

Sophomore thinks about the good not losses

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News
A Sherman County teen-ager has spent the first half of her sophomore year recovering from a car accident, but she and her family aren't thinking about what she's lost but about how good they have it.

Lacey Ridder was on the way home from the first day of her sophomore year Monday, Aug. 25, with her sister Tehnee, 13, in the passenger seat, when she lost control of her Jimmy and rolled it.

Lacey suffered a neck injury and was flown to Children's Hospital in Denver, while Tehnee had no serious injuries.

Both were wearing seatbelts, their mother Cindy Ridder said; the cab was crushed on Lacey's side.

The Jimmy rolled once, Cindy said, and landed on its wheels and kept going across a field. Lacey couldn't stop the Jimmy, Cindy said; she had to tell Tehnee how to stop it.

Doctors don't know how Lacey's fractured C-7 didn't sever her spinal column, Cindy said; she couldn't move.

"I'm glad the farmer who came along knew not to move her," Cindy said. "I think she would be paralyzed if he had.

"They're telling us it's a miracle that she's walking."

Lacey doesn't remember what caused the accident, Cindy said, but it was probably loose gravel.

Even though Lacey wasn't able to move after the Jimmy rolled, she wasn't worried about herself.

"At the time, I was more worried about Tehnee," she said.

The accident happened on County Road 25 about seven miles north of Edson, and it took the am-

bulance and rescue workers extra time to get there because the first dispatch sent them to County Road 5 north of Kanorado. The problem was caused partially by static on the first cell phone call, Mary Messamore, head of county dispatch, said.

"It was our newest dispatcher," Messamore said, "and it was his first major incident call. He got sort of excited. He was having trouble hearing the person calling in, a Cheyenne County fireman who was on the scene, and he repeated the location on Road 5 and the person said it was right."

Children's Hospital flew their own plane in, Cindy said, and flew Lacey to the airport in Denver and then took her to the hospital in a helicopter.

Since that wasn't a fun ride, Lacey wants another helicopter trip. Now Lacey says she wants to get in a helicopter so she can look out the windows, Cindy said.

She was conscious the whole time, Cindy said, but I don't think she remembers a lot. She was on a straight board all the way to Denver, Cindy said, which was uncomfortable. They put her on medication for pain, Cindy said.

Lacey was in surgery for six hours, Cindy said, with the doctors going in through the front and the back to put in hardware to hold her neck together. Her C-7 was shattered, Cindy said, and doctors used her bone fragments, and some from a cadaver, in a cage to hold it together.

The doctors didn't know what to expect, Cindy said. Lacey was in bed over a week, Cindy said, before she started to get much movement back. At first doctors didn't know whether or not she would walk,



Ridder

Family not forgotten, groups help out

While Lacey Ridder and her family have worked toward getting her back to a normal life following her car accident on the first day of her sophomore year, they have not been left alone in their struggles.

Several organizations have had fund-raisers to help lift their financial burden, among them have been the Girls Athletic Association and the Goodland school district.

Don Smith, a teacher at Goodland High School, said the district has had a fund-raiser the past two years to help district employees in need. The school has a pancake feed each year to raise money.

This year, Smith said, \$1,200 was distributed to the Ridder and

Swagger families. Harvey Swagger, high school principal, has had cancer, but it is in remission. The committee disperses some for people in need, Smith said, and keeps some in case someone else has a need.

The Girls Athletic Association baby-sat at the Nu Phi Mu Craft Fair, association sponsor Connie Livengood said, and raffled a money tree to raise money to help the Ridder family.

The 11 girls raised \$250, Livengood said.

The girls are Jordan Frazier, Alisha McKee, May Davis, Megan Leonard, Lisha Tedford, Cortney Shields, Justine Koehler, Janae McKee, Tomi Windell, Jennifer Mentzer and Cierra Abbey.

Cindy said.

There were a lot of prayer chains at work, she said; it either brings a family closer together or it pulls it apart.

The Ridder family pulled together. Cindy said her older daughter Amber didn't leave for college in Boulder, Colo., until November, so she was able to help until then. Lacey's grandmother Donna Ridder came up from Leoti to stay with the family, Cindy said, and a sister, Brenda Hahn, helped with a calling tree to keep everyone informed of Lacey's condition.

While Lacey was in the hospital, the Ridders eagerly awaited any signs of improvement. Every day

when something else moved, Cindy said, it was something to celebrate.

It was three weeks after the accident before she could move anything on her left hand, Cindy said.

Lacey began physical therapy in the hospital and showed what she was made of.

When the therapist came to the hospital, Cindy said, Lacey didn't want to quit.

She wanted to keep improving, Cindy said, and worked until she nearly passed out.

Physical therapy was work, Cindy said; it's amazing how much effort it was just to get on her hands and knees.

At first, Cindy said, she had to

concentrate on everything to walk. It was like learning all over, Cindy said.

Lacey's getting out of the hospital didn't mean smooth sailing for the Ridders.

Lacey spent about a month in the hospital, Cindy said, and when she first got out, she wasn't able to do a lot.

She had to build up to school a little at a time, Cindy said, and had been going to Colby for occupational therapy and physical therapy. It was hard on her to walk, Cindy said; she had to use a walker.

School's going pretty well, Lacey said, but she is still not up to a full day. Monday is a full day of therapy, Cindy said, and she can't do band yet.

Lacey was playing a clarinet, Cindy said, and needs both hands to do it. She doesn't have full use of her left hand, Cindy said; that's why therapy is still going.

Turning her head to look at different chalkboards was tough, Cindy said; Lacey had to wear a neck collar until Dec. 19.

Lacey said her favorite subjects are math and science. Those are the hardest to catch up in, Cindy said; she has chemistry and Algebra II. She has been lucky, Cindy said; her teachers have been helpful with catching up.

"The school's been great!" Cindy said.

Lacey's core classes will probably be caught up, Cindy said, and now she will be adding some of the more fun classes.

"I'm pretty sure she'll be able to graduate with her class," Cindy said.

Lacey said she hasn't been able to go back to vocal yet because she's still building up her class schedule, and she will have to wait until she has more use of her left hand to re-

turn to computer applications.

Besides helping Lacey catch up with her classes at Goodland High School, people at the school and others have helped with the financial aspects of Lacey's treatment.

Cindy said the family has insurance and would never be able to pay otherwise. And money from fund-raisers has really come in handy.

Girls Athletic Association had a fund-raiser, Cindy said, and the Knights of Columbus, the sophomore class and some church organizations.

That helps with the cost of taking her to therapy, Cindy said. Lacey was making two trips to Colby per week for therapy and trips to Denver.

She's through with the occupational therapist in Colby, Cindy said, since there is one who comes to the school.

She still has physical therapy once a week, Cindy said.

Cindy, who works in the lunch room at Central Elementary School, had to take some time off from work to take Lacey to her appointments but is now back at work full-time.

"Her dad is using some of his sick time to get her to Colby," Cindy said.

Lacey's father, Roger Ridder, works with fertilizer at Frontier Equity Co-op, Cindy said, and things have slowed down for him.

"It worked out well," Cindy said. "I haven't had to give up my job."

Lacey said she was tired a lot at first but isn't as much now. When she's tired, Cindy said, there's nothing left.

But the Ridders have not been lamenting their difficulties.

"It makes you take stock of what you have," Cindy said. "Many up there (in the Denver hospital) are worse off. It makes you thankful for what you have."

Issues at joint meeting include height restrictions

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
Handling questions about height restrictions within two miles of the Goodland airport and having a way to have a say in what businesses operate in the county were among the issues raised at Monday's joint meeting of the Sherman County commissioners and the city commission.

City Manager Ron Pickman said there are a couple of areas where the city and county need to work together with one being a way to maintain the height restrictions within a 10,000 foot radius from the airport runways, and a second was to be able to prevent undesirable businesses to open in the county.

"We know it is tough to bring up the 'Z' word," said Pickman, "but there are some things we need to address to respond to these issues."

Pickman said there is a growing movement to locate adult novelty stores along the interstates, and that neither the city or county currently has a way to prohibit this.

"We need to do something before it happens," Pickman said. "Again this brings up the fact that the city has zoning, but the county does not."

"Zoning is something we have a problem with," said County Commissioner Kevin Rasure. "We have had people take issue with anything like zoning in the county."

"It is hard to explain to people that zoning is a way to protect people," Pickman said. "I am not sure what the county could do.

"We have business licenses in the city which gives us a way to handle this type of problem."

City Commissioner Dean Blume said he felt something needed to be

in place before they have to react.

"We need to work together on this," Commissioner Chuck Lutters agreed.

"We need to protect the entire county and Kanorado," Pickman said, "and do it together or somebody would sure complain."

Rasure said he had talked to County Attorney Bonnie Selby about this, but that she had not gotten back to him with any suggestions.

"The 'Z' word seems to be a hot one," Rasure said. "What are other cities doing?"

Pickman said he was contacting Abilene and another city which have been facing the opening of adult novelty stores to see how they are handling it.

Another area which touches on zoning is the airport height restrictions Pickman said.

He and Darin Neufeld of EBH engineering showed the commissioners a map of the area showing the circle around the airport where the Federal Aviation Administration regulations require the city to enforce height restrictions which might interfere with pilots safely landing and taking off from the airport.

"We can handle the restrictions within the city," Pickman said, "but we need to coordinate our efforts outside the city limits.

"We would rather address these problems before they get built, but under the federal rules it is something that causes hard feelings when the person is told to take down or move the structure which violates the height restriction."

Neufeld said it might be a good idea for the county to require anyone wishing to build something over 30 feet high to notify the county or city to make sure it does not interfere with the aviation regulations.

"This would not be a permit on the county side," Neufeld said, "but

rather a notification process that would help before it becomes a problem.

"The feds can make someone move or remove something that violates the height restrictions within two miles of the runways."

He said the 2 mile zone is critical and there is an inside circle which has a 150 foot restriction. We already have six things that break above the plane."

"We need something to have them contact the county up front," said County Commissioner Mitch Tiede.

"Seems the FAA has their own set of rules," Rasure said. "That 'Z' word would handle it, "but there are probably other ways to handle this.

"Maybe we could set up so that anyone building within four miles would let us look at the height before they started."

"If anyone messes with these rules they have to answer to the FAA," Neufeld said.

"It would be better to take care of the problem before it starts," Rasure said.

Another issue Pickman brought up was that the city sewage treatment system has a minor problem because the city does not own all the land where the water runs.

Neufeld said he had been researching the land ownership and discovered that there is a section of county land that runs between the

corrections

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Keck
Grad appears on soap
Tinker Keck, a 1995 Goodland High School graduate, will appear as an undercover police officer during Wednesday's episode of General Hospital.
The show begins at 1 p.m. Mountain Time on ABC. Keck will appear twice during the one-hour show.