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## By George: still his holiday

By Steve Haynes

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Whether you have the day off or have to work – and most of us who aren't government employees probably will – you probably thought the holiday Monday was called Presidents Day.

If so, technically, you'd be wrong.

The federal holiday has been observed on the third Monday of February, rather than on George Washington's birthday, since 1971. In a nod to sentiment, Congress kept the name Washington's Birthday for the holiday, says an article in the website Wikipedia; it was only later that

advertisers began to call the day Presidents Day and use pictures of Washington and Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday on Feb. 12 was never a holiday.

The good bureaucrats at the National Weather Service, however, know the difference. Their forecast uses the legal term, Washington's Birthday.

"Oh, several people have called to ask about that," said Joy Hayden at the Goodland forecast office.

Not all federal agencies seem to have gotten the memo. In Colby, acting postmaster Joe Welshon said everything he'd seen called the day Presidents Day.

"Everything they've sent out to us as far as handling mail on Monday refers to

it as Presidents Day," he said.

That puts the Postal Service in line with most of the country, but if you go to the official holiday list on the service's website, it lists Feb. 20 as "Washington's Birthday (Presidents Day)."

The *Christian Science Monitor*, in a 1998 feature, referred to the common name as "a long-standing misnomer." The change came with something called the Uniform Monday Holidays Act of 1968; early drafts apparently used the name "Presidents Day," but traditionalist got that changed.

So there you have it: Washington's Birthday. But you'll probably have to work anyway.

## Banks, state, courthouse will be closed Monday

Most banks and state offices, all federal offices and the Thomas County courthouse will be closed Monday for Presidents Day.

There will be no mail services and all post offices will be closed. The county landfill will be closed, as will the county office complex with the exception of the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau offices.

Colby city offices will be open and trash pickup will be on the usual schedule. The regional recycling center also

will be open.

Colby Public Schools, Brewster Schools, Heartland Christian School and Sacred Heart Catholic School will have class as usual. Students at Colby Community College and Golden Plains and Triplains schools will take the day off.

Most business and restaurants, except those normally closed on Monday, will be open, as will convenience, drug and grocery stores. The F&M Bank branch at Dillion's will be open regular hours.



CHRISTINA BERINGER/Colby Free Press

Sue and Ron Evans (left) talked with Paul and Sharon Steele on Thursday about a donation of corn the Colby couple made to the Citizens Foundation's endowment campaign as part of a \$1.9 million capital drive. the Evanses are co-chairs of the campaign steering committee.

## Corn puts hospital drive over top

By Christina Beringer

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A Colby couple's contribution of grain valued at more than a quarter of a million dollars has put Citizens Medical Center's foundation over the goal for the endowment part of a \$1.9 million, three-year capital campaign for health-care expansion.

The Citizens Foundation, which supports Citizens and its affiliated operations, set an endowment goal of \$500,000. Thanks in

large part to Paul and Sharon Steele of Colby, who donated 36,000 bushels of corn, the foundation has already surpassed that goal. As of Thursday, contributions hit \$695,000.

Foundation director Tama Unger said Thursday morning at the Steeles' home that the couple's donation has been contracted for sale at \$6.60 a bushel. She said the foundation will receive the \$237,600 in April, and because of the donation, the Steeles will be recognized as Founders of the campaign.

They also get a chance to name one of two lobbies at the Family Center for Health Care

clinic if they choose.

Sharon Steele said she and her husband have not yet discussed a name, but she is just proud that she and Paul could do something for their community.

"Honestly, Sharon, I can't thank you enough," Unger said, "and not just from me; on behalf of the whole community."

Steele said she and her husband have always supported the hospital and are especially interested in helping local efforts.

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## Compromise shortens period for unemployed

WASHINGTON (AP) – Unemployed workers would no longer be able to claim 99 weeks of benefit checks by this summer under a deal being worked out in Congress.

Under this week's compromise for extending a Social Security tax cut through the rest of 2012, federal unemployment benefits for people who have been out of work more than six months are being scaled back.

If Congress passes the bill and President Barack Obama signs it into law, the current maximum 99 weeks of benefits will gradually fall to 73 weeks by September. For people in all but about a dozen of the highest unemployment states, the benefits will be cut off after 63 weeks.

Democrats had hoped to keep the number as close as possible to 99 weeks, arguing that the benefits are critical for those struggling to

make ends meet and provide a boost to the economy. Republicans wanted to reduce the maximum time span for benefits to 59 weeks, saying too many people don't seriously look for a job until the government checks quit coming.

The agreement would let both parties claim victory: Democrats can say they preserved the program for another year, while Republicans may claim they won major concessions by scaling back the program.

About 43 percent of the nation's nearly 13 million unemployed have been without work for more than six months, double the rate of any other economic downturn since the Great Depression. If Congress had not reached a deal to reauthorize the program, about a million people would have lost

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## Rural Kansan slams door shut on gunman

TOPEKA (AP) – An eastern Kansas sheriff says a would-be armed robber left a rural home empty-handed after he confronted the occupant and had the door slammed in his face.

Osage County Sheriff Laurie Dunn says a resident of the home in the northern part of the county answered a knock around 6:30

a.m. Thursday.

The *Topeka Capital-Journal* (bit.ly/xvm2un) reports the occupant found himself face-to-face with a man holding a gun. The home's occupant slammed the door, locked himself in a bathroom and called for help.

Dunn says the gun-wielding man drove away.

## Foundation offers college aid

The Citizens Foundation, affiliated with Citizens Medical Center in Colby, has four scholarships available for high school graduates, transfer students and older people going back to school.

The deadline to apply is 3 p.m. on Monday, April 30. For information or an application, send an e-mail to citizensfoundation@nwkhealthcare.com or call Tama Unger, director of fund development and community relations for Citizens, at (785) 460-1214.

Applicants must be residents of

Thomas, Cheyenne, Decatur, Norton, Sherman, Sheridan, Wallace, Logan or Gove counties planning study in a health-care-related field. Preference will be given to those planning to practice in rural America, but there are no restrictions as to schools.

"These scholarships are available to anyone seeking to further, or begin, their career in health care," Unger said.

Opportunities include the Dr. Jeff Jennings Memorial Scholarship, \$1,000; Citizens Medical

Center Health Care Scholarship, \$1,500; Dr. Floyd and Mary Smith Endowed Scholarship, \$1,500; and the Leonard P. and Twila M. Harrison Endowed Scholarship, \$2,000.

"Please keep in mind that the Harrison Endowed Scholarship will require a one-year employment agreement with Citizens Medical Center Inc., which includes the Citizens Medical Center hospital, Family Center for Health Care clinic and the Prairie Senior Living Complex..." Unger said.

## Police watch streets around schools

Colby police officers spent part of the day Thursday watching traffic around schools, looking for a man in a minivan who'd been reported as "driving slowly" and acting suspicious around children.

Police Chief Randy Jones said the officers hadn't spotted anything, but wanted to check out the reports.

"We didn't turn up anything at that time," he said, adding that police don't want to ignore any reports of a possible risk for children.

"We live right off the Interstate," he said. "There's always going to be individuals who come into town...."

"If people see something – not just hear about it,

but actually see it – we want to get calls right away. Anything that's out of the ordinary, we want to get calls right away."

Goodland Police checked out similar reports last month, according to reports in *The Goodland Star-News*, but never established a contact. There, an older man reportedly tried to get children to get into his vehicle. Students on a school bus told their driver a suspicious man was following the bus.

Goodland police said they put on extra patrols for a time, but have since dropped them.



## In the pink?



KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Northwest Kansas Foundation for HOPE board members helped out with a Pink Zone dessert raffle Wednesday night during the Colby Community College men's and women's basketball games at the Community Building. Pink festivities continue tonight with a silent auction and a "Pinkest Person" contest during Colby High basketball games.