

weather report

39°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 4:30 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:06 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:30 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 32 degrees

• Humidity 40 percent

• Sky partly sunny

• Winds north 17 m.p.h.

• Barometer 29.90 inches and falling

• Record High 74° (1980)

• Record Low -08° (1924)

Last 24 Hours*

High 50°

Low 21°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: mostly clear, low 19, winds west 10-20 m.p.h. Tomorrow: mostly clear, high 42, low 16, winds northeast 10-20 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Saturday and Sunday: cloudy, high 28, low 10s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Video recorded recently

Tape shows gaunt, defensive bin Laden



Bin Laden

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Osama bin Laden, pale and gaunt after months of U.S. bombardment, defended “our terror” against the United States in a videotape apparently made in recent weeks and broadcast in full today on an Arabic satellite channel.

Bin Laden, his beard gone mostly white, appeared sitting in front of a cave wall with a machine gun propped to his right. He praised the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States and the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in eastern Africa.

But he did not directly take responsibility for the attacks, both of which have been blamed on his al-Qaida terror network.

Occasionally smiling, bin Laden said it was “inconceivable” that his followers would “go after innocent civilians.”

“Our terrorism is against America. Our terrorism is a blessed terrorism to prevent the unjust person from committing injustice and to stop American support for Israel, which kills our sons,” bin Laden said in the video. Al-Jazeera had broadcast excerpts Wednesday and today before playing the entire tape in the evening.

Those who carried out the attacks on New York and Washington were “just 19 high school students — may God accept them as martyrs — who shook America, struck the American economy in the heart and hit the biggest military force at its heart with God’s help,” he said in the tape, aired on the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera news channel.

It was not clear where the tape — which the United States dismissed as “propaganda” — was made.

But bin Laden makes comments suggesting it was made in early or mid-December. He said he was speaking “three months after the blessed attack against the international infidels and their leaders, the United States, and two months after the beginning of the vicious aggression against Islam,” apparent references to the Sept. 11 attacks and to the Oct. 7 start of U.S. retaliatory bombing of Afghanistan.

U.S. forces have been searching caves in the mountainous Tora Bora area of eastern Afghanistan, where bin Laden’s al-Qaida fighters made their last stand. But for weeks, U.S. officials say, they have had no indication of where bin Laden might be — in Tora Bora, elsewhere in Afghanistan, fleeing across Pakistan or even dead.

Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said in China recently he was “reasonably sure” bin Laden had been killed by U.S. bombs at Tora Bora.

A spokesman for Afghanistan’s new defense ministry said today that bin Laden was in a border area of Pakistan with “friends” of a Pakistani Islamic activist.

The spokesman, Mohammad Abeel, did not give any sources for his information. And the interim prime minister, Hamid Karzai, said his government did not know where bin Laden was.

Abeel said bin Laden was with associates of Maulana Fazal-ur Rehman, the jailed leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, a pro-Taliban Pakistani party. Rehman denied the report in a telephone interview with Al-Jazeera.

The new Al-Jazeera tape, one of several the station has broadcast, showed bin Laden dressed in a green camouflage military jacket.

As he spoke into the camera, he gestured with his right hand, keeping his left hand still at his side. Bin Laden is left-handed, according to the FBI website. It wasn’t clear if he avoided using that hand because of a problem or injury. Islam considers the right hand more blessed and left-handed gestures can be considered less proper. Bin Laden often has been shown gesturing with his right hand.



Cashier Tim Jones was faced with long lines at the customer service desk at Wal-Mart Wednesday as many people had Christmas gifts to

return. Jones said most of the items were the wrong size or just not what the person wanted.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

Shoppers out to return presents

After-Christmas sales are popular

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News

Half-price stickers on empty shelves, long lines at the cash register and longer lines at the customer service desk: such is the life of a retailer on Dec. 26.

People were out in droves to take advantage of the after-Christmas sales Wednesday, and more than a few had gifts to return.

While some stores had more returns

than others, most heard the same reasons over and over.

Cashier Tim Jones, who dealt with long lines at the Wal-Mart customer service desk, said most of the returns were because the item was the wrong size or the customer just didn’t like it. And some were just because.

“I had a lady a couple of weeks ago,” Jones said, “return a pair of turquoise shoes because she didn’t like the color.”

He said he wondered why she bought them if she didn’t like the color.

Most of the returns were because the gift didn’t fit, said Tom Roesch,

manager at Alco Discount Store, or it was the wrong item.

A lot of returns were exchanged, a J.C. Penney employee said, as most were simply the wrong size.

One retailer had few returns but a good after-Christmas sale.

There were very few returns at his store, Dollar General Manager Dean Terry said, but most customers at the store are satisfied with their purchases.

Dollar General was busy, he said, with customers seeking bargains after Christmas. And the store enjoyed a good holiday season, he said.

Other stores had successful sales

Wednesday as well.

The day after Christmas, Roesch said, people are always looking for a bargain. It happens every year, he said.

Employees at Penney’s said the store had a good day for sales. A lot of customers were returning things, they said, but even more were buying.

And at Wal-mart, customers lined up at all of the cash registers. And shelves were getting bare by 4 p.m.

As Marilyn Bohl, who was stocking Hallmark cards, said, “It’s out with the old, in with the new.”

And indeed, many empty shelves needed the new.

‘Elves’ work miracle for distressed family

By Lee Hill Kavanaugh

The Kansas City Star

GARDNER (AP) — Perry Bice turns off the van’s engine but remains behind the wheel. His shoulders begin racking with sobs. The van doors swing open and two children scramble out.

“Why is my daddy crying?” asks 9-year-old Branson Bice. Parked in the driveway is a brand-new, wheelchair-accessible van, next to the small house in Gardner. A gold and red bow is wrapped around its windshield; nearby, Branson spots a trampoline and a basketball goal near a new wheelchair ramp.

“Those are tears of joy,” answers his aunt Cynthia, as tears well up in her eyes, too.

On this Christmas morning, at their new home, the Bice family is living a Christmas memory they will never forget, thanks to a group of anonymous souls known as the Elves of Christmas Present.

For the 12th year, hundreds of elves in the Kansas City area have toiled for weeks, finding families who needed an

extra special Christmas.

The Bices were one.

On Christmas Eve, Perry Bice and his wife, Kathrine, are in their apartment in Olathe, recounting how a man calling himself Chief Elf telephoned two weeks earlier asking if his group could bring their children some gifts.

“Our kids will love this,” says Perry Bice, 42, a former youth minister working for a communications company in Gardner.

He flips open his wallet to show a tattered photo of five children snugg-

ling close to their parents, including a toddler in her mother’s arms. The photo was taken just days before the toddler — Rishonn, age 3 — died.

“I love this photo. Rishonn’s feeding tube is hidden by the blanket,” says Perry Bice, with a sigh, then a smile.

There were times that the family had little to smile about.

Three years ago, Perry Bice was laid off his job in Iowa. Days later, a house fire left them with nothing, but every-

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local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.59 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.45

Corn — \$1.95 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.85

Loan deficiency payment — 14¢

Milo — \$1.67 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$3.69 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.68

Loan deficiency payment — \$1.24

Millet — \$3.75 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$8.85 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — 70¢

Confection current — inquire

Pinto beans — \$19 (new crop)

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press



1 p.m.

Man accused of killing wife

CEDAR VALE (AP) — A southeast Kansas man accused of killing his wife as she hid in a closet was held Wednesday on \$1 million bond, the Chautauqua County Sheriff Department said.

Richard Reed was stopped and arrested by Sheriff Frank Green near Cedar Vale early Monday, shortly after Shirley Reed was shot and her teen-age daughter wounded, the department said.

Reed was charged with first-degree murder, first-degree attempted murder, burglary and violation of a protective order.

Shirley Reed, 35, called authorities about 4 a.m. Monday and said she was hiding from an armed man who had shot her in the arm. The man found her in a closet and shot her again, authorities said.

Her 16-year-old daughter met officers at the door of the home and was taken to a Wichita hospital.

India, Pakistan trade airline, embassy bans

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — India banned Pakistan’s national airline from entering Indian airspace and ordered half of Pakistan’s embassy staff out of the country today as tensions heightened between the two nuclear-armed rivals.

Pakistan immediately matched India’s sanctions, accusing New Delhi of fanning the crisis while saying it wanted to hold talks to defuse tensions. Still, government spokesman Gen. Rashid Qureshi said Pakistan still has “the capacity to react and retaliate in all conceivable ways” — though he said a nuclear confrontation was “unthinkable.”

In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell called leaders on both

sides Wednesday, urging them to pull back from confrontation and resolve their differences through dialogue.

China — a powerhouse neighboring both nations — also said today it was “deeply worried” by India-Pakistan tensions and called for “dialogue and consultations” to keep stability.

With both sides fortifying and sending troops to their border, fears have risen over the prospect of a new conflict after India accused Pakistan of sponsoring a Dec. 13 gun attack on Parliament in New Delhi that killed 14 people. Islamabad denies the charge. Accusing Pakistan of “supporting terrorism,” India’s Security Cabinet approved a swath of new diplomatic and economic sanctions.

County plans to keep year-end meeting short

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The Sherman County commissioners plan to keep their final meeting of the year Friday morning as short as possible, and the agenda has no scheduled appointments.

The brief meeting is part of the efforts to wind up the year. The commissioners plan to pay any year-end bills. Offices in the courthouse will close for public business at noon to allow the employees and auditors to balance and close the books for the year. The courthouse will be closed Monday and Tuesday for the New Years holiday, and will reopen at 8 a.m. on Wednesday.

Paying the final bills of the year and reviewing the mail are the regular business items for commissioners.

The commissioners selected the Kansas County Association Multi-line Pool and Kansas Workers Risk Cooperative for Counties at their Dec. 18 meeting to handle all the county insurance for the coming year.

Implementing the decision to move the county insurance to the pools is the only item of new business the commissioners expect to handle. This includes approving resolutions and bylaws for the association by resolution.

The commissioners have no scheduled appointments, but the meeting will be open for public appearances from 8 to 8:15 a.m. The first meeting for the new year will be at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 8, in the commissioners room on the first floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.