

weather report

70°

at noon
(Record high)

Today

- Sunset, 4:41 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:42 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 32 degrees
- Humidity 17 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds north northwest 15-20 m.p.h.
- Barometer 29.99 inches and falling
- Record High 66° (1958)
- Record Low -14° (1937)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 62°
- Low 25°
- Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: cloudy, low 30s, winds northwest 10 m.p.h. Tomorrow: cloudy, high mid 50s, low upper 20s, winds north 10-20 m.p.h., 40 percent of rain or snow.

Extended Forecast

Thursday and Friday: mostly sunny, high lower 40s, low upper 10s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.66 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.58
- Corn — \$1.97 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.86
- Loan deficiency payment — 13¢
- Milo — \$1.69 bushel
- Soybeans — \$3.76 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.71
- Loan deficiency payment — \$1.21
- Millet — \$3.50 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$9.05 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 78¢
- Confection current — inquire
- Pinto beans — \$20 (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.

Education bill raises standard

HAMILTON, Ohio (AP) — President Bush, acting today on his No. 1 domestic priority, signed into law a sweeping education bill that will require new reading and math tests, seek to close the education gap between rich and poor students and raise teacher standards.

"As of this hour, America's schools will be on a new path of reform and a new path of results," Bush said to an audience of hundreds at Hamilton High School, west of Cincinnati.

Though he spoke at length about the details of the bill, and articulated his plan to get all students reading by third grade, Bush joked of the bill, "I don't intend to read it all. It's not exactly light reading." But, he said, it contains some very important principles, chief among them accountability safeguards for students, teachers and schools.

Red Cross holding drive to restock

The Sherman County Red Cross will be holding a blood drive Thursday at the Methodist fellowship hall, hoping to restock supplies which have begun to run low after a rush of patriotic donations last fall.

The drive carries a special theme, "Unite for Life," in honor of those who lost their lives on Sept. 11.

A regional coordinator said most people don't realize blood can't be stored forever. The American Red

Cross needs 25,000 donations a day nationally, and 450 pints a day in the Central Plains Region, an area covering most of Kansas and Oklahoma, just to stay even with demand.

There is a steady demand for blood for the region, with over 100 hospitals serving more than two million residents.

The Red Cross website says it nationally has a 10-day supply of blood, up from a three day supply in August, but

that a major tragedy could wipe it out. The agency says the blood supply must be replenished every day, no matter what is going on in the world, because the demand never stops.

The coordinator said all blood types are needed, especially type O. O-positive is the most common type, so more people need this type, and O-negative, while rare, can be given to almost any person.

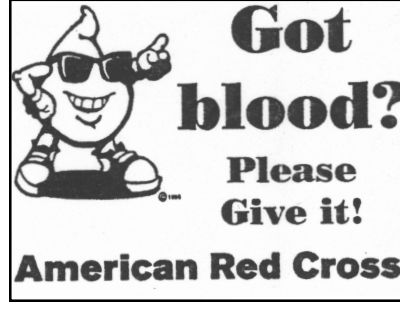
This is valuable in an emergency,

when there is no time to test for blood type.

To donate, a person must be at least 17, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in general good health. Donors must bring a photo ID.

Walk-ins are welcome. The drive will be from noon to 5:30 p.m.

Luella Richardson, publicity chairman of the Sherman County Red Cross, can be reached for questions at 899-2011.



Advertisement for blood drive.

Officers uncover big wad

Deputies discover \$154,000 in car

By Jay Kelley

The Colby Free Press

Thomas County sheriff's deputies found several hidden compartments, this time with \$154,155 in them, after a traffic stop on I-70 Friday night.

Sheriff Tom Jones said the 1993 Cadillac was stopped at mile marker 40 for speeding.

He said deputies became suspicious when the paperwork and stories didn't match and got permission to search the vehicle.

A drug dog confirmed the presence of drug residue and several compartments were found containing the cash.

Officers said they rely on a dog to find the compartments from drug residue that is left on money.

"Drugs and money are usually packed together," said Deputy Rod Taylor.

When only money is seized, he said, the people with the money have a right to challenge the seizure.

Although Kansas has no law covering hidden compartments, he said, federal law covers any compartment that is not naturally part of the vehicle, such as a spare tire well. If the compartment was used to transport drugs, Kansas considers the entire car to be contraband and it can be seized for evidence.

"I've been doing this since 1992, and no one has ever challenged," said Taylor.

The owners of the vehicle also have a right to challenge its seizure, but they have to explain why drug residue was found in the car.

Kevin Graham, from the state attorney general's office, said the law was probably originally intended for use against shipboard smuggling, but has been applied frequently to smuggling by automobile.

Taylor added that it is almost impossible to remove the residue from drugs, especially marijuana, when money has been in contact with the drugs.

"You'd be surprised how many times money is packed with the drugs," said Taylor.

Jones said the money was taken to a Colby bank for the weekend, where it was counted.

It was counted again by the county treasurer on Monday.

Looking back

Fire tragedy of the year

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

In one of the most tragic events of 2001, a mother and two of her children died on Memorial Day in a trailer home fire that was started by a candle.

One child escaped the blaze and now lives with his father, Dan McCurry, in Goodland.

Staff at *The Goodland Daily News* has picked the tragedy as the No. 3 top story of the year because it affected so many people here emotionally.

Employees reviewed last year's papers, picking the top 10 stories, according to their financial or emotional impact on Sherman County. The remaining seven will be reviewed later this week.

3 An early morning fire on Memorial Day engulfed a trailer home in southwest Goodland, killing a mother and two of her three children.

The victims were Jenny McCurry, 29; her daughter, Amanda, 5, a Head Start student; and son James, 6, a first grader at West Elementary. Another son, Thomas, 8, a second grader at West, escaped the fire and was uninjured. He was found outside, crying.

Fire Chief Dean Jensen said the call came in about 7:45 a.m. and the trailer was fully engulfed in flames when the



A Goodland volunteer fireman sprayed water into the living room of the trailer where a mother and two of her three children were killed when fire engulfed their home early Memorial Day morning in southwest Goodland.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

firemen arrived.

The address, 2810 Commerce Road, Lot 19, is in the Mid-America Trailer Park south of I-70 and west of K-27.

Firemen knocked the blaze down in a short time, but the interior had been swept by the flames.

When they went inside, they found three bodies.

"The autopsies show they died of carbon monoxide and smoke inhalation," Police Chief Ray Smee said.

Identification had been delayed until dental records could be obtained on all three.

"State Fire Marshal Melvin Dale, from Garden City, was here this morning and has ruled the fire to be accidental with a child playing with candles," Smee said.

"We did find there was a smoke detector in the kitchen and family members said it was in working order. However, the grandmother said the mother was a deep sleeper and may not have heard the warning."

Goodland Fire Chief Dean Jensen and his volunteers took the opportunity to begin a door-to-door canvas of homes in the city to talk to home owners and parents about fire safety.

The firemen began knocking on doors across the city to talk about smoke detectors and fire safety. Jensen says they will be doing this on the nights when they have fire school, usually two Mondays a month.

"Installing a smoke detector in every home is a state law," the chief said.

Hearings in two drug cases continued

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

Preliminary hearings for two people charged with selling marijuana and methamphetamine within 1,000 feet of a school have been continued, but new dates have not been set, says County Attorney Bonnie Selby.

Hearings for Sybrena A. Malsom, 31, and Clint L. Gresty, 28, who both live at 1402 Cherry Ave., had been scheduled for Thursday.

Selby said preliminary hearings in drug cases are usually rescheduled because the Kansas Bureau of Investigation needs time to test the suspected drugs, the defense lawyer needs more research time or other reasons.

She noted that both cases could be

resolved before a hearing if Malsom and Gresty agree to a plea bargain.

Malsom is facing 11 drug-related felonies for allegedly selling 2.5 ounces of what is believed to be marijuana at her home and allowing Gresty to sell one ounce of suspected marijuana at the house, which is 448 feet from the Goodland High School.

The charges are more severe because the sales took place within 1,000 feet of a school.

Malsom's charges stem from alleged sales on Oct. 17, Nov. 6 and Dec. 18, while Gresty is accused of selling one ounce of marijuana on Oct. 17 and one gram of methamphetamine on Oct. 9. He has been charged with six drug-related felonies.

The sales were made to confidential informants working for the Goodland Police Department. Malsom and Gresty were arrested on Dec. 20 along with three other people, ending a six-month undercover investigation led by Goodland police.

Police Chief Ray Smee said officers from the Sherman County Sheriff's Department and the Quad County Drug Task Force helped with the investigation and arrests.

The other people arrested were Tracy Lynn Keller, 19, 608 W. 14th St.; and Anthony L. Garza, 25, and Manuela B. Hernandez, 30, who both live at 508 West 15th.

All five have been released after posting \$10,000 bonds and Hernandez

and Garza were scheduled to make a first appearance in court today. Keller's first appearance is set for 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 15.

Keller is facing four drug-related felonies for allegedly selling a total of two ounces of suspected marijuana on July 20 and 30 at his home, which is two blocks from Grant Junior High.

Hernandez has been charged with seven drug-related felonies for helping Garza sell marijuana at their home, which is 987 feet from Grant Junior High, on Nov. 1 and Nov. 8.

Garza is facing 12 drug-related felonies for allegedly selling 29 grams of suspected marijuana on Nov. 1, one-half ounce on Nov. 8 and one-half ounce on Dec. 18.

Off-duty police officer helps capture car thief

An off-duty police officer spotted a man wanted for breaking into cars on Friday morning, and called for officers in marked patrol cars to help arrest the man.

The officer spotted the vehicle and recognized the driver, Ramiro Lazo Jr., from an arrest warrant. Police Chief Ray Smee said the officer was in a private vehicle and had no lights or sirens to stop the man. He called dispatch, and on-duty officers arrived to make the arrest.

Lazo was arrested on a warrant charging burglary for breaking into a car on Dec. 3 and stealing a stereo amplifier and a compact disk player

and for breaking into another car between Dec. 6 and 7 and stealing a compact disk player. There was also a charge of conspiracy for agreeing to rob a second vehicle with Santos Lopez.

Lopez was arrested later in the week for burglary of the second vehicle and conspiracy to commit burglary. He was in court at 9 a.m. this morning to face charges.

Lazo is being held in the Sherman County Bastille on \$20,000 bond.

"We all work together," Chief Smee said. "Just because an officer is off duty doesn't mean he's not an officer."

Woman pleads guilty in chase

By Patty Decker

The Colby Free Press

A Mississippi woman pleaded guilty to two of seven charges in the District Court of Thomas County last month for her part in a high-speed chase and theft of a vehicle in August.

Tina Janice Pearce, 23, was arrested in Angelton, Texas, after police were called on a domestic disturbance at a motel where she and her companion, Kristopher Aaron Lambert, 21, also of Mississippi, were staying.

Following their arrests, Pearce was extradited to Mississippi and then agreed to extradition in Kansas late in November to face charges of aggravated burglary, aggravated assault, kidnapping, two counts of theft and two counts of criminal damage to property.

Pearce waived her right to a preliminary hearing, said Thomas County At-

torney Allan Taylor on Monday, and was bound over for arraignment immediately on Dec. 5.

Taylor dismissed the charges of aggravated assault, one count of theft, and both counts of criminal damage to property.

He amended the kidnapping charge to criminal restraint and aggravated burglary to burglary of a residence with the intent to commit theft.

Pearce entered a plea of guilty to both of the amended charges and was then released on a \$10,000 bond to her father, which would allow her to return to her home in Mississippi.

Her next appearance in Thomas County will be at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 6, for sentencing.

Taylor said that Pearce could be looking at 11 to 34 months in prison for the restraint conviction and anywhere from

five to 17 months on the burglary.

"It will all depend on what the sentencing report shows on this defendant," he said.

Thus far, Pearce has spent about two months in jail following her arrest in Texas.

No new information was available on Lambert's arrest from October.

The couple was first spotted on Interstate 70 after authorities in Thomas County were notified of a couple involved in a gas skip in Grinnell.

After an attempt to stop the vehicle resulted in the high-speed chase, the couple was later discovered to have accosted a young Colby girl at knife point and then stolen her vehicle.

The couple's crime spree took them from Mississippi to Pennsylvania, and through Florida, Washington, Wisconsin, Kansas, Utah and Texas.