

weather  
report

50°

noon Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 7:31 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:57 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:32 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 58 degrees
- Humidity 89 percent
- Sky cloudy with very light rain
- Winds northeast 12 mph
- Barometer 29.95 inches and rising

• Record High today 90° (1989)

• Record Low today 25° (1958)

Last 24 Hours\*

High Wednesday 64°

Low Wednesday 35°

Precipitation .5

This month 1.83

Year to date 3.10

The Topside Forecast

Today: mostly cloudy with a 80 percent chance of occasional rain with amounts between one quarter and one half an inch. Snow tonight, high near 42, low near 36, winds breezy at northeast 16-36 mph. Saturday: mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers with amounts of less than .1 inch, high near 52, low around 36, winds north northwest 6-13 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: partly cloudy, high near 68, low around 37.

(National Weather Service)  
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.  
\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local  
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.58 bushel

New crop — \$3.55 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.55

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2.87 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.86

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$2.69 bushel

Soybeans — \$8.91 bushel

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$6.50 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$11.60 cwt.

NuSun — \$11.85 cwt.

Confection — \$16/\$9 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$15

(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



Grant hosts  
track meet

Andrew Taylor cleared the opening height of 4 feet in the seventh-grade high jump during the junior high track meet here Saturday. See story and photos on Page 11.

# Funeral Saturday for banker

A Goodland banker died Tuesday from injuries he suffered in an 18-vehicle pile-up Sunday morning in a dust storm on I-70 a mile west of the Kansas line.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Goodland United Methodist Church for Merlyn Lee Stasser, 52, vice-president of the Western State Bank. He died Tuesday at St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver from multiple fractures and a head injury received in the accident.

His son Justin said he and his fa-

ther had been to church in Burlington. They were on their way back about 11 a.m. when they drove into the dust storm, and became part of the 18 vehicle pile-up which involved 46 people. Stasser was a member and president of the elders quorum of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints in Burlington.

Trooper Lloyd Beck of the Colorado State Patrol said the accident happened when vehicles slowed in the dust-induced brownout and began crashing into each other. Beck said the storm

made determining the sequence of events difficult, and it may take several weeks of investigation to get it all figured out.

I-70 had to be closed for hours while troopers sorted out the accident. The farmer who owned the adjacent field plowed up some ridges to stop the dust, but Beck said several troopers were treated for dust in their eyes. Colorado asked Kansas officials to shut off traffic at Goodland. Highway Patrol dispatchers in Salina said the road was closed at 1 p.m. and reopened at 4:46 p.m.

Beck said there were two other accidents in the eastbound lanes

about the same time, but no injuries. There were no accidents reported in Kansas.

He said Stasser was one of four victims taken to St. Anthony. In all, thirty-six people were taken to the Kit Carson County Community Hospital in Burlington.

Justin Stasser, 29, was taken to the Burlington hospital for treatment of cuts and bruises. He later went to Denver to be at his father's side, along with his mother Arlea of Goodland and their daughter, Heather Banda of Dubuque, Iowa.

Stasser was born Feb. 25, 1952 in Goodland and graduated from Goodland High School in 1970.

He married Arlea R. Robertson in 1972 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Goodland, and their temple marriage was May 8, 1992, in Denver.

Stasser graduated from Fort Hays State University in 1975, and from the University of Colorado in 1991.

In 1998, the couple moved back to Goodland, after living in Larned, Tribune and Leoti. He managed a loan production office here for a Nebraska bank before joining Western State.

Stasser was a member of the Goodland Ambassadors, a board

See STASSER, Page 3

# Goodland part of wartime glider training

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

For a few months during 1942, Goodland had its part in training men to fight the Nazis in Europe.

Other Plains towns had air bases and Naval air stations, where fighter and bomber crews learned their craft. Goodland was one of seven sites across the nation where Army Air Corps glider pilots received basic flight training.

Swift and silent, the gliders were towed aloft from Renner Field, then released to swoop down to a landing.

The episode lasted just three months for the Army, though it turned into a lifetime deal for at least one young Goodland woman.

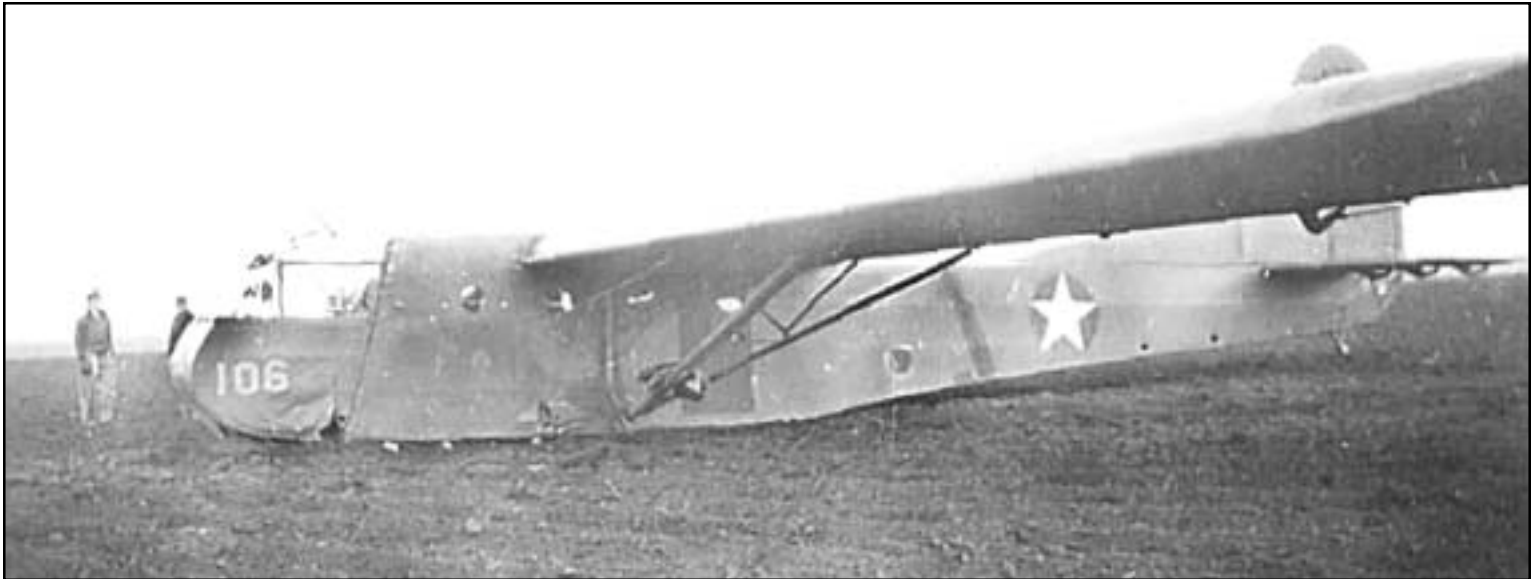
According to information from Linda Holton, director of the High Plains Museum, William Ong of the Ong Aircraft Co. in Kansas City signed a three-month contract on May 15, 1942, to provide all the equipment and instructors to train glider pilots.

The 229th Glider Training Detachment was activated on May 22, 1942, with Capt. Stantan T. Smith Jr. as its first commanding officer, assisted by 1st Lt. Paul Garrett. A short time later, Garrett took over from Smith. He was promoted to captain in July.

Training started on June 8 with two types of classes. One was for students pilots civilian flying experience. They got 60 hours of ground school and 15 hours in the air.

New pilots' training was divided into two phases, 75 hours of ground school and 40 in the air for the first, and 30 hours on the ground and 15 in the air for the second.

The training here resulted in 25 accidents, records show, but no fatalities. Eight were blamed on wind while the others were attributed to pilot error.



One of the CG-4 Waco gliders (above) that was used by the students training in Goodland. Nina Stephens, now Spencer, (left in right photo) dated Army Air Corps student pilot Levin Gosney for a short time while he attended training here.

Photos from the High Plains Museum photo collection.

By the time the contract expired in August, 10 classes had been completed. Of the 363 students who reported for training, 295 graduated and went to locations where they were trained to operate the CG-4 Waco glider.

The Ong contract was part of an Air Corps plan to jump start a glider training program. By the time it expired, permanent training bases had been established, and the 229th and a similar unit were disbanded. Although the 229th was formally deactivated on Aug. 29, some troops remained in Goodland until mid-September.

The Air Corps trained about 5,000 glider pilots and assigned them throughout the world. Three of those who received their basic training in Goodland were assigned to the 93rd Squadron of the 439th Troop Carrier Group. Byron "Coke" Myers, a life-

long Goodland resident, was a C-47 pilot with the group, towing gliders into combat.

Nina (Stephens) Spencer of Goodland, who was here during the war, said she dated one of the glider students, Levin Gosney of Texas, for a while but the romance did not last. Later she dated one of the Marine Corps students, Richard Spencer, who reported here for training. She said the Marines changed their mind about having glider pilots and Richard, who after the war became her husband, was trained as an F-4U Corsair pilot. The war ended before he went overseas.

The Spencers were married in 1945, after his discharge, and moved back to Goodland where he worked for nine years in his father-in-law's Studebaker dealership. After that, he

See GLIDERS, Page 8



# Star-News wins two statewide awards

The Goodland Star-News won two major awards announced at the Kansas Press Association's annual convention last Friday in Overland Park.

The Star-News won the Frank and Mamie Boyd Community Service Award for its efforts to see that Sherman County voters had their say in last year's debate over time zones.

The paper shared the Victor Murdock Award for investigative or in-depth reporting with the rest of the Nor'West Newspapers group for a special edition on Rural Schools published last year.

"We are particularly proud of these two awards," said Publisher Steve Haynes, "because they are the only two awards given by the association which are open to every paper in the state, from the Bird City Times to The Kansas City Star."

"I can't remember the last time smaller newspapers won the Murdock award."

The paper organized a county-wide election on the time zone issue last year after commissioners learned the county had no legal authority to call a vote. Drawing on a precedent set more than 12 years earlier, the staff set up polls at the county courthouse on election day and offered advance voting at its office. Stories and editorials tracked the

"I can't remember the last time smaller newspapers won the Murdock award."

— Steve Haynes, Star-News publisher

debate after a group of business people asked for the change.

In the end, voters were 2-1 against changing to Central Time, and the county agreed to keep things on Mountain Time. Sherman is one of only four Kansas counties left in the western time zone.

Editor Tom Betz picked up the award for The Star-News.

The Murdock award went to the six papers of the Nor'West group, owned by Steve and Cynthia Haynes, for the effort reporting on school problems in the area.

Earlier this year, the section won the Burton Marvin Award given by the William Allen White School of Journalism at the University of Kansas.

While the section shared the Marvin award with The Wichita Eagle, it won the Murdock award outright in competition open to all the state's newspapers.

The award is named for the late editor of The Eagle, the son of

founder Marshall Murdock.

The section covered trends in western Kansas schools, including financial problems, shrinking enrollment and pressure to consolidate.

It touched on legislative attempts to address the problems and the history of school consolidation in Kansas.

The Star-News won three awards in the press association's Better Newspaper's competition, announced Saturday at the convention.

Society Editor Sharon Corcoran won second place in local business coverage for a story about the Butterfly Cafe. The award was in the category for medium-circulation weekly newspapers.

"I can taste the wonderful pastries and bread by reading your article," the judge wrote.

In education writing, Editor Betz won second place for a story on a fossil-hunting trip Goodland fifth-graders took. He was one of the vol-

unteer guides for the field trip.

"An interesting story on an innovative program to teach fifth graders about pre-history," the judge said.

Shannon Davidson, a photographer and reporter for the paper last summer, received honorable mention for a rodeo photo, "Which way is up?", in sports photography. "Great action, but a little soft," the judge said.

Elsewhere in the area, The Norton Telegram won five awards in the class for smaller weekly papers.

The Telegram won first place for investigative writing for Brandon Gay, a summer intern who is a senior at the University of Kansas. He wrote a feature package, "Trash in Trash out," about how the county handles its solid waste.

Carolyn Plotts of Norcatur won first place for feature photography for a shot of her granddaughters in a wheat field.

"Clean, concise, crisp, good contrast and subject manner," was the judge's comment.

Reporter Kristen Brands won second place for business coverage, while Plotts took honorable mention for a feature on the Valentine Diner. Editor and Publisher Cynthia Haynes took honorable mention in editorial writing.

# Tree City planting at 1 p.m.

The City of Goodland will receive its 25th annual award as a Tree City during a special Arbor Day tree planting at the Sherman County courthouse at 1 p.m.

The tree planting is a cooperative effort of the Sherman County commissioners and the city Shade Tree Board.

City Manager Ron Pickman, who will be in Denver dealing with the mediation efforts on the infant pool at Steever Water Park, said this will be the 25th year the city has participated; a sesquicentennial Arbor Day award is to be presented. Commissioner Mitch Tiede is to present the plaque.

Dale Hayden, chairman of the shade tree panel, will be master of ceremonies, and Jim Strine, area state forester will present the Tree City award.

Students from Central and North schools will help place a time capsule, and Zimmerman Tree Service will plant the tree.