not get that, depending on what the governor decides to do before he leaves office. He may cut that, as well."

DeYoung said that the district is doing everything it can to be frugal. "We aren't spending any money that we don't have to until we know how things are going to shake out," she said. "We're meeting payroll and basic expenses, but after that, we're being very careful."

The final enrollment head count is officially 1,043, with 386 children enrolled at Colby Grade School, 269 students at Colby Middle School, and 388 at Colby High School.

Last year the total was 1,062 students.

Moving right along



Ron Wishon and Jim Griffin worked this morning at the new site on Davis Avenue for S&T Telephone. Both Wishon and Griffin are employed with McKee Inc., and were working on installing pipe for heat-

ing. Employees of Jim's Electric and Woofter Construction were also on site working towards the late October completion date of the Colby location.

MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Shallenburger camp disappointed

Farm Bureau won't take sides in governor's race

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Saying neither candidate was its clear favorite, the 42,000-member Kansas Farm Bureau has declined to endorse either Republican Tim Shallenburger or Democrat Kathleen Sebelius for governor.

The neutral stance is a break from tradition for Kansas' biggest agricultural group, which has regularly backed Republicans in statewide races since forming a political committee in 1993.

But this year's gubernatorial contest is different, Farm Bureau members

said Wednesday in announcing the decision.

"At this point in time, we're not in a position to favor one over the other at all," said Roger Griffin, a political committee member from Lyons. "We think we can work with either one."

As if to underscore the point, the Farm Bureau donated \$1,000 apiece to Shallenburger and Sebelius.

The Farm Bureau issues its endorsements after gathering opinions from groups in all 105 counties, which weigh candidates' positions not only on agriculture policy but on such issues

as health care, education and taxes.

Some county groups favored Shallenburger and some preferred Sebelius, but a majority advocated no endorsement, Griffin said.

"We weren't meaning it to be a blow to anybody, or that we were showing favoritism to one side or the other," he said.

The Shallenburger camp acknowledged disappointment.

"We certainly had hoped that we would have received the endorse-

ment," said Shallenburger spokesman Bob Murray.

In the Sebelius campaign, "We're excited about it, without a doubt," spokesman Jeremy Anderson said.

Only one Democrat in a statewide or congressional race — U.S. Rep. Dennis Moore, of the 3rd District — has been endorsed by the Farm Bureau this year.

Of the organization's 111 endorsements for Kansas House seats, 35 were for Democrats.

West Nile reaches 87 counties in Kansas

GARDEN CITY (AP) — On a national map showing the 32 states with human cases of West Nile virus, Kansas stands out like an island of safety. So far, somehow, not a single person has been confirmed to have contracted the mosquito-borne disease.

But Kansas' horse population is suffering, and so are shaken owners like Bill Cummings, who watched his 1,200-pound quarter horse Colonel Bill sicken and succumb to West Nile in a matter of days.

"I know it was my mistake not having the horse vaccinated," said Cummings, of Garden City.

Like many people, however, he didn't think West Nile virus would spread as it has this summer. For one thing, while the public has been cautioned for months to eliminate pools of standing water where mosquitoes typically breed, much of Kansas has been dust-dry. "It doesn't have to be wet for this thing to hit. It's dry at our place; the river beds are dry," said Cummings,

whose family stables seven horses.

On Wednesday, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment reported that West Nile virus has been confirmed in 16 more of the state's 105 counties, for a total of 87.

No part of the state is spared. Cases have now been confirmed from Sherman County in the far northwest to Doniphan County in the northeastern corner, from Morton County in southwestern Kansas to Cherokee County in the southeast.

Briefly

"Delene" concert comes to Colby

The Colby area will have an opportunity to hear one of the featured voices at Branson, Mo. in concert at the Colby High School auditorium at 7 p.m., Saturday. "Delene" was nominated for Branson's "Entertainer of the Year" in 2001 and is critically acclaimed for her truly pure voice and presentation. Her appearance in Colby is a benefit concert for Sacred Heart School. Tickets, \$10 for adults and \$7 for students, may be purchased in advance from Donelan's Jewelry, His Shop, Leroy's Printing, Someplace Special, True Value Hardware, Uptown Style or at Sacred Heart School.

Girl Scouts are busy

Girl Scouts are conducting their *QSP Family and Friends Program* now through Oct. 20. This program encourages readers at all levels by providing them with the "Be a Reader patch program and a magazine subscription sale. Girls are asking family and friends to support their troop and council through the magazine subscription sale. For questions, contact Shannon Koon at 462-

6662. The troops are also selling Girl Scout calendars and pocket planners. The calendars and planners sell for \$2 each and support troop activities such as craft purchases, field trips, sleepovers, etc.

Extension mailing out ballots

The Thomas County Extension office has mailed out their annual election ballots to all county households. Any resident 18 and older is eligible to vote. If additional ballots are needed for your household, please stop by the Extension office at 350 South Range, Suite 16 or call 462-4582. Voting deadline is Oct. 18, 2002.

EMTB Course is underway

Kathi Wright, Thomas County EMS director, said today that an EMTB (basic) Course is currently underway, and is being held on Mondays and Wednesdays. The course will continue through April and additional information is available by calling Director Wright at 462-4585.

Outdoor Skills Day is Saturday

The second annual Youth Outdoor Skills Day is planned for this

Saturday near Colby. Skills the youth will participate in include shot gunning, archery, map and compass reading, game calling demonstration, trapping and snaring demonstration, and muzzle loading. Buffalo burgers will be served for lunch. There is no charge for the event, so bring yourself and your parents to have a fun day. Those interested are encouraged to contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and obtain a Registration/Liability release form and return it as soon as possible. A hunter education card for participants is required. Contact Leonard Hopper at 462-3367 or Benny Young at 462-7602 for more information.

Soup suppers slated to benefit baby

Two soup supper dates have been set to benefit Braden Beims, infant son of Mitch and Courtney Beims of Colby. The Colby United Methodist Church will hold a soup supper on Sunday from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Church. The other will be held in the Colby High School commons area before the Oct. 1 Colby High School girls volleyball game from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Soups will be chili and chicken noodle, with relishes, dessert, and tea.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Wednesday's high, 73
Low this morning, 39
Year ago today, 80 and 42
Temperature at 10:30 a.m. today, 52
Colby's 24-hour rainfall, 0.07
Records for Sept. 26, 95 in 1901; 21 in 1942

The forecast

Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the lower 40s. Friday, sunny, highs 75-80, south winds up to 20 mph. Friday night, clear, lows in the lower 40s. Saturday, sunny, highs in the upper 60s. No precipitation expected. (*Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, unless otherwise noted. Forecast is from the National Weather Service.*)

Colby Water Usage

• Sept. 25 = 2.025 million gallons

Levels of Concern

Watch Level 3.5 million gallons

Warning Level 4.0 million gallons

Emergency Level 4.5 million gallons

(Three consecutive days)

