

Commissioners talk taxes on-line

Commissioner's roundup

By Karen Krien

Dolores Jenik, treasurer, talked about counties which are using on-line services to pay for registration and taxes when the commissioners met on Friday. Cheyenne County is one of the last counties to make use of the on-line service. She said that she could see where it would be convenient for some, especially college students.

She and the commissioners talked about having the property taxes on-line. This would allow anyone to see property taxes paid by themselves as well as others. Commissioner Jane Brubaker was not in favor of having taxes on-line and asked if this would help the workers in the treasurer's office. Treasurer Jenik said that it probably would save some phone calls, noting that many of their calls come from realtors and mortgage companies and she pointed out that it was public record. Charging a fee for

having the listing was discussed but no decision was made as the matter was only for the commissioners' information and what is coming in the near future.

The treasurer discussed the billing by the county newspapers on the delinquent real estate tax listing which appeared in both the Bird City Times and The St. Francis Herald for three consecutive weeks, noting that it was higher than she had expected. She has contacted the billing

person and will update the board at the next meeting.

Replacing outside door locks

County clerk Terry Miller reported that through the years, there have been a number of employees who did not turn in their keys to the front doors. Consequently, there could be some former employees who could get into the courthouse. They discussed that, after entering the See ON-LINE on Page 11

The Cheyenne County Commissioners also discussed:

- That the general obligation bonds for the hospital would be up for sale on Sept. 20. See article below.
- The burn ban and agreed to lift it. See article on this page.
- Having an emergency medical technician re-certification classes. See Page 6.

County residents allowed to burn

By Karen Krien

The burn ban for Cheyenne County was lifted at the Friday meeting of commissioners after most of the county had received measurable rain.

The burn ban has been in effect since the first of the summer because of the extremely dry conditions and hot dry winds. During that time, there had been few fires and most of them were caused by lightning or were accidental.

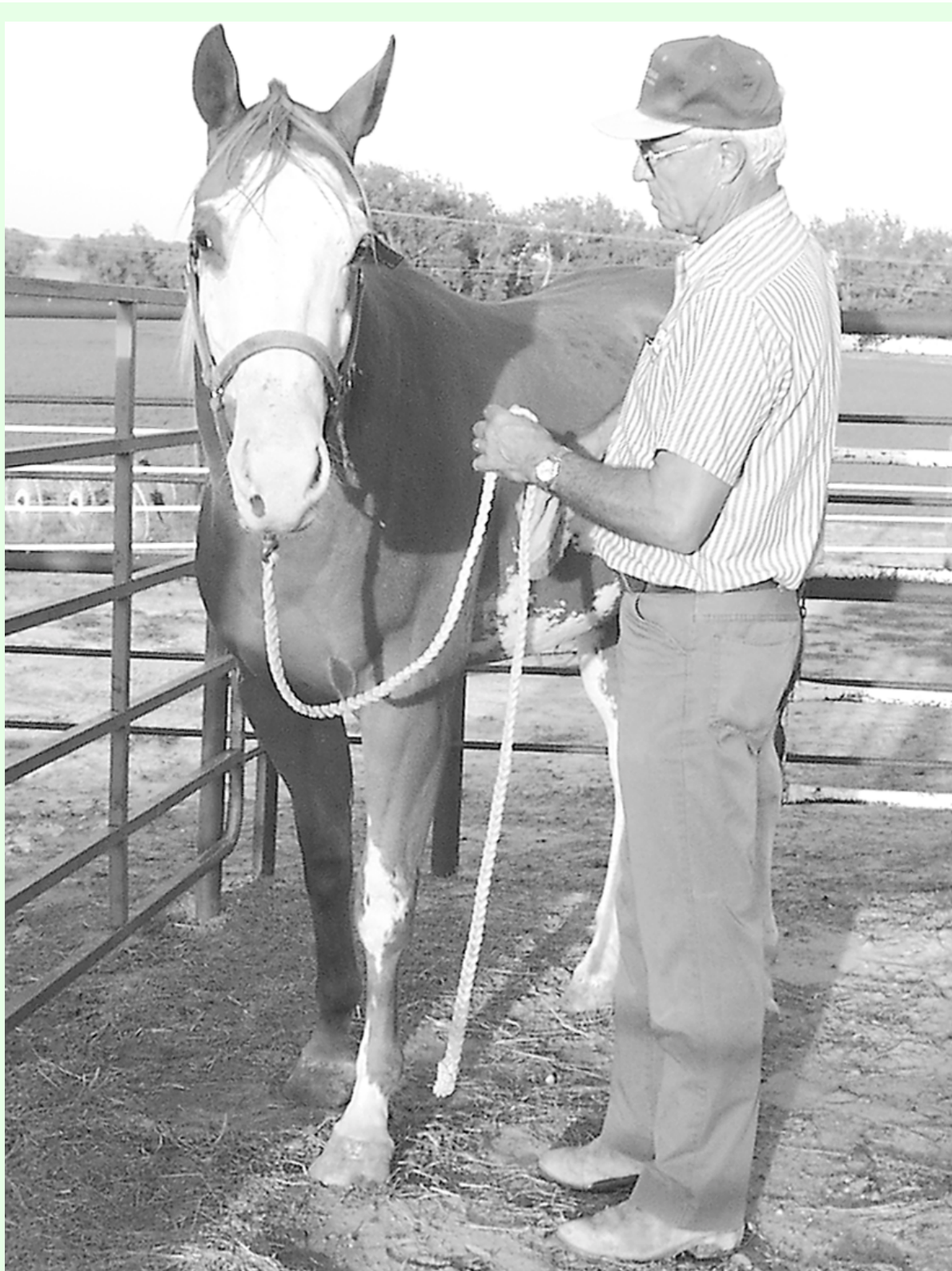
Commissioner Tim Raile said he had received several calls asking that the ban be removed but, until the rains had recently fallen, the commissioners felt it was just too dry. George Harper, St. Francis Fire Chief, had, at that time,

also agreed with the continued burn ban.

Commissioner Ron Krien warned residents that, even though there had been rain, that they should use caution when lighting fires.

The regulations for controlled burns are still in effect. Those burning weeds, logs or other items must call the power plant in St. Francis (785-332-3031) to report their intentions to burn. If the call is not made and firemen have to make a run to extinguish the fire, the burn could be very expensive.

County attorney Kevin Berens will type up the new resolution stating the lifting of the burn ban.



WEST NILE VIRUS attacked this 2-year-old gelding. Owner Gary Cooper curried the horse after he had eaten. The horse is recovering and the Coopers hope to be riding it within the next month.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Sept. 30 is bond sale date

The Cheyenne County Commissioners, at the Aug. 30 meeting, adopted a resolution which will authorize the sale of general obligation bonds for the remodeling of the Cheyenne County Hospital.

The bond sale will be held on Sept. 30 during the commissioners' meeting. Present at the meeting will be Chuck Curfman of Cooper Malone McClain who will be taking bids on the bond. The bond bid deadline will be 11 a.m. on Sept. 30 and all bids will be publicly read and evaluated at that time. The commissioners will then act upon the bids.

The principal amount of the general obligation hospital bonds is \$1,400,000. The first payout for the bonds will be November 2003 and will be \$260,000. The interest is due every six months and interest is bid each year.

For more information on bidding on the bonds, contact Mr. Curfman at 316-685-5777.

Charges made against judge

Magistrate Judge Tamara Zimbelman has been charged with misdemeanor intimidation after she accused Christopher Merklin of taking her purse at the bowling alley in St. Francis. However, Mr. Merklin said he didn't take it and doesn't think there even was a purse stolen.

Her husband Rell Zimbelman, St. Francis, and Scott Baumfalk, Kanorado, then took matters in their own hands and went to the Merklin home in St. Francis. They entered the home and demanded that the purse be handed over. While there, they yelled obscenities to both Mr. Merklin who is 21 and his sister Heather, 17. Also in the house at the time but was in the bathroom was Mary Merklin, Chris and Heather's mother.

Mr. Zimbelman and Mr. Baumfalk were charged with criminal trespassing and disorderly conduct which are also misdemeanors. The attorney general had contacted Dennis Merklin, Chris's father that the first hearing for the Zimbelmans and Mr. Baumfalk would be held Aug. 13 in Cheyenne County District Court but the case was not heard. According to Mark Ohlemeier with the attorney general's office, a judge had not been assigned. Judge Jack Burr has taken himself off of the case. The case will be heard by retired Judge J. Stephen Nyswonger of Concordia and a conference call has been set for Oct. 4 and will involve Judge Nyswonger, Athena Andaya, assistant attorney general and the defense attorney, Mike Day. At that time, a new hearing date will be set. The case against the judge is expected to be tried separately but the cases against the men might be combined.

According to the complaint filed in District Court, the incident occurred on Dec. 22.

Mr. Merklin's pickup was searched by the police but the purse was not found. Later in the evening, Mr. Zimbelman and Mr. Baumfalk showed up at the Merklin house and entered without being invited.

Judge Zimbelman's lawyer had contacted Karen Krien, publisher for The Herald. See JUDGE on Page 11



30-YEAR-OLD Jeanette Wallis is walking across the United States gathering letters of grievances.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Woman walks across U.S. for democracy

By Karen Krien

Jeanette Wallis is walking across the country, gathering letters and listening to people's concerns and grievances, which she hopes to give to President George Bush when she gets to Washington.

She passed through St. Francis on Friday and plans to be in Oberlin from 1 to 3 p.m. this Friday at Centennial Park, on the corner of Penn and Commercial.

She said that once she crossed the Colorado-Kansas border, she noticed that people began to wave and stop to see if she needed help. These friendly faces and kind words made the 5,000-mile walk from Seattle to the



Wallis

White House more enjoyable, she said. Ms. Wallis, 30, said she walks about 15 miles a day. Steven Navarro, drives an aging Isuzu station wagon as a support vehicle.

Wallis talks while she walks and accepts donations and grievances — notes people have written about concerns they'd like hand-delivered to President Bush.

"I'm just a messenger," said Wallis, who carries a placard on her back declaring her mission. If she makes it to the White House by February, it will be her first visit to the nation's capital.

She said she might never have considered walking for a cause had she not been walking home during the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle three years ago, where the police and demonstrators clashed often. She said she wasn't a participant, but was horrified to see how willing the elected leader

See WALKER on Page 11

West Nile strikes in county

By Karen Krien

One case of West Nile virus has been identified in a horse in Cheyenne County. Dr. Judy Baxter said that there had been one other unconfirmed case but the owner did not have any blood drawn.

Gary Cooper, St. Francis, had called Susan Roelfs, Cheyenne County Health Nurse, to report that his horse had been tested and had been diagnosed as having the virus.

"Gary did a great job of reporting to the health department and we, in turn, reported it to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment," said Nurse Roelfs.

There have been over 800 cases of West Nile virus identified in horses throughout the United States and, in Kansas, there have been 34 cases identified. The death rate was not available however, if the horse is already aged or in poor health, its immune system has more trouble fighting the virus and has less chance of living.

This may be the case of Sharon Olofson's 11-year-old mare. The mare has been in poor health and, when the Cooper horse was diagnosed with the virus, Mrs. Olofson decided it was time get her horse vaccinated which she did. However, on Monday the mare was disoriented and there was muscle twitching. The vaccine contains a little of the virus and she wondered if her horse had contacted the virus or if it was just a reaction to the vaccination. She did not expect the horse to live through the night but on Tuesday, the horse was doing better. As of Tuesday afternoon, she had not decided if she would have the horse tested.

Mr. Cooper's horse is a 2-year-old gelding which appears to be getting

Symptoms to look for

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment reported that, as of Aug. 28 in the United States, there were 480 cases West Nile virus found in humans but none had been detected in Kansas.

West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquitoes which have been infected with the virus. The mosquitoes become infected by biting a bird that carries the virus.

The virus is not spread from person to person such as touching, kissing or caring for someone who is infected or directly from birds to humans.

In people, the disease usually causes only a mild illness but may cause encephalitis (swelling of the brain), meningitis (swelling of the lining of the brain), or even death in rare cases.

Anyone can be infected with

West Nile virus if bitten by an infected mosquito. More severe infections are seen in the elderly and those with a weakened immune system. Most people infected with the virus do not become ill. People with a mild infection may have a fever, headache, eye pain, muscle aches, joint pain, a rash on the trunk or swollen lymph nodes. In severe cases, symptoms include extreme muscle weakness, inflammation of the brain, paralysis and coma. In rare cases, the infection may be fatal, particularly in the elderly and people with other medical problems.

Symptoms usually occur three to 15 days after a West Nile virus-infected mosquito bites a person. Being bitten by an infected mosquito will not necessarily make the

See SYMPTOMS on Page 11

better each day and he certain that the horse will live. This horse had been at a trainer near Ogallala, Neb., and when he came home at the end of June, he had some ringworm and, when he was taken to the vet, they noticed that his blood count was down but, after a month of rigorous training in the Nebraska sandhills, they thought the horse was extremely tired. Because of the ringworm, which was located where the saddle sat, Mr. Cooper and his son Greg decided to let the horse rest for a couple of weeks but, then, when Greg rode him, he said that there was something "weird" about the horse. They kept an eye on him and he continued to act strangely. Mr. Cooper said that "he

just wasn't tracking right — that he didn't walk straight." Several things happened throughout the week including the horse running into a windbreak and, when they took him back to the vet, the horse was still not tracking right and now, he acted like he couldn't straighten his neck and held it to one side. The vet questioned if there was a pinched nerve, if the horse was stiff from hitting the windbreak or if the horse had West Nile virus. A blood test sent to the lab confirmed that West Nile virus was present and the horse was treated and sent home where he is recovering.

The vet said the Cooper horse was

See VIRUS on Page 11

