

Couple questions school truancy letter policy

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

A Goodland couple complained to the school board last Monday that the high school sent a letter to the county attorney and a copy to them about their daughter's absences and tardies in the first nine weeks of school.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said he did not know anything about the letter, but would look into the situation and get back to the parents.

Dave Walker, 1016 Harrison, stepfather of a 17-year old Goodland High School senior, Nicole Buskirk, spoke to the school board.

He told the board he was upset that he found out about his daughter's apparent tru-

ancy by receiving a copy of a letter sent to the county attorney.

He said the letter said the girl had missed 54 days of school, but he disputed that. He said there were at least 19 of those days where she was working at Pizza Hut in the afternoons, and 10 absences for doctor's appointments.

"She was truant," Walker said. "I wish I had known about this before we got the copy of the letter. We told her this was not satisfactory."

Walker said he was upset that Steve Raymer, assistant principal at the high school, had gone to the county attorney without attempting to contact the parents first.

"I am coming to you because I want to

know what the district policy is," Walker said. "I think it is very wrong to go to the county attorney before the parents know."

He said Richard Schwasinger, head of the DECA program, who supervises work-study students, had asked for the doctor's phone number to verify her appointments.

"If I say she is going to the doctor," Walker said, "the school district does not need to know who the doctor is or the course of treatment."

He said Nicole works at Pizza Hut, and her supervisors are pleased with her performance.

"I am not aware of it," Selby said. "I am in the dark. I will get back to you as soon as I know about the details."

"It is not good that the letter went to the

county attorney before we were given a chance to work with this," said the girl's mother, Lavera Walker.

"I'd like to know what the policy is," David Walker said. "Seems to me to the a textbook definition of arbitrary and capricious."

Board President Jane Philbrick asked if it would be OK to have Selby do some checking and get back to the parents later in the week?

David Walker said that would be fine.

Selby said Thursday he had reviewed the situation, and agreed that some mistakes had been made. He said there were not 54 days, but it was 54 class periods she was listed as absent from, with four tardies.

"I agree that the afternoon work periods

should not have been counted as absences," Selby said. "I told him we had miscalculated, and that he had brought up good questions. I said we had addressed the issues at the high school."

Selby said from now on when there is a question about an absent student and the parents cannot be reached, the school would send a note or letter to the home.

In the future, Selby said, the school will make sure the afternoon work session are not counted as absences, and the school will work with the parents before going to the county attorney.

"She was being truant," Selby said, "but it was not handled as it should have been. She is over 16, but under 18, and is scheduled to graduate at the end of the semester."

New publisher begins work at Colby Free Press

By Patty Decker
Colby Free Press

A new publisher has been named for the *Colby Free Press*.

Combining enthusiasm with more than a decade of education and experience, John Van Nostrand, former managing editor of the daily newspaper in Creston, Iowa, says he is excited about his new challenges in Colby.

As for his philosophy on publishing a small-town newspaper, Van Nostrand's answer was simple.

"This is our readers' newspaper," he said, adding that he has an open door for suggestions or other input.

Regarding changes in the look of the newspaper or office procedures, Van Nostrand said he is not at that point yet.

"I would like to wait until I know more about the *Free Press* and its staff, the town and trends," he said.

One major asset the new publisher and his family bring to the area is how much they enjoy opportunities that involve them with community organizations.

For example, in Greenfield, Iowa, where John and his family lived prior to Colby, his wife, Jennifer, coordinated a 30-year anniversary and reunion celebration of the movie "Cold Turkey," which was filmed in 1969 in Greenfield. The comedy starred Dick Van Dyke, Tom Poston and Jean Stapleton and was produced by Norman Lear.

The day-long celebration in September 1999 included entertainment, a street dance, a bonfire and many of the movie's leading actors. She worked with the Main Street group and the Chamber of Commerce to make the event happen.

Van Nostrand said, he too, got involved with a variety of organizations, noting in particular his membership with the Adair County Pork Producers.

"Living in Iowa, which is a big agricultural state, membership in



Van Nostrand

this association helped me learn more about agriculture, legal issues about agriculture, farmers and hogs," he said.

While he was born in Leon, Iowa, Van Nostrand's family moved to Sterling, Colo., when he was 6. He graduated from Sterling High School and Northeastern Junior College, also in Sterling, majoring in journalism.

Taking the advice and encouragement of instructors from high school and college, Van Nostrand began his career in June 1993 as a reporter with the *Flagler News*, a weekly in eastern Colorado.

In March 1996, he accepted a job at a larger weekly newspaper in Windsor, Colo. In July 1998, he was named managing editor of the *Adair County Free Press* in Greenfield.

"The move to Greenfield was more of a personal move rather than a career one," he said. He and Jennifer moved to Iowa to start a family. They have two children, Grant, 4, and Kari, 3.

In January, John said, he was inspired to buy a newspaper after reading an article in the National Newspaper Association newsletter about a man who purchased a weekly newspaper in Minnesota. However, after careful thought and research into financing, John decided he wasn't quite ready for that step.

Still, the outcome was positive.

Van Nostrand said while looking into buying a newspaper, he discovered an opening for a publisher in northwest Kansas. After meeting with Tom Dreiling, former *Free Press* publisher, and Steve and Cynthia Haynes, owners of Nor'West Newspapers, he accepted the position.

He said he is excited to be in Colby and looks forward to meeting people in town and around the area.

"I like small-town journalism," he said. "It's the only level of media that I believe people still have some respect for."

Service prepared for winter season

Fall is here, and the dangers of winter weather won't be far behind. If fact, I-70 in Colorado has already been closed by snow once.

The National Weather Service advises people to be prepared for winter weather, and pay attention to forecasts and warnings. But what do all those weather terms mean?

David Floyd, warning coordinator meteorologist at the Goodland weather station, said this week the service is try to build awareness about winter weather, including the health threats of frostbite and hypothermia, travel safety and the meanings of weather advisories and warnings.

Special information statements are being broadcast each day this week about 6 a.m. Mountain Time, and will be repeated on the weather radio transmitters in Gem, (162.400 MHz), Lenora, (162.425 MHz), Trenton, Neb. (162.500 MHz), Wray, Colo. (162.475 MHz) and Bethune, Colo. (162.525 MHz).

Turn to these radio broadcasts or to the Weather Service web pages at weather.gov/goodland for the latest forecasts and warnings.

Floyd said the service will be issuing more specific advisories and warnings this year, including blowing snow and freezing rain advisories, for instance, rather than the generic winter weather advisories and warnings.

Winter Season Advisories and Warnings

Here are some of the advisories and warnings that may be issued by the Goodland office this winter. The exact criteria may vary between offices, but the values are typical of the High Plains:

Blizzard Warning: Sustained or frequent wind gusts of 35 mph or more, and falling or blowing snow with visibility below one-quarter of a mile for at least three hours.

Blowing Snow Advisory: Blowing snow occasionally reducing visibility between one-quarter and one mile with sustained winds under 35 mph.

Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory: Falling and blowing snow occasionally reducing visibility between one-quarter and one mile with sustained winds under 35 mph.

Heavy Snow Warning: Snow accumulations of 6 inches in 12 hours, or 8 inches in 24 hours, imminent or occurring.

Snow Advisory: Snow accumulations of 3-5 inches (2-3 inches early in season).

Ice Storm Warning: Damaging freezing rain accumulations over one-quarter of an inch.

Freezing Rain Advisory: Light freezing precipitation accumulations under .25 of an inch.

Sleet Warning: Sleet accumulations over one-half inch.

Sleet Advisory: Sleet accumulations under one-half inch.

Winter Storm Warning: A combination of hazardous winter weather (snow, freezing rain, sleet exceeding warning criteria). Criteria includes 6 inches of snow in 12 hours, 8 inches of snow in 24 hours,

Winter outlook uncertain

Predicting winter ahead is tough, and the winter outlook released Friday by the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center is a bit broad.

Forecasters expect the winter, from Dec. 1 to Feb. 28, to feature warmer-than-normal temperatures in the central and western United States,

The Tri-State outlook for eastern Colorado, southwest Nebraska and northwest Kansas is for a good chance (40 percent) for above-normal temperatures.

The forecasters said there are lower chances for near or below normal temperatures. El Niño is not expected to be a factor this winter, so the forecast is based primarily on the trend of warmer winters observed over the western half of the country during the past 10 years. The Tri-State area had much above normal temperatures last winter.

Historic records show the average temperature for locations in northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado, with the warmest, coldest and normal for the winter periods.

For Goodland, the warmest winter was 1933-34 with an average of 37.5 degrees. The coldest was 1992-93 with an average of 22.7, and the normal average (1971-2000) is 30.1. Last year's average was 33.8 degrees.

Colby's warmest winter was 1933-34, with an average of 36.8 degrees. The coldest was 1992-93 with an average of 20.5, and the normal over the past 30 years is 28.9 degrees. Last year's average was 32.6 degrees.

In eastern Colorado, Burlington's warmest winter was 1933-34 with an average of 38.6 degrees. The coldest was 1992-93 with an average of 23.4 degrees, and the normal average over the last 40

years is 31 degrees. Last year's average was 34.7 degrees.

There is a degree or two differences between the three cities, with the apparent indication that the temperatures are warmer to the west at Burlington and colder in Colby.

The forecasters said the precipitation outlook for eastern Colorado, southwest Nebraska and northwest Kansas cannot be determined with the scientific tools that we have available. As a result, this area is indicated in the outlook as equal chances, which means the probabilities of above normal, near normal, and below normal are nearly identical (33.3 percent). The tri-state area observed mostly below-normal precipitation during the same period last year, the one exception being in the Hill City area.

Historic records for precipitation and snowfall in Burlington show the lowest precipitation for the winter was 0.03 of an inch in 1996-97. The most was 5.18 inches in 1959-60, and normal over the past 30 years (1971-2000) is .97 of an inch. Last year, the total was .47 of an inch.

Burlington's total snowfall was the least with none in 1969-70, and the most was 46 inches in 1918-19. The normal over the past 30 years has been 12.1 inches, and last year there was 11.7 inches of snow.

Precipitation during the winter in Goodland has been as low as .2 of an inch in 1932-33 to a high of 3.8 inches in 1911-12. The 30-year average is 1.23 inches, and there were 1.1 inches last year.

Snowfall in Goodland has been as low as .4 of an inch in 1906-07, and a high of 46 inches in 1959-60.

The 30-year average is 18 inches, and last year saw 5.8 inches.

one-quarter inch or more of ice, one-half inch or more of sleet.

Winter Weather Advisory: A combination of hazardous winter weather, including 3-5 inch snow accumulations (2-3 inches early in season), one-quarter to 1 mile visibility in blowing snow (winds under 35 mph), freezing rain, drizzle accumulations under one-quarter inch and sleet under one-half inch.

Winter Storm Watch: Issued when winter storm conditions (blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, heavy sleet) are expected within 12 to 48 hours.

Wind Chill Warning: Wind chill temperatures expected to be hazardous within several minutes of exposure. Wind chill -25 degrees or less, wind speed at least 10 mph.

Wind Chill Advisory: Wind chill temperatures expected to be a significant inconvenience with prolonged exposure, win chill between -15 and -24 degrees, and wind speed at least 10 mph.

Dense Fog Advisory: Fog reducing visibility to one-quarter of a mile or less over a widespread area.

Freeze Warning: Surface air temperature at or below 28 degrees for at least 1 hour. Used primarily at the beginning and end of the growing season.

Frost Advisory: Surface air temperature between 29 and 36 degrees with light winds and expected frost.

High Wind Warning: Sustained winds at or exceeding 40 mph for at least an hour, or gusts at least 58 mph.

Wind Advisory: Sustained winds of 30 to 39 mph for at least 1 hour, or gusts at least 45 mph.

Dust Storm: Sustained winds of 25 mph or greater resulting in widespread visibility below one-quarter of a mile in blowing dust.

Blowing Dust Advisory: Any sustained wind resulting in widespread visibility between one-quarter to 1 mile in blowing dust.

Precipitation Definitions

Snow Flurries: Light snow falling for short durations. No accumulation or light dusting expected.

Snow Showers: Snow falling at varying intensities for brief periods of time. Some accumulation is possible.

Snow Squalls: Brief, intense snow showers accompanied by strong, gusty winds. Accumulation

may be significant. Snow squalls are best known in the Great Lakes region.

Blowing Snow: Wind-driven snow reducing visibility and causing significant drifting. Blowing snow may be falling snow and/or loose snow on the ground picked up by the wind.

Sleet (ice pellets): Rain drops which freeze into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet usually bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick, but it can accumulate and cause a hazard to motorists.

Freezing Rain: Rain falling onto a surface with a temperature below freezing, resulting in a coating or glaze of ice on surfaces such as trees, cars, and roads. Even small accumulations create a significant hazard.

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.

DAVE'S COMPUTER AND REPAIR

Hello! Are you tired of paying high costs for your computer to be fixed? Well, pay no more. I am knowledgable in all fields of computers. I also build computers and do up grades and much more. I will travel.

Call 1-(719)-397-2449

No Experience?

"I didn't have to know how to drive a truck. Schneider provided the training. In two weeks, I was out on the road, earning excellent pay and benefits. It's a great feeling."

Dave - Schneider National Driver

For opportunities in your area go to schneiderjobs.com

SCHNEIDER NATIONAL

EOE M/F/D/V

1-800-44-PRIDE (1-800-447-7433) Mon-Fri: 7am-6pm, Sat & Sun: 9am-6pm (Central Time)

ABSOLUTE LAND AUCTION

640± ACRES EXCELLENT RAWLINS CO. KANSAS DRYLAND

10:00 CT ♦ THURSDAY, NOV. 3
Columbian Hall ♦ Atwood, KS

Tract 1NW¼ Sec. 16, 5-35 160± Ac. Dryland
Tract 2NE¼ Sec. 16, 5-35 160± Ac. Dryland
Tract 3NW¼ Sec. 21, 5-35 160± Ac. Dryland
Tract 4NE¼ Sec. 21, 5-35 160± Ac. Dryland

Good soils & Bases; Land is NW of Colby & SW of Atwood

SHAY REALTY, Inc.

St. Francis, KS
Atwood, KS a Wray, CO

Rodney W. Shay, Auctioneer
Diana Argabright, Auctioneer
Ryan W. Shay, Auctioneer
Reese W. Shay, Auctioneer
785-626-3196 or 785-332-2566

More info @ www.shayrealty.com

**Mobile Connections and RadioShack Presents**

A SPECIAL OPEN HOUSE

November 4th 8am – 8 pm
November 5th 8am – 10 pm
November 6th 12 pm – 5 pm

There will be specials all week-end long throughout the store including cell phone accessories.

FACE PLATES 50% OFF
SOME FACE PLATES \$1.00

Come and check out out newest plans and phones including **Motorola Razr V3** and the Firefly.

2215 Enterprise Road, Goodland KS
For more details call 785-890-8777