



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Doctor decides to open practice here in November

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

Colby will soon have another doctor following an interview and site visit earlier this week at Citizens Medical Center and the Family Center for Health Care.

Dr. Gary Slavens, specializing as a family practice physician, signed a letter of intent on Wednesday with the Family Center for Health Care through the hospital, said Tama Unger, public relations and marketing director.

In addition to Slavens, the hospital is also continuing recruitment efforts by contacting other family practice residents.

"We are developing relationships with several additional physicians as we make plans for recruiting two to three more doctors over the next two to three years," said Kevan Trinkle, interim chief executive officer at the hospital.

Slavens will be completing his residency in Wichita at the end of October, Trenkle said, and will begin practice in mid-November.

His special interest lies in obstetrics, of which he performs his own Cesarean Sections, he said.

Vern Schwanke, chairman of the Citizens Medical Center board, said he too is pleased with the doctor's decision to come to Colby.

"We are impressed with Dr. Slavens," Schwanke said. "His desire to practice medicine in Colby says a great deal about Thomas County. His commitment to serve is yet another indication that our medical services and medical community have a very bright future."

Slavens told hospital officials during the signing that he looks forward to practicing in Colby and fulfilling the health care needs here.

He too said he was impressed

with the caring people of Thomas County and the technology and services at the hospital.

Slavens and his wife, Jane, have five children. Even though he will not complete his residency in Wichita until October, his wife and children are planning to move to Colby in the next two weeks. In doing so, the children, he said, can begin school at the start of the fall semester.

Scott Focke, administrator at the Family Center for Health Care, along with others in Colby and Thomas County, recently formed a physician recruitment committee with the purpose of bring doctors, like Slavens, to Colby.

Those on the committee, he said, are representative of the entire community. Along with Focke, other committee members are Mike Brown, Vera Sloan, Warren Hixson, Jeff Morrison, Jeannie Solko, Larry Barrett, Sharon Steele, Robb Ross, Jada Tubbs, Loretta Weeks, Tom Barlow, Geri Landry, Sue Evans, Anita Horinek and Paula McDaniel.

The purpose of the committee will be in coordinating site visits, welcoming the candidates and their family and working together to retain doctors for the future at the Family Center for Health Care through Citizens Medical Center, Focke said.

"The recruiting process," Focke said, "is ongoing. We currently have four to six candidates who have indicated an interest in our community and we will continue to keep everyone informed of any significant developments."

For questions or other information about recruitment efforts or the new physician, Focke said they can call him at (785) 462-6184.

More West Nile found

TOPEKA (AP) — The Kansas Department of Health and Environment said Wednesday it has confirmed two more cases in humans of illness from West Nile Virus, bringing the state's total this year to four.

The latest victims — a 54-year-old Gray County resident and a 2-year-old from Ford County — both contracted meningitis and are recovering at their homes, the agency said. In the two earlier cases, a 65-year-old Sherman County resident and a 38-year-old Gray County resident both contracted meningitis.

No deaths have been confirmed.

Last year, KDHE confirmed 22 human West Nile cases, with no deaths.

The state has been monitoring birds, horses and mosquitoes for signs of the virus since May. West Nile is considered primarily a bird disease, but humans can contract it when bitten by mosquitoes that have bitten infected birds.

West Nile causes headaches, low-grade fever and muscle aches. In rare cases, the virus may cause encephalitis, swelling of the brain, or meningitis, swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord.

Checks may help

SHAWNEE (AP) — Checks the government began sending to millions of parents last month could lead to a slight increase in sales tax revenue for the state of Kansas — if people don't save the money or use it to pay bills, state officials say.

"We should see a bump in sales tax receipts over the next couple months, if people are out spending the money like most folks think they will," said Steve Stotts, the Department of Revenue's director of taxation.

Busiest place on campus



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

The bookstore at Colby Community College was busy Wednesday afternoon. Students were on campus for freshman orientation and the faculty and staff were finishing up the second day of their in-service. Classes at the college start Tuesday, Aug. 19.

Relay for Life weekend arrives in Colby

By **TISHA COX**

Colby Free Press

Thomas County's biggest slumber party happens this weekend.

It's the annual "Relay for Life" to benefit the American Cancer Society at Dennen Field. Activities get underway at 7 p.m. on Friday and conclude at 7 a.m. on Saturday.

Cheryl Schwarz, the organizer for the event, said 10 teams have entered and money raised will go to cancer research. Last year's event brought in \$18,000.

"We're kind of low on teams but we did pretty good," she said.

The first event of the night will be the Survivor's Walk at 7 p.m. and Schwarz said all cancer survivors are invited to take part.

Entertainment will run from 7:30

to 9 p.m. and includes an accordion player and taekwondo demonstration.

At 9:30, the public is invited to the luminary service. She said people can buy a luminary before hand or at the event in honor of someone with the disease or who has survived or in memory of someone who has lost their battle with cancer.

"We really encourage the public to come out and see what it's like if they've never been to a relay before," Schwarz said.

She said members of each team will spend the night walking around the track, which shows what a person with cancer goes through, such as a sleepless night.

Teams for this year and their cap-

tainers are: Dancing Divas, Cheryl Schwarz Dance Center; Angels Aboard, Linda Schwarz; Colby High Plains Lions Club, Mary Hurr; Sacred Heart CYO, Marilyn Unger; Prairie Senior Living Complex, Stephanie Stone; Colby Community College Cross Country Team, Jeff Becker; Cancer Kickers, Keith Corbett; Coleman Family Team, Shirley Coleman; Mike Woofert Team, Mike Woofert; and Circle of Support, Shelby Hubert.

The 2003 Relay for Life Committee is made up of co-chairs Cheryl Schwarz and Chuck Dempewolf, team captain committee Tina Dreiling, Stephanie Stone and Michelle Morris; corporate chairman Cheryl Schwarz; treasurer Marla Wozniak; survivor chairman

Bob Coleman; entertainment and games chairman Cheryl Schwarz; and Brette Pfeifer, Yvonne Wingard and Juday Huelsman, food booth.

Corporate sponsors are Secrest Inc., Bank West, Jeannie Solko, Kansas Quick Lube, Tom and Mary Hurr, Farmers and Merchant Bank, Time Warner Cable, Taco John's, Comfort Inn, Cheryl Schwarz Dance Center, First National Bank, Palace Drug Store, Village Laundromat, Colby Bowl and Fun Center, Leroy's Printing, Camp Inn Gas and Oil, T&S Productions - Tanner Stover, National Guard Armory and Midwest Energy.

Anyone needing more information or to purchase a luminary is asked to contact Cheryl Schwarz at 462-3232.

Unforgettable experience for Rep. Moran

WASHINGTON (AP) — In Iraq this week with fellow lawmakers, Rep. Jerry Moran pinned a Purple Heart medal on a fellow Kansan, Army Lt. Katrina Gier Lewison.

The ceremony was unexpected, Moran said in a telephone interview Wednesday from Kuwait City.

Moran, Kansas Republican of the Big First District, and his colleagues were in a Black Hawk helicopter bound from Tikrit to Mosul in northern Iraq, and Moran asked an Army general if he knew any Kansans.

"He clicks on the microphone to the front of the chopper, and Katrina comes on — she's our pilot. So we have a great conversation," Moran said.

The chopper landed, and Moran attended an Army briefing. After about an hour, an aide to the general tapped Moran on the shoulder and

handed him a Purple Heart.

About 150 officers and troops came to attention, and Moran presented the honor to Lewison, who had been injured by shrapnel from a grenade thrown at a Humvee she was riding in.

"Neither one of us could keep the tears out of our eyes," Moran said. "It was a very moving and emotional experience. Her story is very much that she's doing OK, that she very much believes in the cause."

"It was very good to hear that from this Kansan," he said.

Lewison, 25, is from Hutchinson, Kan. Her mother, Kathy Gier, said Lewison had been treated for her injuries and returned to work immediately, despite feeling "a little tender sitting down."

"It could have been a lot worse, and we don't want any more Purple Hearts," Gier said Wednesday in a

telephone interview.

Gier also was relieved to hear news about her daughter, who hasn't had much time to write in the past month. Several of Lewison's letters to her family have been published in The Hutchinson News.

"I'm thrilled he was able to connect with her in Iraq," Gier said. "Now she has a little Kansas connection, a little piece of home."

Lewison is married to another Black Hawk pilot, Tyler, whom Moran met after the ceremony. Moran had served on the selection board headed by Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., that appointed Lewison to attend the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.

Moran said his chance meeting contrasted mightily with another experience he had that day.

"We transported the body of a soldier who had died five hours

in the same location where we were," Moran said. "It's a very sobering experience to ride in a C-130 with the body of a soldier who was recently killed in a body bag three feet from your feet. It is a reminder."

The lawmaker said the soldier died when his Humvee overturned. Moran said the first-hand view of Iraq that he got is far different from a congressional briefing on Capitol Hill.

"My purpose in coming here, there were several reasons, but at the top of the list was to express gratitude and appreciation to Kansas soldiers, and also to learn from them their view of what we're doing," he said.

"It is a very difficult assignment. It seems to me that to a person, they believe this is a battle that's worth winning. They see progress. They think they're making a difference."

Briefly

Fair Board to meet next week

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 21 at the Thomas County 4-H Building. Items on the agenda include committee reports on the buildings and grounds, the carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising. Also on the agenda are barbecue, queen and princess contest, and the 2004 budget.

Field day registration underway

K-State Research and Extension will offer its 2003 Summer Field Day starting at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 27, at the Northwest Research-Extenschool. The day is "Diversified Cropping Systems. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. and the last session of the day is at 2 p.m.

Information topics include sunflower research, dryland crop rotations, crop performance evaluations, summer annual forages, three breakout sessions.

For information or to register, drop by the Extension Cen-

ter at 105 Experiment Farm Road in Colby or call Vicki Brown at (785) 462-6281.

Fair premium checks ready

Thomas County Fair premium checks are now available at the Thomas County Extension Office, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. The checks are for both open class and 4-H and can be picked up Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. until noon and again from 1 to 5 p.m.

For questions, call (785) 462-4582.

Leadership Class seeking applicants

Leadership Thomas County is seeking applicants for its new class, beginning in October. Call 460-3401 or 460-7643 or stop by the Chamber office at 350 S. Range for an application. Completed applications are due back to the Chamber office by Aug. 22. The 2003-2004 class will be announced on Sept. 19.

Recreation pictures available

The Colby Recreation Department team pictures are here and can be picked up at the Colby Community Building, said Ryan Sturdy, director. For questions, call 462-4440 or stop by their office at 285 E. 5th St.

DivorceCare Classes to begin

A 13-week video series and support sessions on DivorceCare, will begin on Thursday, Aug. 14 at 7 p.m. at Colby Wesleyan Church, 320 Pine. These free sessions are open to anyone who is going through or has gone through a divorce. To register, call 465-9077.

Military display ends Sept. 1

There's not much time left to view the military photographs at Colby Photo at 420 N. Franklin. After Monday, Sept. 1, families are asked to pick up the pictures from the display, said Ardat Beringer, owner of the business.



Warmer

Tonight... Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 60s. South wind 10 to 15 mph. **Friday...** Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 90s. South wind 10 to 15 mph. **Friday night...** Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 60s. **Saturday...** Mostly sunny. Highs in the 90s.

By the numbers
Wednesday's high, 87
Low this morning, 57
Records for the date, 103 in 1937 and 44 in 1920
Year ago today, 94 and 52
24-hour precipitation to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Month's precipitation, 1.88
Year's precipitation to date, 13.17
2002's precipitation to date, 6.43

Water Usage/Colby
Aug. 13 = 2.001 million gallons

