

Other stories of interest for the year of 2003

Some stories weren't rated as important enough for the top 10, but were more interesting than the usual run of news.

They included a principal spending a night on the school roof, the city manager saving a woman's life, the draining of Smoky Gardens lake and Goodland's big Van Gogh replica becoming a hit on television.

North Elementary Principal Steve Raymer, now the activity director at the Goodland High School, made a deal with his students that if they collected 5,000 General Mills Boxtops for Education, he would spend a night on the roof.

The students and staff worked hard to collect the boxtops, posting a ladder on the office door showing how close they were to getting him to the roof. The staff created a "mini-Raymer" which was placed next to the collection box, and looked a lot like the full size man.

In May, as the deadline approached, the kids were 1,250 short with two days to go.

However, Raymer said he expected them to make the 5,000 level. His theory was that they were holding back enough to reach that level. Sure enough, on the appointed day, the ladder went over the 5,000 level.

Raymer went up the ladder a little after 3 p.m. Thursday, May 22, after kissing his wife and telling her "goodnight." Then the staff hauled the ladder away, cutting off any possibility of escape.

About 8 p.m., he said there had been quite a few visitors come by, and a kindergartner had brought him a sundae from Dairy Queen.

"She had her father put a ladder in his pickup and brought it so she could give me the ice cream," Raymer said, "so I had my dessert."

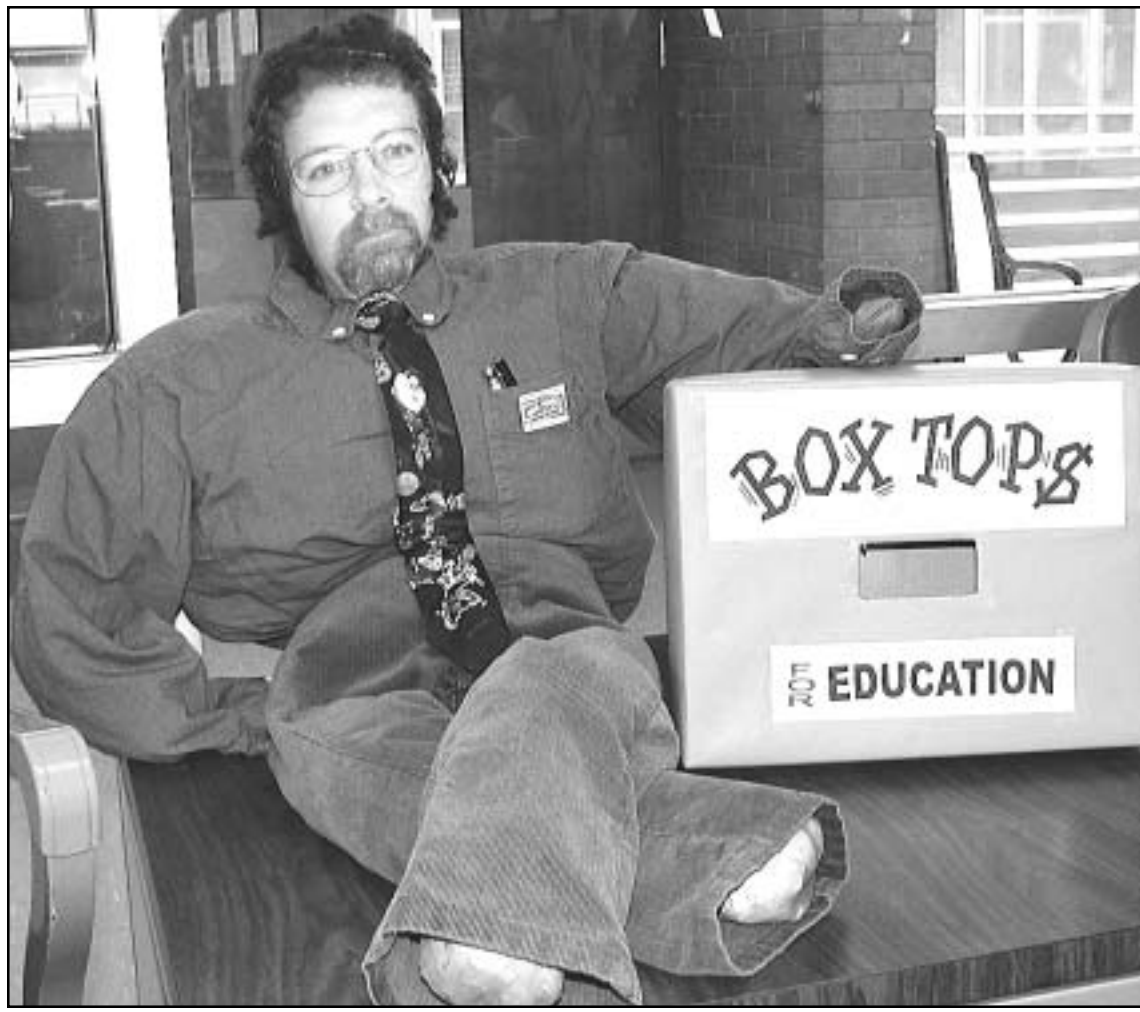
When he crawled off the roof and came down, the kids gave him a cheer and a round of applause. They then sang a verse of "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow."

"It was fun," he said. "Once."

City manager saves woman's life on golf course

A cry for help on the Sugar Hills Golf course brought City Manager Ron Pickman to where Bonnie Hawks had collapsed on the seventh green.

Her husband Dale said they were



Mini Raymer, a three-foot-tall stuffed replica of Principal Steve Raymer, guards to box-top receptacle in the North Elementary School office.

playing a round on Sunday morning, June 30. Hawks had reached down to mark her ball, said, "Oh, my God," and collapsed.

"When I got there," Pickman, a former Goodland police chief, said, "she was on the ground. She was not breathing and there was no pulse. I started CPR, and the emergency training just kicked in."

He continued the life-saving efforts until the ambulance, with Steve Evert and Bruce Gleason, arrived to take over.

"I don't know how long I was at it," Pickman said. "I was glad to be in the right place at the right time and could help."

Once the ambulance arrived, they used a portable defibrillator to get Hawks' heart going and got her stabilized. She was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center and then flown to Porter Adventist Hospital in Littleton, Colo.

"He saved my life," Hawks said. "I doubt I would have made it without his efforts. He doesn't like to hear it, but he is my hero."

"It was one year to the day from when I had congestive heart disease. I have been home for a week, and am feeling much better.... I am glad to be back."

Smoky Gardens drained to kill carp

The bottom of Smoky Gardens lake was dry enough to allow people to walk in looking for salvageable items by Sept. 7.

The lake was low after three years of drought, and the board felt this was the best chance to drain it and clean out the bottom as well as kill the gang of carp that had been crowding out game fish the past few years.

The board has been using donations and a grant to help clean out the bottom of the lake. They have

had a dozer down in the bottom to clean out the main channel and deepen the fishing area.

The board has asked for more as their money has run out.

They believe what has been done will make it a much better fishing lake, and are prepared to close the outlet on the dam as soon as there is any water to refill the lake.

Randy Bellamy, board chairman, said that if the weather cooperates and the water level increases, the lake could be ready for fish this spring.

Sunflower painting questions settled as it makes debut on television

The rumors around town about the status of the bill for the Van Gogh easel have been put to rest, and the painting has made an appearance on a television sitcom.

The painting, a 24-by-32 foot reproduction of one of Vincent van

Gogh's Sunflower series, and easel were erected in April 2001. They are part of Canadian artist Cameron Cross Big Easel Project, which involves setting up seven such structures around the world.

Sunflower USA, the nonprofit group who promoted the painting, reached a settlement in October with Greg Farris of Farris Industries over an outstanding balance on his bill for building the 80-foot easel on which the oversized Van Gogh rests.

B.E. "Pete" Whalen, a Goodland lawyer who is president of Sunflower USA, said the association wanted to see the project completed.

In addition to the painting, the group is planning to eventually open a museum that will educate people on the history of sunflower agriculture in northwestern Kansas.

The giant painting appeared on an ABC sitcom and is to appear on a documentary in Europe through footage shot by a Goodland man.

The painting at the end of the Friday, Nov. 21, episode of "Married to the Kellys" and in a documentary, "The Private Life of a Masterpiece," on the British Broadcasting Corp.

Producer Tom Hertz loosely based the comedy on his own life. His wife Susan is a Shawnee Mission West High School graduate and has a gregarious family, much like the one in the show.

Susan's father is Goodland native Bill Kelly, who graduated from high school here in 1951 before moving to the Kansas City area.

The show appears to be a hit and ABC has picked it up for the season. If it goes into a second season, there may be more filming in Kansas and possibly in Goodland.

The painting also will appear in a one-hour documentary on Van Gogh's series of sunflower paintings. Cross said Clare Lynch, a documentary filmmaker from the BBC, has contacted him about including footage of the work in progress of his painting for Goodland in the documentary.

Cross said he told Lynch about the footage shot by Rusty Renner of Goodland and asked Renner to send it to him. He said he then sent it to Lynch.

Cross, who said he may be interviewed for the documentary, is excited about his work being on television.

"It is good news," he said.

Former Sport Editor pleads guilty in municipal court

Doug Stephens, former sports editor of *The Goodland Daily News*, returned to Goodland and his family as the year began.

Stephens plead guilty to misuse of a company credit card in municipal court on Monday, Jan. 8.

For almost a year, Stephens, 23, was a reporter and sports editor at *The Goodland Daily News*, but about 8 a.m. Monday, Oct. 21, he went out the door and vanished.

He said he was going to pick up film at Wal-Mart, but the film was never picked up, and his car had not been spotted around town.

That left his wife and two small children wondering where he was.

Stephens returned to his family about Christmas and was served with a city summons at the end of December for misuse of a company credit card.

About the time he returned, the Casa Grande, Ariz., police called *The Daily News* office and the Goodland Police Department to say that they had found Stephens' wallet and checkbook.

At the time Stephens disappeared, *The Daily News* was investigating questions about a story in "The Graying Plains" special section published in September.

In the section, Stephens wrote a story about the effects of the changing population on the school districts of northwest Kansas, and was supposed to have interviewed the superintendents.

Questions rose when at least two of the superintendents quoted in the article said they did not remember ever talking to Stephens.

He said he thought the quotes were real, but belonged to another person.

"In our business, this is really worse than the misuse of the company credit card," said Editor Tom Betz. "When we were finally able to ask Stephens about the story, he was unable to give us a satisfactory answer. It is the kind of action that would be grounds for firing."

Solid waste issues and long range planning discussed

Curt Way, director of public works and the Sherman County commissioners Tuesday discussed solid waste issues and long range planning for the system including the excavation and closure costs of the landfill site.

Way said he felt the county should look at the bailing system for solid waste, and that it could be used for recycling cardboard as well.

"I believe this is important because with the continued dry conditions we are having to use much more cover dirt, and the bailer

would also reduce the flying debris which could cause a problem with the state," he said.

"I believe we will need to get some new trash trailers this year, and go ahead with the building at the landfill to house the new MadVac and give us a place to do maintenance on the compactor and track loader.

"There are many advantages to the bailer system, and I think we need to get the information together and explain it to the people."

Commissioner Mitch Tiede

agreed the bailer was something that needs to be pursued, but he wanted to see some money set aside for the post-closure costs and more money for the next phase of excavation at the landfill.

He said he felt putting the money aside now was important because once it is designated for these purposes that is all it can be used for.

"I want to see us start the fund and lock the money in so at least there will be a base amount available when the county has to face this in the future," Tiede said.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure made a motion to add \$100,000 to the excavation fund which was started last year with \$100,000, and to put \$50,000 aside in a post-closure fund for the landfill. Motion was seconded by Tiede and passed unanimously with Thomas voting in favor.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas agreed the county should move ahead on the bailer project. He asked what the estimated cost of the bailer and building remodeling would be.

Rasure said the bailer would cost between \$300,000 and \$350,000. Way said the planned remodeling of the transfer station would be about \$250,000, and that there would be some additional costs for equipment.

Way said the county could sell the compactor, but that it would have to be replaced with a loader to handle the one-ton bales at the landfill.

Rasure asked Way to see if he has the information that had been gathered on the bailer, and to contact the salesman about getting more

information.

"I think we need to get the solid waste committee involved and look at the equipment options and the building options," Rasure said. "This is a large project and I think we will need to explain it to the citizens because it will probably take a bond issue. We don't want to deplete our funds completely."

A meeting with the commissioners and the county solid waste committee will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 5:15 p.m. in the commission room at the courthouse.

County reviews employee wages and allows three percent raise

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The Sherman County commissioners reviewed the actual figures for wages spent last year, and told county department heads Tuesday morning they can recommend raises for themselves and their employees not to exceed 3 percent for this year.

A chart showing the employee pay by hours gave the commissioners a look at how the different departments stack up, and County Clerk Janet Rumpel said she used the actual wages paid last year rather than using the budget figures to give the commissioners a clearer look at the labor costs.

She said the full time employees

figures were based on 2,080 work hours in a year.

Commission Chairman Kevin Rasure asked to have the department heads come to the meeting and he explained that the commissioners were going to allow each department to determine how the pay would be spread out.

"We will allow a maximum of 3 percent of the actual wages for each current employee in a department to be split up by the department head," Rasure said. "This will include the department head, and we want each department to do job evaluations in the next two weeks or as soon as possible."

Carol Armstrong, register of deeds, Shelby Miller, treasurer,

Doug Whitson, sheriff, Dorendo Harrel, county health, Curt Way, public works and road and bridge, Bonnie Selby, county attorney and Terry Ballard, county assessor were present. Mary Messamore, county emergency management director and dispatch department head, was absent because she was on vacation.

The department heads said they felt this was a workable idea, and most said they would try to get the evaluations done in the next two weeks.

Several indicated they would probably recommend an across the board 3 percent raise for their employees because they did not get any raise last year.

Once the department heads have

completed the evaluations and their raise recommendations they will be returned to the commissioners for their approval.

Rasure said he had a letter from the Sherman County Economic Development Council asking the commissioners to approve the appointment of Dwane Timm of the First National Bank to a three-year term to take the place of Larry McCants, whose term expired the end of December. The commissioners unanimously approved the appointment of Timm.

The commissioners held a 35 minute closed session with Rumpel on personnel matters.

Rasure said he had talked to Mayor Rick Billinger about the

two board holding a joint meeting in the near future. He said they had talked about meeting before the regular city commission meeting to discuss ways the city and county can work together and be more efficient.

The city commission discussed the joint meeting at their meeting Monday, and told the mayor to work out a date with Rasure.

**Classifieds work!
899-2338**

The county commissioners will do their annual reorganization during their regular meeting today.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

Open Your Heart & Your Home To a Child In Need!

United Methodist Youthville Foster Care Viewing Party

Thursday, January 15
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