

## Playing hookie



Fifth graders ate and played on a teeter-totter Friday evening at Smoky Gardens, the county lake and park south of Goodland. The boys (from left) Allen Normandin, Darrick Ihrig, Dustin Zelfer, Eugene Gutierrez, Michael Klinge and Preston Dautel, along with other fifth graders, parents and teachers from North School went on an "outdoor education" trip to Wallace County on Friday to dig for fossils, and visit a museum, a cemetery and other sites. They ended the evening with games, a cookout, songs and stories at the lake.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

# Month of April already gone

Another week gone and so is the month of April. Everyone seems to be running in circles trying to get everything done, both at home and with their kids at school.

There are a lot of special activities going on these last four weeks of school.

I noticed on the mentoring sheet that the West kids are to go to Garden City and visit the zoo. The mentoring season is about over and depends on how many outside activities the kids will be having as to how much longer it will last. Hard to believe the school year is almost over.

My neighbor Lillian Thornburg got home after a short visit with her son in California. She was tired and not feeling up to par so she didn't plan on coming to the Goodland Senior Center until Monday. It's good to have her back next door.

Jonathan McClung's class went on a trip to Wallace County to do some digging. He came over and asked if by chance I might have some dental tools he could use in his diggings. I looked around in the boxes and found a few that I gave to him. He said they all had a good time and he enjoyed the digging.

It's hard to believe the number of ill people we have in our community. I don't want to miss anyone, so I'll won't name them.

Some have been in the Goodland hospital, others are just getting out and some have gone to both the Good Sa-



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maritan Center and Wheat Ridge Acres assisted living center for an indefinite amount of recovery time.

Others are at home hoping to shake this junk that has been hanging around so long. I think a good, long rain would clear the air, maybe, of these various bugs lurking out there for us to catch. Get well wishes to all of you who are suffering.

My friend Lucille Nash should be home from her trip to see her son and daughter-in-law, Terry and Linda Nash, by the time you read this. She was scheduled to get into Denver on Tuesday and home from there. I'll be glad to have her home again.

Ila Zeigler and I went to the home and garden show at the field house and to the open house at the new fitness center on Sunday afternoon. Lots of stuff to look at and buy if you were so inclined.

I didn't make it to the home and garden show on Saturday as I worked at the church all morning, went to the potluck dinner at the senior center and did a little yard work before going to church Saturday evening. I don't understand where the times disappears to. I've got a meeting in

Colby Tuesday morning and hope to get back before 11 a.m. to work at the noon meal. It's hard to fathom that I'll be working on my third month of reports to the Hays office.

Someone asked how I liked retirement. As I've said before, I think I'm as busy or maybe more so since Dr. Beynon's office closed.

I'm aiming towards the end of May to get back to Colorado. At this time that's about all I can do.

Birthdays—Brian Imel and Audrey Engel on May 2; Leah Gutsch on May 5 and a belated one to Don Weick on April 25. Happy birthday to all these and any others who may be celebrating.

Belated anniversary greetings to Al and Rosetta Lindsten on April 26. Better late than never.

I'm still working on my yard, but hopefully the major work is about over and it will just be the weekly maintenance stuff from now on. My sprinkler is on and set to work on the dry lawn.

That terrible wind on Saturday took a big, and I mean big, branch out of my neighbor's tree. Hope there wasn't too much damage around town.

With nothing floating around the computer, I'll sign off and get this to the newspaper office.

Take care of yourself, guard yourself from that burning sun and see you all next week.

## Teachers, board discuss safety

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qualified teachers to move to Goodland. With a shortage of teachers in Kansas, he said, most districts are struggling to find good help.

Mary Porterfield, head of the teacher's five-person team and National Education Association of Goodland president, presented a proposal to have each of the district's five schools form "school climate committees" to find ways to make school safer for students and teachers. The proposal required a district-wide committee, too.

When the negotiations began, Porterfield said the teachers most likely wouldn't propose items related to the safe school issue, though they wanted to talk about it.

While the board's team listened, Russell said they don't want to include the item in the negotiated agreement.

She called the proposal a "permissibly" negotiated item, and said the board doesn't have to talk about it.

"I don't think anyone disputes the need for safe schools," she said. "but I'm not sure the board wants it in the negotiated agreement. It doesn't need to be mandated."

Speaking for teachers, Porterfield proposed the district hire one teacher aide for each of the three elementary schools, and limit class size to 17 in kindergarten-sixth grade and 20 in seventh-12th.

The board's team had the same response, saying they legally didn't have to talk about it.

Porterfield said a teacher survey showed copying, laminating and other tasks aides would do are cutting into the elementary staffs' planning time.

She said since the district took teacher aides out of the elementary

schools a couple of years ago, students have suffered because teachers have less time. High school and junior high teachers have students who are able to act as aides, she said, but most elementary students aren't mature enough to help much.

Russell said one of the board's goals is to keep class sizes low so students have enough time with teachers. However, she said, the district may have to cut staff to save money, and may not be able to afford new employees.

"We choose not to negotiate either one," Russell said.

The teams also discussed the teachers' proposals to change how staff can fulfill the district's 8-hour annual technology training requirement and to remove a limit on the amount of Professional Development points teachers can use to move up the salary scale, but didn't come to an agreement.

## School finance holding up negotiations

BUDGET, from Page 1

increase for schools.

The House negotiators said they would wait for senators to resolve their differences over school finance.

"We cannot bring a conclusion to the budget when that question remains open," said Rep. Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, one of the negotiators. "In fact,

we can't even have the negotiations we need to have."

The Senate's lead negotiator, Steve Morris, said some of his colleagues are unwilling to support proposals for raising revenues to close the budget hole until school finance issues are debated again.

Two proposals — one to raise insurance taxes by \$10 million and another

to impose a 1 cent a gallon increase in gasoline and diesel fuel taxes on July 1 — failed to clear the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee on Tuesday.

Graves included both ideas among \$117.6 million in tax increases he proposed to help close the budget gap and raise an extra \$60 million for public schools.

## Ex-Klansman guilty in church bombing

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Nearly four decades after a church bombing killed four black girls preparing for worship services, a second ex-Ku Klux Klansman has been convicted in the deadly blast that galvanized the civil rights movement.

Even before a handcuffed Thomas Blanton Jr. was led from the courtroom Tuesday, questions were raised about when, and if, prosecutors would now attempt to try Bobby Frank Cherry — the only other living suspect in the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.

A grand jury indicted both men last year in the girls' killings. They had been scheduled to go to trial at the same time, but Circuit Judge James Garrett delayed Cherry's trial because of questions about his mental competency.

"Now it's time to go after Cherry. I am tired of hearing about his mental

competency. They have tried mentally retarded black men," said the Rev. Abraham Woods, a black minister who help persuade the FBI to reopen the church bombing case.

Prosecutor Doug Jones said the decision would not be made until an evaluation of Cherry's mental competency was completed.

On Tuesday, a jury of eight whites and four blacks deliberated for 2 1/2 hours before finding Blanton, 62, guilty of first-degree murder. They had heard a week of legal arguments and evidence, including photos of the girls and audiotape secretly recorded 37 years earlier. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Asked by the judge if he had any comment, Blanton replied: "I guess the good Lord will settle it on judgment day."

It was never made clear what Blanton did in either putting the bomb together or placing it outside the

church, but the swift verdict was sweet news for many black Birmingham residents, who have lived with painful memories of the bombing.

"It's an emotional experience," said Estelle Boyd, a member of the church now and in 1963. Boyd said she is a friend of family members of the four girls: Denise McNair, who was 11, and Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley and Carole Robertson, who were all 14.

"This means a great deal to the families. If you have children, you are able to empathize," Boyd said.

NAACP Chairman Julian Bond said the Blanton conviction, the latest in a series of civil rights era crimes brought belatedly to court, was commendable.

"If Southerners want to put this era behind them, this is the best way to do it — by bringing to justice the terrorists who tried and failed to stop the movement for democracy," Bond said.

## Officials ask that budget not be cut

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

High Plains Mental Health officials didn't actually ask Sherman County commissioners to increase their budget for next year, but they dropped large hints while asking that the county at least not cut the \$30,110 they have budgeted.

Executive Director Kermit George presented the county's report for the past year and told the commissioners that the number of people seen from Sherman County was up 8 percent.

He said the largest group of patients was young people from 10 to 19 years of age, who accounted for 22 percent (53) of the 238 patients seen.

Adults 25-59, combining three age groups, with 54 percent of the total or 129 patients. Patients 25-34 were 16 percent (39); 35-44 20 percent (47); and 45-59 18 percent (43).

In most age groups, he said, the total leaned a bit more toward males, who were 54 percent of the total (128) to 46 percent for females (110). Of the 54 under age 18, though, 33 were male

and 21 were female.

Families with an annual income of under \$15,000 were 53 percent (96) of the total, and 66 percent (118) were under \$20,000.

Single people 15 and over account for 36 percent (73) of the patients. Married patients are 33 percent (67); divorced 15 percent (31) separated 6 percent (13); and widowed 4 percent (8).

Most of the patients from Sherman County (59 percent) were people seeking help themselves or for a family member or a friend. Doctors or the hospital referred 17 percent, the court system and law enforcement 14 percent and the schools 2 percent.

Looking at the diagnosis breakdown, George said the largest number, 66, were mood disorders, which includes depression.

George said High Plains had a balanced budget in 2000 for the first time in years, and that a major part of that was because the board agreed to raise the patient fees. He said many of the counties don't pay their full share

when the county contribution is compared to the number of patients served. He said Sherman County ranks second by usage versus the county contribution.

"We would ask that when you look at the budget for next year that you consider the figures we have presented," George said, "but at least we ask that you not cut the present level of funding."

Meripat Bowman and Richard Emig, the Sherman County representatives on the center's board, said they felt the mental health center has done a great job making it a break-even process. Bowman said the ability to do video conferencing with the central office in Hays or hold hearings by video from the state hospital in Larned has been a valuable improvement. George said all the branch offices like the one in Goodland have this service available.

The commissioners didn't have a lot of questions or comments, but said they would take the request into consideration when doing the budget.

## County may put records on film

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about \$30,000.

There are 14 books in the clerk's office which would cost \$1,637. The 127 books in the treasurer's office would cost \$6,033. The 221 books in the register of deeds office would cost \$21,216, and she estimated about \$1,895 for the appraiser's office, including purchase of quick retrieval software.

Register of Deeds Carol Armstrong said these are old records which have not ever been microfilmed, but that the newer records are being microfilmed at a cost of about \$400 per year.

The commissioners asked if the cost included making a CD of each one.

Roberts said the proposal was only

for microfilming except with the appraiser, which included the CD and the software for the retrieval system. She said it would be an additional \$550 to make the CDs of everything.

The commissioners said they would like to do some research about the old school records, which were not included in the proposal, and would look at the budget.

Crystal Linsner reported that she was unable to get enough people for a team in the 24-hour relay. The commis-

sioners talked about making a contribution, but no action was taken.

Linsner also reported that only four county employees showed interest in the cafeteria disability insurance plan. She suggested that since the city has the plan, the county might see if more employees are interested next year.

The next regular commission meeting will be 8 a.m. Tuesday in the commission room on the main floor of the courthouse, Eighth Street and Broadway Avenue.

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