

weather  
report

25°

noon Monday

Today

- Sunset, 4:44 p.m.
- Sunrise, 7:06 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:45 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 31 degrees
- Humidity 100 percent
- Sky cloudy and foggy
- Winds southeast 5 mph.
- Barometer 29.92 inches and steady

- Record High today 70° (1999)
- Record Low today -17° (1963)

Last 24 Hours\*

High Sunday	57°
Low Sunday	25°
Precipitation	none
This month	.07
Year to date	.07
Normal	.11

The Topside Forecast

Today: cloudy becoming partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow at night, high around 28, low near 20, light northwest wind. Wednesday: mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow before 3 p.m., high around 34, low around 10, winds south southwest 6-11 mph.

Extended Forecast

Thursday - Friday: partly cloudy with a slight chance of snow. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. \* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local  
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.14 bushel  
Posted county price — \$3.32  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Corn — \$1.85 bushel  
Posted county price — \$1.78  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 17¢  
Milo — \$1.53 bushel  
Soybeans — \$4.91 bushel  
Posted county price — \$4.99  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Millet — \$6 hundredweight  
Sunflowers  
Oil current crop — \$12.65 cwt.  
NuSun — \$12.75 cwt.  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Confection — \$19/\$13 cwt.  
Pinto beans — \$25  
(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



Goodland  
takes second

Freshman Jordan Albers dominated Jordan Hibbs of Hays in their first-round match at 103 pounds Saturday at the Southwest Classic in Liberal. Albers won the match by a 11-0 major decision. See story, photo on Page 11.

# Scars will follow stab victim for life

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

When the tall, thin young man opens the door, you first notice the scar along his chin, slightly pink and mostly healed.

A slash scar runs around his throat and turns down his chest to the end of his rib cage. The long, vertical mark is dotted on each side, like the scar a heart patient might have.

Overall, Rustin Leiker said, he suffered at least eight stab wounds in his neck, arm and the back of his head when he was attacked outside his home on Nov. 8. The wounds kept him in a Denver hospital for 10 days.

A Utah man, Michael D. Whitaker, 34, is charged with attempted second-degree murder and aggravated battery in the case. Whitaker, who was shot as police tried to arrest him that night, has not yet been to trial, or told his side of the case.

Leiker, 21, says the brush with death left him scarred, emotionally and physically.

How it all started

The young man said he first got involved with Whitaker in October when Heidi Limb, also from Utah, started working at Taco John's, where Leiker is a shift manager.

He said he became friends with Limb and remembers hearing stories of how she wasn't getting along with her boyfriend. He said Limb told him Whitaker planned to kick her and Maya, her 1 1/2-half-year-old daughter, out of their house.

Leiker said Limb didn't have any family in town or any place to go. He said he didn't want her to move in with him and at first said no.

About a week before he agreed to let her move in, he said, Whitaker himself came by Leiker's house, at



Back to his old life as usual, Rustin Leiker put together a taco at Taco John's in Goodland, where he is a shift manager. Leiker said he does everything at the restaurant: mopping, cooking, and helping customers at the front counter and drive-thru.

Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

702 W. 11th, and asked if it would be OK.

"He was like, 'Can Heidi stay here?,'" Leiker recalled, adding that he still doesn't understand why

Whitaker came over.

On Friday, Nov. 5, Limb told Leiker that all of her stuff was outside of Whitaker's house in trash bags. He said they picked them up

and moved Limb and her daughter into his house.

Although the two weren't in a romantic relationship, he said they were good friends.

"We weren't boyfriend and girlfriend," he said, "but it was pretty much headed that way."

By Monday, he said, Whitaker called to tell Limb she had forgotten some items at the house and that he had heard she was dating Leiker.

Later that night, the two went to Wal-Mart where they ran into Whitaker while shopping. Leiker said he saw him and pushed Limb to another aisle as Whitaker approached them.

"He came up to me and said, 'If you ever look at me like that again, I'm gonna f--- you up,'" Leiker said.

He said Whitaker spoke to Limb, but Leiker pulled her away and they left for home.

"We tried to get away from him," he remembered, adding that Whitaker seemed hot-tempered. "I was really nervous after that because I didn't know what to expect."

The stabbing

When Limb and Leiker got home, he said, they invited a friend over to hang out. He said she wasn't feeling well, and when he took her home, he discovered Whitaker was following them.

He said he drove around town until he lost Whitaker and then headed back to his house. Because he wasn't sure what to expect, he said, he grabbed his shotgun and put it in the back seat of his car.

He hadn't even backed out of the driveway when he saw Whitaker's car had stopped. Leiker said he stopped, too, and rolled down his window to see what he wanted.

"I shouldn't have stopped," he

said.

As Whitaker approached the car, Leiker remembers hearing him say "You've got something, you've got something."

"I don't know why he said that," he said adding that his friend was so frightened she hopped out of the car.

He said Whitaker reached into his pocket.

"I didn't know what it was," he said, "if it was a pistol or what. I didn't see the knife."

The first contact came when, Leiker said, Whitaker reached into the car and punched him in the face. He's not sure if he was hit with a knife, brass knuckles or a ring, but the blow caused the scar on his chin.

"What did you do to me? What did you do to me?," Leiker remembers asking Whitaker before he blacked out for a few seconds. "I don't remember the next 10 seconds."

When he became conscious again, he said Whitaker was reaching into the car for his shotgun.

"He was trying to get it, but it was stuck on the shifter," he said.

Leiker said he knew something was wrong so he tried to drive away.

"He said 'You wanna drag me, go ahead and drag me,'" Leiker said Whitaker muttered while still reaching for the gun and accidentally shifting the car into neutral.

He said the car coasted onto a curb and hit a mailbox. As soon as the car stopped, he said, Whitaker ran back to the house, said something to Leiker's friend and took off in his car.

Getting help

"I knew I didn't feel right," Leiker recalled. "I felt really wet."

He said he told his friend to go to

See VICTIM, Page 9

# Year in agriculture saw up and downs

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

"Variable" is the word for wheat farming this year, says county extension agent Dana Belshe, with dry fields and low wheat yields this spring, but good moisture and a strong start for the crop this fall.

He said the wheat, the most important crop in the county, was well below average last spring because of the drought.

"We had a low wheat yield, way below normal," he said. "Wheat is the backbone of the county."

Alan Townsend, who farms about 15 miles southwest of Goodland, said he didn't harvest any of his 200 acres of dryland wheat this year.

When they planted last year's wheat crop, Townsend said, they planted directly into dry ground.

"We were so dry a year ago," he said, "that our wheat was planted in dust."

Wheat did, however, along with most other crops, do well on irrigated fields.

"The only high point," Belshe said of the year, "was the irrigated crops. That was the highlight of the year."

Dryland corn also came in at under normal yields.

"A good share didn't even get harvested," the agent said.

The irrigated corn fared much better, but Belshe said farmers had

trouble because fall moisture kept the crop from drying down for harvest.

"They did have some decent yields," he said, "but harvest was so long."

A longer harvest, he added, can cause some of the ears of corn to drop, but not too much of the crop was damaged.

Townsend said the irrigated corn was his best crop this year.

"We had our best corn crop ever," he said. "We went from zero on the wheat crop to the best corn crop ever."

"All in all," Belshe said, "the corn crop came out real well."

Townsend said his soy and pinto beans came out well this year, too.

"We had a record year on the soybeans," he said.

Belshe said the milo crop, mostly dryland, suffered this year with lower-than-average temperatures in the summer, forcing many fields to stand unharvested alongside the corn.

"We had a cooler-than-normal

summer," he said adding that the lack of moisture coupled with the temperatures gave some farmers little hope.

Belshe said the sunflower crop was good overall. Early dryness, he said, did limit the dryland acres, but irrigated sunflowers did well.

Along with a lack of moisture, hail storms in July and August damaged some crops, Belshe said. One in July cut a long swath northeast of Goodland, flattening fields in its way.

"That particular hail storm chewed up the crops really well," he said.

He said hail, can cause extensive damage forcing farmers to abandon the crops.

"A lot of that corn went to silage," he said. "Hail can do quite a bit of damage. Hail's never a good thing."

Belshe said a boost of moisture this fall has helped farmers look forward to a better wheat crop next spring.

"The wheat crop probably is the best looking stand we've seen in five

years," he said.

"It looks excellent right now," Townsend said.

The fall rains only brought the area up to slightly above normal rainfall, but Belshe said any amount helps.

"Anytime we can get a little bit of a recharge, it's good," he said, adding that the stored moisture in the subsoil not only helps the dryland crops, but gives irrigated fields a jump start, too.

"There's a lot more hope for good wheat crop," he said.

"It appears the tide has turned," said Townsend, adding that the last snow and ice storm dropped more moisture than he had seen saw all winter last year.

Although the rain has been good, Belshe remains cautious.

"We only made average rainfall," he said. "For the past five years, we've been below normal. We haven't really replenished what we lost."

See FARMING, Page 9

## Cowboys win over Eagles



Cowboy Brock Lohr squared for a shot from the top of the circle during Friday's game against the Colby Eagles, which Goodland won, 57-43. Lohr was the lead scorer with 14 points in the game. See story, photos on Page 11.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

A trial has been set for Monday, April 4, in Sherman County District Court for a 28-year-old Colorado woman charged with three counts of second-degree murder after a car accident on I-70 last summer.

Jennifer Adams will face a jury of her peers unless attorneys reach an agreement in the case sooner. County Attorney Bonnie Selby was in court Monday and couldn't be reached to comment on reports in the case.

Court records show that Adams' blood alcohol tested more than three times over the legal limit when her car struck a Ford Explorer from behind on June 11, knocking it out of control and killing three Goodland women.

Along with three counts of second-degree murder, Adams will be facing charges of aggravated battery, driving under the influence of alcohol and transporting an open container. The three murder counts include alternate charges of involuntary manslaughter.

The accident on I-70, east of mile marker 33 between Brewster and Edson, killed Christine Williams, her mother, Mary Wyatt, and her grandmother, Aline Becker, and injured two of Williams' children, Garrett, 8, and Caylee, 6.

Williams was a science teacher at Goodland High School, and Wyatt was an aide at West Elementary.

Judge Jack Burr signed a motion ordering Adams to pay \$5,000 for the funeral expenses of Aline Becker.

At a preliminary hearing in October, testimony revealed that Adams has been stopped and ticketed twice that day for speeding on I-70 west of WaKeeney, and that her car was moving fast and nearly out of control just before the wreck.

Master Trooper Terry Stithem of WaKeeney, an 18-year veteran of the Kansas Highway Patrol, said that he stopped Adams twice for speeding within a 30-minute period along the same stretch of the Interstate, between mile-markers 124 and 118 a few miles west of WaKeeney. After she was stopped the first time, he

said, she went back to town to get gas and then headed west again.

Stithem said the first time he stopped Adams, he clocked her at 96 mph, and the second time it was 104. He said he wrote her tickets both times and asked the dispatcher to notify officers to the west to watch for her, since it appeared she was not taking the speed limit seriously.

Trooper Troy Smith of Goodland testified at the preliminary hearing that Adams consented to a search of her car. During the search, he found an opened bottle of Smirnoff Vodka in front of the passenger seat and an unopened bottle of beer in a cooler behind the driver's seat.

Trooper Joe Greene of Goodland administered a breath alcohol field test, which Adams failed. She was arrested for suspicion of driving under the influence.

She was taken to the Sherman County Bastille, Greene said, where breath tests pegged her blood alcohol content at .265 percent, more than three times the legal limit of .08.

Adams' attorney entered a plea of not guilty on all six counts.