



COLBY FREE PRESS



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Jordan Hartwell of Colby, right, swapped a couple of dollars with Jennifer Reed, left, for a sno cone Saturday during the Northwest Kansas League Swim Meet Saturday at the Colby Municipal Pool. The sno cone business helped keep swimmers cool between events.

Colby welcomes new surgeon

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Patients at Citizens Medical Center in Colby will no longer have to travel for orthopedic services. Beginning today, the hospital will offer the services of Dr. Mekki Saba, general orthopedic surgeon.

Janice McCart, president and chief executive officer of the hospital, said the opportunity to add services came along at the right time.

"It's a service we knew we could offer at the hospital if we could find the right surgeon," she said.

Saba, 66, said he is happy to be in Colby and ready to offer orthopedic and trauma services.

"I believe we can fix it, and make a big difference to patients if we do it at home and not be transferred somewhere else," Dr. Saba said. "I'm very much excited. I aim to make Colby the orthopedic center for small communities."

He graduated from Baghdad Medical College in 1967 and continued his medical training in London. He received his specialty in general surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons before beginning his training in orthopedics. Saba has been practicing orthopedic surgery since 1980.

After completing his training, he waited for a permanent job in England, but there were limited vacancies. He said for every job that comes open, there were up to 200 applicants.

After four years of waiting, Saba had two options — more training or go somewhere British training would be accepted.

A friend who trained with him heard about an opening in Fort Scott, and he applied. He interviewed for the job, and received his license while working as a consultant and surgeon in the United Arab Emirates. Saba was in Fort Scott 15 years.

He chose orthopedics for one reason.

"You can see results from your work immediately," he said. For example, he said if he does a hip

replacement, the patient can walk the next day, "and will have a smile on their face."

"He does all orthopedic procedures except for the upper back," McCart said. That includes hips, ankles, feet, shoulders, the lower back.

Jennifer Scott, president of ancillary services, said surgery on the upper back requires a neurologist and equipment not available at the hospital.

Saba will evaluate orthopedic trauma. If someone received a deep laceration damaging the muscle, tendon or ligaments, he will be able to determine if the problem can be treated in Colby or the patient must be taken elsewhere.

In the past, the hospital has had services of specialty doctors from Denver, Colo., and Hays. Patients have had to travel for procedures.

With the addition of Saba, a second operating room is being added.

New x-ray equipment has been ordered, and an orthopedic operating table installed. Staff is also being trained to assist with orthopedic surgery.

McCart said a second operating room has been planned for some time, and the addition of Saba came at the right time.

"If an orthopedic procedure is being done, and someone needs, for example, an emergency Cesarean, that is where the second operating room will come in," she said.

The room, still under construction, is estimated at \$200,000.

Some of the equipment will be intermixed with the current operating room.

"This is still adding a new line of service, which is exciting to us to have someone of his caliber on the staff," McCart said.

McCart said the hospital was in partnership with Atwood to bring Saba here. He was going to help cover the emergency room there, and offer orthopedic services at both hospitals, but said Atwood chose to go in a different direction.

"We feel fortunate to have him," she said. "It's a win-win situation for northwest Kansas."

The hospital is hosting a community welcome for Saba from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, July 20, at Colby Country Club.



Saba

Weak wheat harvest may show at stores

WICHITA (AP) — A paltry winter wheat harvest in the nation's breadbasket has driven up the cost of flour for consumers, with more price hikes feared as drought takes a growing toll on the nation's spring wheat crop as well.

Among those noticing the rising flour prices at the grocery store is Dale Eustace, a professor of grain science at Kansas State University. Eustace, who retired as the college's flour mill superintendent, said 25-pound bags of flour that had been running \$9 or \$10 before the winter wheat harvest are now \$2 to \$3 higher.

Not only is the raw ingredient more costly because of this season's short wheat crop and low stock carry-over from last year, but flour

mills across the nation are having to scramble to find the classes of wheat their customers want to buy. The only bright spot is crop quality: Test weights and protein levels for winter wheat are both exceptionally good this year.

"It is kind of like the price of gas: It just keeps going up," Eustace said. "It is the same problem with flour. You got to have it, so people are going to keep buying it."

Hard red winter wheat flour — the type of flour most commonly grown in Kansas, the nation's largest wheat producer — is used for making flour for breads.

Kansas is also the nation's biggest flour milling state. Texas and Oklahoma, both major winter wheat growers, had dismal harvests

this season. Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in early summer.

Spring wheat types — grown primarily in more northern states where summers are not as harsh — are used to mill flour that makes its way into pasta, cakes and other baked goods.

At the Stafford County Flour Mills Co. in Hudson, President Alvin Brening said winter wheat harvest in the area was down about a third than what is normal. But the quality of the wheat — such as protein levels and test weights — was good. He was more worried about the price his mill was paying for it this season.

Last month, the Agriculture Department forecast the Kansas wheat

crop would come in at 291.4 million bushels. That would make the crop 23 percent smaller than last year's harvest.

Nationwide, the agency predicted the winter wheat harvest would be 1.26 billion bushels, 16 percent below last year. The agency was expected to revise those estimates Wednesday.

With the winter wheat harvest so poor, people in the industry were initially buoyed by the greater numbers of acres planted into spring wheat.

The all-wheat planted acreage was up 1 percent from last year, with spring wheat acreage up 4 percent from a year ago, according to the latest count from the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Preacher turns teacher

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

For the past two years, Brad Herndon has preached Psalm 98:6, the scripture about making a joyful noise with a trumpet. Herndon will continue that, literally, at Colby Community College.

Herndon was named director of bands at the college replacing Dr. David Mruzek who has accepted a position at a private college in Ohio.

Herndon, 43, has been in Colby for two years preaching at the First Baptist and First Christian churches. Recent issues at First Baptist influenced him to look for other employment. Although he assists with First Christian Church, he said it was not enough to make a living on.

"It became apparent things could be coming to an end," he said.

Herndon's timing and experience would soon pay off.

Before preaching in Colby, Herndon had taught band at Frank Phillips College in Texas and at Allen Community College in Iola. Herndon said he had to leave those

positions due to the schools' financial situations.

"My jobs at the past two schools were to resuscitate something that is dead. That is not the case here," he said.

Herndon is expecting to start the school year with at least 60 band members and the momentum from Mruzek's leadership.

"Mruzek did a great job recruiting," he said. "This is the guy who has all the stuff after his name. I just hold the baton."

Herndon said his wife, Jeannie, could also tell a difference in him while preaching and teaching. He said she could see the stress of church work.

"While I was teaching, she said I was the man she married," he said.

He does not completely want to leave the ministry. Herndon will formally leave First Baptist Church in August but will continue with the First Christian Church indefinitely.

"I still feel called to the ministry," he said. "and I will continue to minister when available."

The Herndon's son is a senior in high school this year. Herndon said

he did not want to leave Colby at such an important time in his son's life.

"We can stay here, that is very cool," he said.

Other than recruiting more students to play in band, Herndon is not expecting a major overhaul of the band program. He is expecting commitment to band from the students though.

"While at Allen County, we had to prove ourselves," he said. Scholarship students were required to take private lessons and play in two different groups within the band.

"It's not different than sports recruits," he said. "They put in tons of hours for their scholarship. What would you expect of them?"

Full-time Colby Community College students don't have to be the only band members. Herndon said he will consider other people as well, even those who only take one college class, as long as they know how to play an instrument.

Herndon acquired his master's degree from Fort Hays State University and has begun his doctorate through the University of Northern Colorado.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

New Colby Community College band instructor Brad Herndon posed in the college's band room. Herndon previously was the minister at Colby's First Baptist and First Christian churches. Herndon will continue at First Christian indefinitely.