

weather report

77°

at noon

Today

• Sunset, 7:24 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:13 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:22 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 78 degrees
- Humidity 55 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds southeast 11 mph
- Barometer 30.09 inches and steady
- Record High 99° (1954)
- Record Low 48° (1964)

Last 24 Hours*

High 96°
Low 63°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear, low 60, winds southeast 10-20 mph. Tomorrow: Mostly sunny, chance of thunderstorms, high 90-95, low mid 60s, winds south 10-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: chance of thunderstorms, high mid 80s, low mid 60s. Friday: chance of thunderstorms, high 80-85, low 55-60. Saturday: chance of thunderstorms, high 80-85, low 55-60.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.62 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.33
Loan deficiency payment — 12¢
Corn — \$1.63 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.45
Loan deficiency pmt. — 54¢
Milo — \$2.54 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$4.05 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.08
Loan deficiency payment — 82¢
Millet — \$7.00 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$5.45 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$4.30
Confection current — \$15/\$6 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.

Heat destroys soybean crop

WICHITA—Nearly two-thirds of the Kansas soybean crop has already been lost, withered by an unrelenting heat wave that destroyed what once promised to be a record harvest, said Dennis Morrice, executive director of the Kansas Soybean Association. All the soybean crop in northern Kansas is now gone, and only late-planted soybeans in southern Kansas may yet make a crop — if they get soon a substantial rain of more than two inches, he said. “Within the next 10 days or more, there won’t be anything to harvest in Kansas as far as a soybean crop. We won’t have any,” Morrice said. Only last month, Kansas farmers were expecting a bumper crop. The 2.9 million acres of soybeans planted this spring set a state record in the number of acres.

Elevator’s license suspended

By Dana Sulsberger

The Goodland Daily News

The U.S. Department of Agriculture suspended Prairie Pea and Bean LLC’s elevator license on Thursday while federal investigators go over the records.

The Ruleton elevator is under investigation by the Warehouse License and Examination Division, said Vernon Steenhard, chief of the division in Kansas City.

During the license suspension, says a legal notice published today by the licensing department, any grain accepted by the elevator will not be backed by the government, and management will not be able to claim their facility as a licensed elevator.

Their license will be suspended until an investigation is completed, said Steenhard, probably some time this week.

An elevator gets licensed on a voluntary basis in order to protect their depositors, said Steenhard.

“It is kind of like banks being insured with the Federal Depositors Insurance Corporation,” he said.

In order to get a license, said Steenhard, a facility must meet financial standards and pass an inspection.

“Basically, a license means the facility is a bonded warehouse,” he said.

If something goes wrong, he added, the government will be able to protect the farmers’ product.

“Being licensed is a major selling point for an elevator,” he added.

Steenhard said that generally a company can have its license suspended if the warehouse no longer meets the division’s financial standards, or if they do not pass an inspection of their warehouse.

Steenhard said he couldn’t give a specific reason for the suspension until after the investigation is complete. Galen Diehl, owner of the elevator, did not return phone calls this week.

City talks, doesn’t buy

The Goodland City Commissioners met Monday night to discuss the purchase of some real estate.

Commissioners met in closed session at 5 p.m. for 10 minutes of discussion, but no decisions were made.

“There are no plans to discuss this matter further at this time,” said City Manager Ron Pickman, “but you never know.”

Man sees future here

INDEPENDENCE (AP)—A former network news anchor who went to high school here wants to open the Kansas prairie to a new wave of tourism.

Bill Kurtis, who is a familiar face as host of A&E’s “Investigative Reports,” sees his parents’ property — where Laura Ingalls Wilder’s family once built a one-room cabin — as a keystone in his efforts.

“People have seen the mountains, they’ve seen the seashore,” Kurtis said. “What we have is as exotic as the grasslands of Africa.

Kurtis sees an area that could attract visitors to southeast Kansas with its



Ron Thompson (above) showed Austin Klemm, 10, how to use a telescope. Austin, his mother and her three other children brought the telescope to Thompson’s house on Saturday for a star party. Thompson plans to have one every three months as the seasons change. Ron Asbury (below), a fellow star gazer, looked for celestial bodies once it got dark.

Photos by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

Star gazer brings people together

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Ron Thompson says it’s his fascination with the sky that leads him to spend thousands of dollars on high-powered telescopes so he can peer deep into space.

And the 39-year-old airplane mechanic says it’s his love for astronomy that makes him want to teach it to others.

But most of all, Thompson says it’s his hankering to find friends with similar interests that makes him want to invite strangers to his home to gaze at the stars.

“I just want to get to know people that have the same interest as I do,” said Thompson, who quit his job at United Airlines in San Francisco over a year ago to get married and move to rural Sherman County.

So he formed the Northwest Kansas Astronomical Society and started advertising for members who like looking at stars — no experience necessary, of course.

After putting a notice in the newspaper and on the Internet and setting up an astronomy display in the library — where people can sign up for a free subscription to Astronomy Magazine — the Air Force veteran held his first “star party” on Saturday at a field east of his home, which is west of Goodland.

Two families, including three adults and five children, from Sherman County showed up around 7 p.m. ready for some star gazing. But first, Thompson helped the families — who had plenty of experience star gazing with their eyes but not so much with a telescope — set up the telescopes they brought.

His large, computer-controlled scope was already in the center of the field next to a card table with a laptop computer on it.

Laurie Klemm, who owns the Homestead Buffalo Ranch with her



husband Ken, brought her four children, Austin, 10, Emily, 8, Jessica, 6, and Levi, 3. Klemm home schools her kids, and she is teaching them about astronomy.

“This was the perfect opportunity,” she said, “because we are studying the solar system.”

Rob and Charlene Asbury came with their son Jeff, who they described as “a 13-year-old science nut.”

“We spotted the set up at the library and decided to check it out,” Charlene said.

Thompson’s wife Bonnie and two of his step-children, Mathias and Josiah, joined the party.

The group learned a little about telescopes, but didn’t have time to do much else as clouds rolled in, followed by lightening and rain. By 9:30 p.m. everyone had gone home.

The Asburys returned Sunday night, and though Klemm said she couldn’t make it for the rain date, she said the family planned to join the group, which will meet at least once each season.

The sky was clear on Sunday and the group was able to find a few stars, with Thompson reading off the names and distance of the stars using computer software installed on his laptop.

He said one light year equals six tril-

lion miles, the distance light can travel in a year. The sun is eight light minutes from the earth — which means it takes eight minutes for light from the sun to travel to earth.

Thompson said the image the group was seeing of the star Antares, which is 603 light years away, was actually light the star emitted 603 years ago. He said the star Caph, which was in the northeast part of the sky, is 86 light years from earth and Octurius, which was in the western sky, is about 36 light years away.

The Andromeda Galaxy, the galaxy closest to the earth, is 2 million light years away, Thompson said.

In between the star-talk, there was some socializing.

Thompson said he met Bonnie about two years ago at the Apple Trail Restaurant, where she used to work. He said he stopped in on his way to fix an airplane, and it was love at first sight.

Thompson said he left his job in San Francisco to move here. Now, he said, he is a self-employed airplane mechanic.

All Thompson asks of the people that come to his star parties is that they pay a \$10 annual membership fee. That \$10 fee will make the person a member of the Astronomical Society, he said, and a member of the Astronomical League.

He said it’s good if people have a telescope, but they don’t have to and it doesn’t matter what kind it is.

Thompson’s equipment is worth thousands, but the Asburys said their telescope was from Wal-Mart and cost about \$135.

“It’s just a get together,” Thompson said. That’s what he really wants anyway.

Thompson said he will have a fall star party at the end of September and continue them once every three months or so, possibly inviting speakers in between.

Canadian artist comes to city to see progress of his project

Canadian artist Cameron Cross will be in Goodland for a few days this week to inspect the progress of the Van Gogh sunflower project which he has been commissioned to paint.

Cross won’t be doing any painting while he’s here though, as he has been unable to obtain a work visa.

Marcia Golden, vice president of the Sunflowers USA Association, which has organized the project, said they didn’t want to do any more work until

Cross looked at what had been done.

Golden said the association hoped Cross would be painting by now, but it has been difficult to get a work visa.

“This is not uncommon,” she added.

She said they have the final packet prepared and just need a few more things from Cross that they will submit them to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Cross will be at North School on Wednesday morning to hear a presen-

tation from the fifth and six grade classes of Norma Staker and Jona Neufeld. The students have been working on a documentary about Cross’s Van Gogh sunflower project.

The students have videotaped the work on the project and have done research on the seven countries where his copies of Van Gogh sunflower paintings will be placed, all places like Goodland, where the sunflower is important to the culture and economy.

Golden said Cross has already done paintings in Australia and Canada. After he does the one in the United States, she said she believes his next one will be in South Africa.

Cross will give the program Thursday at the noon meeting of the Goodland Rotary Club, in the meeting room of the student union at the Northwest Kansas Technical School. He will explain his plans for Goodland and the other countries.

Following the meeting, Cross will inspect the preparation of the canvas and talk with Gary Farris of Farris Manufacturing in Goodland, who is to build the easel.

Golden said the association wants to get started on the easel. Cross is bringing a video that shows the process of building the easel.

He is set to arrive in Goodland this afternoon and will leave Friday morning.