

Random searches at school prompt debate

No. 6: Debate over a random search at Goodland High School and a federal law requiring a 12-month suspension for any student caught with a gun drew 60 students, parents and taxpayers to a school board meeting in January.

A firm employed by the school to make random searches for drugs, alcohol and explosives sent an inspector and a search dog to the school Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 15 and 16.

As the handler searched the parking lot the first day, Goodland Superintendent Marvin Selby said, the dog indicated that three vehicles had suspicious items inside. In one, two handguns were found, while marijuana was found in another. Shotgun shells, which are not illegal without a fire-

arm, and a hunting knife were found in another student's car.

When the inspector returned on Thursday to search a different part of the parking lot, Selby said, he found a shotgun and a pellet pistol in the car of a fourth student.

The two handguns were found in Gage Cloyd's car; marijuana was found in Blake Saint's; and a hunting knife and shotgun shells were in Blayze Bahe's.

Cloyd and Saint were arrested, and Bahe was sent home Wednesday, while it was determined whether or not the knife and shotgun shells were a violation.

Officials decided they were OK in the car, but that the knife would have been if it had been inside the school.

During the second search, the shotgun

and pellet pistol was found in Jordan Anderson's car. He also was arrested.

Cloyd, Anderson and Saint were all taken to the Goodland Police Department and released to their parents. Two were charged with possession of firearms on school property, Police Chief Ray Smee said, and the other with possession of a controlled substance.

Under federal law, Selby said, it is illegal to have weapons on school property, and students who break the law have to be turned over to the police.

The offense can be a felony or a misdemeanor, but the student must be expelled from school for one calendar year.

The school's drug policy on a first offense would suggest a 30-day suspension plus a suspension from all student activi-

ties for no less than four school months.

Sixty students, parents and community members showed up at the school board meeting Monday, Jan. 27, to talk about the expulsions.

Several said they were concerned about how the searches were conducted and thought that if searches were done, the team should search the entire school, not just random areas.

Several students addressed the board and said there was a double standard in the punishment for the students with the guns and the other found with marijuana.

They said the punishment should be the same for each situation and that either one punishment should be shorter or that the other should be longer.

April Hall told the board she thought many students and parents were unaware the consequences for having weapons in their vehicles were so severe, and said they should be taught more ahead of time.

Jay Anderson, the parent of a Goodland High School student, addressed the board in February and said he had done some research on school policies.

He said he thought the student handbook should correspond to the board policies.

In the school board policies, he said, two full pages describe what constitutes a weapon, but in the student handbook that is reduced to one sentence.

He said the consequences for having weapons takes up a half page in the policies but only a sentence in the handbook.

New faces join elected officials

No. 7: Three new faces joined the Goodland school board, and two new faces joined the city commission this year following the April 1 elections.

Incumbent board member Jane Philbrick was the only one of four re-elected, as voters chose three new board members, Fritz Duke, Danny Whalen and Marty Melia.

In the city election, incumbent Rick Billinger was re-elected along with newcomers David Daniels and John Garcia.

In Kanorado, Hazel Estes was re-elected as mayor, and Chad Hanevik was elected to the city council. There was a write-in for Obert Helderman to fill a vacancy on the council.

A total of 1,675 people voted in the election, 43 percent of the 3,927 registered in the county. Philbrick topped the school ballot with 1,011 votes, followed by Duke with 837, Whalen with 787 and Melia with 761. Each will have a four-year term.

Fifth was Gary L. Smith, 710; followed by the three incumbents,

Kathy Russell, 679; Ben Duell, 539; and Eric Gray, 511.

Billinger topped the city ballot with 762 votes, and Daniels was second with 743. These two have four-year terms. Third was Garcia with 714, and he will fill a two-year term.

Next were two incumbents, Commissioner Tom Rohr with 479 votes, and Commissioner Curtis Hurd with 297.

Estes won re-election with 41 votes, while Gerald Webber received 18. Hanevik, the only candidate to file for the council though there were two spots open, received 48 votes, and Helderman, who was running as a write-in, received 34. Webber received four write-in votes for council.

The Goodland city commissioners were sworn-in at the Monday, April 7, meeting, and Billinger was elected mayor, and veteran Commissioner Chuck Lutters was elected vice-mayor.

School board members were sworn in in April but did not take office until July 1.

West Nile confirmed in Sherman County

No. 9: An elderly woman from Kanorado was confirmed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in August as the first case of West Nile virus-caused encephalitis in Sherman County and the second human case in the state.

Sherman County had its third confirmed case in October, and the state had two deaths from the disease by that time. A 25 year old in Sherman County was found to have the disease on Sept. 4.

State health officials confirmed five additional cases, including the Sherman County 25-year-old. Kansas was counting only "serious" West Nile infection, involving encephalitis, meningitis or acute flaccid paralysis, confirmed by the state laboratory in Topeka. That brought the total cases to 67.

Dr. Robert McCullough, Sherman County health officer, said he had confirmation Tuesday, Aug. 12, that the Kanorado woman had the virus. He said she was improving and doing physical therapy.

The state Department of Health and Environment confirmed two other cases on Wednesday, Aug. 13, bringing the total for the state to four.

"I know there have been other positive blood tests in the county,"

McCullough said in August, "but none of those have exhibited symptoms of meningitis or encephalitis."

"No matter whether these cases are confirmed by the state or not, it is good for the people to know there is a possibility (of contracting West Nile) and to take precautions against mosquitoes."

McCullough said that when there are symptoms of encephalitis or meningitis, spinal fluid is drawn for testing, and that is what the state uses to confirm West Nile virus cases.

"The patient may have symptoms of the flu," he said, "and the blood test may be positive for West Nile, but if they do not develop more serious symptoms, no additional testing is required."

West Nile virus is primarily a disease of birds, but also infects humans and horses. It is transmitted when a mosquito bites an infected bird and then bites a human. Symptoms can include headache, low-grade fever and muscle aches, but in rare cases it can result in serious illness, swelling of the brain (encephalitis), swelling of the covering of the brain (meningitis), paralysis or death. In October, officials estimated that one in 150 persons would develop a more severe form.

Local contractor takes over trash

No. 8: In July, Sherman County took responsibility for trash hauling and a new business — In the Can — became the official trash collector for the City of Goodland.

Owner Chuck Redlin won the contract under the agreement which turned over the city trash collection to the county.

The process began in March 2002, when the city commissioners decided they wanted to get out of the trash business, and began asking for proposals for outside companies to handle the collection and disposal. Sherman County commissioners worried that if the city contracted the trash to an out-of-state company, it would reduce use of the new county landfill.

Someone suggested the county consider taking over the entire trash system, and members of the Sherman County Economic Development Council met with both the county and the city commissions to see if an agreement could be reached.

In January, negotiations seemed near an agreement, but the city and county boards both wanted to hear from the public about the

plan and the development council held a public forum in January attended by about 70 people.

At the end of the meeting, the audience was asked to raise their hands in a straw poll to see who was in favor of the county taking over the collection. Twenty-six people indicated their support for the county while at least two vocally said they thought the city should keep the system. About seven raised their hands saying they did not want the county to take over the system.

After the public forum, county commissioners offered to pay for extra labor to help with the sorting of trash if the city would keep the trash system. The city commission turned the county proposal down in February, and it appeared all the efforts to find an agreement between the two had fallen apart. At the time there were mixed feelings on both boards.

City commissioners discussed trash collection for about 25 minutes at their meeting on March 6, and then voted 3-2 to try again to reach a deal with the county. The city commission voted 3-2 at its meeting on March 29 to accept a contract with the county. Once the agreement had been reached, the two boards fine tuned the contract,

and the county began looking for a contractor to handle the actual collection.

County commissioners received four proposals on May 15, from Justin Comer of Haysville, Waste Management of Colorado Springs, ECS Trash Removal, operated by Kevin and Cynthia Butts of Goodland, and Redlin.

The commissioners narrowed the proposals down to the two local companies on May 22, and then unanimously chose In the Can to start hauling the city's trash.

It had taken about eight months, but Goodland was close to being out of the trash business after the city commission unanimously approved a contract with Sherman County at its meeting on May 18. The 14-page contract lays out a 10-year deal. The county had 90 days to complete the transition and begin handling the trash.

After six months, it appears the new system is working at least as well as the old one, and in some cases better, as there is someone to contact directly with problems. So far, rates have remained the same.

Search continues for missing man

No. 10: At least 10 people have been arrested in Sherman County on drug charges over the last year, and in November one of them disappeared after a shot was fired at a rural home northwest of Goodland.

Jimmy McClelland, 44, of Goodland was seen running away from Mark Peden's home, 6940 County Road 19, the night of Nov. 24 as a sheriff deputy arrived.

A search of the area by dogs and by plane did not turn up any sign of the man. Whitson said the deputies found the former railroad worker's tracks heading to the southwest, but they lost



McClelland

them after a quarter of a mile.

A couple of weeks later, a volunteer and deputies walked, rode and flew a seven-mile section of Beaver Creek hoping to find clues to the disappearance. At the end of the day, Whitson said at least he feels the search proved that McClelland was not laying in a field somewhere.

There has not been any contact with the missing man, nor any report of him being seen anywhere. Rumors persist that he is either dead or hiding out in Denver.

His aunt, Marie Edwards, who helped with the search, believed

that McClelland would call by Christmas. If he didn't, she said, then something has happened to him.

Whitson said he entered McClelland in to the national crime database as a missing person, and that he has run down about all the leads he can. The status has now been changed from missing to wanted as McClelland's absence is a violation of the community corrections agreement that was reached earlier this year.

McClelland was one of six people arrested on Jan. 8 as part of an investigation by the Quad County Drug Task Force, the Goodland police and the sheriff.

During the bust, officers arrested Justin Kibel, 23, at the mobile home on the corner of 16th Street and Kansas Avenue, along with Curtis Wiley, 31; his wife Leslie, 24; and Jaqueline Bowling, 21. All four were booked on charges of possession of narcotics and production of methamphetamines.

The second house involved in the bust was the rural home of Jimmy McClelland. Whitson said during the investigation, the two were "tied in together" and meth labs were

functioning in both.

McClelland, 44, and his then wife Elaine, 40, were charged with the cultivation of marijuana, possession of narcotics and drug paraphernalia, and manufacturing of methamphetamines.

A seventh arrest was made Jan. 11. Mark Struckhoff, 41, a former Goodland resident who lists Lakewood, Colo. as his home, was arrested while walking at 8th Street and Sherman Ave.

On Feb. 18, another meth lab was discovered. Sheriff Doug Whitson said a deputy went to the home of Heath Paxson, 19, at 512 W. 14th Street, with an arrest warrant for Thomas Alvis, 21, for probation violation in Graham County.

On May 8, Alvis, one of the men arrested on Feb. 18, plead guilty to possession of a narcotic drug with intent of sell within 1,000 feet of a school, a level 2 drug felony. District Judge Jack L. Burr ordered a presentence investigation.

On June 2, Alvis was sentenced to 49 months in prison and then 36 months postrelease supervision.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said most of the defendants in these cases have pleaded to lesser charges.

Woman shot Sunday

A 27-year-old woman was killed by what her husband said was an accidental gunshot Sunday morning at their home south of Brewster.

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson said Lanny Bevington, 33, told officers his wife, Kerrie A. Bevington, was shot while he was removing a gun from the pickup she was sitting in. He said dispatch got the report of a gunshot victim at 7 a.m. on Sunday.

The Bevington home is 3 1/2 miles southwest of Brewster on

County Road 37 in Sherman County. Whitson said the couple had moved to the county in August.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said the KBI was investigating. A search warrant was issued on Sunday for three agents to check the scene.

Bevington was pronounced dead at the scene, and her body was taken to Bateman Funeral Home. It later was moved to Topeka for an autopsy.

Funeral arrangements were pending with Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel of Colby.

Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
PG-13: Intense epic battle sequences; frightening images.
www.goodlandnet.com/movies

Showing through Jan. 8
Nightly 7:00
Movie Bucks Make Great Gifts!
Sherman
1203 Main - Phone 899-6103

Come and try authentic Mexican food
Emvia Dinero a Mexico por Enramex
•Tamales
•Calling cards
•Targetas Telefonicas
474 14th St, Burlington, Co.
719-346-4660

Attention
All Blue Rollout Trash Customers
All blue roll outs will be emptied on Wednesdays starting January 7, 2004.
In The Can, LLC.
1007 E Hwy. 24, Goodland, Kan.
Phone: 785-890-8080

The NWK Area Medical Foundation asks for your support of its 2003 "Caring Kind" Campaign to raise funds for a new physical therapy treatment program for incontinence at Goodland Regional Medical Center.
Contributions are tax deductible and benefit local medical care for all residents.
Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Attention Goodland Residents!
In The Can, LLC will be placing 2 containers, in the area of the recycling containers by Rasure Do It Center, for disposing of debris that can not be placed in your regular trash container. (The recycling containers will continue their existing service.) One container will be painted orange in color and will be able to receive **SMALL** amounts of construction debris. The other container will be painted gray in color and will be able to receive **SMALL** amounts of metal debris.
Each container has specific instructions on what you may and may not place in it. We do not accept tires or batteries. If the item does not fit in the container, please do not leave it beside the container.
These containers are not to be used for household trash, tree limbs or any type or yard waste. This courtesy service is for your convenience, but if it is abused it will be removed.
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call our office. We look forward to serving you.
In The Can, LLC.
1007 E Hwy. 24, Goodland, Kan.
Phone: 785-890-8080 Fax: 890-8081
Hours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F