

# Kite weather



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Mild temperatures and breezes prompted the Mike Weimer family of Hoxie to spend part of Easter Sunday afternoon to fly kites. Jason Weimer, right, helped his son, Dillon, left, and cousin, Bret Weimer of Denver, left.

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# Firefighter fixes food for 'Blue Crew'

HUTCHINSON (AP) — Don't bother kissing this cook. Especially between 4 and 5 p.m. That's when Patrick O'Neal fires up the gas stove and starts cooking supper for himself and the four or five other Blue Crew members from Hutchinson's Fire Station 1.

The fire driver doesn't take special orders or requests from picky eaters.

He lets them choose: Either eat what he makes or eat something else — but not in front of him.

"You don't get a lot of choices with us," O'Neal said.

"No one on this crew is very picky. We eat well."

Or they'd go hungry.

For \$7 a day, firefighters pay for the food made at lunch and dinner each shift they work.

During breakfast, the Blue Crew decides what they'll eat for lunch and later that evening.

They scan the cookbooks, the family recipes, or simply go by memory.

Lately, though, the crew depends on the Food Network, especially "Everyday Italian," a show hosted by chef Giada De Laurentiis.

"We're addicted to the food channel right now," Capt. Greg Henke said. In fact, they've memorized the "Everyday Italian" television schedule.

On a recent Wednesday, shortly after 4 p.m., O'Neal tied his red firefighter apron around his waist and prepped for Simple Chicken

Italiano — recipe courtesy of his wife.

He chopped chicken, boiled water and oiled down a large cast-iron skillet — all while listening to oldies music. In the meantime, Capt. Bob Robinson chopped onions and threw them in a mixed salad.

O'Neal didn't depend on measuring cups or even spoons as he sprinkled Parmesan cheese and Italian spices into the skillet. Thirty minutes later, he tossed linguini noodles into the chicken mixture and threw in some frozen vegetables.

Minutes before O'Neal's "chow down" announcement, firefighter Aaron Walton provides the taste test. Walton, the rookie crew member, samples vegetables and motions they need a few more minutes — as well as more salt.

"He's just in training," O'Neal said as he stirs the vegetables without adding the salt.

Around 5 p.m., O'Neal makes the dinner call to his crew. They better get to eating, he said, or else risk eating the crumbs left behind.

Just like a family, crew members use the dinner table as a way to catch up on daily gossip, news and, of course, grub up.

"It's a good time as a crew," O'Neal said. "All good rumors come out at the supper table."

As for cleanup duties, O'Neal and Robinson enforce another rule.

"If you don't help cook, you clean," Robinson said.

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# Farmers reaping meteorites by the acre

HAVILAND (AP) — Kiowa County farmers have found a new crop worth harvesting: meteorites.

But even though a 20-pound meteorite can go for up to \$20,000, area farmers Don and Sheila Stimpson have another goal in mind other than money. They want to open a meteorite museum and establish Haviland as the Meteorite Capital of America.

On Saturday they invited Haviland Mayor Jeff Christensen and University of California research scientists Candace Kohl and Kunihiko Nishizumi to watch as they dug up three meteorites with the help of backhoe operator Dan Woods.

"This is better than hunting for Easter eggs," Kohl said.

The backhoe dug until, between 5 and 6 feet, the scoop scraped rock.

Woods said it was the 15th meteorite he'd helped dig up in Brenham

Township since September.

The Brenham meteorites, named for Brenham Township near Haviland, fell from space about 20,000 years ago.

They're known for their naturally occurring gemstones of olivine crystals, which look like stained glass when cut.

In the 1920s and 1930s, one of the world's foremost meteorite hunters, Harvey H. Ninnger, examined Kiowa County's impact crater site and left with many finds. In 1949, collector H.O. Stockwell found the previous record-setter, a 1,000-pound meteorite, on what is now the Stimpsons' land. It's housed at the Celestial Museum at the Big Well in Greensburg, Kan.

"I consider this meteorite crater to be a national treasure, a pallasite meteorite crater," Stimpson said. "I am hoping we can attract some attention to the area."

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