

weather report

**77°
at noon**



Today

• Sunset, 7:53 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 5:33 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:54 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 63 degrees
- Humidity 26 percent
- Sky partly sunny
- Winds south-southeast 5 mph
- Barometer 29.93 inches and falling
- Record High 94° (1936)
- Record Low 30° (1924)

Last 24 Hours*

High 76°
Low 43°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy, low mid 40s, winds 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Partly cloudy, 20 percent chance of thunderstorms, high mid 80s, low 50, winds 10-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: dry, high 85-90, low 50-55. Thursday: dry, high 80, low 50. Friday: dry, high 80, low 50.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.36 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.27
Loan deficiency payment — 18¢
- Corn — \$1.96 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.02
Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Milo — \$2.96 hundredweight
- Soybeans — \$4.86 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.87
Loan deficiency payment — 2¢
- Millet — \$3.60 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.00 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.57
Confection current — \$13/\$7 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$12 (new crop)

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and Prairie Pea and Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Thousands join in march

WASHINGTON — Advocates of tighter gun control laws hope a mass turnout of mothers and families at a weekend march will spur activism that breaks the gridlock in the Republican-run Congress.

In the wake of tragic shooting spree across the country, participants in Sunday's "Million Mom March" signed thousands of Mother's Day cards printed with the message: "Forget the flowers ... forget the chocolate ... forget breakfast in bed. This Mother's Day, give us a present that lasts: common-sense gun laws."

Organizers of the "Million Mom March" principally want trigger locks to protect children and a national system that would register handguns and license their owners. They intend to maintain a movement that will endorse and oppose political candidates based on gun control positions.

Buzzzz!

Snakes rattle away in their pit while artist chips away at bears, pigs

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

In the middle of a wire-mesh net and a cloud of sawdust, a chainsaw buzzes. Wearing glasses and protective leg covering, an artist is creating animals out of wood at the Rattlesnake Roundup on Saturday and Sunday in Sharon Springs.

Michael Blaine of Winchester, N.H., carves figures out of tree trunks with a chain saw. He has been a member since 1993 of Masters of Chainsaw, which he said is the "best" group of carvers in the world. Blaine says there are six to eight major artists and four minor artists.

It was a sunny, but windy day for the annual weekend event. Over 200 prairie rattlesnakes were caught in the area, with diamondback rattlesnakes brought in from other areas. There were hourly shows where snake hunters performed various stunts with the snakes, and people could get a closer look at the reptiles in the snake pit. In a nearby building, men skinned and gutted snakes. People could buy pieces of deep-fried snake or snake chili to eat.

Lots of people stood around to watch Blaine create his carvings. A magician performed his tricks throughout the day. Food and craft vendors were selling their items at the fairgrounds.

Blaine said he has run a chainsaw since he was 12. He began chain-saw carving in 1981 after he got out of college. Then in 1986, he began making money at it and has been carving full-time since 1989.

Except for the five years he attended college in Vermont, he was always lived in New Hampshire. However, he travels around the country doing his art, usually doing three or four shows a day.

He said he has been artistically inclined since he was a young boy. He used to block the wood and then use hand tools to make his wood carvings, but that has changed.

"No sense in spending all day chipping wood that you can remove in five minutes with a chainsaw," said Blaine.

He carves all kinds of wood, but says green wood is best. He said dry wood limits him to what he can do. At the Sharon Springs event, Blaine used cottonwood.

He has never been cut by a running saw blade and said that he's one of the few who do this type of work who can say that. All his creations are done without a pattern, so each one is an individual piece. However, he said he has lots of pictures if he needs to refer to one for a particular animal.

Blaine said he carves at least one bear at every show and tries not to make duplicates. Prices for his figures range from \$80 to \$800. At Saturday's show, he carved a pelican, a standing bear, an eagle, a pig, and a tree stump with two bear cubs peeking out from opposite sides. The figures were to be auctioned off.

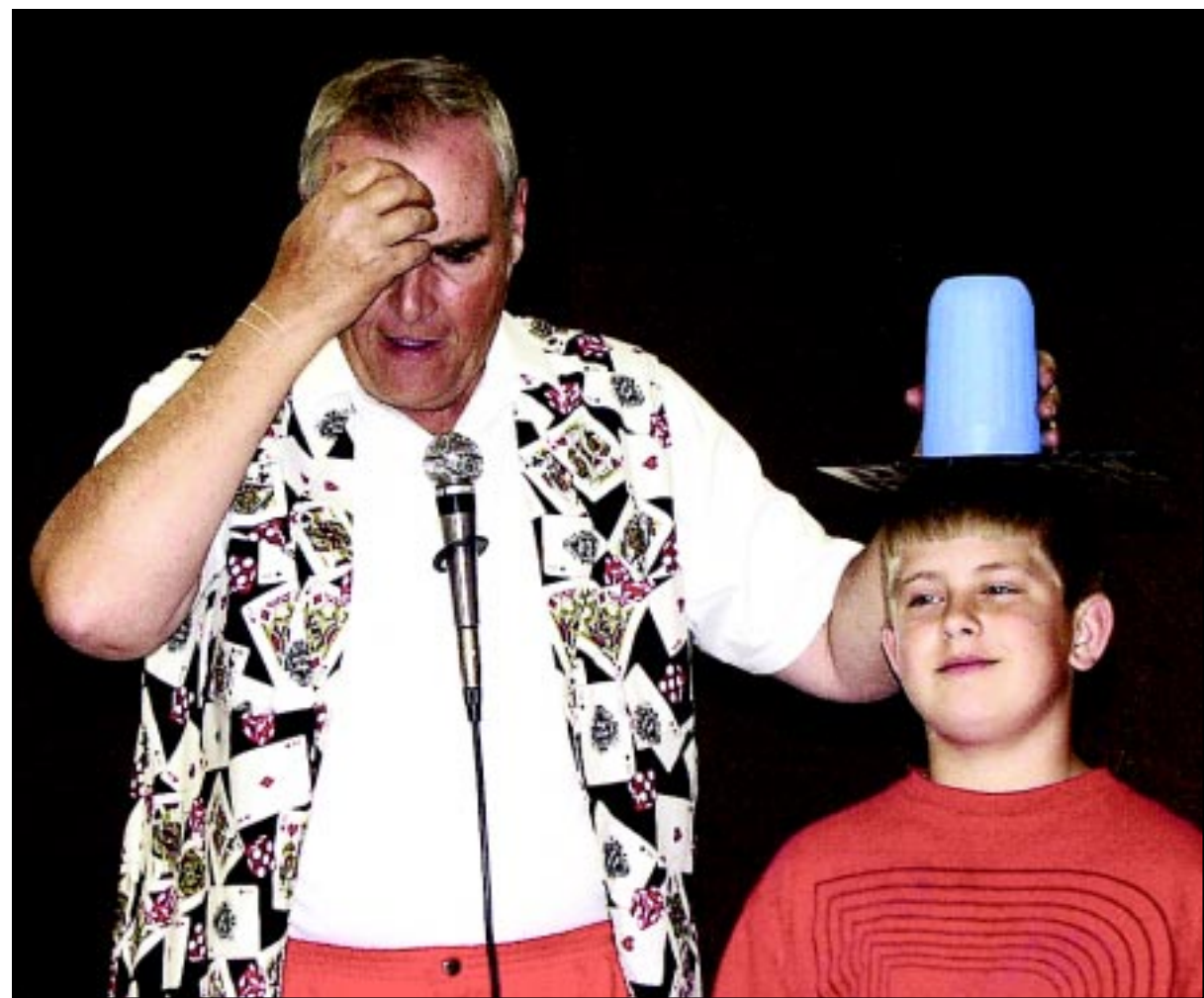
When he is performing at shows, Blaine's creations take anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes to carve. He tries to work with speed and accuracy.

He said he pays attention to other chainsaw artists when they work and learns from them to get fresh ideas.



Snake hunter Tim Gunther (above) held a rattlesnake for some kids to feel during one of the shows at the Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup. Michael Blaine (left) carved a bear with a chainsaw. Magician Rex Getz (below) performed a trick with a young boy from the audience at the magic show.

Photos by Sheila Smith and Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News



Tears of joy and sorrow flow freely as people return to New Mexico homes

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) — It was a time of jubilation for some, of intense sorrow for others, as thousands of people driven from their neighborhoods by searing walls of flame began returning home.

"Our town just looked like something very special," said Martha George, arriving Sunday afternoon at the house she had abandoned three days before. Her home of 16 years, like those of 7,000 other White Rock residents, had been spared.

Just up the mountainside in Los Alamos it was a different story. There, buses traveled winding roads, carrying 389 people who had lost their homes.

Some cried and others sat in stony silence, seemingly stunned by the extent of the destruction, said Jack Downing, a Red Cross psychologist who accompanied the bus.

A charred brick staircase still stood on one lot, reaching a full story into the air. Nearby were a pair of wooden bird feeders, apparently untouched by the fire, one still filled with seed. Burned-out cars sat near scorched trees in neighborhoods now painted in shades of gray.

Only people whose homes were destroyed by the Cerro Grande fire were allowed back Sunday. Even then, most could get only a glimpse of the destruction.

Officials today estimated 220 to 235 structures were destroyed and 405 families, many of them in multifamily housing, lost their homes. They previously estimated 260 homes had burned.

The fire, which had consumed 44,323 acres, was 28 percent contained today, and U.S. Forest Service spokesman Jim Paxton said the weather was too unpredictable to estimate when it might be under control.

Paxton said the southern end of the fire, near the lab and town, was contained and there was not a great risk of the fire growing in those areas.

"That does not mean the total threat of fire to Los Alamos is gone," he said. "It's diminished."

More than 1,500 people were fighting the blaze, including about 300 in the town itself, Paxton said. "We expect these fires to be like a marathon, an endurance run," he said.

Lower temperatures and calm wind today were helping firefighters gain ground along the wildfire's 89-mile perimeter, fire information officer Jon Schendel said. They're trying to move quickly, he said, because the wind is expected to kick up again Tuesday.

"There's a prediction of wind as high as 50 miles an hour. That's similar to what happened last Wednesday when (the fire) really blew up," Schendel said.

The fire was set by the National Park Service on May 4, intending a so-called controlled burn to reduce brush and grass that could fuel future fires. The high wind quickly pushed it out of control. Park Superintendent Roy Weaver has since been placed on paid leave, and prescribed fires in the West have been put on hold for a month.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt promised residents over the weekend that investigators would have answers for them by Thursday about why the blaze got out of control and who should be held accountable.

"Federal statutes that are in existence now say if we were negligent, we pay, and that will depend on the outcome of the investigation," Babbitt said Sunday.

County to check board positions

The Sherman County commissioners plan to consider a resolution from the Mid-States Port Authority on its appointment of board members at Tuesday's meeting.

The port authority owns the former Rock Island Railroad tracks, which Kyle Railroad in turn leases and operates.

Board members meet quarterly to discuss the economics of the railroad, handle the leases for elevators along the railroad and make improvements to the tracks. They work closely with the Kansas Department of Transportation. John Golden is the county's representative, and Lynn Hoelting is a member at large.

Road and Bridge Director Curt Way will meet with the commissioners to have them sign a letter of acceptance on the completion of the Caruso bridge. The letter needs to be signed for the state Department of Transportation.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby is on the agenda to discuss property across the street from the courthouse. It wasn't known if the county is interested in purchasing the property or just what the discussion is to be about.

Under old business, the commissioners are to make a decision regarding dispatch supervisor Mary Messamore's request relating to Cheyenne County.

The meeting opens at 8 a.m. in the commissioner's room on the first floor of the courthouse.