

Tree of hope



Sandy Rodgers (left) and Gordon Pettibone, board members for the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter, placed dog-paw ornaments on the shelter's "Tree of Hope" Wednesday morning. The shelter is accepting donations and the names of beloved pets or persons through Saturday, Dec. 23, for ornaments to be put on the tree, which is in the lobby of Western State Bank in Goodland. See story on Page 1.
Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

Smoking linked to colorectal cancer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Smoking cigarettes for 20 years or more can increase by more than 40 percent the risk of dying of colorectal cancer, according to a study that blames tobacco use for nearly one in eight such deaths in the United States.

A team of American Cancer Society researchers report Wednesday in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute that a study of 781,351 people over 14 years showed a strong statistical linkage between cigarettes and death from colon or rectal cancer.

"It is clear that cigarette smoking is associated with colorectal cancer mortality for both men and women," Ann Chao, a researcher with the American Cancer Society and first author of the study, said Tuesday.

Chao said earlier lab studies showed that carcinogens in cigarette smoke may cause tumors in the colon and rectum and may damage the DNA in cells. The new study is the first to link cigarettes and colorectal cancer death among such a large number of people followed for such a long period of time, she said.

Based on the study, Chao concluded that of the approximately 56,000 Americans who die annually of colorectal cancer, about 6,800 of the deaths, some 12 percent, are associated

with cigarette smoking.

Colorectal cancer is diagnosed in more than 780,000 people worldwide annually, according to the World Health Organization. There about 129,400 cases of colorectal cancer identified in the U.S. annually, according to 1999 figures from the American Cancer Society.

Cigarette smoking is identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the cause of 160,000 deaths from eight kinds of cancer, but colorectal cancer is not included on that list as a disease linked to tobacco use, said Chao.

Chao and her co-authors suggest in the study that colorectal cancer now should be classified as a "smoking-related cancer."

Dr. Bernard Levin of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston said the study gives strong support for classifying colorectal cancer as a smoking-related illness. "This study and others show that there is a high risk (of colorectal cancer) after 20 years or more of exposure (smoking)," he said.

Levin, the vice president for cancer prevention at M.D. Anderson, said the new study shows a clear dose-related effect from smoking: The more one

smokes, the greater the risk of cancer.

Smoking also has been linked to death from heart and pulmonary disease. The CDC estimates that cigarette smoking causes more than 400,000 premature deaths annually.

In the research, Chao and her colleagues found that 4,432 people in the study group died of colon or rectal cancer over the 14-year period.

An analysis of the smoking habits of the 781,351 people in the study, said Chao, showed the risk of colorectal cancer death increased steeply among 20-year smokers. The risk of death from the disease, she said, was directly linked to the number of cigarettes smoked and to the number of years that a person smoked.

For instance, people in the study who smoked more than 40 cigarettes a day were 54 percent more likely to die of the cancer than were those who never smoked. Smokers who have puffed for more than 60 years were 48 percent more likely to die of colorectal cancer than those who never smoked.

The age when smoking started also played a role, said Chao. People who started the habit before the age of 15 had a 47 percent greater risk of dying from colorectal cancer than did those who never smoked.

Cattlemen meet in Great Bend

Cattle producers are invited to attend the second annual meeting of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association to be held on Friday and Saturday at the Holiday Inn in Great Bend.

Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. Central Time Friday. An informal get-together will be held at that time and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

On Saturday, registration will begin at 8 a.m. New memberships and renewals will be taken.

Speakers for Saturday morning will include Luke Schwieterman of Schwieterman Inc.; Mike Callicrate from the Cattlemen's Legal Fund and Ranch Foods Direct; and Fred Stokes, president

of Organization for Competitive Markets. There will be a question-and-answers session following each speaker.

There will be drawings at lunch. A belt buckle created for the second annual meeting will be given away. The winner must be an association member and be present.

The afternoon session will begin with Leo McDonnell, founder of R-CALF, giving an informative presentation on the issues threatening the future of independent cattlemen. Dennis McDonald, R-CALF executive committee member, will speak.

McDonald is the only cow/calf producer on the World Trade Organization

and is on the U.S. Senate Agricultural Advisory Panel. Both will be available for questions.

Panel discussions with members of the Family Farm Coalition in the Kansas Legislature and other speakers will follow.

The business meeting will be held after that, with nominations for the association's board. All voting will be by mail-in ballot.

If you want to find out why cattle producers are losing their share of the retail dollar, the association says, you may want to attend this meeting. For information, call toll-free (877) 694-2906.

Group asks inquiry into Israeli force

INTERNATIONAL
JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli troops have used excessive force in dispersing Palestinian demonstrators, an Israeli human rights group said in a new report Wednesday, calling for a commission of inquiry into the violence.

The Israeli human rights group Betselem has been tracking human rights violations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for more than a decade. It said Wednesday that Israeli soldiers have used excessive force in dispersing demonstrations.

Betselem also said the Palestinian Authority has not done enough to prevent Palestinian children from participating in demonstrations, and has often failed to stop Palestinian gunmen from attacking Israeli civilians.

The army said it received the report, but had no immediate comment.

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Ethnic Albanian militants fired on Serb police for a second straight night in the tense area near the boundary with Kosovo, a Belgrade television station reported Wednesday.

YUINFO-TV's reporter said about two dozen ethnic Albanian rebels dressed in black coveralls fired Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at the Serb positions.

There were no casualties in the incidents, which YUINFO said occurred late Tuesday in the village of Lucane.

The shootings have come along a buffer zone between Serbia, the main republic of Yugoslavia, and Kosovo, a southern Serb province that has been under international control since last year.

Most of Kosovo's population is ethnic Albanian, and many want full independence from Serbia.

It is believed that some leaders of the separatist insurgency are behind the current clashes in the Presevo Valley.

The militants are seeking to drive Serbs from the valley, which is located in the buffer zone, just outside the area the NATO-led peacekeepers in Kosovo control.

NATIONAL
SPACE CENTER, Houston — Astronauts on space shuttle Endeavour enjoyed some time off Wednesday after a 6 1/2-hour spacewalk that completed power connections for the international space station's electricity-producing solar wings.

Meanwhile, NASA officials were refining their plan to fix a tension problem on one of the space station's wings.

Two cables came off their reels and pulleys when the right wing was extended Sunday night, leaving the blanket of solar cells slack. The problem could cause the fabric to tear or the wing to bend or break during shuttle dockings.

NASA's plan tentatively calls for astronauts Joe Tanner and Carlos Noriega to try to fix the problem at the start of their third spacewalk Thursday. The astronauts will climb to the top of the truss that holds the solar wings' batteries and electronics and use tools to put back into place the two loose cables.

The mission management team was set to review and formally approve the plan Wednesday.

ALBANY, N.Y. — The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing a \$460 million plan to remove PCBs from portions of the upper Hudson River in what would be one of the nation's largest dredging operations.

Under the federal agency's recommendation, 2.65 million cubic yards of sediment would be dredged from so-called PCB hot spots along a 40-mile stretch of the river north of Albany.

The proposal, to be announced Wednesday, caps 10 years of study. Much of the PCBs, or polychlorinated

biphenyls, were released decades ago by General Electric Co.

The EPA must take into account public comments before making its final decision in June.

A spokesman for GE, which has opposed dredging, promptly dubbed the EPA's proposal a massive folly and promised a fight.

GE, which could be forced to pay for the cleanup, has encouraged doubts about dredging with a recent media blitz. Reacting to the proposal, a GE spokesman said the company "will fight it with every resource."

SAN FRANCISCO — Gov. Gray Davis was in the holiday spirit when he lit the Christmas tree at the state Capitol, but he quickly pulled the plug as part of a statewide effort to conserve energy.

The 56-foot white fir was lit in Sacramento for about five minutes Tuesday, then turned off for 2 1/2 hours until 7:30 p.m., after the peak of the day's electrical use.

"In some parts of California, people are going without power," Davis said. "I would love to keep the lights on. But it's important that we all pull together to reduce the strain on the grid."

Officials have called on residents to delay the start of outdoor holiday lighting, keep thermostats set at 68 degrees and turn off computers and lights when not in use.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. customers face an average bill of \$77 this December compared with an average of \$50 a year ago.

Electricity shortages are plaguing the state, with Stage Two emergencies declared Monday and Tuesday by the California Independent System Operator — leading to the request for Californians to keep holiday lights off and to lower home thermostats.



A Stage Two emergency means the state is within 5 percent of running out of power.

HOLIDAY SPICE CELEBRATION

Most Stores Open

1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday

MATINEE 1:30 p.m.-Sherman Theatre Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 9-10 "The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas" (PG) Admission is a donation to Genesis	\$1200 Give-A-Way Weekly Drawing Register in Participating Businesses For \$100 and \$200 Weekly Scrip Drawings Drawings Held: Dec. 2, 9, 16 Winners Will Be Notified \$200, Ruben Garcia; \$100, David Schnug. Congratulations last week's winners!!!
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	Santa Store Tour December 2, 9, 16 1:30-3:00 p.m. - 3:30-4:30 p.m.	
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