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The Star-Press

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Local Methodist Church Welcomes News Pastor, Family

BY SUSAN EDMONSTON
Editor Emeritus

The Protection Methodist Church recently gained a new pastor and his family. Chris Johnson, 40, of Coldwater began his service to the church in early May. His wife, Katelyn, joins him and the church as a song leader, sharing her musical abilities, and participating in the ladies Bible studies. Their two sons

Denin and Samuel are also part of the family joining the Protection community. The Methodist pastor desires to preach the Word of God faithfully. He enjoys visiting with people, praying with church and community members and watching God work in people’s lives. He is available for visits at the church office generally Tuesdays through Thursdays during school hours. As a bus driver for South

Central Schools, he continues to be involved in the community and enjoys visiting with people wherever they are as well. Johnson can be reached on Facebook or at (620) 635-0718. **Family History** He was born to Keith and Pam Johnson, of Wichita, in 1986. His father, now retired, was a building inspector for the city of Wichita, and his mother was a homemaker.

Johnson has one older brother. When he was nine years old, his family moved to the Towanda-Benton area of Butler County, which he considers his hometown. A Circle High School Thunderbird, he graduated in 2005. Although his family was not regular churchgoers early on, Johnson learned about Jesus through Sunday School songs on cassette tapes. During his freshman year of high school, he began

spending time with the wrong crowd. However, after his father was hospitalized with severe pneumonia, his family began attending Fairview Baptist Church north of Towanda. About four months later, he began realizing he needed to be right with God. On April 7, 2002, while the Rev. Bill Bullard was presenting the gospel, Johnson felt

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Fauci Pleads Fifth During Sen. Hearing

BY JENNIFER SHUTT
States Newsroom

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Dr. Anthony Fauci, one of the nation’s most visible public health officials during the coronavirus pandemic, declined to answer questions from a U.S. Senate committee in a tense and confrontational hearing Wednesday, citing his Fifth Amendment rights. Fauci said during a brief opening statement he believed Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Rand Paul, R-Ky., was trying to get him to make statements under oath that would lead to criminal charges. “Given Senator Paul’s obvious obsession with calling for my prosecution, his repeated slanderous comments about me, and recently his publicly releasing my unredacted personal diary aimed at embarrassing and intimidating me, the only conclusion I can reach is that the sole reason he is calling me before this committee is to get me to say something, anything that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, ‘behind bars,’” he said. Fauci added that “any reasonable person who has followed his unhinged obsession with me would readily come to the same conclusion.” “Therefore, although it

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Hall of Famer



KANSAS CITY STAR FILE PHOTO

Nathan Leeper, middle, a 1996 graduate of Protection High School, was inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame last Saturday at the Kansas Star Casino. Leeper qualified for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney and placed 11th overall. He is pictured at the 2000 Olympics with Kenny Evans, left, and Charles Austin, right. Austin still holds the American record in the men’s high jump and won the event at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta and was inducted into the U.S. Track Hall of Fame in 2012. Evans is a member of the Arkansas Track and Field Hall of Fame.

Kansas Sports Hall of Fame Inducts Former Protection Athlete

BY BOB MORRIS
Managing Editor

Nathan Leeper, a 1996 graduate of Protection High School, is one of the 2026 inductees into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame. Leeper was formally inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame Saturday at the Kansas Star Casino. In a phone interview with *The Star-Press*, the current Pratt resident

said he would see news about it and “I wouldn’t be telling you the truth if I didn’t hope that someday my name would be mentioned. And when it did, I told my wife and it was a little surreal.” Leeper said that, as time passes and you get involved with your family and kids, you sometimes forget about what you did in high school or college sports. “And then you get this call and

then you do a couple of interviews,” Leeper said. “Well, then you start remembering all the, you know, some stuff that you kind of completely forgot about.” Leeper was a two-time high school State champion in the boy’s high jump and won a State title in the boy’s triple jump. At the time, Coldwater and Protection were two

See **LEEPER** / Page 8

Protection Students Explore Creativity, Innovation During STEM Camp

STAFF REPORT Thirty-eight students in kindergarten through sixth grade spent the week exploring creativity, problem-solving and innovation during a Camp Invention STEM camp held July 20-24 at the Protection Elementary-Middle School. The camp, offered through the National Inventors Hall of Fame, gave students hands-on opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering and mathematical concepts through creative challenges and invention-based activities. Camp Invention programs are designed for students in grades K-6 and focus on hands-on exploration, collaboration and developing problem-solving skills. Local director Tonia Traas led the Protection camp, where students worked through four different modules throughout the week. Each module provided new challenges designed to encourage students to think creatively, test ideas and develop solutions. The camp was made more accessible for local families through the generosity of local donors who provided funding to reduce the registration cost for in-county students. Camp Invention is a program of the National Inventors Hall of Fame, which develops STEM experiences aimed at helping students build confidence and an innovative mindset through hands-on learning.

Coldwater City Council Discusses Property Procedures, Stray Cat Concerns

BY KATEE UNDERWOOD
Staff Wrtier

The Coldwater City Council spent much of its July 13 meeting discussing a city-owned property on South Baltimore and possible solutions to the city’s growing stray cat population before approving the publication of the 2027

budget and several other agenda items. During public comment, Roberta Snyder raised concerns about conditions at the south ball diamond, where both dugouts have been completely absent since storm damage destroyed the structures last season. Snyder said youth baseball and softball players

spent the season without shade or shelter and questioned why replacement lumber had been left exposed to the weather. Mayor Paul Alvarez said the city purchased replacement materials approximately six months ago when prices were lower but delayed construction because the high school softball team was still

using the field. With the season now complete, he said the city can now move forward with rebuilding the dugouts. Snyder also criticized how the city handled the dismissal of the former pool manager, saying the employee deserved more respect after years of service to the community.

“This is Coldwater,” Snyder said. “We’re a little more friendlier here than that.” The council did not respond to the public comments before moving on to the regular agenda. Council members spent considerable time discussing the city-

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NEWS

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email jasonjump@thestarpress.news

PASTOR

• From Page 1

deeply convicted during the altar call but did not initially go forward. After the service, the pastor noticed the teen and invited him to the altar, where Johnson prayed the sinner’s prayer and received Christ as his Lord.

Johnson says that was the beginning of truly knowing God, and he credits an older couple in the church who disciplined him and his family with helping him grow in faith. Through that journey, he also began sensing God’s call to ministry and a desire to help others find Jesus.

Education, Preparation

After graduating from Circle High School, he attended Butler Community College in El Dorado, where he received an associate degree with an emphasis in marketing and management.

Following a volunteer trip assisting with Greensburg’s tornado recovery, Johnson learned about Barclay College in Haviland, where he continued his preparation for ministry. While at Barclay, he participated in several pastoral internships, including ministries on the Navajo Reservation, in Oklahoma City, and in Greensburg.

One of the most influential experiences came through an internship at Shepherd’s Cross in Claremore, Okla., a working sheep farm and Christian outreach ministry operated by Pete and Dr. Diane Dickinson. There, the focus was on Jesus as

the Good Shepherd. Johnson says he learned two important lessons from that experience: a pastor is only an under-shepherd serving under Christ and ministry requires a willingness to work hard.

It was also during the summer of 2009 that Johnson preached his first sermon.

He graduated cum laude from Barclay College in 2013 with majors in pastoral ministry and Bible, along with minors in psychology and business administration. During that same time, he received his first level of ministry credentials with the Assemblies of God and met his future wife, Katelyn.

Family, Ministry

His wife grew up in Ashland and graduated from high school there in 2008. She graduated from Kansas State University in 2012 with a degree in elementary education.

She has served as a bank teller, special education para, middle school teacher at Bucklin Middle School and for the past several years as the high school English teacher at South Central High School. This fall, she will also serve as the SCHS librarian while overseeing online and college classes, scholarship applications and state testing.

Her parents are Bill and Sherry Neier, of Ashland. Many know Bill Neier through Stockgrowers State Bank and as a longtime firefighter, and Sherry as

a teacher for USD 220. Katelyn Johnson also has one sister.

Johnson met his wife, Katelyn, at church while she was visiting her grandparents in Greensburg. After graduating from Barclay, he served as an associate pastor in Winfield, and the couple was married the following January. In 2015, he received his ordination with the Assemblies of God, and the couple moved to Coldwater.

Though Chris has always taken his calling to pastoral ministry seriously, he has also believed ministry is about faithfulness more than a title. After serving as an associate pastor, Chris and Katelyn moved to Coldwater where he continued serving, learning, and growing while trusting God’s leading.

For the past 10 years, Chris has served as a special education para and bus driver at the high school. He has also worked in construction, as a CNA, and as a substitute teacher. Chris says being bivocational helps him better understand and serve his community.

The Johnsons have experienced the blessing of small-town support throughout their years in Coldwater. That support has come during the adoption of their oldest son Denin; during Katelyn’s battle with thyroid cancer; and most recently with the birth of their son Samuel.

Chris says one thing he learned from Haviland is that small towns have a way of keeping people account-



SUSAN EDMONSTON / The Star-Press

Chris Johnson poses for a photo at his desk. He is the new pastor of the Protection Methodist Church. Johnson and his family started serving the congregation in early May of this year.

able and helping them grow. It is not always easy, but it truly is good.

The family will continue living in Coldwater, but Johnson sees all of Comanche County as one community and enjoys spending time with the people of Protection.

He enjoys landscaping, architecture and being creative with his hands, while his wife enjoys music. Denin enjoys track and cross country, and Sammy enjoys making messes, playing with wheels and meeting people.

Although Chris has Baptist and Assembly of God roots, he has always felt a strong connection to a Wesleyan understanding of salvation, grace and the Christian walk. He believes God’s grace not only calls people to faith but continually shapes them to become more like Christ. His journey through different traditions has been intentional, appreciating the Baptist emphasis on the gospel’s invitation to faith and the Assembly of God emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s help in ministry.

When Johnson preaches, he desires to preach text-driven sermons, letting Scripture interpret Scripture and focusing on practical Christian living and growth. As a pastor, he has a deep awareness of being an under-shepherd with Christ the head shepherd of His people.

He believes the Protection Methodist Church, and indeed all the churches of Comanche County, are not full enough yet because “the fields are ready for harvest, but we need to pray for more workers”



Another week closer to school starting. The kids haven’t been coming in as frequently this past week. Not sure if it’s just too darn hot to get out or if they are enjoying the last few days at the pool. I practically lived at the pool when I was growing up so I don’t blame

them at all.

Several new books hit the shelves this week. We also qualified to receive the Kansas Notable Grant again this year, and we have all but three of those books ready to be checked out as well. Just a few of the new books added are:

- Into the Water by Paula Hawkins – in large print and regular editions
- A Memory of Violets by Hazel Gaynor
- Hoot by Carl Hiaasen - young adult fiction
- Mercy Watson is Missing by Kate DiCamillo - young adult fiction

PUBLIC NOTICES

(Published in The Western Star & Protection Press on Thursday, July 30, 2026) 1t

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to K.S.A. 3104 that a canvass of votes cast will take place at the Comanche County Courthouse on August 10th, 2026, in the Commissioner room.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my seal this 27th day of July 2026.

/s/ Bri Uhl, Comanche County Election Officer

(Published in The Western Star & Protection Press on Thursday, July 30, 2026) 1t

NOTICE OF ELECTION AUDIT 2026 PRIMARY ELECTION

Pursuant to K.S.A. 25-3009, notice is hereby given that the post-election audit will be held Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 1:00 PM in the County Courthouse Commission Room located on the 1st floor at 201 S New York Ave, Coldwater, KS 67029.

The election audit shall be votes cast in the Primary Election to be held on August 4, 2026.

Witness my hand and seal this 27th day of July 2026.

/s/ Bri Uhl, Comanche County Election Officer

Mercy Watson Fights Crime by Kate DiCamillo -young adult fiction

Oz: The Complete Paperback Selection by Baum
James by Percival Everett - reimagining of Huckleberry Finn

When We Were Strangers by Pamela Schoenewaldt
The Seven Sisters by Lucinda Riley
Fall of Poppies by Heather Webb
Ellis Island by Kate Kerrigan

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Past Paragraphs

Protection news from earlier times

Compiled by Dave Webb

125 YEARS AGO
Western Star
Aug. 2, 1901

Protection prattle

A good rain fell Monday night.

We smile to think that watermelons are now getting ripe.

We understand that A.J. Cantrell, of this city, had his horses stolen in El Reno recently. No clue to the thief has been found. —[Correspondent] “JUNIPER.”

Protection paragraphs

Pastures are green again. Another good rain at Protection this week.

Farmers are busy sowing kaffir corn and cane. Farmers are preparing to sow a large acreage to wheat this fall. They want it principally for pasture. There is now questioning the fact that Protection is enjoying a good healthy growth.

The township officers recently made some needed improvements on the road east of town. They repaired the bridges and graded the road, making it much higher than it was.

A party of young people went to the Salt Plains last Sunday. They camped for dinner under the shade of a large cottonwood tree near a spring, east of the Plains. They say that the salt is beautiful to look upon just now. To a person not knowing of the salt and seeing it at a distance, it appears to be a great snowbank which still withstood the heat of the summer. The party returned home about sundown, tired, but happy that they had spent the day at the Plains.

Those who composed the party were A.N. Barber and Miss Orphia Edmonston, A.H. Murray and Miss Eva Myers, Theron Myers and Miss Nellie Taxter, Clinton Wuchter and Miss Lena Wuchter. —[Correspondent] “OWEN.”

Voices from Valley Twp

Not much rain in the Valley yet. Everything looks black and bare since the fire.

Everything dull in the Valley at present.

Sunday school was not very well attended Sunday.

Isaac Bratcher had the

misfortune to get one of his legs cut one day this week while cutting thistles with a knife.

Lon Ezell, James Bratcher and George Tade were among the many plum hunters Friday and Saturday. They got about 12 bushels. —[Correspondent] “BUTTERFLY.”

On the rails

Railroad travel has greatly subsided since last week.

The westbound train was four hours late Monday evening and nearly as late going east Tuesday morning. In fact, late trains are becoming quite common again.

The “Mulvane extension” and several other branchlines of the Santa Fe railroad which were built by the “Chicago, Kansas & Western” railroad, recently passed entirely into the hands of the [Atchison, Topeka &] Santa Fe. The consideration mentioned in the deed for the Englewood branch is \$90,500. The amount of revenue required on the document was \$90.50.

The Santa Fe [Railway] has changed its name. The directors have decided to drop the accent mark over the “e” in Fe and adopted as a trademark emblem the word “Santa Fe” on the bar of a cross with a circle.

It appears on the new [timetable] folder, together with a representation of an Indian blanket which makes a very attractive cover. The cross within the circle is a symbolism appropriate to a great transcontinental line. —[Reprinted from the] *Mulvane Record*.

W.W. Robbins, the Norwich banker-stockman, recently sold about 1,000 head of cattle to some Montana parties. The cattle were shipped last Saturday—22 carloads from Englewood and 16 carloads from Belvidere. The cattle were consigned to the Concord Cattle Company and to H.M. Gilmore, of Moorcraft, Wyoming, and will be grazed in the Big Horn Mountains of Montana.

Station Agent O.P. Snare was over [to Coldwater] from Wilmore Wednesday. He does not expect very heavy cattle shipments from Wilmore this fall.

New business

J.W. Way, the hustling merchant of Protection, spent a few hours in the county seat last Saturday afternoon. He and his business partner, George Meisinger, are preparing to put in a stock of lumber and coal at Protection.

Oklahoma land lottery

Miss Tena Rogers, of [Coldwater], drew No. 1046 and will be entitled to a good claim in the Lawton district. Up to Tuesday evening, she was the only lucky person from this county [to draw a chance to buy Indian land in Oklahoma].

There aren’t very many disappointed Comanche County people after all—those who failed to draw claims are finding consolation in the fact that “there are others”—about 155,000 of them.

Wildcat hunting

There are still a few wildcats in Comanche County, but there are now a few less than there were two weeks ago. One day last week Joe Smith, who lives in the southeastern part of the county, killed four of the animals. His greyhounds and a good revolver did the work.

100 YEARS AGO
Protection Post
July 29, 1926

Wheat train is a big deal

Right on schedule, the Golden Wheat Special Train reached Protection promptly at 12:30 Friday, and two and one-half hours were spent here.

One thing was very regrettable and noticeable at Protection, and that was the small crowd that attended—not to exceed 250 people—and especially did officials of the Special comment on the very notable and conspicuous absence of the businessmen from the train. But as the season is so very busy may account for a large portion of the absence from the train....

A demonstration of smut treatment was given and treating seed wheat for smut is a very simple process.

Probably the most interesting event of the program, especially so from a publicity standpoint, was the bread-baking demonstration given by Miss Morletta Pease and Miss Leonica Fisher of Bourbon County, the champion bread-making team of Kansas....

Each year the Wheat Special, as run by the Santa Fe, grows more and more interesting and valuable to the wheat farmers, the businessmen and to Kansans generally, as well as each one who realizes that in some of the years soon to face a populating world, the question of bread-wheat production will be an acute one.

The personnel of the train were [college] President F.D. Farrell, R.I. Throckmorton, L.E. Call, H. Umberger, Chester E. Graves, E.A. Stokdyk, W.E. Grimes, R.M. Green, George Dean, J.W. McColloch, E.B. Wells and H.R. Sumner, all of the Kansas State Agricultural College [later KSU];

H.M. Bainer, director, Southwest Wheat Improvement Association; William Dalton, chief, State Grain Inspection Department; W.A. Cochel, editor, *Weekly Kansas City Star*; J.C. Mohler, secretary, State Board of Agriculture; George Catts, agricultural commissioner, Kansas City Chamber of Commerce; Senator Arthur Capper;

Miss Edna Bender, assistant state club leader; Miss Connie Foote, nutrition specialist; Miss Vada Watson, Kansas Wheat Girl; the state 4-H baking champions, Leonica Fisher and Morletta Pease of Bourbon County; C.W. Lane, J.F. Jarrell, agricultural department of the Santa Fe; and the train was met at Protection by County Agent Ratcliffe who accompanied it as far as Coldwater.

J.F. Jarrell of the Santa Fe expressed surprise and regret at the slim audience at Protection. He was very well satisfied, he said, with the apparently earnest hearing that those gave who did attend, and especially was his disappointment more keen after the exceptional fine attendance [of previous agricultural demonstration trains] at Protection in past years.

“But,” continued Mr. Jarrell, as the train got underway bound for Coldwater, “we will be back next year, and in spite of our slim reception this year, we will stop again....”

As the smoke of the Golden Wheat Special wavered into a thin line, finally to disappear altogether as the train rolled eastward, thoughts crowded the recesses and the channels of memory and mind; thoughts of the earnestness and sincerity of men and how often others who do not penetrate the masks of the inner souls of a crusader impugn their motives and refuse their council, even when it is for their own good.

Out and about

John Loesch has contracted for the erection of a new home on his ranch northwest of Protection. Mr. Loesch is building a modern farm home and a good one. It will have a bath, Delco lighting system, plumbing and be beautifully finished as all the finish will be polished oak with oaken floors throughout.

The Home Lumber & Supply Company have the

material contract and lumber for Mr. Loesch’s new home.

T.A. Myers and son Lane left Tuesday of this week for their ranch near Springfield, Colorado, to look after the threshing of their wheat crop.

75 YEARS AGO
Protection Post
July 27, 1951

New elevator manager

Orlando Callaway, who has been employed as a lineman for the CMS Cooperative, has been named manager of the local Larabee elevator to succeed Lawrence Holler.

Mr. Holler, who has expressed his desire for some time to resign his position, intends to leave Protection with Mrs. Holler in search of a drier climate in hopes their son Edmund will receive relief of a sinus condition.

The change of managers will occur August 15.

Kansas City wheat is dry

Webb Brite, local Gano manager, is in receipt of a letter assuring Gano customers that none of the wheat accepted by the Gano Grain Corporation for storage has been stored in the flood-damaged Kansas City terminals.* The letter was signed by Duane Brada for Gano Grain Corporation.

**The Great Flood of 1951 impacted northern Kansas and eastern Missouri, flooding about a million acres in each state. Hays, Manhattan, Ottawa, Emporia, Topeka and Lawrence were some of many Kansas communities affected. Kansas City, at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers, was especially hard hit.*

In all, 17 people died and damage in the two states approached a billion dollars, or about \$12 billion today.

55 YEARS AGO
Protection Post
July 30, 1971

Wet and cool in July?

Although a couple of weeks in July were blisteringly hot, this has really been a wet month. And the past week has had nights with the temperatures in the high 50s and low 60s. The daytime readings have also been most pleasant with just a couple of days registering in the 90s.

Last Thursday night, Bob Sangster, north of town, reported 1.60 and this rain was fairly general in the area. Tuesday night showers varied from a half-inch in town to 1.25 at the Myron Edmonston farm west of town. Again Wednesday night the area was soaked, with 1.90 inches reported in town. Chet Miller’s gauge [south of town] showed 1.40.

Ramona is a winner

Mrs. Virgil Lawrence of Protection was recently named a runner-up in the Rural Recipe Roundup, a recipe contest held in each issue of *Farm Wife News*. Mrs. Lawrence’s prize-winning recipe, cherry-apple drink, was selected from over 300 recipes sent in the July contest for summertime beverages.

Helps Apollo to the moon

Sergeant Russell W. Brown, son-in-law of Cecil and Mary Milhon of Brewster and former residents of Protection, played an important part with the launching of the Apollo 15 space mission from Cape Kennedy, Florida, Monday morning.

Protected by a 1,400-foot thick granite roof, Sgt. Brown had the distinctive job of helping prevent the collision of the Apollo 15 astronauts with other space traffic during their lunar landing mission.

Sgt. Brown is a member of the joint U.S.-Canadian North American Air Defense Command staff that mans the blast- and earthquake-proof complex inside Cheyenne Mountain near Colorado Springs....

His wife is the former Virginia Milhon, who attended Protection Schools.

Put on state committee

The appointment of Merle Wait of Protection, a member of the USD 300 Board of Education, to the Legislative Committee of the Kansas Association of School Boards, has been announced....

35 YEARS AGO
Protection Press
Aug. 1, 1991

Moving to Woodward

John Garvie will be assistant principal at Woodward, Oklahoma, High School.

It is a school of about 700 enrollment in the four grades. Woodward High is the alma mater of both Garvie and his wife Pam.

For the past decade, Garvie has been principal at Protection. He will be replaced by Protection High graduate Phillip Keidel.

Woodward is the hometown of both John and Pam Garvie. Their daughter Karissa will be a senior at Woodward High. Their son Ryan will be an eighth grader.

Garvie graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University at Alva. He then took his first teaching job at Woodward, for three years. During that time he also coached junior high school basketball and high school baseball.

“We left Woodward for 16 years, and now we are going back,” he said this weekend.

Garvie served as Protection principal for 10 years. He followed Duane Rankin as Protection’s principal. Rankin went from Protection to Cimarron, where he is now superintendent....

15 YEARS AGO
Protection Press
July 28, 2011

Susie’s Scribbles

By Susan Edmonston

Lewie and Brandy Darr of Coldwater are moving to Protection and will be living in the Divoll home (older readers will remember this house as belonging to Mae Sherman). The Darrs manage the Protection Community Venture Store.

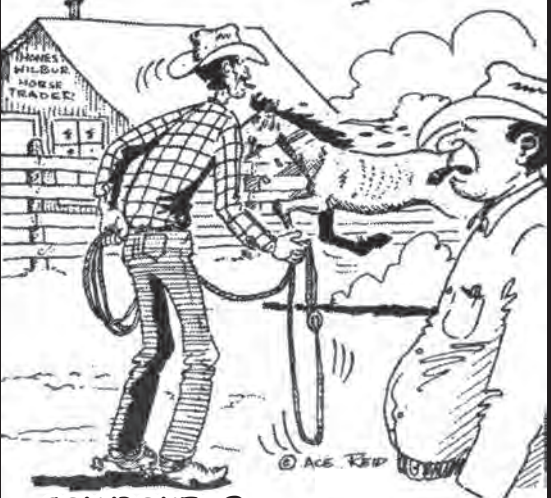
Jennifer Divoll and her children are moving into the Darrs’ home at Coldwater.

It’s a win-win situation as both families are now living in the communities where they work.

Tammy Sanders and her son Jordan have moved into their “new home” on the former Wymer property northwest of the Farmers Co-op elevator.

Chad McMillin’s new home five miles north of Protection was moved onto the foundation two weeks ago and workers are there putting the finishing touches on the house that was built in Inman.

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FAMOUS FACES ON THE WHEAT TRAIN. Vada Watson (handing a small bag of wheat to President Calvin Coolidge) appeared in Comanche County in July 1926 in her role as Kansas Wheat Girl. She was accompanied on the Wheat Train by Kansas Senator Arthur Capper (far right). Charles Curtis (far left) was another well-known Kansan. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate before becoming vice president under Coolidge. Photo was taken at the White House on Kansas Day, January 29, 1925.

NEWS

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email jasonjump@thestarpress.news

Rise in US Preteen Suicide Rate Alarms Mental Health Experts

BY NADA HASSANEIN
States Newsroom

For months, Marie’s 11-year-old daughter wasn’t acting like herself. The fifth grader was often fatigued, sleeping more. She wasn’t eating enough, and spent more time alone. “She wasn’t really motivated to do things with her friends,” Marie said. The Chicago girl had been overwhelmed with worry for her father, who was recovering from diabetes complications after a serious infection. She also felt intense pressure at school, aiming for straight As. “Ever since Dad went to the hospital, it just made it more intense,” she told her mom in a written note. “I don’t know how to feel. I’m having thoughts about hurting myself. I’m tired, and afraid of death.” Earlier this year, she told her mom she’d tried to cut herself in the bathroom, and said she was hurting herself at school. Stateline is withholding Marie’s full name to protect her daughter’s privacy. Marie took her to the emergency room. The ER staff tried to transfer the girl to a psychiatric facility, but several refused to take her. Most only

served teenagers, while others didn’t accept her insurance plan. The emergency department team finally found a place for her at a child psychiatric facility nearly an hour away. Marie’s daughter recently finished an intensive outpatient therapy program, and is seeing a therapist regularly. “We were able to get her the help that she needed,” Marie said. “But a lot of the times, there’s kids that struggle and unfortunately, do end up taking their life.” In the past several years, numerous studies have pointed to a mental health crisis among America’s youth. Much of the attention has focused on teenagers, who have higher suicide rates. But preteens are struggling, too. The number of preteens – ages 8 to 12 – who die by suicide in the United States each year is relatively small. But the total in 2025 was 194 – the most since at least 2001, according to preliminary data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 2008, the rate of preteen suicide has increased by an average of 8.2 percent annually, according to

researchers at the National Institutes of Health. Their analysis, published in 2024, found that Black preteens had the highest overall suicide rate, while girls and Hispanic preteens had the greatest percentage increase. Native American preteens also saw some of the most pronounced increases. Suicide is complex and is often the result of a combination of factors. Talking with trusted adults and connecting kids with help can aid in prevention, and research shows most who have suicidal thoughts do not carry through with them. Mental health experts and advocates are calling for more mental health check-ins with preteens, earlier screenings and tailored interventions for native, black and LGBTQ+ preteens. Jenny Britton, chief clinical officer at the Washburn Center for Children in Minneapolis, a nonprofit mental health practice, has noticed the long-term trend during her 25-year career. “I’ve watched the age of kids who struggle with suicidal ideation and suicidality get younger and younger over that time,” she said. “Now, we’re seeing even as young as our 7- and



DAVE WEBB / The Star-Press

Hot: Scorching Temps Hit Area
The thermometer reached 108 degrees at The Bank of Protection on Monday at 1:20 p.m. It was still 108 at 5 p.m. Medicine Lodge recorded a high of 110 degrees on the same day.

See **SUICIDE** / Page 6

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COMANCHE CO. FAIR RESULTS

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email jasonjump@thestarpress.news

Saturday – Sand Volleyball Tournament

Kicking off the 45th Annual Comanche County Fair was our 3rd Annual Sand Volleyball Tournament. Six teams participated in a double-elimination tournament on Saturday night. Winning the Sand Volleyball Tournament were team members: Hayden Martin, Molly Murphy, Call Martin, Chandler Bryer, Landry Price, and Kailie Martin.

Monday – Fashion Revue

The 44th Annual Comanche County Fair kicked off Tuesday, July 15th, with judging of the 4-H Fashion Revue. Twenty-seven outfits were modeled in the Shopping in Style division and two in the Constructed Clothing division. Within Shopping in Style, the entries were divided into six classes: Recreation, School, Dress, Western attire, Formal, and Miscellaneous. Our 3rd annual Pop-Up Market was held alongside the Fashion Revue, featuring area businesses selling their merchandise. Businesses include The Little Fern Co, Boho Rodeo Boutique, Lisa Souers Designs, The Cozy Coop, Front Porch Sweets, Boomhower Leather, Jackson Welding Permanent Jewelry, L7 Coffee, and Brew Babe.

Fashion Revue:
Constructed Clothing

Dress Sr Division: Champion, Blue-Anna Dale

Constructed Clothing
Recycled Intermediate Division: Red-Victoria Miller
Constructed Clothing
Miscellaneous Intermediate Division: Blue-Emersyn Tanksley

Purchased Clothing-Cloverbud: Blue-Oaklee Selzer
Purchased Clothing-Recreation Intermediate Division: Champion, Blue-Emersyn Tanksley, Reserve Champion, Blue-Rilyn Yoder, Red-Victoria Miller, Red-Bryston Westrup

Purchased Clothing-Recreation Sr Division: Champion, Blue-Breckyn Snyder, Reserve Champion, Blue-Jazmyne Sanchez
Purchased Clothing-School Clothes Intermediate Division: Champion, Blue-Victoria Miller, Reserve Champion, Blue-Emersyn Tanksley, Blue-Bryston Westrup, Blue, Rilyn Yoder

Purchased Clothing-School Clothes Sr Division: Champion, Blue-Jazmyne Sanchez, Reserve Champion, Blue-Breckyn Snyder

Purchased Clothing-Dress Outfit Intermediate Division: Champion, State Fair Blue-Victoria Miller, Reserve Champion, State Fair Blue-Rilyn Yoder, Blue-Emersyn Tanksley, Blue-Brystol Westrup

Purchased Clothing-Dress Outfit Sr Division: Champion, Blue-Jazmyne Sanchez, Reserve Champion, Blue-Breckyn Snyder

Purchased Clothing-Western Attire Intermediate Division: Champion, Blue-Rilyn Yoder, Reserve Champion, Blue-Victoria Miller

Purchased Clothing-Western Attire Sr Division: Champion, State Fair Blue-Jazmyne Sanchez, Reserve Champion, Blue-Breckyn Snyder

Girls Miscellaneous Intermediate Division: Blue-Rilyn Yoder, Red-Emersyn Tanksley

Girls Formal Sr Division: Champion, Blue-Breckyn Snyder

Constructed Sr Division: Grand Champion-Anna Dale
Shopping in Style Sr Division: Grand Champion-Jazmyne Sanchez; Reserve Grand Champi-

on-Breckyn Snyder
Shopping in Style Intermediate Division: Grand Champion Victoria Miller, Reserve Grand Champion-Rilyn Yoder

Tuesday – Horse Show

Tuesday evening's Horse Show featured exhibitors showcasing their showmanship and horsemanship skills in a variety of halter and performance classes. The horse show was judged by Morgan Clinesmith of Cimarron, who awarded the following:

Showmanship at Halter-Sr: 1st Red – Bretlynn Westrup, 2nd Red – Taitym Snyder, 3rd Red – Hayes Harvey.

Showmanship at Halter-Jr: 1st Red – Whitley Hubbard, 2nd Red – Victoria Miller, 3rd Red – Koy Harvey, 4th Red – Tuff Glenn.

Halter – 4 yr+ Mares: 1st Blue – Victoria Miller, 2nd Blue – Bretlynn Westrup, 3rd Blue – Whitley Hubbard, 4th Blue – Taitym Snyder.

Halter – 4 yr+ Geldings: 1st Blue – Tuff Glenn, 2nd Blue – Koy Harvey, 1st Red – Hayes Harvey.

Overall Champion Gelding: Tuff Glenn

Overall Reserve Gelding: Koy Harvey

Overall Champion Mare: Victoria Miller

Overall Reserve Mare: Bretlynn Westrup

Western Pleasure, Bareback: 1st Blue – Taitym Snyder, 2nd Blue – Tuff Glenn.

Walk-Trot, 7–9 yr old: 1st Blue – Tuff Glenn.

Western Pleasure-Sr: 1st Blue – Bretlynn Westrup, 2nd Blue – Taitym Snyder, 1st Red – Hayes Harvey.

Western Pleasure-Jr: 1st Blue – Whitley Hubbard, 2nd Blue – Victoria Miller, 1st Red – Tuff Glenn, 2nd Red – Koy Harvey.

Horsemanship-Sr: 1st Blue – Hayes Harvey, 1st Red – Bretlynn Westrup, 2nd Red – Taitym Snyder.

Horsemanship-Jr: 1st Red – Victoria Miller, 2nd Red – Koy Harvey, 3rd Red – Tuff Glenn, 4th Red – Whitley Hubbard.

Reining-Sr: 1st Blue – Hayes Harvey, 1st Red – Bretlynn Westrup, 2nd Red – Taitym Snyder.

Reining-Jr: 1st Blue – Koy Harvey, 2nd Blue – Tuff Glenn, 1st Red – Victoria Miller, 2nd Red – Whitley Hubbard.

Trail-Sr: 1st Blue – Taitym Snyder, 2nd Blue – Hayes Harvey, 3rd Blue – Bretlynn Westrup.

Trail-Jr: 1st Blue – Koy Harvey, 2nd Blue – Tuff Glenn, 1st Red – Victoria Miller, 2nd Red – Whitley Hubbard.

Pole Bending-Sr: 1st – Hayes Harvey, 2nd – Taitym Snyder, 3rd – Bretlynn Westrup.

Pole Bending-Jr: 1st – Koy Harvey, 2nd – Victoria Miller, 3rd – Tuff Glenn.

Barrels-Sr: 1st – Taitym Snyder, 2nd – Hayes Harvey, 3rd – Bretlynn Westrup.

Barrels-Jr: 1st – Koy Harvey, 2nd – Tuff Glenn.

Flag Race-Sr: 1st Taitym Snyder, 2nd Hayes Harvey, 3rd Bretlynn Westrup.

Flag Race-Jr: 1st Koy Harvey, 2nd Victoria, 3rd Tuff Glenn.

Koy Harvey received Hi Point Jr Performance Horse and Taitym Snyder received Hi Point Sr Performance Horse

Taitym Snyder received Hi Point Male award, Bretlynn Westrup received Hi Point Female award

Grand Champion Horse: Taitym Snyder

Champion Sr Showmanship: Bretlynn Westrup

Champion Jr Showman-

ship: Whitley Hubbard
Top Hand Sr: Taitym Snyder
Top Hand Jr: Tuff Glenn

Wednesday – Building Exhibits/Community Carnival/Youth Team Sorting/Kids’ Pedal Tractor Pull

Wednesday morning was busy getting all the animals weighed and checked in. The SC school building was also buzzing with activity as 4-Hers and the general public hurried to enter their year’s projects. Soon after, judges took their seats to look over the items entered. It’s always fun to see a great selection of yummy baked foods, garden produce, and stunning flowers. Creativity abounds in sewing, needlework, quilting, fine arts, photography, leather, jewelry, and arts and crafts. Area food trucks, Amelia’s Tacos, Lemonade Factory, and Good Tummy Concessions, set up in the high school parking lot for everyone to enjoy.

4-H Division-
Hope Burt: Foods Level III-Red; Photography-Blue

Emily Burt: Photography-two Blues and two Reds; Leather and Jewelry-Blue

Anna Dale: Foods Level IV-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, Blue; Sewing and Textile Design-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue; Open Class: Fiber Arts-Grand Champion/Champion/Blue

Cami Dunn: Foods Level IV-Reserve Grand Champion/Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, two State Fair; Photography-Champion/State Fair Blue, two State Fair Blue, four Blue, one Red

Emmarie Gean: Foods Level II-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one blue; Sewing and Textile Design-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, Visual Arts-two Reds, Vet Science-one Red

Jackson Gean: Foods Level III- Champion/State Fair Blue, one blue; Vet Science-one red

Tuff Glenn: Visual Arts-one Blue

Hayes Harvey: Visual Arts-one Blue

Whitley Hubbard: Building Blocks Engineering-one Blue, one Red, one White; Foods Level I-Blue; Forestry-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue; Geology-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue; Photography-Reserve Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, one State Fair Blue, four Blue, four Red; Vet Science-one Blue; Visual Arts-Champion/State Fair Blue, one State Fair Blue, one Blue, two Red; Wildlife-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, one Blue; Woodworking-Blue

Audrey Bratcher: Foods Level IV-one Blue, one Red; Photography-twelve Blues, eight Red; Visual Arts-Reserve Grand Champion/Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one Blue
Rogue Macias: Photography-one Red; Visual Arts-one Blue
Victoria Miller: Sewing and Textile Design-one Blue
Elle Redger: Building Blocks Engineering-one Blue; Photography-one Blue, two Red; Robotics-one Blue; Visual Arts-one Red

RJ Redger: Building Blocks Engineering-one Blue; Visual Arts-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one Blue

Thomas Redger: Building Block Engineering-one Blue

Aaliyah Scarbrough: Foods-State Fair Blue;

Photography-one Blue, one Red; Visual Arts-one Blue, one Red

Ava Scarbrough: Foods-one Blue; Photography-one Blue; Visual Arts-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one Blue

Oaklee Selzer: Foods-two Blues; Visual Arts-three Blues

Ryker Selzer: Foods-two Blues; Visual Arts-two Red

Breckyn Snyder: Shopping in Style-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue; Visual Arts-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue;

Taitym Snyder: Foods Level II-State Fair Blue

Emersyn Tanksley: Fiber Arts-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue;

Foods Level I-Champion/State Fair Blue, Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one State Fair Blue; Photography-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, three Blue, three Red; Sewing and Textile Design-Reserve Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, three State Fair Blues; Shopping in Style-Champion/State Fair Blue; Visual Arts-Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, four Blues, two Reds

Ryatt Thompson: Level I Foods-State Fair Blue, one Red; Photography-State Fair Blue, one Blue, two Red; Visual Arts-four Blues, one Red

Mylee Turley: Food Preservation- two State Fair Blue; Foods Level IV-one Blue, one Red; Photography- Grand Champion/Champion/State Fair Blue, Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, two State Fair Blues, four Blues, fifteen Reds, two Whites; Vet Science-one Blue; Visual Arts-one Red

Bretlynn Westrup: Fiber Arts-Reserve Grand Champion/Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue

Brystol Westrup: Foods Level II-one Blue; Shopping in Style-one Red

Bryton Westrup: Foods Level II-State Fair Blue

Rilyn Yoder: Fiber Arts-two State Fair Blue; Foods Level II- Champion/State Fair Blue, One Blue; Photography-one State Fair Blue, two Blues, seven Red, one White; Shopping in Style-Reserve Grand Champion, Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue; Visual Arts-Reserve Champion/State Fair Blue, one Blue

Open Class Division

Bentlee Bidwell: Foods-Reserve Champion/Blue; Visual Arts-three Blue, one red

Melissa Bittner: Visual Arts-one Blue

Emma Bruckner: Building Blocks Engineering- one Red

Kim Burt: Food Preservation-Reserve Grand Champion/Champion, three Blues, one Red

Knox Carlin: Visual Arts-one Blue, three Red

Reagan Carlin: Photography-Reserve Champion/Blue, three Red

Helen Dale: Crochet-one Blue; Patchwork and Quilted Article-Reserve Champion/Blue

Mary Doles: Food Preservation-Grand Champion/Champion/Blue, Champion/Blue, two Reserve Champion/Blue, one Blue, two Red; Horticulture and Honey-Champion/Blue, Reserve Champion/Blue, three Blues

Melanie Dunn: Horticulture and Honey-Champion/Blue, Reserve Champion/Blue; Photography-Grand Champion/Champion/Blue, three Blues, two Red, one White

Mille Dunn: Horticulture and Honey-Grand Champion/Blue, Champion/Blue,

Champion/Blue, Reserve Champion/Blue, two Blues; Visual Arts- one Red

Abby Girk: Visual Arts-two Blues, three Red

Lyla Girk: Fiber Arts-one Blue, one Red; Visual Arts-one Blue, two Reds

Ada Hamilton: Visual Arts-one Blue

Kate Hamilton: Visual Arts-one Blue

Alyson Harrel: Visual Arts-one Blue

Natalie Harrel: Visual Arts-one Red

Pat Hess: Fiber Arts-Grand Champion/Champion/Blue

Landry Hubbard: Photography-Champion/Blue, two Blues, two Red; Visual Arts-six Blues, two Red

Brooke Lohrding: Photography-Reserve Grand Champion/Champion, one Blue, two Red

Layne Lohrding: Foods-Champion/Blue; Visual Arts-four Blue, two Red

Halle Miller: Building Blocks-one Red; Visual Arts-three Red

Jake Miller: Building Blocks Engineering-one Blue, three Red

Berkley Nelson: Horticulture and Honey-one Blues; Visual Arts-two Blues

Gayla Redger: Fiber Arts-Reserve Grand Champion/Reserve Champion/Blue, one White

Ashley Rich: Fiber Arts-Reserve Champion/Blue; Horticulture and Honey-Reserve Grand Champion/Blue

Lynnox Rodgers: Visual Arts-one Blue, two Red

Andrew Sawyers: Horticulture and Honey-two Blue, one Red; Visual Arts-two Red

Jeremiah Sawyers: Horticulture and Honey-one Blue, two Red; Visual Arts-two Blue, six Red

Cindy Snyder: Food Preservation-Reserve Champion/Blue, one Blue

Reed Snyder: Visual Arts-two Blue, one Red

Sadie Snyder: Visual Arts-three Blue

Quaid Swingle: Building Blocks Engineering-one Blue; Visual Arts-two Blue, one Red

Quinton Swingle: Visual Arts-two Blue, one Red

Glenice Thompson: Visual Arts-one Blue

Jade Thompson: Building Blocks Engineering-two Blue; Visual Arts-four Blue

Melanie Thompson: Horticulture and Honey-Grand Champion/Champion/Blue, Reserve Champion/Blue, one Blue

Norah Thompson: Horticulture and Honey-Reserve Grand Champion/Reserve Champion/Blue, two Blues, one Red

Taffi Turley: Photography-two Blue, six Red, two White

Hudson Underwood: Photography-Reserve Champion/Blue, two Blue, four Red, one White; one Red

Mason Underwood: Visual Arts-one Red

Morgan Turley-Hazen: Food Preservation-Reserve Champion/Blue

Wednesday evening was packed with fun, featuring the Tractor Pull sponsored by the Comanche County Farm Bureau and the Community Carnival, which included bouncy houses, community carnival booths, and Turtle Races. Bellies were filled with concessions by the Blonde Grill, and the evening wrapped up with a Youth Team Sorting. Winning the Youth Sorting was first place: Coda Lindsay, Easton Huck, and Hayes Harvey; second place: Ethan Yoder, Taitym Snyder, and Quincy Sanchez. We had our 4th Annual Cow Patty Bingo. Bingo tickets were sold with a chance to win

\$200 for first place, \$125 for second place, and \$75 for third place. Chris Hurd won first, Jene Allen came in second, and Connie Westrup was third.

Thursday – Community Pancake Feed/Sheep, Goat and Swine Shows

The Fair Board Members cook pancakes and sausage for a small crowd. Evening events included a meal sponsored by Alliance Ag and Grain, followed by Z Ropings. As the temperatures started to cool, the Sheep, Goat, and Swine Shows began. Chad Blocker, who is from Alva Ok, was our judge for the Show.

Swine Show:

Breeding Gilts: Champion-Audrey Bratcher

Berk Light Weight: 1st Blue-JoEllyn Sawyers, 2nd Blue-Mylee Turley, 1st Red-Remi Martin, 2nd Red-Taitym Snyder

Berk Class #1: 1st Blue - Taitym Snyder

Berk Class #2: 1st Blue – Mylee Turley, 2nd Blue – JoEllyn Sawyers, 3rd Blue Hayes Harvey

Berk: Champion – Mylee Turley, Reserve Champion - JoEllyn Sawyers

Chester: Champion – Hayes, Reserve Champion – Koy Harvey

Cross Class #1: 1st Blue - Tuff Glenn

Cross Class #2: 1st Blue-JoEllyn Sawyers, 2nd Blue – Bryton Westrup, 1st Red – Audrey Bratcher, 2nd Red – Bracey Westrup

Cross: Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers, Reserve Champion – Tuff Glenn

Duroc Class #1: 1st Blue – Rilyn Yoder

Duroc Class #2: 1st Blue – Remi Martin, 2nd Blue – Mylee Turley, 1st Red – Koy Harvey, 2nd Red – Loretta Sawyers

Duroc: Champion – Remi Martin, Reserve Champion – Mylee Turley

Hamp Class #1: 1st Blue – Remi Martin, 2nd Blue – Audrey Bratcher

Hamp Class #2: 1st Blue - =Loretta Sawyers

Hamp: Champion – Remi Martin, Reserve Champion – Audrey Bratcher

Spot Class #1: 1st Blue – JoEllyn Sawyers, 2nd Blue – Tuff Glenn, 1st Red – Taitym Sawyers

Spot: Champion-Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers, Reserve Champion – Tuff Glenn

York Class #1: 1st Blue – Bracey Westrup, 2nd Blue – Bryton Westrup, 1st Red – Loretta Sawyers

York: Champion - Bracey Westrup, Reserve Champion – Bryton Westrup

AOB Class #1: 1st Blue – Loretta Sawyers

Sr Swine Showmanship: Champion – Audrey Bratcher, Reserve Champion – Remi Martin

Jr Swine Showmanship: Champion – Tuff Glenn, Reserve Champion – Bryton Westrup

Overall Grand Champion: Hamp - Remi Martin

Overall Reserve Champion: Cross - JoEllyn Sawyers

Goat Show
Breeding Doe: Grand Champion - Audrey Bratcher

Market Goat
Class #1: 1st Blue - Audrey Bratcher, 2nd Blue – Mylee Turley, 1st Red – Mylee Turley, 2nd Red – Kasen Yoder

Class #2: 1st Blue – Audrey Bratcher, 2nd Blue – Kasen Yoder

Overall Grand Champion: Audrey Bratcher

Overall Reserve Champion: Audrey Bratcher

Sr Showmanship: Grand Champion – Mylee Turley,

COMANCHE CO. & 4-H FAIR



The Protection Swimming Pool is closing Aug. 6 – your last day to swim! Manager Molly Murphy, daughter of Joe and Hilary Murphy, will be returning to college. With daytime temperatures higher than 100 degrees, the water feels real good. It is \$2 per person, unless you bought a season pass.

Blake Carter in Protection

The feature story this week is about the new minister at the Methodist church. He and his family are vacationing this week in Colorado so Blake Carter of Meade will speak this Sunday, Aug. 2, during the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

He is the son of Rev. Dennis and Betty Carter who ministered here from 1999 to 2008 and now are serving the Ellsworth and Kanopolis global Methodist churches.

Blake graduated from South Central High School in 2006. He has been with the KJIL radio station in Meade since December 2012. He's the music director/web master/social media/morning show cohost. You may have heard his voice numerous times on KJIL. He attends the Meade Church of the Nazarene.

Print, Online, Both

I highly recommend subscribers or our new ones to get the print copy of *The Star-Press*. I paid for both print and online – a total of \$79.95. The way the Jumps set up their website is nice because all the previous issues of *The Star-Press* can be found there.

My reasoning for the paper copy is that last week's issue (July 23) had owner Jason Jump's first column. It was lengthy but explained a lot about his newspaper work and family.

Second reason is that I almost missed seeing the third obituary on page 2 as I scanned through the online version. I paid attention to the two photos and later saw the Russell Duer obituary. That family – Russell, Janie, Cindy, Leslie – lived in Protection.

He was the math teacher at Protection High School for my class and many others before and after, then went over to USD 300 in Coldwater. Mr. Duer would have been 101 years old on Nov. 5 of this year.

VBS in Coldwater

Another newsy article last week was “From the Squeaky Church Mouse” on page 7. I remember reading that column numerous times in *The Western Star*. The “mouse” was telling everyone that Vacation Bible School would be Tuesday through Saturday, July 28-Aug. 1, each morning from 8 to 11. The long article did not mention VBS was to be held at the First Christian Church in Coldwater until almost the last paragraph.

The “mouse” also announced the VBS program would be at 10:30 Sunday morning.

That church is also having their Back to School Bash on Saturday from 11 to 2 p.m. that includes a meal and bouncy houses and games. Everyone is invited.

Comanche County Fair

Did you get over to Coldwater for the county fair? I went on Wednesday and enjoyed looking at all the exhibits in the high school cafeteria, the tractor pull event, and the dunk tank. Sheriff Jacob Bruckner (of Coldwater) volunteered to sit on the board. A long line of children were waiting to take their turn to throw balls at the target that would release the board and see the sheriff getting dumped into the water tank.

In this photo a little girl couldn't throw hard enough so she was given permission to go up to the target and press it.



Coyote Deli Grand Opening
Did you happen to read that the Coyote Deli, at Protection along Highway 160/183,

is having its Grand Opening on Monday, Aug. 10? That ad was on page 7 last week and announced prices for the breakfast, lunch and supper buffets. Looks like the Coyote Deli will be open six days a week. They also have a regular menu.

FunFest Breakfast, Riner Cousins Reunion

I happened to attend the FunFest Breakfast Fundraiser in the Protection Legion Building on Saturday, July 18. That ad was on page 2 in the July 9 and July 16 issues. While there, I saw the design for the FunFest 2026 T-shirt that Amy (Fitzwater) Baker designed.

I bought a breakfast burrito and yogurt parfait and sat at the table with D.J. and Lori Riner from Tulsa. They were here for the annual Riner Cousins Reunion that day.

Then Karen Jarnagin was sitting next to me and when I saw her plate of biscuits and gravy, I went back for that, taking the burrito and yogurt to the library to put in the refrigerator there while I visited with many of the Riners who had arrived.

So many relatives traveled quite a distance to attend. Pat Riner Mitchell (whom I ran around with in high school) helped me get everyone's name and town so we submitted that list for last week's issue.

Calvin and Allie Shofner showed up later at the reunion. Calvin is Kim Riner Monroe's grandson. He and his wife spent the weekend with Kim and her husband Cam. The Shofners were on their way to Cheyenne, Wyo., to watch Calvin's younger brother in the rodeo there.

In case you didn't know, Kim and Cam bought the former Atlee and Edith Edmonston's home that is a block from the SCE/MS gymnasium. They headed back to Jasper, Texas, on Tuesday.

PVM Residents

One thing I am trying to do since I retired is going to Protection Valley Manor to visit the residents. I used to be their ombudsman for eight years. I hadn't been there for the last six weeks so stopped Sunday afternoon.

One of my favorite people to visit is Kathryn (Young) Turley who moved here from Garden City. She graduated from Protection High School in 1957. Her parents were Alva “Cap” and Opal Young; her siblings were James, Francis, Richard “Dick,” Mable and Sandy.

Kathryn and I visited for over an hour. She told me that Julie Bell of England, Kathy McGee of Greensburg, and Marge Sangster had been some of her other visitors.

Visit with Kathy McGee

I had a dentist appointment in Greensburg last Wednesday so while in town I stopped to see if Kathy McGee was home. She was. Kathy had sold her house in Protection last year but comes back here for third Thursday card party. She graduated from PHS with the class of 1959.

Kathy said I ought to stop by the 5-4-7 art museum before leaving Greensburg. Her granddaughter Mikel Robinson of Woodward would have her photographs displayed there until the end of August.

I did stop and browse through 26 framed photos on the walls taken from 2021-2026 of Longhorn cattle, main streets of various towns, Cimarron River, landscapes, plants and animals. On a table were many signed prints with a certificate signed by Mikel on the back side.

Mikel and I were in Vision VII that Linda Hart of Coldwater as economic director planned that year. The select high school group and adults visited businesses in Comanche County (Lane Myers Company, Wagnon Commodities, Dale Family Farms, and maybe others I can't remember now).

The purpose was to encourage the young people to stay and/or come back to Comanche County after graduating from high school or later in life.

Our group was to choose a vision/project to help Comanche County. We chose the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth until they begin school. Andi Dale of Protection, one of the adults in Vision VII, was instrumental in getting that set up with our local libraries.

Visitors from Kansas City

Ashley and Daniel Cox and 9-month-old Cameron from Kansas City, Mo., arrived early Thursday morning to spend a week with Ashley's parents, Clint and Sheri Darnell, in Protection. Saturday evening visitors were the grandmothers Sandy Darnell of rural Freedom, Okla., and me.

Ashley is my oldest grandchild. Cameron is my youngest great-grandchild.

Poker Run

I was downtown earlier in Protection on Saturday and saw several jeeps and four-wheelers decorated up. I had forgotten it was the Poker Run for FunFest 2026.

This photo shows one of the vehicles. Standing in front are Abby Girk, Lyla Girk, Brylee Murphy, Harper Woolfolk. Inside the vehicle are mothers Suzie Girk and Hilary Murphy.

SUICIDE

• From Page 4

8-year-olds.”

Last year, the overall suicide rate in Minnesota increased by 4 percent compared with the year before, according to preliminary state data. But the suicide rate among children ages 10 to 14, the youngest age group included in the state's report, more than doubled compared with the five years

prior, from 2.2 per 100,000 people to 5.8.

Four years ago, when the inpatient mental health unit opened at Children's Minnesota, a Minneapolis-based health system, providers mostly saw teenagers, said Dr. Prachi “PJ” Striker, a child and adolescent psychiatrist. That's still true, but over the past year-and-half, the unit has seen more 10- to 12-year-olds who have harmed themselves, attempt-

ed suicide or said they've considered it.

“(We're) seeing more of the younger age group coming in,” Striker said. “Depression, anxiety, hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed, suicidal thoughts.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics now recommends that pediatricians start screening all patients starting at age 12 for suicidal thoughts. But for preteens ages 8 to 11, the academy

only recommends a suicide screening if the child is coming to the doctor for behavioral health concerns or has a history of suicidal thoughts.

But Striker said screening as early as age eight can prevent kids from slipping under the radar.

“How do we start identifying kids who are in trouble faster?” Striker said. “Kids are feeling unsupported. They have more alone time.

They're more isolated. People aren't really picking up on some of the clues of depression as early.”

Stressors

Many mental health experts point to COVID-19 as a major factor that harmed the mental health of kids who are now preteens.

“You have to remember these kids who are like 10 to 12, their early elementary years were COVID years,

and so kindergarten, first grade, second grade were often at home. They didn't have those normal experiences of going to school, starting to socialize,” Striker said. “They're going into third, fourth, fifth grade, having been home and quarantined for the first few years of their school lives.”

EDITOR'S NOTE: To read the States Newsroom article in its entirety visit statesnewsroom.com.

RESULTS

• From Page 5

Reserve Grand Champion - Audrey Bratcher
Sheep Show
Breeding Ewe: Grand Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers
Market Lamb
Hamp Class #1: 1st Blue – Jackson Gean, 2nd Blue – Loretta Sawyers
Hamp Class #2: 1st Blue – Mylee Turley
Hamp: Champion – Jackson Gean, Reserve Champion – Loretta Sawyers
Cross Class #1: 1st Blue – Loretta Sawyers
Cross Class #2: 1st Blue – JoEllyn Sawyer, 2nd Blue Mylee Turley
Cross: Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers, Reserve Champion – Mylee Turley
Natural: Champion – Emmarie Gean
Grand Champion : Natural - Emmarie Gean
Reserve Champion: Cross – JoEllyn Sawyers
Jr Showmanship: Grand Champion – Emmarie Gean, Reserve Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers
Sr Showmanship: Grand Champion – Mylee Turley, Reserve Champion – Jackson Gean

Friday – Beef Show/Poultry Show/Round Robin Contest/Awards/Grand Drive
Shortly after the sun came up, the kids were washing their animals in preparation for the morning's events. Animals and their owners are all speaking their own language as dryers hum and clippers buzz. Our judge this year was Bill Toews, from Newton, KS.
Beef Show:

Bucket Calves: Champion - Tuff Glenn
Grand Champion Breeding Heifer – Emmarie Gean, Reserve Champion – Tuff Glenn
Cow/Calf Pair: 1st Blue – Whitley Hubbard, 2nd Blue – Whitley Hubbard, 3rd Blue – Rilyn Yoder
Cow/Calf Pair: Grand Champion – Whitley Hubbard, Reserve Grand Champion – Whitley Hubbard
Market Heifer – Champion - Emmarie Gean
Angus: Champion – Mylee Turley, Reserve Champion – Mylee Turley
2nd Year Bucket Calf: Champion - Bracey Westrup
Cross: Champion - Bretlynn Westrup
Shorthorn: Champion - Jackson Gean
Charolais: Champion – Jackson Gean
Overall Market Beef: Champion - Jackson Gean-Shorthorn, Reserve Champion – Emmarie Gean-Market Heifer
Sr Showmanship: Grand Champion – Mylee Turley, Reserve Champion – Jackson Gean
Jr Showmanship: Grand Champion - Emmarie Gean, Reserve Champion – Tuff Glenn
Following the Beef Show, we had the Round Robin. The Round Robin is a showmanship contest where the Champion Showman from each livestock class, including horse, competes for the title of overall showman in both the junior and senior divisions. This year, competitors in the senior division were Bretlynn Westrup, Jackson Gean, Mylee Turley, Audrey Bratcher, and Remi Martin. Those competing in the junior division were Tuff Glenn, JoEllyn Sawyers, Whitley Hubbard, and Emmarie Gean. Round Robin

is a long event that wears on the participants. A good showman is constantly alert to the judge's movements and the placement of their animals. They should also be ready to answer any questions the judge asks. So, having good knowledge of their animals' characteristics and needs is a must.

Round Robin:
Sr. Champion – Mylee Turley
Jr. Champion – JoEllyn Sawyers
Before the beef show got underway, the poultry Show took center stage, despite all the feathers, there was nothing “fowl” about the competition. Judge Jenni Carr of Harper evaluated the entries, which included several open class exhibits. She enjoyed visiting with the kids about their birds and the hard work they had put into their projects. Whitley Hubbard earned both Grand and Reserve Grand Champion honors in the Poultry Show.

Late Friday afternoon, building exhibits were released, and the building was cleaned. A crowd formed at the fairgrounds to line up for the evening meal sponsored by Peoples Bank, Branch of Stockgrowers State Bank, and Peoples Insurance, with Comanche County Farm Bureau providing refreshing watermelon for dessert. Show arena events began at 6:30 p.m. with the 4-Hers being recognized for their top achievements during the Awards Ceremony. The young ladies in the Fashion Revue modeled one outfit before the awards ceremony. The Spirit of Brittny Award was given by the Britney Turley family. This year's award went to Mylee Turley. The fair concluded with the Livestock Grand Drive, where all the Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion animals were shown.

New this year was the 4-H Add-On Auction, which gave community members another opportunity to support local youth. The auction featured all 14 exhibitors who earned Grand Champion honors in both indoor and livestock exhibits. Buyers were able to add to the premiums earned by these outstanding exhibitors, recognizing the hard work, dedication, and excellence they demonstrated throughout the fair. The auction was well received and offered another meaningful way for the community to invest in the future of Comanche County 4-H.

The Herdsman Award, which is for both small and large animals, assesses how well a 4-Her cleans and maintains the area where their animals are penned. The Fair Board members vote on this award and are watching each 4-H'er throughout the week. This year's winners were Koy Harvey, small animals, and Bretlynn Westrup large animals.

Saturday – Ranch Rodeo

The last night of the fair finished with a Ranch Rodeo. Eleven teams participated in the event. Winning the Ranch Rodeo was Kyle Farms; second place was Double Spade Ranch.

The Comanche County Fair requires tremendous effort from many people. Special thanks to our Extension office professional, Hayden Martin; Fair Board members, Jerri-ca Glenn, Jaymi Westrup, Derek Hubbard, Katresa Gean, Clay Jarnagin, Colby Snyder, Tucker Uhl, and Bri Uhl; 4-Hers and their families; Judges and local fair chairman. Great appreciation is expressed to the Comanche County Commissioners and to all the awards, premium pool, and added-money donors for their amazing support.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email jasonjump@thestarpress.news

Back in the Older Days

Coldwater news from earlier days
Compiled by Teresa Jones

130 YEARS AGO *From Aug. 1, 1896 Star*

THE STAR claims the distinction of being one of the oldest residents of Comanche county and the oldest business firm in Coldwater. Last week it completed its twelfth year, and this week enters upon Vol. 13 No. 1. It was established Aug. 16, 1884, and has never missed an issue or changed proprietors. The paper has been issued 624 times.

The census of this school district shows 100 persons of school age, which is about the same as last year.

The Coldwater base ball nine will play a match game next Saturday at Greensburg with the Haviland nine. It is expected to be an interesting game.

The democrats and populists will hold their county convention at Greensburg the same day.

Wheeling etiquette is not yet in a very advanced stage, although a few rules have been laid down. A gentleman should never mount until the lady with whom he is riding is settled in her saddle. Then he may mount and follow her. When practicable, they should ride abreast; the lady always on the right side. When a narrow road makes this impossible the lady should go ahead so that her escort may know at once should any danger menace her.

120 YEARS AGO *From July 27, 1906 Star*

Last Saturday and Sunday were two of the hottest days of the season so far. There were many sun-burnt faces about town Saturday evening.

Big crowds were attracted to Coldwater on last Friday and Saturday by the "carnival" which had been advertised by a traveling announcement company.

A balloon ascension late on Friday evening was very creditable, but the promised ascension on Saturday did not materialize, much to the disappointment of many who lived several miles away and who stayed in town late expecting that the ascension would be made.

The company claimed that it was too windy or that the aeronaut had got hurt the day before, but these excuses were not very readily accepted by the waiting and disappointed crowd.

The merry-go-round did a big business. There wasn't much to the "carnival," but the people seemed to enjoy getting together again and having a visit and a day or two of relaxation from their every-day labors.

Passenger trains quite regular once more.

Ice cream social at New Eden on the evening of August 4.

John A. Lightner brought several bushels of ripe peaches to market last Friday. He remembered the STAR office with a supply.

110 YEARS AGO *From July 28, 1916 Star*

A number of people from Coldwater and vicinity attended the picnic held in Wilmore on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. The Coldwater Concert Band furnished some good music.

The crowd was not large on Wednesday. On Thursday, however, quite a large gathering of people was at the picnic and all seemed to be having a good time.

Next Tuesday, August 1, is the date fixed by law for

holding the primary election this year. At that time the various party candidates, to be voted for on November 7, will be chosen.

The selection of candidates at the primary will be by the party voters, that is, republicans only have the right to choose the republican candidate, democrats the democratic candidate, etc.

A blank ballot is provided for those who may wish to vote for persons whose names are not printed on any of the ballots. At practically every election in the past some ballots voted have been rejected and uncounted [because of] careless and hasty markings.

Already there is a real "booster" spirit manifest among the people of Coldwater in regard to the coming Chautauqua.

A meeting of a number of our business men was held in the office of Jay T. Botts and the various phases of the work of handling the Chautauqua were freely discussed. All seemed to realize the value of co-operative efforts in such enterprises.

The principal subject considered was the disposing of Chautauqua tickets and of "making good" the \$750 [almost \$23,000 in today's dollars], the amount guaranteed to the company. This matter was handled in a prompt and business-like manner. In a short time practically the entire amount was provided for.

Under the present contract the local committee shares more liberally than ever before in the ticket receipts. It is now quite certain that the Coldwater Chautauqua for 1916 is upon a successful working basis [but] remember that your help is needed; then do your part.

100 YEARS AGO *From July 30, 1926 Star*

Next Tuesday, August 3, is the day fixed by law for the holding of the primary election this year for the selection of the party candidates to be voted for at the general election in November.

The polls will be open at 8 a.m. and will close at 6 p.m. Don't stay away from the polls and then find fault because your choices among the candidates are not elected. So be sure to vote on next Tuesday.

This is the last issue of the weekly papers before the primaries. On next Tuesday the various candidates will be chosen on each of the three tickets in the field — Republican, Democratic, and Socialist. There will be no Socialist county ticket in this county, but there will be a Socialist state ticket.

When at the polls, call for Democratic ticket if a Democrat; Republican for Republican ticket, in November. Be sure to put a cross in the square opposite the names of the persons for whom you wish to vote. If you happen to make a mistake in marking your ballot return the ballot to the judges and secure a new one.

Just one month more of vacation for the school children.

Roy Hooper recently purchased the R.A. Ramsey residence property and 15 acres of land in the southern part of this city and will move thereto the first of next week. The place was formerly owned by Wm. Rein.

90 YEARS AGO *From July 31, 1936 Star*

Next Tuesday, August 4, is the date of the Primary

election and each voter should take the time to go to the polls and vote for the candidates which he or she thinks best fitted for office.

This is Senatorial year in Kansas and there are two or three Republican candidates in the field. We call attention to the announcements in this issue of the STAR of H.L. Stout of Ft. Scott. While we do not know Mr. Stout personally, his announcements and recommendations sound good. Sometimes the bringing of new blood and new energies into public office is good for a people.

After nearly a month of extremely hot weather a cooling breeze came from the north Monday evening. Tuesday was partly cloudy and on Wednesday the sky was quite cloudy and a few showers fell in the county.

Thursday morning the temperature was about 70 degrees, which is 44 degrees lower than the highest temperature a few weeks ago. It is a refreshing change, but moisture is still badly needed.

The Paruna and Coldwater junior baseball teams will play at Coldwater next Sunday at 2:30 p.m. The players do not exceed 16 years of age.

The Pike View ladies will hold a carnival on August 12, at the McCulla lake. Further notice next week.

Thursday morning Earl Lee brought into the WESTERN STAR office a cucumber which he had planted at the Morton place which measured 16 inches in length, and weighed 2¾ pounds.

80 YEARS AGO *From Aug. 2, 1946 Star*

This week, the WESTERN STAR begins its 63rd year of continuous publication, having last week completed Volume 62. The paper was founded in August, 1884, one year before Comanche County was even organized and only a few months after the town of Coldwater was started.

In the early days it took one man to ink the one page handset form and another strong-armed individual to operate the lever which printed a few hundred copies.

Through the lean years, the exodus to Oklahoma after opening the Strip and the years of drouth and depression the STAR managed to outlive 13 other publications in Coldwater and is today Comanche County's oldest business institution.

We are appreciative of the fine co-operation which has been given us by our subscribers, now numbering nearly twice as many as before the war, and of our advertisers, who are finding that no other means of publicity gives so much for the money.

If we can help make this a better community and county in which to live; if we can help keep our people working unitedly for the common good; if we can furnish the public with an accurate and unbiased record of the current news and conditions locally and show the world what a fine lot of people we have here, then we will have accomplished our purpose. — THE EDITORS.

Coldwater's baseball team, undefeated thus far in league play, annexed their 7th straight victory Sunday afternoon by defeating Sun City 10 to 5. Next Sunday afternoon, Greensburg will

be in Coldwater for a game on the local diamond.

Considerable interest in being taken in the softball games which are being played several nights a week on the high school athletic field in Coldwater. All who enjoy softball games are urged to come and see these games. Admission is free.

Friday, August 5, Wilson Lumber Co. plays I.H.C. Monday, August 5, Amerada Oil Co. plays Buttermilk. Tuesday, August 6, Home Bakery plays Wilson Lumber Co. Thursday, August 8, Anderson Grocery plays High School

70 YEARS AGO *From July 27, 1956 Star*

The next 10 days, until primary election on Tuesday, August 7, will be filled with claims and counter-claims by candidates for state and national offices.

Politics at the county level are more spirited than in several years with rumors of write-in candidates for several offices. This is a good indication that there be a high percentage of eligible voters at the polls Tuesday, August 7.

In the first game of the sub-district softball tournament played Monday of this week under the lights at the Northside ball park.

Wilmore defeated Northside No. 2 team 15 to 2. The second game of the evening was between Greensburg and Medicine Lodge with Medicine Lodge edging Greensburg 4 to 3. The Sluggers defeated the Methodist Men in a close one, 15 to 14.

Wilmore topped the Sluggers 9 to 3 in Wednesday's first game with Northside No. 1, losing to Mullinville 5 to 4 in another tight game.

Games scheduled for Thursday are: Methodist Men vs. Northside No. 1 and Medicine Lodge vs. Mullinville. This is a double elimination tournament with Wilmore leading in the top bracket and Greensburg leading in the loser's. Game time is 7:30 p.m. and is sponsored by the Northside Ball Park.

We, here at THE WESTERN STAR, hope you keep right on laughing at our mistakes and buying our paper. Each week we do our best to avoid "slips" but it seems the harder we try the more seem to get by.

Our normal practice is to read each proof once and check correction lines after they are inserted. We have increased this week to reading proofs twice and double checking correction lines. So, just try and find a mistake this week. You probably will. — THE EDITORS.

There is gas and oil in Comanche County and eventually this will help maintain equilibrium for a while but until then, or when our surplus is diminished and farm prices give a fair return to our farmers, let's realize that we are all in this together and unite as neighbors for each other's benefit.

60 YEARS AGO *From July 28, 1966 Star*

The Hospital Auxiliary will have its August luncheon on Monday, August 1, at 12:30 p.m. at the Comanche Restaurant. Dr. Ronald McCoy will make a short talk on "Community and Hospital Relations." All interested persons are invited to attend.

An art show, displaying the work accomplished

during the six weeks summer recreation program under the capable instruction of J.W. Hayward and Mrs. Mary Eden of Alva, Okla., will be held Sunday, July 31, from 2-5 p.m. in the Comanche County Art Studio in Protection.

All participants in the program are urged to bring their work to the Studio July 30 between 8 and 9 a.m. All paintings must be framed and ready to hang. The public is invited to view the progress made.

We wish to remind everyone that the 4-H Fair is Thursday and Friday, August 4 and 5, in Protection at the Legion Building and City Park. We invite each and everyone to come and view the work done by the 4-H'ers this past year.

Thursday, August 4, at 8 p.m., is the public style revue on the baseball diamond west of the swimming pool. There will be local girls and boys featured under the spotlights in everything from aprons to school clothes to coats and formals. Come and support our 4-H'ers.

Interest in the primary election has been especially high this year. Several contests in county offices as well as the contest for representative have spurred local interest in the election.

The reapportionment of the state legislature has brought about a unique situation. The new 120th district including Comanche, Kiowa, Clark, and Meade counties involves candidates who formerly represented their respective counties.

A complete list of all candidates filed for National, State, District, County and Township offices will be found in this week's legal notices. You will also find information about local candidates and the offices they are seeking in this issue of the STAR under "Political Announcements."

Several candidates have special personal messages which they offer in ads published in this week's STAR. You will find this information helpful in selecting candidates you wish to support with your vote. Know your candidates, then vote next Tuesday.

50 YEARS AGO *From July 29, 1976 Star*

The lofty ideals and sense of patriotism shown by Comanche County people in their celebrations this bicentennial year are personified by the flying of Old Glory and the white Bicentennial Flag at the top of the 101-foot flagpole on the Courthouse grounds in Coldwater each day.

Comanche County Hospital Auxiliary Luncheon will meet at Don's Cafe in Protection at 12:00 on Monday, August 2, 1976.

This Thursday at 9:00 a.m. the Comanche County 4-H Fair will get under way with the Style Revue, Best Groomed Boy contest and clothing construction judging at the Coldwater High School Cafetorium.

The setting up of the main part of the fair will begin Friday morning at the Protection City Park. Work will begin and continue on Saturday on booths on Saturday. The climax of the fair will be the livestock parade beginning at 7:30 in the Protection ballpark with sale immediately following.

The Buttermilk Saddle Club will sponsor the open class horsemanship at the

Comanche County Fair on Tuesday, August 3.

There will be seven classes with the winner of each class being awarded a trophy. There will be three halter classes: Stallion, Mare, and Gelding. Two performance classes: Western Pleasure and reining. There will be two timed events: Barrel Racing and Pole Bending.

The books will open at 7:00 on August 3 at the Protection Rodeo arena. The books will close and judging begins promptly at 8:00 p.m.

40 YEARS AGO *From July 31, 1986 Star*

Coldwater's slow-pitch softball team, managed by Robert King, has played about 30 games and has won about half of those. It has competed in tourneys at Kiowa, Pratt and Dodge City.

In previous years the Sunflower League was composed of Coldwater, two Greensburg teams, Haviland, Bucklin, Spearville, Mullinville and Ford. But that league did not get organized this summer. Teams instead are playing on an independent basis.

Coldwater has won one game and lost two in each of the tourneys in which it has played. At Kiowa it faced a pair of clubs from Alva, Okla., plus a Kiowa team. It also saw some "new faces" in the meet at Pratt. Each of the tourneys had 12 teams entered. Many of the members of the Coldwater squad have been playing together several years.

One of Coldwater's two entries in the youth baseball tourneys being played here this week, was still "alive" heading into Wednesday's semi-final round of action. Nine teams are in the lower age bracket of the meet: for boys of ages 10, 11, and 12. That group plays 5-inning games.

Just six clubs are in the other bracket: for boys ages 13, 14, and 15. It plays 7-inning games. Both divisions of the week-long meet are single-elimination. By week's end, a total of 15 games will have been played on the local diamond. Thursday's schedule calls for third-place games in each division. Friday's slate has the pair of championship contests. Coldwater now advances to the semi-finals. In the lower age bracket, Little League, Coldwater was eliminated by Minneola in the opening round on a 13-3 margin. That gave Coldwater a 2-7 season record and boosted Minneola to 8-1 overall.

Coldwater Recreation Commission will sponsor its sixth annual boys' and girls' basketball camp, Aug. 4-8 at the CHS gym. The camp will again be free of charge to all kids, grades 6-12, who wish to participate. Girls' sessions each evening will run from 6:30 to 8:15 and boys' sessions from 8:15 until 10 p.m.

This year's camp instructor will again be Tracy Rietzke of Salina. In addition to working Heart of America Sports Camp in Salina, Rietzke is also head women's coach at Kansas Wesleyan University and played for KWU in the mid 1970s earning NAIA All-American status in 1976.

Each camp will again furnish its own gear, including basketball shoes that have not been used as street shoes. The gym floor has been re-finished and CHS wishes to keep it looking nice for the upcoming season.

NEWS

FAUCI

• From Page 1

pains me to do so, because of the respect I have for the legislative branch of government and my decades-long record of cooperating with Congress, under the advice of my attorneys, I will invoke my right under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, to refrain from answering your questions,” he said.

Fauci was a member of the coronavirus task force during President Donald Trump’s first administration and a chief medical adviser

on COVID-19 during President Joe Biden’s term.

Repeated Testimony

Fauci has testified publicly 13 times before Senate committees and 11 times before House committees since January 2020. This was the first time he declined to answer any questions from lawmakers.

Paul noted that former President Joe Biden pardoned Fauci for any actions he might have taken from Jan. 1, 2014 through Jan. 20, 2025. But he said that doesn’t cover any actions since then, including any

statements to Congress that may not have been entirely accurate.

“A pardon may protect a person from criminal prosecution. It doesn’t rewrite history,” Paul said. “It does not erase documents. It does not convert a misleading statement into a truthful one.”

Paul said the committee will hold a vote next week to hold Fauci in contempt for declining to answer questions under a subpoena.

“There will be repercussions to your refusal to testify today,” he said.

A member of Fauci’s legal

team, seated beside him at the witness table, tried to speak several times but Paul refused to recognize him before having U.S. Capitol Police remove that lawyer from the room.

Paul then said for the record that Fauci would “still have the advice of the other half a dozen attorneys that he brought along today.”

Origins of COVID-19

Paul alleged during his opening statement that Fauci, who was the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases when the pan-

demic began, didn’t give enough credit to theories the COVID-19 virus may have been created in a laboratory in China.

He asked Fauci a series of questions about the

pandemic. Each time, Fauci responded, “On the advice of counsel, I respectfully decline to answer, based upon my rights under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.”

LIBRARY

• From Page 2

Stop by anytime to look things over. If you are looking for anything the library doesn’t have, I will be happy to borrow it or purchase it for our collection.

The Community Room is filling up quickly for reunions and family gatherings. It’s never too soon to plan for the next

Holiday and save yourself the mess at home. As of now Thanksgiving Day is reserved but other dates are still available. Give the library a call at (620) 622-4886 to save your date. The charge is \$50 per day and to hold your date, payment is suggested as soon as possible after your reservation. You cancel with us up to two weeks in advance your money will be returned.

COLDWATER

• From Page 1

owned property at 401 S. Baltimore, questioning how ownership of the property was transferred to the city during a previous condemnation process.

According to discussion during the meeting, current council members were uncertain how the city acquired the property and whether the proper condemnation procedures had been followed. The city has already spent \$3,962.26 cleaning the property and discussed additional costs needed to complete the cleanup.

Officials considered obtaining an estimate from a local contractor rather than pulling city crews away from other projects. Once cleanup costs are known, the council plans to discuss whether the property should be retained for future city use or sold.

Council members also discussed preventing similar situations in the future. Alvarez directed staff to review possible changes requiring additional council approval before property ownership can be transferred

to the city.

Stray Cat Ordinance

The council also held an extensive discussion regarding the city’s stray cat population and possible changes to enforcement.

Beginning Aug. 3, the city plans to make cat traps available for residents to borrow. Residents using the traps will be required to sign an agreement accepting responsibility for the humane disposal of trapped cats.

Council members notified residents through *The Star-Press* last week and the city’s Facebook page, encouraging owners to place collars on their cats so owned animals can be distinguished from strays before trapping begins.

Much of the discussion centered on enforcement of the existing ordinance, with council members debating registration requirements, spaying and neutering, feeding stray cats and the limited time available for code enforcement. Several members said food left outdoors for stray cats also attracts skunks, raccoons and opossums.

The council ultimately

agreed to focus on public education, enforcement of existing ordinances and making traps available to residents before considering additional ordinance changes.

Other Business

The council also:

- Approved renewal of Venture Foods’ Cereal Malt Beverage license.
- Denied a request to exchange privately owned property for city-owned land near North Lake after determining the requested parcel was too close to the lake for hunting.
- Adopted a chip seal policy for city streets and lake roads.
- Approved eliminating the \$10 weekly fee for a local youth group that meets Wednesdays in the city building.
- Directed staff to send notices to residents who have not registered chickens kept within city limits, allowing additional time to comply before municipal court proceedings begin. The council also approved a chicken permit for 702 S. Topeka.
- Approved updated covenants for Comanche Estates.

- Directed staff to advertise for residents interested in baling lake grass beginning next year while allowing the current rotation to continue this season with it being Raymond Affeldt’s turn.

- Approved publication of the proposed 2027 budget and scheduled the required public hearing for Aug. 10. Officials said the city plans to remain revenue neutral and will not increase the city’s tax levy.

- Approved *The Star-Press* as the city’s official newspaper.

- Approved the purchase of 60 water modules and registers for \$14,040 from the water fund.

- Approved payment of city bills totaling \$143,771.57.

Before adjourning, Public Works Director Charlie Austin reported the city is on schedule with its water system improvements following approval of the new water modules and registers. Council members also discussed removing storm-damaged tree limbs at the city park and ongoing litter problems along the lake road after a recent cleanup effort by residents.

LEEPER

• From Page 1

separate high schools.

“So, my records will never be broken,” Leeper quipped.

He went on to compete at Dodge City Community College and Kansas State University. While in college, Leeper was an NJCAA national indoor and outdoor champion and, in 1998, he was the NCAA Outdoor National Champion while competing for Kansas State.

Leeper then competed in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, in which he placed 11th in the men’s high jump, clearing 2.25 meters, which is nearly seven feet, five inches.

“I mean, obviously that’s kind of the pinnacle of a track and field athlete’s career,” Leeper said regarding the Olympics. “You know, that’s what we strive for. That can make or break a career, honestly.”

He said he looks at the Olympic trip from two standpoints. The first was that he was “a little disappointed” in his performance because the winning height at the 2000 Olympics was a height he had cleared a couple months before.

“All of those guys that you jump against the top 10 or 15 in the world, you know, you see them in a lot of the same track meets,” Leeper said. “And so they, you know, kind of what your competition is. So from the athletics, the athlete’s point of view, I was a little bit disappointed.”

At the same time, as he looks back on what he accomplished, he realizes that not many people get to say they competed in the Olympics.

“I think it’s taken time to kind of reflect back on some of that,” Leeper said. “At the time, you know, when you’re competing, I think you’re so focused on winning and competing that we don’t take a step back and appreciate it as much as we do as we get older and we’re unable to do it. But it was quite the experience.”

He noted that it rained during the finals of the high jump, which he said could have been an advantage for him as those who have lived long enough in Kansas know that “the seasons change sometimes by the hour.”

But there were some things he couldn’t prepare for, though.

“I mean, there’s no way to simulate jumping in front of 100,000 people,” Leeper said. “And, you know, the nerves and the mental side of staying focused and prepared and staying in the moment. And that was probably the hardest part about it.

“You know, the physical part of it is something that we train every single day to jump off the ground. And so that’s usually not the problem. It’s just the ability to kind of maintain focus and use that nervous energy in a positive way.”

Another thing he mentioned that sparked memories was seeing something on social media about Charles Austin, who holds the American record for the high jump of 2.40 meters, which is about seven feet, 10 1/2 inches, and that Tuesday was the anniversary of his 1996 Olympic gold medal win in Atlanta.

“And, you know, Charles and I jumped against each other for, you know, basical-

ly my whole career,” Leeper said.

He added that he remembers jumping against Javier Sotomayor of Cuba, who holds the world record in the high jump at 2.45 meters, which is roughly eight feet, one-fourth of an inch and is a record that still stands.

“So there’s kind of a flood of memories and honestly, emotions as well, because it’s, you know, as much as we, I wouldn’t say try and turn off that competitive edge,” Leeper said. “We try and suppress it a little bit, but that doesn’t really ever go away. So when you kind of bring back all those memories, it almost kind of fires you up again.”

As for his high school days, Leeper said he remembers the high jump having a strong field, as he jumped seven feet, one inch as a junior, then had an ankle injury in basketball his senior year and jumped seven feet late into track season.

“I think there was six other high jumpers in the state of Kansas that had all jumped seven foot when I was in high school,” he said. “So the high jump, you know, that event was really, really good. And anytime you can jump against some of the best guys in the, you know, obviously in the state, but most of those guys were all ranked, you know, in the top several in the U.S. So when you can compete against guys like that, then you don’t really have a choice but to get better.”

Leeper said he was “kind of blessed with the ability to jump” but, once he got to college and started training for the event, he realized some of the things he wasn’t doing well.

“As far as the (high

school) coaches go, I mean, everybody tried to do their best and help and try and learn it,” he said. “And I know my dad and I spent a lot of time kind of trying to learn the event.”

But while Leeper doesn’t remember every high school track meet, he remembers the support that so many people throughout the area who helped him and his family when he had so much success in the high jump.

“The one thing that I can tell you is that the people of southwest Kansas, you know, Coldwater, Protection, Ashland, Greensburg, Minneola, Bucklin – you know, the whole part of that region had such a large part in my career and helping me along,” he said.

“They sold T-shirts to help raise money to help pay for my mom and dad to go watch the Olympics. And, you know, to this day, I mean, they’re still, everybody down there is just salt of the earth.”

He said he appreciates the congratulations that people from that area sent his way when they learned about his induction into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame.

“This last weekend with the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame induction stuff, just the messages that I got, text messages, phone calls, emails, just an unbelievable amount of support and people reaching out and congratulating me,” Leeper said. “And I just, I mean, I really want to tell all of them thank you.”

Leeper and his wife, Jennifer, have three children. Taylor will enter the eighth grade in the fall, while Brynn will enter sixth grade and Colson will be a second grader.

WHEAT PRICES

Alliance Ag & Grain
Coldwater - 620.582.2251
Protection - 620.622.4619

July 22	- \$6.88
July 23	- \$6.85
July 24	- 6.70
July 25	- CLOSED
July 26	- CLOSED
July 27	- \$6.54
July 28	- \$6.51

COLDWATER WEATHER

By Greg Vanderree

July 22	High 100 / Low 70 / Precip - None
July 23	High 100 / Low 68 / Precip - None
July 24	High 96 / Low 68 / Precip - 1.19
July 25	High 93 / Low 73 / Precip - None
July 26	High 99 / Low 73 / Precip - None
July 27	High 102 / Low 75 / Precip - None
July 28	High 104 / Low 76 / Precip - None

Coldwater UMC invites families to VBS - back-to-school style!

Hot dogs, Games, Lesson & Movie

When: Wendnesday, Aug. 5
Where: East of Stick it Signs
When: 8 p.m.

Dinner, popcorn & water will be provided!

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE



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Comanche County Road and Bridge is looking for heavy equipment operators and laborers. Pay starts at \$14, with the possibility of higher pay with experience. If you have questions, please call AJ at (620) 582-5222. Applications are available at the Road and Bridge Office, 401 S. Philadelphia, Coldwater, or at the County Clerk’s office in Courthouse at 201 S. New York Ave., Coldwater. 51tfnc

ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL AND SOUTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL are now seeking applications for an assistant softball coach. Please contact Tyler Bates, South Central High School at (620) 582-2181.

SOUTH CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL is seeking a boy’s middle school basketball coach for the 2026-27 season. Please contact Matt Jellison at (620) 622-4545.

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Wanted: Paraprofessional at South Central Elementary and Middle School in Protection. If interested fill out an application at www.scksec.com or call Matt Jellison at (620) 622-4545.