

Plans underway for return

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after and friends and community leaders are planning a big homecoming at the Max Jones Fieldhouse.

A group of 12 met at the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce office on Monday to start organizing the event — noting that a date won't be set until they learn Jeff's plans. The pilot wasn't sure Monday, saying he had to talk with his commanding officer first.

The planners, including Chamber officials, members of Goodland's welcoming committee and a few of Jeff's friends and classmates, said the celebration should reflect what's most important in Jeff's life: religion, family, the military and spice cake.

Cara Daise, the mother of Jeff's

good friend Travis, who now lives in Salina, said after her son broke his arm during a football scrimmage his senior year, she invited Jeff and Dan Hayden over to eat dessert. She said Jeff couldn't get enough of her spice cake.

"I kid you not," she said, "Jeff nearly ate the whole cake. Whenever he comes home, I make a spice cake for him. It's sort of expected now."

The homecoming group talked about serving spice cake and punch at the homecoming, but said they didn't know if they could feed the thousands who are expected to show up, including television and newspaper reporters from across the country.

"This is going to be a big deal," Daise said. "I just think it's going to be massive."

Members decided to order 1,000 balloons, almost 1,500 small flags and 2,000 yards of ribbon for the event and to invite Gov. Bill Graves and legislators who represent this area. The group talked about reserving an area in the fieldhouse for reporters and television cameras.

"This is a world story," said Roxie Yonkey, owner of Red Brick Road Promotions.

Hayden, who was one of the first people Jeff called after he and the crew were taken to Hawaii for debriefing, said his friend deserves the attention he's getting.

"My thought is that we keep hearing about how he's a hero," he said. "Jeff's always been a hero. The rest of the world is just catching up to what we've always known."

City prepares for high power bills

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to dip into its savings.

"We've been able to make ends meet by using money in our reserves," he said.

He said the city is looking at an energy charge that has the least effect on the consumer. The staff has been instructed not to make unnecessary purchases and to turn off lights when leaving rooms.

Eric and Roxie Yonkey and Andrea Raby were approved for home occupation permits. The Yonkeys' permit is to sell promotional products and operate a graphic design business, but not a web site. Raby's permit is for a daycare center. Even though the commission approved a permit for Raby, she still has to get a state license before she can start. Commissioner Blume asked if a per-

son has to get a new permit if they move. City Manager Ron Pickman said then the process starts all over again because the permits are for a certain address and person.

Billinger declared Friday, April 27, as Arbor Day in Goodland. Pickman said a ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. that day in Steever Park, where a tree will be planted. He said students from Central School have been invited to bring articles relating to either Goodland, Arbor Day or tree planting to be placed in a time capsule that will be buried under the tree.

Pickman said the city will put out bid specifications for putting in sod and sprinklers and paving an access road to the Steever Water Park.

The commissioners approved librarian Janet Warren's suggestions of Jo Ann Wahrman and Maggie Hernandez

to fill seats on the Goodland Public Library Board. Both have completed a term on the board and are eligible to serve a second.

On the appointment of two members to the High Plains Museum Board, the commissioners reappointed Millie Wright for another three-year term. However, when Lloyd Holbrook was approached about serving again, he asked not to be reappointed unless the board couldn't find anyone else. He said he wanted to give younger people a chance to serve.

Pickman said if anyone is interested in serving on the museum board, they should contact his office at 899-4500.

Ed Wolak was appointed as a "resident member" of the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency and Rod Blake was appointed "alternate member," each for a two-year term.

Tire blowout kills Colby man, 40

A Colby man was killed Sunday night when the right rear tire on his car blew, sending the vehicle out of control into a ditch on K-25 about 12 miles south of town.

The Kansas Highway Patrol re-

ported that David Lane Keller, 40, was killed when he was ejected from the 1981 Corvette about 8:25 p.m. near milepost 180.

After the car came to rest in the east ditch, it caught fire. Colby fire-

fighters, city police and Thomas County sheriff's deputies rushed to the scene.

Funeral services for Keller are pending with Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel in Colby.

China promises 'straight forward' approach to talks

WASHINGTON (AP) — China is promising a "straightforward" approach in negotiations Wednesday with the United States on U.S. reconnaissance flights.

"We look forward to that," State De-

partment spokesman Richard Boucher said today.

The Pentagon-led American delegation will seek the prompt return of a detained American plane, discuss what caused the plane's April 1 collision

with a Chinese jet fighter and how to avoid future incidents, Boucher said.

Chinese do not want flights resumed. The Bush administration has promised to restart them and says China conducts similar reconnaissance operations.

Weather seeding ends with a bang

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the weather up to Mother Nature.

The group pushed for a public vote on the issue in area counties but the board said those wouldn't be legally binding.

After years of debates, public polls, "advisory" elections and squabbles over the process, though, the groundwater board pulled the plug on cloud seeding in November. It had lost in public and county commission votes at nearly every turn, and state officials were losing patience.

The decision came a week after 64 percent of voters in Thomas County (the groundwater district's home base) said in an advisory election that they didn't want cloud seeding, and a few months after commissioners in Cheyenne, Decatur and Rawlins counties banned the practice. Decatur and Rawlins counties even made it a crime.

Wayne Bossert, the district's manager, said that the votes didn't factor into the board's decision as much as other administrative and financial problems with the program, which was financed 50-50 by the state and the district's water users. The program was an extension of an established one in southwest Kansas, run by another groundwater district, and Bossert said that agency planned to take away its equipment.

Either way, it was a victory for the natural weather group.

"This party isn't to get in the face of those who were defeated," said Gordon Hawkins, a Rawlins County farmer who helped form Citizens for Natural Weather. "It's not to celebrate that we won. It's a way for us to get to know each other socially."

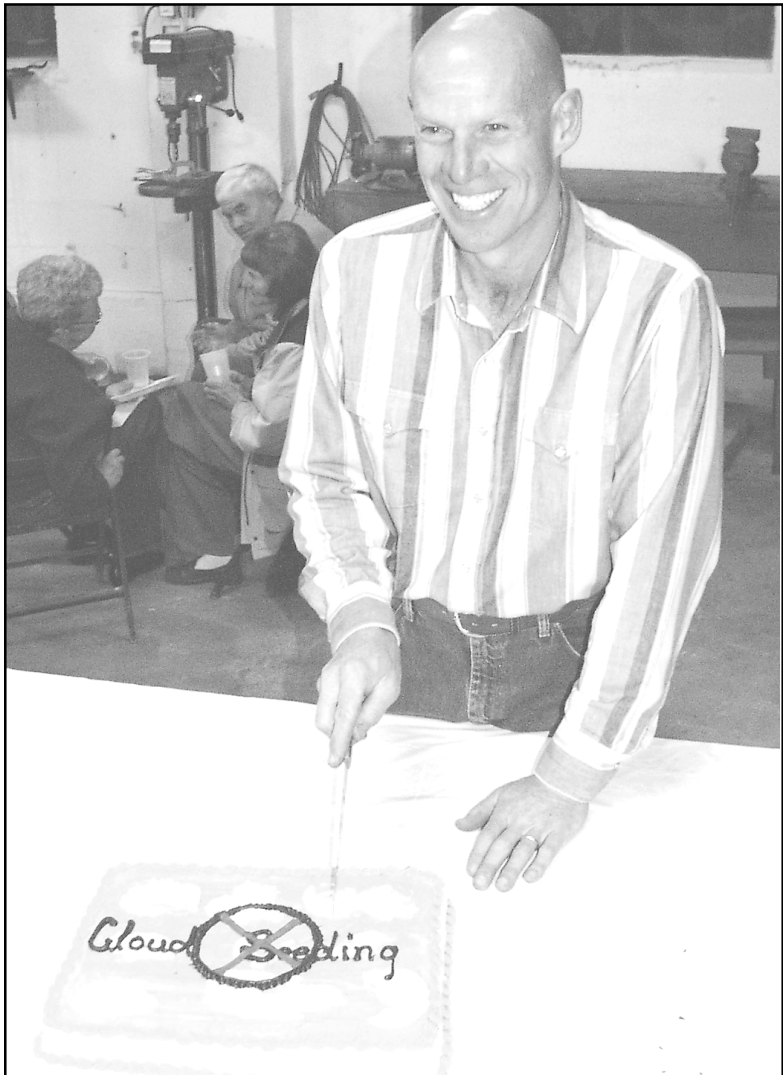
The crowd of about 40 ate roasted pork, baked beans, potato salad and a cake with the words "cloud seeding" crossed out on it, then Del Hawkins, Gordon's son, stood on a set of stairs and thanked those who contributed.

He said the group donated its last money for one cement square on the sidewalk that circles Atwood's lake. He said "let it rain" will be written on the square beneath the group's name.

Keith Downing, a charter member who farms mainly dryland crops in Thomas County, said it's a relief to know that cloud seeding is no longer affecting the weather.

"I'm ecstatic," he said. "If it's dry, it's dry because it's supposed to be. I can live with that."

Though they admit they don't have much proof, some cloud seeding op-



Keith Downing, a Thomas County farmer and former member of Concerned Citizens for Natural Weather, celebrated the end of cloud seeding last month with other members of the natural weather group. For three years, the group fought to stop the weather-changing process in northwest Kansas.

Photo by Rachel Miscal/The Goodland Daily News

ponents blame the program, which uses planes to "seed" storm clouds with chemicals, for last year's drought. Bossert, a cloud-seeding advocate, said that's unfair because his numbers show the program's target area had 4 percent more moisture last year than areas that weren't seeded over.

"Both areas were extremely dry," he said, "but the target area was wetter than the non-target area."

But Downing claimed the group's members were never as interested in the numbers as they were in being able to give their opinion on the program. They claimed the groundwater board and Bossert never listened to them.

"The issue was never is cloud seeding is right or wrong," he said. "It was, 'Why can't we have a say on it?'"

Hawkins said Bossert and the board showed a demeaning attitude and arrogance, which helped push the Citi-

zens for Natural Weather together.

Three years ago this month, he said, more than 140 opponents tried to attend a district board meeting, looking for answers about the program.

The board planned to discuss cloud seeding later in the meeting, Hawkins said, but the group showed up early to talk to Al LeDoux, director of the state Water Office, which had to issue a permit for cloud seeding.

Bossert said the board had arranged to have cloud seeding supporters come to the meeting, but the farmers refused to wait.

"They got miffed and stormed out," he said.

From there it escalated into a three-year battle. Now that it's over, there is only hindsight.

"It's a complex thing," Bossert said. "They're looking at it one way and I'm looking at it in another way."

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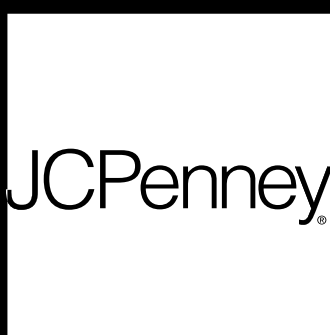
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