



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Group hears from former hospital employees

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Four of six former Colby hospital employees, who said they were either fired or forced to leave the facility in recent months, told their side of the story to nearly 300 people during Wednesday night's Area Citizens for Health Care meeting at the Colby Community Building.

Those who spoke included Sandy Hill, a nurse practitioner; Kathi Hapke, a registered nurse; Jim Mentlick, maintenance employee; and Marlyce Campbell, a respiratory therapist.

Others recognized, but who did not talk were Joy Griffin and Monique Eaton, former nurses at Citizens Medical Center.

"We wanted to give a voice to the voiceless," said Carol Voisin, secretary of the group.

Each of the former employees spoke about their experiences and varying reasons for being forced to leave or let go.

In addition to those presentations, the Area Citizens board encouraged people to support Drs. Victor H. Hildyard and LaDonna Regier specifically by sending them a "card shower." The reasons for offering support were in part because of the recent changes in the emergency room coverage and the alleged inappropriate behavior filed

against Hildyard in April of 2002.

"These doctors don't want to give up," said Brian Unruh, physician assistant at Colby Medical and Surgical Center. "I think they need to hear from you that they should keep up the fight."

On a positive note, Unruh said, a surgeon was recently interviewed, but has not made a commitment yet.

Dennis Horney, another member of the Area Citizens board, asked people to go to the hospital board members and tell them, "we want our hospital back."

One person in the audience said she had called Terry Wendall, one of the Citizens Medical Center board members, to say she was not happy with the emergency room changes and recent decisions by the board.

She said Wendall told her that she was one of the first to complain to him about the board's decisions in recent months.

"We cannot assume that somebody else is going to be taking care of calling board members or writing letters," said John Kern, president of Area Citizens.

Another board member, Hank Vette, said people need to call hospital board members and express their concerns.

Editor's note: More highlights from the Wednesday night meeting will appear in Friday's edition.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

A large crowd of nearly 300 people gathered at the Colby Community Building on Wednesday night to hear updates on the emergency room changes and other issues facing the medical community in Colby and around the area.

Work continues



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Employees with Contractor Specialists, Inc. from Grand Forks, N.D., have been laying cable for S&T Telephone Company. Starting late last week, the company has concentrated their efforts in the northwest part of Colby. ABOVE: Peter Bruggeman, also of Grand Forks, was one of the six people with CSI digging a spot to drop cable on 6th St. and between Mission Ridge and School. Brad St. George, foreman of the project, said he is estimating it will take about three months to complete their contract with S&T.

Principals report conference attendance

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Colby principals reported good attendance at last week's parent teacher conferences to the members of the Colby School Board during Monday's meetings.

All three principals gave reports on their schools.

Terrel Harrison, principal of the grade school said 91 percent of parents attended the conferences last week. She reported many parent had still scheduled appointments this week so the percentage should be even higher.

Board members questioned as to

whether or not that was a high figure. Harrison said in the elementary school their numbers are usually higher than in the other schools.

Don Barta, principal of the high school reported 65 percent of parents attended conferences last week.

He said he was pleased with the evacuation of the school during the electrical fire last week. Both the teachers and students were able to leave the building quickly and efficiently.

Barta also reported they are still focusing on cutting down the number of absences and tardies and getting the new schedule prepared for

next year. He said they feel they need more class opportunities and are looking at trimming down the planning time for teachers at the high school to the same amount of time allowed for teachers at the elementary and middle school. Currently high school teachers have a longer planning period due to the block scheduling.

They are discussing offering a zero hour for juniors and seniors that would allow them to take a class before 8 a.m. or possibly after school.

Robb Ross, principal of the middle school said 83 percent of

parents attended conferences last week in the middle school.

He reported students competed in the Science Olympiad last week in Hays and the League Music Festival held Wednesday at the college. On Friday all three of the schools will be watching a media presentation on drug-free schools.

Ross also said Todd Voss from the Sheriff's Department has been coming into the school and students are starting to warm up to him and talk to him in the halls.

All three principals feel that Voss' presence in the schools has been very positive.

U.S. and Britain to introduce resolution

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States and Britain will shortly introduce a new U.N. resolution that would pave the way for military action and give Saddam Hussein a final few weeks to fully cooperate with weapons inspectors, diplomats said.

U.S. and British officials said Wednesday the short resolution, to be circulated later this week or early next week, would declare Iraq in "material breach" of its U.N. obligations to completely eliminate its weapons of mass destruction — a determination that can be used as

legal justification for the use of military force.

The Americans and British will then demand a decision on the resolution in two or three weeks, said the diplomats from the two nations, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Details of the U.S.-British plan surfaced Wednesday at the end of a two-day Security Council meeting where more than 60 countries spoke out on the Iraq crisis. The vast majority called for continued inspections and intensified efforts to peacefully disarm Saddam.

County commissioners give permission to buy and sell

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Two new computers and approval to sell their Suburban was given to Emergency Medical Services during Tuesday's meeting of the Thomas County Commissioners.

Kathi Wright, director of EMS and Martin Rinehart, the assistant director, told commissioners the Suburban that used to serve as the

first responder vehicle is no longer needed and a prospective buyer is willing to buy it for \$4,000. They were wanting to use part of the money from the sale to purchase two new computers for the office.

The commissioners were all in agreement on the sale of the vehicle and told Wright and Rinehart it would be okay to use the money to buy new computers if they were needed.

Commissioner Ron Evans said some of the offices in the courthouse had purchased a few used computers recently and he thought Donita Applebury, the county treasurer, still had a few in storage. He encouraged them to contact Applebury to see if the computers would be something that would work for EMS.

Evans said if they could save some money by using used comput-

ers which would meet their needs, the money could be used somewhere else in the future.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked about possible candidates for the 2002 Ambassador Business Person of the Year. Evans said if Glen Kersenbrock or Duane Dawes had any suggestions they could fill out the form.
- Read a letter from the Kelley

Detention Center in WaKeeney. The detention center will be raising their rates from \$125 per day per inmate to \$145 per day per inmate, but will be dropping the \$1,000 per year up front fee required by the county.

• Reviewed and discussed a hand-out from Lynette Koon, Thomas County Conservation District manager, about this year's soil conservation meeting.

Briefly

SHARE distribution Saturday

The monthly SHARE distribution begins at 9 a.m., Saturday, at the Sacred Heart Catholic School's gymnasium, 1150 W. 6th in Colby, said Jean Griffin, coordinating the drive for February. She also said there are still a few extra shares available. In order to qualify, two hours of volunteer time are necessary, along with paying \$17.50 for distribution items. This month's menu includes Canadian bacon, deli sliced turkey breast, perch fillets, Salisbury steaks, chicken drums, lettuce and red peppers, broccoli slaw, cauliflower, potatoes, apples, oranges, grapefruit, and Nestle tollhouse cookies. The next SHARE signup will be during the week of March 10-14 at State Farm Insurance, 905 E. 4th, Colby. If interested in receiving a share this month, call Griffin at 462-3579.

Video discussion planned Saturday

The Community Awareness Team is sponsoring a video discussion group beginning at 10 a.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building downstairs, said Janet Worthy, coordinator. "This week's film is *Mother/Daughter*," she said, "and it's about a mom and her 16 year-old daughter who trade places for 24 hours." For questions, call 462-8152.

Kindergarten pre-enrollment nears

Kindergarten pre-enrollment for the 2003-04 school year at Colby Grade School is from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28 in the conference room at the school. For questions or what paperwork is necessary, call 465-5100.

College plans special meetings

Colby Community College will be having special meetings on Monday, Feb. 24 and Tuesday, Feb. 25. Both of these meetings will begin at 5 p.m. in the board room of Thomas Hall. Trustees will be listening to presentations by architects for the new wellness center.

Childbirth education series to begin

The next Colby Childbirth Education series will start on Thursday, March 6 will subsequent classes scheduled on March 20 and 27, and April 3. They will be held in the Health Science Building on the Colby Community College Campus. Call Tina Schrick, 462-6845.

'Hospital Notes' needs your help

If you have a family member hospitalized here or elsewhere

in our reading area — or is being dismissed — and you want his/her name to appear in the *Free Press*, please call us at 462-3963 no later than 10 a.m. each day for inclusion in that day's paper. Most hospitals no longer provide that service.

Sacred Heart carnival set

Sacred Heart School's annual carnival begins at 11 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m., this coming Sunday. The event will feature lunch with bierocks and sloppy Joes, along with games and other prizes. For questions, call 462-2813.

Clarification made on ER changes

Michael Boyles, chief executive officer at Citizens Medical Center, said he wanted to clarify one particular point with respect to changes in the emergency room beginning Saturday. "Patients can request a specific doctor," he said, "even if that doctor is not under contract with the hospital." In that situation, Boyles said, the physician could bill directly. He also said that unless a patient in the emergency room absolutely refuses to allow the on-call doctor to look at them, the contracted physicians are obligated to make an evaluation. For other questions, call Boyles at 462-7511.



Mostly cloudy, breezy weather

Tonight, mostly cloudy with lows in the upper 20s. There will be a northwest wind ranging from 5 to 10 mph becoming north early in the morning. Friday mostly cloudy and breezy with highs in the lower 50s and lows in the lower 20s. There will be a north wind at 10 mph increasing early in the afternoon to 15 to 25 mph with gusts to 35 mph. Friday night, partly cloudy with lows in the lower 20s. Saturday, mostly cloudy with highs in the upper 40s. Saturday night mostly cloudy with a chance of snow, lows near 10 above, chance of snow 40 percent.

The numbers
 Wednesday's high, 55
 Low this morning, 22
 Soil temperature, 42
 Month's precipitation, .26
 Month's snowfall, 2 inches

