

# The Goodland Star-News

Volume 71, Number 51

Twelve Pages

Goodland, Kansas 67735

**MIDWEEK**  
Tuesday, May 13  
2003

75¢

## weather report

59°  
at noon



### Today

- Sunset, 7:51 p.m.
- Tomorrow
- Sunrise, 5:34 a.m.
- Sunset, 7:52 p.m.

### Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 51 degrees
- Humidity 49 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds southwest 7 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.09 inches and falling
- Record High 97° (1941)
- Record Low 25° (1953)

### Last 24 Hours\*

High 64°  
Low 49°  
Precipitation none

### N.W. Kansas Forecast

Today: mostly sunny with 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, high lower 80s, low upper 40s, winds northeast 5-10 m.p.h. Wednesday: partly sunny with 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, high mid 70s, low mid 40s.

### Extended Forecast

Thursday: mostly cloudy with chance of showers and thunderstorms, high upper 60s. Friday: mostly cloudy with chance of showers and thunderstorms, high near 60, low near 50.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

## Grad to speak Saturday

Graduation for 87 Goodland High School seniors is 2 p.m. on Saturday at Max Jones Fieldhouse and a 1973 graduate, Donald R. Topliff, now professor and head of the Division of Agriculture at West Texas A&M University, will speak.

Ceremonies will include announcement of the class valedictorian and salutatorian by Principal Harvey Swager and the Outstanding Educator award to be presented by Dale Schields of the Sherman County Alumni Association.

There will be a special presentation to Laura Rice for her 13 years of perfect attendance, and performances by the Xpressos and the high school band.

Dr. Topliff, the son of Dean and Myrna Topliff of Goodland, attended Colby Community College, where he received an associate of arts in feedlot management.

He managed Roaring Forks Feeders near Goodland for a year after graduation, then went to Kansas State University, where he graduated in 1978 with a degree in animal science.

Following graduation, he was general manager for Dean Topliff Farms before heading to Texas A&M University in 1978.

In 1981, he got a masters from Texas A&M in animal nutrition, and he earned a doctorate in 1984. He was a graduate assistant from 1978-1983 in the equine section of the animal science department.

He became an assistant professor of animal science at Oklahoma State University in 1983, associate professor in 1987, and a full professor in 1993.

At Oklahoma State, he was in charge of horse teaching and research programs. He was responsible for development of the equine program and the master plan for the completion of a \$600,000 equine facility. Topliff taught six undergraduate and three graduate courses in equine sciences and nutrition. He conducted over 20 research trials in equine nutrition, equine exercise physiology, and the economic impact of the horse industry in Oklahoma.

In 1998, he became a professor and head of the Division of Agriculture at West Texas A&M, in Canyon, about 25 miles southwest of Amarillo.

Today, he oversees 23 faculty, 11 staff, 55 graduate students and about 400 undergraduates.

The division includes agricultural teaching and research facilities that encompass over 2,500 acres of range, pasture, and farmland as well as an experimental feed yard.



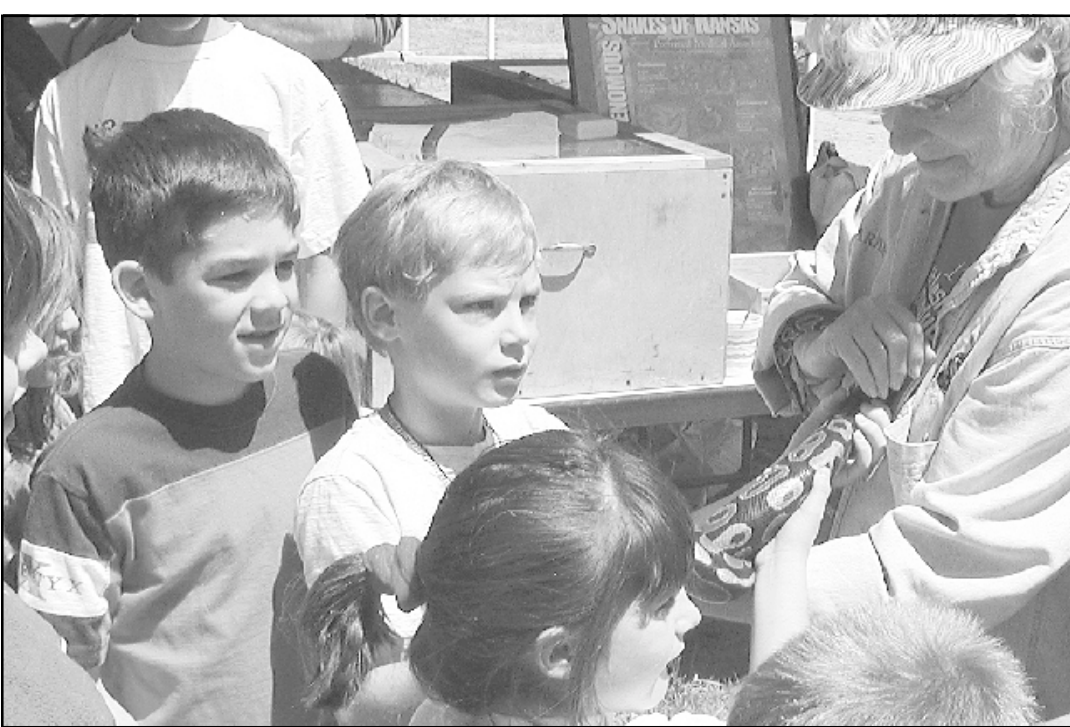
D. Topliff

## Snake meat testers ...



Laton Heger, 9, and Bill Holcomb, 10, (above) of Hugoton were a bit hesitant to taste a piece of rattlesnake at the annual Sharon Spring Rattlesnake Roundup Sunday. Patty (below) the bald python was a bit hit as kids and adults gathered around to get a chance to pet the snake.

Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News



## May showers keep ground wet; rain level stays above normal

May is normally wet, and this year the rain showers are keeping the topsoil damp, crops, lawns and weeds are growing quickly, and the rain is still ahead of normal moisture.

Victor Stegemiller of the National Weather Service office in Goodland said the rains are keeping the area ahead of the normal moisture level, with rainfall so far more than double last year.

For the month of April, the total moisture received was 1.71 inches, .2 of an inch above normal.

The total for the year through Sunday was 4.92 inches, which is .19

ahead of normal. That is 3.04 inches ahead of the 1.88 at this time last year.

Weather service records show the middle of April to the middle of May as the wettest part of the spring, and this year it is proving that. Goodland has had measurable rain on six of the first 11 days in May, with the best day being Tuesday, May 6, when .56 of an inch was recorded.

May Day saw the area receive .13, there was .01 on May 2, .12 on May 5, the .56 on Tuesday, .06 on Wednesday and .2 on Saturday.

Stegemiller said there is a chance

for showers and thunderstorms again on Tuesday and Thursday night through Friday morning, with another possibility on Saturday.

While the north part of the state is receiving quite a bit of rain, the southwest continues to lag behind normal, thought still ahead of last year.

Figures for Dodge City show the moisture level 1.44 below normal with the 4.8 inches received so far. The normal for this time of year is 6.27 inches.

The figures are double the 2.5 inches Dodge City had at this time last year.

## Girl hasn't missed in 13 years

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Barring unusual circumstances, a Goodland High School senior will mark a milestone Wednesday — perfect attendance for all 13 years of school.

Laura Rice has spent nearly 2,418 days in school, and says she is looking forward to finishing high school.

Attending all those days without missing even half of one has not been easy, but Rice credits her good health.

"I never get sick except during Thanksgiving break," she said.

In 13 years, Rice said, she had just one close call. She had pink eye in fourth or fifth grade and was sent home. It would have counted as an absence, she said, but she got eye drops and was back in school within 20 minutes.

And she has had days she wanted to stay home, at least until noon.

"There's been times you just wake up in the morning and don't feel good," she said, "and going in at noon seems like a good idea."

"But you have to be there in the morning to get counted."

Rice said for years, she had no idea she might have perfect attendance, but when she realized it was possible, it became a goal.

"You don't know you're going to have perfect attendance until you like get up in the seventh grade," she said, "and then it becomes a goal instead of a coincidence."

Rice said she likes school but is now looking forward to being out. She estimates that other students probably miss about two years worth of schooling over their years. She said since she has spent so much more time in school than most students, she is ready to move on.

With approximately 186 days of school each year, two years of school is nearly 372. If a student misses 28.62 days of school per year for 13 years, that student really will have missed two years, as Rice estimated many do.

As for achieving her attendance goal, Rice said it's scary now because there are so few days left, and she realizes if she misses just one, all her hard work will be down the drain.

But she's determined not to let that happen. Rice said she'll be at school through Wednesday if she has to go in sick.

She plans to move to California after school is out and will probably attend a community college next year. She plans to major in journalism.

Duane Rice of Goodland is her father, and Rhonda Rice is her stepmother. He works at the prison in Burlington, and she works at Wal-Mart.



L. Rice

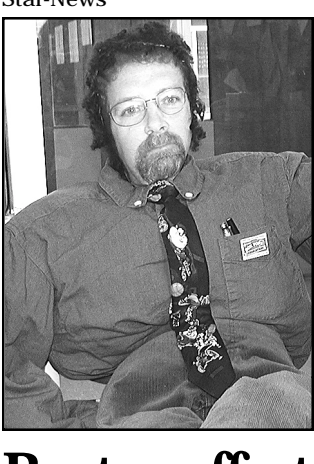
## local markets

### Noon

Wheat — \$3.41 bushel  
New Crop — \$3.05 bushel  
Corn — \$2.60 bushel  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Milo — \$2.30 bushel  
Soybeans — \$5.98 bushel  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Millet — \$6 hundredweight  
New crop — \$5  
Sunflowers  
Oil current crop — \$9.35 cwt.  
New crop — \$9.90 cwt.  
NuSun — \$9.70 cwt.  
NuSun new crop — \$10.20  
Confection — \$17/\$7 cwt.  
New crop — \$17/\$10 cwt.  
Pinto beans — withdrawn  
(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

## inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



## Boxtop effort nearing goal

Just 1,250 more boxtops, and North Elementary Principal Steve Raymer will be spending a night on the school's roof.

Raymer might escape his fate, though. The deadline for collecting the special General Mills boxtops is just two days away. See story on Page 3.

## 3-2 split vote approves emergency water rates

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Despite a request from Commissioner John Garcia to put off a vote on emergency excess water rates one more time, city commissioners voted 3-2 to approve the ordinance last Monday.

The emergency rates and rates for special security lighting were part of an ordinance that had been tabled at the two previous commission meetings to give new commissioners Garcia and Dave Daniels a chance to understand why they were being proposed.

Both said they felt the water rate section of the ordinance was sending the wrong message, that if you have enough money, you can afford to waste water.

An amendment to the ordinance changing the order of the paragraphs and establishing the fees as an excess water surcharge had been recommended by city attorney Perry Warren, and Commissioner Dean Blume made the motion to

approve the amendment. It was seconded by Commissioner Chuck Lutters and passed unanimously 5-0, with Garcia making sure that this was not the vote on the full ordinance.

City Manager Ron Pickman said the emergency rates would be just one of the options the commission would have if a water emergency is declared.

"I don't see there being any need at this time to declare a water emergency," he added. "With the recent rains, it is a good possibility we will not have the same problem we had as last year. The emergency water rate provision has been in the ordinance for a number of years, but it was not spelled out what the emergency rates would be."

Garcia said he felt the emergency rates were not needed. With the conservation enforced during the water restrictions last summer, he said, the city fell far short of the 700 million gallons a year the state allows it to pump.

"I can see what the city commission is trying to do," he said, "but I think the restrictions deprived the city of \$185,000 in revenue last year."

Commissioner Chuck Lutters said it was better to conserve water, and that having people pay a higher rate may be one way to get them to think about turning the tap off when not needed.

"I think this is a good plan," Commissioner Dean Blume said. "I know last year we had a number of people who were not following the water restrictions, and with such a rate system, they would at least pay more for using more water."

Mayor Rick Billinger said he could see both sides, but felt it was important to put these rates in the plan so the people would know what to expect if another water emergency comes up.

Dr. Dan Golden of the Golden Chiropractic Clinic said he was concerned about these rates and he felt they were not the right way to ad-

dress conservation.

Commissioner Daniels said he thought the emergency rates were OK, but he felt it was sending the wrong message to say that if you have money, you can ignore the need to conserve and buy your way out.

Pickman said there will not be any change in the current water rates, but that the emergency rates are one of several options the commission would have at any time an emergency is declared.

Some of the options already in the ordinance include a suspension of new water connections, a ban on water use by businesses such as coin-operated laundries and car washes, water rationing like the odd-even system last summer, and complete or partial bans on watering bushes and trees, washing of vehicles and filling swimming pools.

He said there is a criminal penalty for violating emergency restrictions, which can include a fine, jail

time and even disconnection of city water service, with a stiff penalty to reconnect.

Pickman said that with the emergency excess water rates set to kick in at 5,001 cubic feet per month, it would be easier to enforce the restrictions because the meter reading alone would put a person in violation of the restrictions.

"Not only will the person have to pay the higher cost," Pickman said, "but you can charge them with a criminal violation that will be enforceable in court."

Billinger said he had been concerned about the rate plan because he did not want it to be seen as an attempt to make money, but a means to encourage people to use less water in a time of emergency.

"This is more user-friendly than last year," Blume said.

When the roll was called on the ordinance as amended, it passed 3-2 with Billinger, Blume and Lutters in favor and Garcia and Daniels against.