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Suspension's effect addressed by Schwanke

Free Press Editor

Following news on Thursday that a Colby physician's privileges were permanently suspended at Citizens Medical Center, Inc., the president of the hospital board of trustees talked about what that means and how it could affect the medical community in the future.

Vern Schwanke, president of the board, said that Dr. Victor H. Hildyard at Colby Medical and Surgical Center, exhausted all avenues required through the peer review process stemming from the original allegations of improper conduct by an employee of the hospital nearly one year ago.

"The peer review process is completed and pursuant to the fair hearing requirements," said Carol Bonebrake, attorney for the hospital board, about the final decision to suspend the physician.

When asked if Dr. Hildyard had any other avenues available to him to retain his privileges at the hospital, Bonebrake said the medical staff by laws explain the process, but did not elaborate further.

Dr. Hildyard was allowed to continue seeing patients at the hospital following a ruling by Judge Jack Burr of Goodland in early May of 2002 based on the fact that the judge believed the administrative process needed to be carried out to the solution. After attempting to suspend the doctor's privileges a second time in the fall of 2002, the judge again ruled to lift the summary suspension until the entire process was

Regarding stabilization of health care in Colby and the surrounding lenges," he said, "and we are con- Center, Inc. area, along with what are the next tinuing our physician recruitment steps by the board, Schwanke said efforts and addressing reimburse- said today that their primary reason what concerns they have," he said. the hospital board of trustees have ment issues. reviewed the management contract, professional leadership and alternative procedures to ensure a viable

"We look forward to working with the local media, community groups and individual citizens," he said, adding that "there are many restraints on the board's ability to respond to each and every question because of all of the federal and state laws that restrict the dissemination of information."

Schwanke added that the board

Warm, windy

Tonight...mostly clear and

warm. Lows in the mid 40s.

South wind 10 to 20 mph.

Saturday...becoming partly sunny...Breezy and continued

warm. Highs in the lower 80s. South wind 15 to 25 mph...Gusting to 35 mph late.

Saturday night...partly cloudy

and warm. Lows in the mid 40s.

Sunday...partly sunny and con-

tinued warm. Highs in the mid

80s. Sunday night...partly

cloudy. Lows in the lower 50s.

Monday...mostly clear. A slight

chance of showers and thun-

derstorms during the night.

Highs in the lower 80s.

Thursday's high, 80

Low this morning, 31

Soil temperature, 52

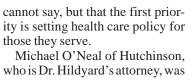
Year ago, 72 and 39

Month's precipitation, 0.30

Month's snowfall, 2 inches

Records, 89 in 1977 and 7 in

The numbers



unavailable to comment today, but his associate said he would be making a statement for Monday's edition of the Free Press.

However, O'Neal did say late last week that written arguments in the administrative process were due on Tuesday, April 8, which was two days before the decision was made to terminate Dr. Hildyard's privi-

Michael Boyles, who was the chief executive officer at Citizens Medical Center, resigned his position last Friday. Schwanke said today that Kevan Trenkle is the acting interim.

"He (Kevan) is working closely with Dr. LaDonna Regier, chief of the medical staff at the hospital, Dr. Raymond Ketting and the Docs Who Care physicians to assure continuity of quality patient care," Schwanke said.

In addition, Schwanke said that there is a "transition team" made up of hospital staff in place to coordinate and begin directives of the board and chief executive officer.

When asked about some people's fear regarding the hospital and HMOs, Schwanke said that first of all an HMO is a health insurance reimbursement mechanism and not a type of hospital reimbursement.

"The challenge that Citizens Medical Center faces are not unique to Colby," he said. "Affordable health care is a national issue and rural hospitals face special chal- house regarding Citizens Medical

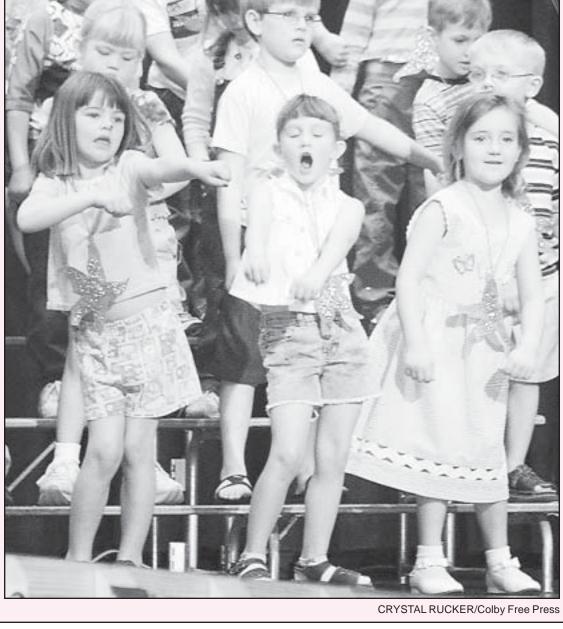
O'Neal's associate said that Dr. Hildyard's attorney would more than likely discuss his reaction to what happened on Thursday, along with the possibility of talking about the options available to his client at this point.

Even though Dr. Hildyard cannot see patients at the Colby facility following the board of trustees action on Thursday, it was confirmed previously that he does have privileges at the Logan County Hospital in Oakley and at the Regional Medihas limitations on what they can and cal Center in Goodland.

Johnson County gets a new judge

Sebelius has named lawyer Thomas the rodeo queen and princess con-Sutherland to fill a district judge test. She is hoping to order the opening in Johnson County. It was the first such appointment of her administration.

Sutherland, 43, of Lenexa, will fill a position left open by the retirement of William Cleaver. civil practice with the firm his new duties by early next month. projects and it was decided to allow of the funds be used to upgrade committee chairs for the parade. Stephenson at the May meeting.



From the mouths of babes sometimes comes music. And that was the case this morning when the kindergarten classes at Colby Elementary School presented their spring tea. "Sounds a Little Fishy to Me," was the name of the musical treat directed by Jennifer Koel. Singing their hearts out on the front row were (left to right) Mikayla Cody, Danielle Foster and Shaila Giebler. In the second row are Samantha Lindberg, Logan Jones, Ryan Stevens and Tanner Rook. No question about it, they were giving it their all!

Citing hospital's fate

Group taking worries to commission

Free Press Editor Members of the Area Citizens for Health Care board plan to meet with the Thomas County Commissioners on Monday at 9 a.m. at the court-

for talking with the commissioners is to save the hospital.

"We want to see if there is any possibility of getting a special election organized so that people in the county can have a voice in determining the direction to take in helping the hospital," he said.

something isn't done soon, the hospital will go under having lost more than \$771,000 in operations last year, according to information he has from an audit report.

hospital should be at this meeting John Kern, president of the board, and let the commissioners know

of the board, are not sure what op-sioners on Monday, Dennis Horney, tions are available to the public, but another member of Area Citizens, tives of the Area Citizens group, the believe they cannot sit idle and do nothing.

He said he hopes the commissioners will be able to provide information that will assist in their quest

"We are asking for the county's help by offering its citizens any options that could be available to them," he said.

"Anybody who cares about our about Monday's meeting, Kern en-floor of the Colby Community courages people to call him at 462-

Kern, along with other members pointment with the county commissaid an emergency meeting of the commissioners also have scheduled group will also be held in the com-

tor Hildyard's privileges were per-

Kern said he believes that if to stabilize the medical community. manently revoked on Thursday," Horney said, "we are urging everyone to attend this area-wide meet-

> Horney said the meeting will be For questions or information held in the gymnasium on the main Building at 7 p.m. next Thursday.

> "Anyone and everyone who can In addition to the scheduled apattend is welcome," Horney said to-

> Along with seeing representa-Clair Schrock, county road supervisor, regarding road classification "Following the news that Dr. Vic- and Mike Baughn, undersheriff, regarding inmate medical issues.

County's fair plans are beginning to jell

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

The fair is less than four months away and the Thomas County Fair Board was busy making plans toward that end at their Thursday night meeting.

Marie Skolout, pageant coordi-OLATHE (AP)—Gov. Kathleen nator, presented ideas concerning saddle early to be able to display it around the area to draw contestants. The board approved a budget of \$2,000 for the contest.

In other business:

• The board heard reports from Sutherland, who has specialized in county Extension agent D'Ette Scholtz. Scholtz also questioned the

projects to be picked up all day during the release date as long as they were picked up before the time to clean up the fairgrounds. She also reported the 4-H Spring Horse Show will be June 9, unless it rains, in which case it will be rescheduled to June 12.

• Board member Jim Malcolm said he and fellow board member Stan Strange had repaired the window restrains in the sheep barn and that the water line in the commercial building had been fixed since it froze and broke.

Malcolm also reported that the board has drawn \$10,000 from Mastec for camping fees and suggested the money be used to put in Holbrook & Osborn, hopes to begin board about release times for the more sites. Strange suggested some

current sites.

• Darrel Dible reported on the progress of the Thomas County Amusement Association. He said they have already purchased three adult rides and are looking to purchase three more children's rides by fair time. The group is still accepting donations and will accept help in a variety of areas. Dible said the Sheridan County fair donated 10 to 12 game booths to the association as well.

• Gary Garrett said the rodeo has been approved by the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association for the dates of July 29 and 30.

• New board members Justin Alexander and Brad Skolout are the

some of the utility outlets on the They reported a letter has been sent out to county schools about a contest seeking a theme for the parade. First and third graders will have an opportunity to come up with a theme and a prize will be awarded to the class with the best theme. Alexander said they will also have

an honorary float in the parade for • The board is seeking a new sponsor for the free barbecue to be held on July 30. The sponsor helps with the barbecue and also serves

the meal to the public.

 The new groundskeeper is Richard Britton. He has been working with Fred Stephenson, the former groundskeeper, to learn what needs to be done. The board will honor

Briefly

Health department to close early

The Thomas County Health Department will be closed on Wednesday from 1 to 5 p.m. for staff in-service. For questions or other information, call (785) 462-4596 or stop by the office at 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 2, Colby.

Dible benefit scheduled Saturday

A benefit for Ken (Butch) Dible, former resident of Colby and a former reserves police officer, will be held Saturday at the National Guard Armory in Colby from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. He has been diagnosed with acute mylogenous leukemia and is receiving treatment in Wichita. Drawings, a silent auction, karaokee, homemade chili, noodle soup and cinnamon rolls are on the menu.

The Colby Police Department will have its Ident-a-kid program available starting at noon. Ryan Wark will have his stock car 8FR available for all the see. Free will donations will be accepted.

Easter egg hunt is Saturday

The Colby Kiwanis Club will sponsor its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday at Fike Park for children from birth to 9 years old. For those three and under, the hunt will begin at 10 a.m.; ages 4 to 6 at 10:10 a.m.; and children 7 to 9 at 10:20

Endowment meeting is Monday

The Colby Community College Endowment Association will hold its annual meeting on Monday at 5:30 p.m. All members are urged to attend. It will be held in the Fireside Lounge in the Robert Burnett Memorial Student Union. For more information, contact Nick Wells at (785) 462-4684.

'Church open for prayer

Rev. Carol Rahn, pastor for the First Presbyterian Church in Colby, has announced the church will be open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. while the country is at war. Those wishing to

pray or have quiet meditation may use the church at 515 W. Fourth Street.

School board to meet April 21

The Colby school board's next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 21 at 7 p.m. in the board room at the Administration Building, 210 South Range.

Barbershop Chorus to hold concert

The Tumbleweed Chorus will hold their annual concert on Saturday, April 26. The choir will present "Dixieland Harmony" at both 3 and 7:30 p.m. at the Colby Community College Cultural Arts Center.

Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$8 or in advance

For tickets or information call 462-6552 or 460-8640. The concert will also feature guest appearances by Very Light Opera Company and Patent Pending.