



COLBY FREE PRESS

Doctor, state discuss future practice

If agreements are made, doctor could have limited work

By **Patty Decker**
Free Press Editor

Following a meeting held Saturday between a Colby doctor and the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts in Topeka, negotiations between the two could lead to the state reversing its decision revoking the physician's privileges.

"Nothing has been decided one way or the other regarding the board and Dr. Victor Hildyard," said General Counsel Mark Stafford with the Kansas Board of Healing Arts, the agency overseeing and regulating

doctors and other health care professionals.

However, Stafford spoke today about the Saturday meeting.

"The board and doctor discussed ways to resolve the revocation order," he said. "A good deal of time was spent in cordial and



Hildyard

productive conversation," Stafford said "and more communication could occur in the future."

Two months ago, the state board of healing arts withdrew Hildyard's license based on multiple charges related to Hildyard's handling of specific cases.

The debate has been spread out over several years including various court cases, testimonies and the state board of healing art's own investigation.

Stafford said today no decisions were made to reinstate Hildyard's

privileges but both the board and doctor walked away in the hopes of finding some "middle ground, if that can be found."

Unable to talk in specifics, Stafford said the board could consider whether some form of practice could be reinstated.

"From the doctor's side, Hildyard could be thinking about whether or not he could accept certain conditions or limitations on his medical privileges," Stafford said. "Among appropriate remedies the board must address all its concerns about

the doctor and what is practical and affordable in order to accomplish that."

The board of healing arts is looking at what is in the best interest of the public and appropriate ways to achieve that, Stafford said.

As for timelines regarding when agreements can be made, Stafford said it can happen at the board's meeting in April or it can be discussed earlier in a special meeting.

"Both sides have a lot to think about," he said.

Stafford said the meeting between the board and Hildyard was

initiated mutually by both parties.

"Somehow or another, both the board and doctor wanted to look at ways short of license revocation," he said.

Saturday's discussion does not negate the doctor's other options, which include filing notice of appeal to the higher court on the board's ruling to revoke his privileges.

Hildyard, a family practitioner for more than 30 years in Colby, was unavailable for comment. His attorney, Mike O'Neal of Hutchinson, also could not be reached.

Group supports prairie dogs

By **Jan Katz Ackerman**
Colby Free Press

Another organization supporting prairie dog growth in Logan County has filed paperwork in Logan County District Court to have a voice in an upcoming hearing.

Jeffrey Harsh, volunteer director of the American Trail Foundation of Oakley, has filed a brief asking District Judge Jack Lively to acknowledge the foundation's belief prairie dogs are good for the environment.

"We are interested in the environment and animals in the short grass prairie," Harsh said. "Just like the lion is the king of the jungle, the prairie dog is the king of the prairie."

Saying the American Trail Foundation was founded in 2006, Harsh said prairie dogs are a remarkable animal.

"They have their own language, recognize people and are very much like humans in taking care of their young," Harsh said.

A resident of Thomas County, Harsh said he lives at the Free Breakfast Inn on U.S. Highway 83 in Oakley. A supporter of prairie dog population growth, Harsh, in his brief calls them the "keystone of their ecosystem."

Harsh asks the judge "the multi-billion dollar corporation Farm Bureau not be the only group as spokesman for the citizens of western Kansas."

The Farm Bureau earlier this month filed a similar brief with the court supporting the Logan County Commissioners in legal action against several landowners.

The Farm Bureau supports Logan County Commissioners Doug Mackley, Carl Uhrich and Nick Scott's position that several landowners are thwarting their effort to control prairie dogs.

The commissioners said Larry Haverfield and his wife, Elizabeth Haverfield of Russell Springs; Robert Barnhardt, Jr. of Bucklin; Maxine Blank of Willard, Utah; Donald and Lillian Becker of Winona; and Dixie Surratt of Panhandle, Texas, are those landowners.

Defendants in the case have intentionally moved cattle to certain tracts of land to keep the chemical Rozol from being applied starting March 1.

Harsh said the American Trail Foundation's position is that the environment saves the future for not only people, but the short grass prairie.

A hearing is set for 9 a.m. April 4 in Logan County District Court in Oakley.

Not just another song and dance



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: Mary Beth Akers, left, used the piano to help her son and daughter, Josiah and Kendra Akers, all of Weskan, to tune their violins before the Pride of the Prairie Orchestra concert Sunday at the Colby Community College Cultural Arts Center.

RIGHT: The Colby High School dance team performed during halftime of the boy's basketball game Friday at the Colby Community Building.



Kansas rejects buffer zone for sexual predators

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — When it comes to making laws to protect children from sexual predators, Kansas legislators have been as aggressive as anyone.

But it's something the Legislature has not done that is gaining attention in other states that have discovered that some of the best-intentioned laws might not be the most useful.

A Senate panel wants Kansas to steer clear of restricting where sex offenders live.

Last week it endorsed extending

a moratorium passed last year that keeps cities and municipalities from creating buffer zones for molesters.

"They just don't work," said Sen. John Vratil, R-Leawood, who is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "They sound good at first blush, and to people who don't know the facts, it appears to be a quick and simple fix. It is not."

A bill in the House would remove the moratorium.

At least 21 states have residency restrictions for sex offenders. But in

some of those states, such as Iowa, lawmakers are trying to figure out how to get rid of them.

For a second year, Iowa prosecutors, police and victims' advocates are pushing the Legislature to overturn the state's law. Because of the law that bans child molesters from living within 2,000 feet of a school, they say, authorities have lost track of hundreds of offenders.

"People who don't think it through think it provides safety, when in fact it does not," said Corwin Ritchie, executive director

of the Iowa County Attorneys Association. "But no one has demonstrated how (residency restrictions) will deter sex offenders or protect children."

Part of the reason is that only a small percentage of child victims are assaulted by strangers. Most are abused by family members and acquaintances.

A Kansas task force that studied buffer zones concluded that such measures could push offenders into rural areas, away from treatment, support systems and jobs.

Happy New Year ... in May

Snowed out concert rescheduled May 27

By **Tisha Cox**
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Fairgrounds will be the site of a concert Sunday, May 27. The fair board approved the use of the grounds for the event at its meeting Thursday.

Rich Epp of J&R Marketing asked the board about using the facilities for the concert. He explained the concert was to have taken place New Year's Eve, but was canceled because of snow.

"Rescheduling was an option because some of the acts are still available," Epp said. "Colby High School isn't set up for such a large event, and the Colby Community Building is booked that weekend."

More than 500 kids are expected for the Christian rock concert, and tickets purchased initially for Dec 31 are still good for the event.

"I think we have the opportunity to bring a lot of people to town," Epp said.

Epp was planning on about 1,000 youth in town on New Year's Eve.

The board is charging \$300 in rent for the event, and Epp said he will find help to clean up the fairgrounds after the concert.

In other fair board news ...

Storage for emergency supplies was also discussed. County Emergency Management Director Jim Engel asked the board about using part of the solar building for storage.

Engel has four generators, more than 150 cots and tubs of blankets that need to be stored.

Board president Mark Anderson said the east end of the building can be used for that purpose, but the board instead offered a stall in the Commercial Building.

Anderson said the solar building is full and also needs some work on the floor.

"The foundation isn't the best," he said.

Pouring a new foundation and moving the building was discussed, but nothing was decided. Anderson said they will take the matter to the county commissioners to discuss the options.



Epp