



COLBY FREE PRESS



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Members of the Colby Grade School third grade class showed off their new dictionaries, which they received today from the Colby Rotary club. The club gave out the dictionaries as part of a literacy service project. This was the first year for the project.

Colby Rotary Club gets wordy

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Third graders at Colby Grade School got a surprise today. Each student received a Scholastic dictionary from members of the Colby Rotary Club.

Rotary member Nancy LePell said they also gave dictionaries to third graders at Heartland Christian School last week and the third grade at Sacred Heart School on Tuesday.

LePell, along with members Cindy Cersovsky, Janice McCart, Paul Steele, Nick Wells, Gene Rothfuss, with help from Scott Barnum, who took pictures, gave out the books to students and their teachers today.

Seventy-eight of the dictionaries were given to students and teachers at the three schools.

"It's one of our service projects working toward our literacy award," LePell said. "It was paid for by a combination of donations from Rotary members and a district grant."

The purpose of the project is to help promote literacy. Each of the books had the child's name inside, as well as a letter to parents explaining the dictionaries are a gift from Rotary. It also included Rotary's four-way test, which is "Is it the



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Colby Grade School third grader Shania Finley (both in foreground) accepted her dictionary from Colby Rotary member Cindy Cersovsky today in the grade school gym.

truth: Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?"

The dictionary they chose is one that other Rotary clubs around the country are using for similar projects.

"These are full of color and pictures and graphics," she said. "I could spend all day in one."

This is the first year for such a project, and LePell hopes to make it an annual event. Planning started in August and September, and it was an easy undertaking. She said they

had excellent cooperation between the club and the schools.

Grade school principal Terrel Harrison said the books are a "wonderful" gift to students. She added the students were excited about receiving them, and hopes the club can do the project again next year.

Holiday sales off to good start in town

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Christmas shopping season has begun and, so far, Colby merchants are reporting brisk sales. And hopes are high business will increase as it gets closer to Christmas.

Brenda Swafford, manager of the Sports Shoppe, said things have been good.

"It's starting to pick up a little bit," she said, adding they will be getting busier as the month goes on.

The theme from the Christmas light parade, "For a de-"light"ful Christmas, shop Colby first, shop Colby last," is helping business.

The store already expanded holiday hours to be open Sundays and,

like the rest of downtown businesses, will be open until 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday starting Monday.

Swafford said everything in the store has been fair game for Christmas shoppers, but college items have proved the most popular.

At Someplace Special, sales and traffic have been "wonderful" so far, said owner Jackie Wiens.

The demand has been for ornaments and holiday items.

"They're (customers) decorating their homes," she said.

Swafford said business is up significantly over last year. She attributed it to colder weather, because it puts people more in a holiday mood,

unlike the warmer weather at the same time in 2004.

The business has also had a lot more out of town visitors.

Swafford said a lot of travelers have stopped in to take a look around also.

Horlacher Jewelers is experiencing a good holiday season, too.

Owner Jeff Horlacher said it's going "very well" right now.

"Things are heating up as the temperature goes down," he said.

Sales and traffic are both good compared to past years, and he expects to get busier as the month goes on.

Curt Beringer, manager at Beringer Hardware, said so far, busi-

ness has been "pretty good."

Their annual holiday open house was held last weekend and many specials kept customers coming in the store.

Beringer said it was a good weekend, and hopes the season stays that way.

"It's up from last year," he said.

While not what one could consider big draws for Christmas shopping, a business like Colby AgCenter still has items that could be a draw.

Parts manager Larry Ummel said toys and Yamaha items are proving popular this year.

Business for such gifts has been better than last year.

Quick approval of bonds needed for roads

TOPEKA (AP) — With legislators likely to face intense budget pressures next year, Kansas' top transportation official launched a campaign Tuesday to keep the state's comprehensive highway program on track.

Transportation Secretary Deb Miller said legislators need to approve \$210 million in bonds by Jan.

31 to prevent the state from canceling road, bridge and interchange projects it already has promised communities.

She also said legislators must avoid diverting highway funds to other uses.

"The program is not complete. Important commitments have been made to communities in all regions

of the state," she said during a news conference. Under Miller's timetable, the state would issue the \$210 million in bonds sooner than legislators had anticipated to make up for receiving less federal funds than expected.

She said she's confident legislators won't undermine the 10-year program, which started in 1999 and

is due to spend \$13.2 billion.

When legislators open their next session on Jan. 9, they could face increasing spending on public schools by hundreds of millions of dollars as a result of a lawsuit filed in 1999 by parents and administrators in Dodge City and Salina. Sstate universities want to tackle \$584 million in overdue building repairs.

Pediatrician to leave area after 10 years

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Economic ups and downs coupled with the challenge of developing a pediatric fast track system at another location were two reasons why one Colby doctor said he is leaving.

After 10 years, Dr. Raymond Ketting, pediatrician at Colby Medical and Surgical Center and the Citizens Medical Center's chief of staff, will say goodbye to his patients and the medical community Monday as he heads for Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center in Missouri.

"I will miss my patients, who I consider friends," Ketting said. "In bigger cities, the relationship is not as personal as it is here," which was a major draw when he came to Colby nearly a decade ago.

Ketting said he discovered Colby's medical community in 1990 while attending the University of Kansas Medical School.

"I was assigned to a preceptorship at Colby Medical and Surgical Center," he said and then after three years of residency in Florida, with two months each year in Colby, he chose to work

Ketting said his specialty was pediatric lung and kidney, but he also was well-versed in emergency room services and adult medicine.

"If I had to leave Colby, I would want the challenge of a wide-spectrum of medicine," he said, adding that the Poplar Bluff facility was that kind of place.

In addition to the fast track pediatric service, Ketting will also work in the emergency room and with trauma patients.

The Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center has close to a 160,000-patient draw from a six-county region, with a 430-bed capacity, making it the largest hospital in southeast Missouri.

Ketting also spoke about the climate of the medical community in Colby.

"The potential is here," he said, "it's just that people need to remember to treat each other like a business."

Patient reaction

Marlyce Campbell, a respiratory therapist, who has known Ketting since his preceptor days in Colby, said it's a total shame Colby won't do more to keep him here.

She said that many of the new doctors being recruited have to build up their clientele and with Ketting, that has already been established.

"It is almost unheard of to get a pediatrician in a rural community and one who also treats adults," Campbell said, "and for the hospital (Citizens Medical Center) not to work with him is terrible."

Campbell believes Ketting is a "rare commodity" and not only will Colby and other surrounding areas suffer from his departure, but the patient care will suffer too.

"We are losing one of our best doctors and nobody will be taking over his practice — there is no pediatrician coming to replace him," she said.

Jill Hanson of Wallace said that about eight years ago, her son was diagnosed with a rare syndrome and expected rural northwest Kansas to have limited resources in helping him.

"Coming from Denver where I had a lot of options, I was concerned about the quality of health my son, D.J. would receive here," she said. Hanson said she was impressed with Drs. Victor Hildyard and LaDonna Regier and while they are options now, she said Ketting was right for her son.

"Dr. Ketting not only was familiar with the syndrome, but he had seen it and worked with it in his Florida residency," she said. "We are blessed to have some great doctors here — it's just that Missouri is getting an awesome doctor."

Hanson said she wishes the community could do something to make him stay.

In her particular situation, Hanson said she and Ketting did a lot of brainstorming on various aspects of D.J.'s life and his Schwachman-Diamond Syndrome.

"Dr. Ketting helped D.J. and our family with education, medical and how to ease the trauma of the disease," she said.

"We will miss him — he was an answer to our prayers."

Deb Ihrig of Goodland also talked about her experiences with Ketting.

"I love Dr. Ketting's personality and he is so good with children," she said. Ihrig has twin boys, Gannon and Gage, 10, and one younger son, Garin, 5.

She spoke about Ketting's help on treating allergies and asthma, along with maintenance involving tubes for her younger son.

"We couldn't ask for a nicer person and I think we are going to try and treat Dr. Ketting more like a specialist now — I am not willing to give him up," she said.

Lisa Stoll of Brewster worked for Ketting from 1999 until 2003 and spoke about what an asset he is.

"He is awesome with children," Stoll said, adding that when young people were feeling bad, he could change their outlook for the better during that same visit.

"I think everyone will be surprised how much Dr. Ketting will be missed," she said, "he had a huge clientele and was a good doctor."

Monique Eaton, Ketting's nurse for the last three years, reiterated Stoll's thoughts about the doctor and how he was with his patients.

"He is a broad-spectrum kind of guy," she said, "and isn't afraid to try anything to help his patients."

Citizens Medical Center, 100 E. College Dr., is planning a farewell luncheon for Ketting from noon until 1 p.m., Friday, in the hospital cafeteria.

Sandwiches will be served and everyone in the community is invited to attend, officials said.



R. Ketting

'What's in Santa's sack?' still not claimed

The winning number "476" in the "What's In Santa's Sack?" sponsored by the Colby Chamber of Commerce Promotion Committee has not been claimed as yet. On each of the Holiday Gift Reference Guide booklets that were available prior to Sunday, Dec. 4, a number was stamped on the front cover, which was the

entry number. The winning number was drawn at the Christmas Light Parade on Sunday and has been announced in the *Colby Free Press* and KXXX-KQLS. Anyone who has the winning number, 476, is asked to present their booklet to the Colby Chamber of Commerce, 350 S. Range Ave., to claim their prize.