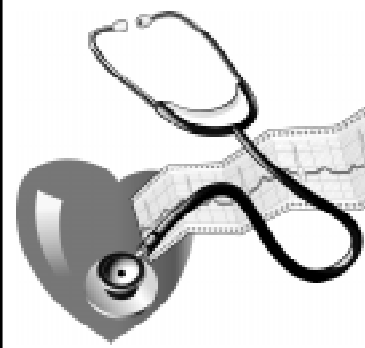




COLBY FREE PRESS



It all began 30 years ago with Dr. Inkret

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

For almost three decades, Dr. William Inkret of Denver, came closer than most to being one of those indispensable people in northwest Kansas.

And just a few short months ago, the good doctor decided it was time to retire.

"There is nobody that could tell you anything wrong about Dr. Inkret," said Rosalind Bundy of Brewster, who has known him for many years.

"You just don't meet special people like him very often," she said.

It all started nearly 30 years ago when Inkret was asked to see a few patients referred to him by Drs. LaDonna Regier and Victor Hildyard III at Colby Medical and Surgical Center.

"At that time, I was specializing in both obstetrics and gynecology in Denver," Inkret said in an interview, "and I would get a call when there was a need for consultation on a 'gyn' problem."

He said he couldn't quite put his finger on the exact moment when seeing patients in Denver changed to seeing patients in Colby, but it was at that point the specialty clinic concept was born in northwest Kansas.

"There is nobody that could tell you anything wrong about Dr. Inkret."

Rosalind Bundy
Brewster

"They (Regier and Hildyard) were comfortable with me and me with them," he said, "and then one day I agreed to go out on a Thursday night after finishing work in Denver and schedule myself to see patients on Friday."

"We were really the first to begin this type of system in Colby and Goodland," Inkret said. "At that time, the only other doctor who came to the area was Jim Holmes in orthopedics, who still comes out."

Inkret said in the earlier years, he did most surgery procedures in Denver, but as time went on he started doing surgery either here or in Goodland.

As time went on, Inkret said one day a month became two days a month in Colby and then about 10 years ago, he was asked to see patients in Goodland.

Inkret said he liked the people in Kansas and when the opportunity presented itself to retire from his Denver practice in October of 1994, he said he didn't mind.

"I didn't want to completely retire and I certainly wanted to keep coming to Kansas, so pretty soon two days a month became three in Colby and one day a month became two days in Goodland."

One day while working in Goodland, Inkret said one of the nurses who used to work with him, Glenda Rigor, asked if he might go to St. Francis. Rigor worked in Goodland, but lived in St. Francis and knew it would be helpful for people there. At first, he said he thought there would be no way he could do that since his entire week was already filled in Colby and Goodland.

"As I was driving home one Friday night and it was raining, and I was tired, I got to thinking about her suggestion," he said.

"I thought to myself that if St. Francis wants a clinic on Saturday, it would be okay with me too." And for many years he included St. Francis in his routine as well. Even though the days were long (from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.),



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Dr. William Inkret, center, reminisced with Drs. Ladonna Regier and Victor Hildyard III. Inkret, a gynecology/obstetrics specialist, was one of the first specialists to work in Colby.

Inkret said, it was always pleasant to work here.

"I have developed a tremendous number of friends from patients and I feel blessed to have worked so many years in these communities," he said.

It was also gratifying for Inkret to see the specialty clinic today with more than 30 doctors coming to Colby from Denver and Colorado Springs.

Along with helping people here, Inkret has spent time in Thailand teaching doctors there how to use gynecology equipment like the colposcope and with diagnosing abnormal conditions. He also spent time at Navaho and Cherokee Indian reservations, along with helping to set up clinic in Goodland with Sarah Veselik, who was the county health nurse in 1993.

"We set the clinic up on Tuesday night and would work with low-income patients and help with diagnosis," he said.

What concerns Inkret most is that it's hard to have someone in his specialty come out to the area one week a month because most of the doctors have their own obstetrics patients in Colorado.

What made his arrangement unique, was that he specialized only in gynecology.

"I will miss him," Dr. Regier said this week. "He was a fun person and so knowledgeable — and he had such a good relationship with his patients."

For Dr. Hildyard, Inkret's retirement has left a void.

"He provided an invaluable service to this community and northwest Kansas," Hildyard said, "and it will be very difficult to replace him. He was also a good friend."

Now that he has retired, Inkret still plans to come back to the area as often as he can to visit his friends and do a little hunting.

And that's also something many of his friends are looking forward to. Rosalind Bundy and her sister, Laura, said he is welcome back anytime, but they are particularly looking for him in April.

"We have such a grand time when he comes," said Rosalind. "Dr. Inkret does turkey hunting in the spring and visits all the friends in this area."

Rosalind said that it's not unusual for

all her neighbors to get together with the doctor and his friends for a fun time.

"Joe and Charlene Kramer, Rowland and Kay Query, along with many other neighbors in Brewster have met his son, Bill, and lots of his Colorado friends," Rosalind said. "It's just like having a family reunion when he comes."

One of his former patients, Clea Moeder, of Rexford, who attended one of his two farewell receptions in Colby, said she too will miss him.

"I've been going to see him for many years and he was a wonderful doctor," she said. "He took his time, was careful and made you feel like you knew him all your life — he really cared about each and every person he saw."

For many, Dr. Inkret might be retired from practicing medicine, but he's still as much a part of this community as he is in Colorado.

"We have many fond memories of Dr. Inkret," said Rosalind, "and we all look forward to seeing him again next spring."

An unusual site



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

While flying patients to Denver or other larger hospitals isn't all that unusual for Citizens Medical Center, Colby residents saw something unusual Wednesday when an AirCare helicopter landed across the street from the hospital. According to emergency medical officials, helicopters are usually too short ranged to come to Colby, but other air ambulances were busy and the helicopter was available. No additional information as to point of origination or destination was made available.

Colby selected as one of four sites for Kansas Chautauqua in 2004

By **JAY KELLEY**

Colby Free Press

The Kansas Humanities Council selected Colby as one of four cities to host *Kansas Chautauqua: Bleeding Kansas: Where the Civil War Began* to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Kansas Territory in June of 2004, announced Marion Cott, executive director for the council, at a press conference in Colby Wednesday afternoon.

"Chautauqua was a popular form of learning in the late 1800s and early 1900s," said Cott. Speakers representing historical characters talk about events from their eras in an informal setting, usually a large tent.

Colby Mayor Warren Hixon said the city still needed to raise \$9,000 as well as get the event in the state budget and they were asking for help.

"Money is tight right now," he said, "but we feel this is an important event."

Junction City, Fort Scott and

Lawrence were also selected among the 52 applicants and 12 finalists.

The basis of Colby's selection was largely from a video presentation done by Judy Kleinsorge and Sue Taylor of the Prairie Museum of Art and History, and Derek Bissitt and Pat Turrell of the Colby school system.

The quartet worked on the project during a workshop on technology put on by the school district.

The video presented the connection of Thomas County to the Civil War era through its namesake, Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, also known as the "Rock of Chickamauga."

Thomas County's townships are also named for Kansans who died in the battle and several Colby streets are named for battles where Thomas fought. Cott said historical figures represented in the latest chautauqua include: Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United States, who toured

the Kansas Territory speaking against slavery.

• John Brown, an abolitionist who was hanged after a raid on the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va. in 1859. Earlier, he came to Kansas in the abolitionist cause.

• Frederick Douglass, a former slave and national abolitionist leader, he published the *North Star*, an anti-slavery newspaper.

• David Atchison, a former Missouri senator who worked to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state, he was also one of the border ruffians who led raids into the territory.

• Clara Nichols was an advocate of women's rights who helped slaves escape along the Underground Railroad.

• Stephen F. Douglass, a U.S. Senator from Illinois and sponsor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 which created the territory and whose debates with Lincoln on the issue of slavery.

Unmarried partners losing benefits

WICHITA (AP)—Saying the community was against it, Sedgwick County commissioners on Wednesday unanimously ended a new policy that extended health insurance benefits to unmarried domestic partners.

"Elected officials have to go with the pulse of the community," Commissioner Carolyn McGinn said.

Commissioner Ben Sciortino said

some people were concerned the policy would diminish the sanctity of marriage and send the wrong message to young people.

County Manager William Buchanan decided to offer employees the option of extending their health coverage to gay or straight partners in a move to keep the county competitive in recruiting and retaining the best employees

possible. Commissioners put the item on Wednesday's agenda after receiving numerous phone calls and e-mails from constituents who say the policy gives official sanction to sinful unions.

Employees were told of their option to cover domestic partners in a packet of materials outlining insurance plans for 2002.

Briefly

Weather: Snow? Well...

Cooler weather, cloudy skies and shower activity just might give way to a mixture of rain/snow during the early morning hours Friday, advises the National Weather Service. Rain chances for the Colby area are around 70 percent tonight, dropping off to around 40 percent Friday morning. Lows tonight will be in the middle 30s with brisk northerly winds 15-25 mph. Clouds will give way to sun late Friday morning with temperatures rising to around 45-50 for the day's high and north winds packing it in to around 10-20 mph. Friday night will be clear and cold with lows around 30, while Saturday will bring mostly sunny skies with highs 60-65. Saturday night and Sunday, look for partly cloudy conditions, with lows in the middle 30s and highs near 70. Short winter. Colby's high temperature Wednesday was 74 and the overnight low this morning was 45. Still

no precipitation to record for the first four days of the month. The soil temperatures at the four-inch depth is averaging 69 degrees. The records for Oct. 4: 95 in 1967 and 30 in 1903. (*The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

Luncheon deadline Friday

The Colby Chamber of Commerce Diplomats are hosting their annual Ladies Luncheon, Oct. 10 at Ramada Inn at noon. This year's theme is "United We Stand." All women are invited and employers are encouraged to send their lady employees to this luncheon. Cost is \$10 which includes a luncheon, with entertainment provided by the Colby High School singers. Reservations are due by Friday, Oct. 5. To reserve a spot, call the chamber office at 785-462-3401.

Monday's a holiday — for some

Monday is Columbus Day and that means some of the places you generally frequent won't be in operation. Those include the post office and banks. You may want to call ahead before setting out for other destinations. The Free Press will be open and the paper will be delivered.

Singles dance Friday

The Colby Singles Club will hold its regular dance, Friday, Oct. 5, from 8 p.m. to midnight. Jim Christensen of Kearney, Neb., will be providing entertainment. All single people and alumni are invited. For details, call 462-2127.

Tootsie Roll Drive scheduled

The Colby Knights of Columbus will hold their annual

Tootsie Roll Fund Drive on Oct. 12-13-14. Proceeds will go to Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas. All inquiries may be directed to Dick Parnell at 2820 N. Range, Colby, Kan.; 67701.



Postmaster
Jim McDonald

Expect changes at the post office

see guest commentary page 2

