

# Western Kansas landmark has change in appearance

QUINTER (AP) — There's been a change in a familiar western Kansas landmark. Few noticed it at first, after the tallest portion of Castle Rock toppled to the ground earlier this month.

"I didn't expect that to fall in my lifetime," said Don Harvey, whose farm is located about 5 1/2 miles from the rock formation south of Quinter. "It's been there for thousands of years."

No one is exactly sure when the rock fell or why, but it appears to have happened the night of July 12, when heavy rains and strong winds hit Gove County.

"We've had some pretty good winds," said Tom Stewart, the Castle Rock Ranch owner on whose land the formation is located. "And it may have just gotten tired and decided to fall."

Harvey said that 5 inches of rain fell in a week at his nearby farm.

Stewart didn't find out about the collapse until last Thursday, a week after it's believed to have happened.

It's difficult to say how much of the

rock fell, but it included the tallest of what had been two distinct spires. Castle Rock now has three distinct spires, although one appears to show strong evidence of erosion and cracking.

Quinter resident Ben Litfin might have been among the first to make the discovery, the night after the storm. He had relatives in town and he wanted to show them the sights, including Castle Rock.

As they approached the overlook south of the spire, Litfin said he could tell that another piece had fallen from the rock. He's a frequent visitor to the site, which he likes to show to relatives and friends. He also looks for shark's teeth, remnants of the prehistoric era when water covered the region.

Litfin was disappointed by his discovery, just as he had been when he learned that the Cobra, another tower of rock located south of Castle Rock, had fallen before his return to Quinter nearly a year ago.

The Cobra's passing nearly two years ago also went without notice, again the victim of heavy rains and high winds.

In the 1980s a similar rock — dubbed the Sphinx because of its similarities to the sphinx in Egypt — fell. It was located near Monument Rocks in western Gove County.

The three rock formations are landmarks, carved out over thousands — if not millions — of years by wind and water erosion.

Castle Rock was exceptionally notable because it was a single rock tower, located hundreds of yards north of a series of rock badlands.

Quinter has heralded the location of Castle Rock for years, erecting signs noting that it is the gateway to Castle Rock.

The main part of debris from the collapse measured 10 to 15 feet deep, stretching out to the north almost 20 yards. Additional debris, much of it from the caprock that rested at the top, stretched out another 20 yards.

## Learning the business



Students from the VISTA summer school visited *The Goodland Daily News* Wednesday to learn about the newspaper business. Editor Tom Betz conducted the tour of about 20 students.

Photo by Rachel Miscall / *The Goodland Daily News*

## Sports organization back in Kansas

OLATHE (AP) — The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics officially opened up shop in its new digs Monday, returning to the area it left in 1993 when it moved to Tulsa from Kansas City, Mo.

"We moved in unofficially last week, but today is our first day of business out here," said Jim Carr, the NAIA's chief operating officer.

The collegiate sports organization representing 332 smaller colleges and universities will operate for the next two years out of office space being provided free-of-charge by Honeywell Corp. at its complex in suburban Kansas City, near the intersection of Kansas 10 and Kansas 7.

The NAIA is planning its own new building to be located in the Cedar Creek complex two or three miles to the west along Kansas 10, a heavily traveled route linking Lawrence and the southern metro Kansas City area.

"We hope to break ground in the late fall or early spring," said Carr. "We're working on our capital campaign, we need a certain amount of money before we start. We hope to be in the new building 18 to 24 months from today."

The opening of the new office is a homecoming for the organization, but not for any of the 22 employees working there. Carr said his secretary had worked in the NAIA's Kansas City office before the move to Tulsa, but decided to retire rather than return.

Kansas City had been the home of the NAIA's men's basketball tournament since 1937, when the organiza-

tion called itself the National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball, and to the NAIA itself after it moved its headquarters from Los Angeles in 1957.

The announcement in 1992 that the NAIA would pull up stakes the following year stunned business and political leaders in Kansas City, a setback followed later by the departure of the larger National Collegiate Athletic Association from Overland Park, another Kansas City suburb, for Indianapolis.

The NAIA tournament had been a fixture in Kansas City for so long that it had become part of the local culture. The games were played first at Municipal Auditorium, switching later to the larger Kemper Arena.

Many people drawn to the tournament would pack a lunch and watch basketball from 8 a.m., when the first games began in the early rounds, until the last ball bounced around midnight. Occasionally they'd get to see players from little-known schools who went on to make names for themselves in pro basketball, Dennis Rodman among them.

But the NAIA, with peak of around 500 members in the 1970s, saw a steady erosion of membership in the 1980s and early 1990 as more and more small colleges switched to the NCAA to get a share of the money and benefits available because of that organization's billion dollar television contract with CBS.

Tulsa came up with the incentives

that convinced the NAIA to move. And while the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce and local businesses got behind the NAIA basketball tournament, it never caught on there. It moved to three different locations during the Tulsa years — from the Mabee Center at Oral Roberts University to the Reynolds Center at the University of Tulsa to the Tulsa Convention Center.

Faced with the flagging attendance for its tournament, the NAIA started looking around again, and 19 cities, including Tulsa, expressed interest. Olathe, a rapidly growing suburban city of about 95,000, won out over the other two finalists — Fort Wayne, Ind., and the St. Louis suburb of O'Fallon, Mo.

Incentives that helped the Olathe bid, besides the free office space from Honeywell, included a \$1 million discount on the six-acre site for the new headquarters and an adjacent character development center, \$1 million over 10 years from the city through a hotel tax increase and Chamber of Commerce assistance for the drive to raise capital for the project.

Carr said the NAIA is still determining exactly where next season's Division I men's basketball tournament will held "but it will be here in the Kansas City area, assuming we can get the final details worked out."

He said eventually the organization plans to hold at least one championship event in the area in each season — fall, winter and spring — "preferably in Olathe."

## Air ambulance service has been chosen

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one paramedic, both of whom will be locally hired. If there are not enough qualified people in Goodland and surrounding areas, he said, Eagle-Med will provide the necessary training, including paying half the cost of books and tuition.

He said Jeff Krall, Emergency Medical Services Director of Goodland, will help with the hiring and each prospective crew member will undergo extensive critical care and advanced life sup-

port training. Eagle-Med, McElroy said, has proposed a plan for implementation.

Beginning on Aug. 1, he said, the company will advertise for paramedics, nurses and emergency medical technicians for paramedic classes, with the aircraft being moved into Goodland in April 2002.

Meanwhile, he said, Eagle-Med will be reviewing equipment requirements and interviewing and choosing qualifying applicants. Training of crew members will begin Sept. 15 and be

finished by March 1, 2002, before the plane gets here.

After the presentation, the board discussed and compared, Eagle-Med to Air Evac, whose presentation they heard last month at their regular meeting. In the end, the board decided unanimously to go with Eagle-Med.

Pickman, city manager, said he would give Iva Ballard, Co-Owner/Operator of Eagle-Med, the news today.

The board set their August meeting for the 27th.

## Toy inventor plans to launch himself 35 miles

BEND, Ore. (AP) — Next summer, Brian Walker will strap himself into the 24-foot rocket he's building in his backyard, ignite 9,000 pounds of fuel and hurl himself toward the edge of space. At least, that's the plan.

If he's calculated correctly, Earthstar 1 will run out of fuel six minutes out, about 35 miles from the Earth's surface. The spent fuel tank will drop off and the control capsule, with Walker strapped inside, will coast to a stop.

He'll float in space for a moment, then activate a thruster in the nose of the capsule and prepare for descent.

As he glides back toward Earth, a dozen Hooters girls will be waiting, ready to shower him with champagne. That part is in his dreams.

Walker, a bearded 44-year-old who never finished college, gets a gleam in his eye when he talks about his idea of the perfect end to the space flight he's fantasized about since watching the Apollo flights on black-and-white TV when he was 8.

He isn't trying to break any records. Even if his homemade rocket hits its peak trajectory, it won't make it all the way into space, which most scientists define as beginning 65 miles above the Earth.

"My No. 1 goal is that I survive," he said. "My No. 2 goal is that I actually go 35 miles."

Walker has always had a knack for inventing things, but many of his gadgets were failures, such as a two-person recreational submarine that he built in Fiji and a hard hat with a built-in ventilation system. Until about six years ago, he was broke and living with his parents.

Finally, his tinkering began to produce something profitable — toys. Royalties have been rolling in for gizmos that, not surprisingly, are space-related: lasers, a hand-held Pop It Rocket, a gyroscope in the guise of a glow-in-the-dark alien spaceship.

He made enough to buy a BMW Roadster and a log house in a subdivision outside Bend.

But something was missing. He set to work, putting his rocket dreams onto paper. When experts told him his plans wouldn't work, time and time again, Walker took an eraser to the penciled blueprints. Fins on the outer skin of the rocket were removed, making it more aerodynamic. Boosters were added to the rocket's nose to stabilize it as it makes its ascent.

"I'm not supposed to admit that I can make mistakes," Walker said. "But I do. And then I move on."

David Engeman, a 24-year-old community college student in Bend, tracked Walker down after reading about the rocket on the Internet. Walker

decided Engeman's background with wood and metal composite work would come in handy and pays him generously to come in several days a week to help out on the "Rocket Ranch."

"Nothing is too outlandish," Engeman said of Walker's rocket design. "Some of this technology has been around since the '60s and '70s."

The rocket is simple enough that some experts say it might just work.

In Walker's backyard "Rocket Garden" — a bed of black lava rock — sits a full-scale, black-and-white mock-up of the rocket. With a bulbous command capsule sitting atop a long fuel tank, it looks like it could be from an old Buck Rogers movie.

There's still plenty of work to be done.

Walker is assembling by hand plastic molds that will be used to make the rocket's capsule and fuel tank. He's building a distillery behind his warehouse-like shop to refine enough hydrogen peroxide to fuel his flight.

He's also constructing a centrifuge, which will spin him to 70 mph to acclimate him to the force of six Gs.

Work will soon begin on a 30-foot-long launch trailer that Walker plans to tow into southeastern Oregon's Alvord Desert, his planned blast-off site, next year.

## Judge to decide if convicted killer can replace court-appointed lawyers

OLATHE (AP) — Johnson County District Attorney Paul Morrison fears John E. Robinson's decision to hire a new lawyer could lead to a successful appeal if Robinson is convicted of killing three women.

Morrison expressed his concerns at a hearing Monday regarding Robinson's decision to hire attorney Bob L. Thomas to replace his court-appointed attorneys from the Kansas Death Penalty Defense Unit.

To handle death penalty cases, lawyers for the defense unit must meet minimum qualifications that privately retained lawyers aren't required to meet.

District Judge John Anderson III said Robinson's right to hire any lawyer he wants may conflict with his right to be represented by a lawyer with the qualifications needed for a complex capital case.

Anderson scheduled another hearing on the matter for Friday.

Robinson, 57, of Olathe, did not speak at Monday's hearing. He is charged in Kansas with capital murder in the deaths of two women and first-degree murder in the case of a woman who disappeared in 1985. He is also accused of three killings in neighboring Cass County, Mo.

Thomas, a May 2000 law school

graduate, said he has hired an investigator for Robinson's case and plans to hire four or five "support staff."

He made it clear to the judge that he intended to be the sole lawyer in the case.

Morrison called Thomas a "fine young attorney" but said he was taking on an "overwhelming task" for any single lawyer, even one with a wealth of capital-case experience.

## Senator to undergo surgery

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., will undergo surgery next month to remove a section of his colon because of diverticulosis, his office said Monday.

The surgery will be performed Aug. 6 at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Balti-

more. Roberts will be hospitalized about four days, with recovery expected to take two or three weeks, the senator's office said.

It said doctors have assured Roberts that the surgery will be routine and that the condition is benign.

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The issue will appear Thursday, August 2. Please be gathering any alumni information and/or pictures no later than July 27.