

Hikers experience danger and rescue

By Norma Martinez
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The weekend of April 13, could have been a tragic time for Steve and Isabelle Headrick, Desera Headrick who live in Bird City, Keith Headrick from Goodland and other family members in Denver. Tragic news of two missing hikers on the western slope of Colorado took a twist ending up as a very positive experience.

Isabelle's son, Thomas Gabaldon of Westminster, Colo., and his friend Santiavo Rodriquez loaded their car with hiking gear and King, Rodriquez's 1-year-old Labrador on Thursday, April 11. They headed to Grand Junction, Colo., to the McInnis Canyons made up of the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness to hike the four-day trail, relaxing and enjoying the spectacular scenery on the western slope of Colorado.

The Mee Canyon is only accessible by boat from the Colorado River, or from a trail head near Glade Park. The trail runs into Cedar Tree Arch making the hike a 50-mile loop. This is not a trail for inexperienced hikers. Some spots are very narrow, but contain the scenery of natural arches and bridges second only to Arches National Park in Utah.

The Mee Canyon Hike contains many exposed cliffs to hike over making it more technical. In the longer loop heads down a steep hill and work its way to the other side of the butte to view Rattlesnake Canyon. The view and natural beauty of many arches on this trail makes this treacherous hike worthwhile.

Check points are established at various points along the trail where hikers are to check in. Gabaldon and Santiavo had last checked in on Friday.

When Gabaldon was leaving town he called his daughter, Jordan Stransky with instructions on where they were going and that they were to return on Sunday morning. He also told her to call him on his cell phone each day and if he did not answer it meant he was in the canyon where there was no reception.

On Sunday when he had not called to say they were returning home and still no response by phone, his daughter became concerned. Early Monday morning she drove by his house and his car was not there so she called the Search and Rescue Services and alerted them. They began their search from Point A and found they had checked into all check points up to the canyon. This is where Stransky lost cell phone service with them.

Both of these men were experienced hikers. Gabaldon had hiked the same area five times before and, for Santiavo, it was his eighth time. They packed plenty of food, bedding, warm layers of clothing, fully charged cell phones, items needed to build a fire and had everything hikers are taught to take and do as precautionary measures.

They had completed 36 miles of the 50-mile loop when the trail became wet and slippery. After the point where the trail became too

slippery making it too dangerous to continue, they debated on whether they should try to return the way they came in, or just make camp and sit it out. It was too dangerous to continue on, but decided it would be more treacherous to try returning back the way they came. The final decision was to make camp and wait it out.

After setting up their camp they staked out their rescue flag, started a fire and had just settled down to enjoy the beauty of the natural inhabited land and sip on a cup of hot chocolate. Gabaldon heard this "tisk," "tisk," "tisk," sound of whirling from helicopter blades and asked Santiago, "Did you hear that?" They pulled their flags and started waving them. The rescuers had already seen their camp and fire

and were ascending down to the canyon. The rescue unit called Stransky and reported, "We found the hikers and one person is out as we can only take one person at a time, but they were both okay." This message was relayed to his mother in Bird City.

When they got back to the point where they had left their car, the rescuers told them, they had done everything just right. This rescue, they said, is what rescue is all about. "If all hikers would follow the rules of hiking as they did," they said, "they would not have to deal with as many tragedies".

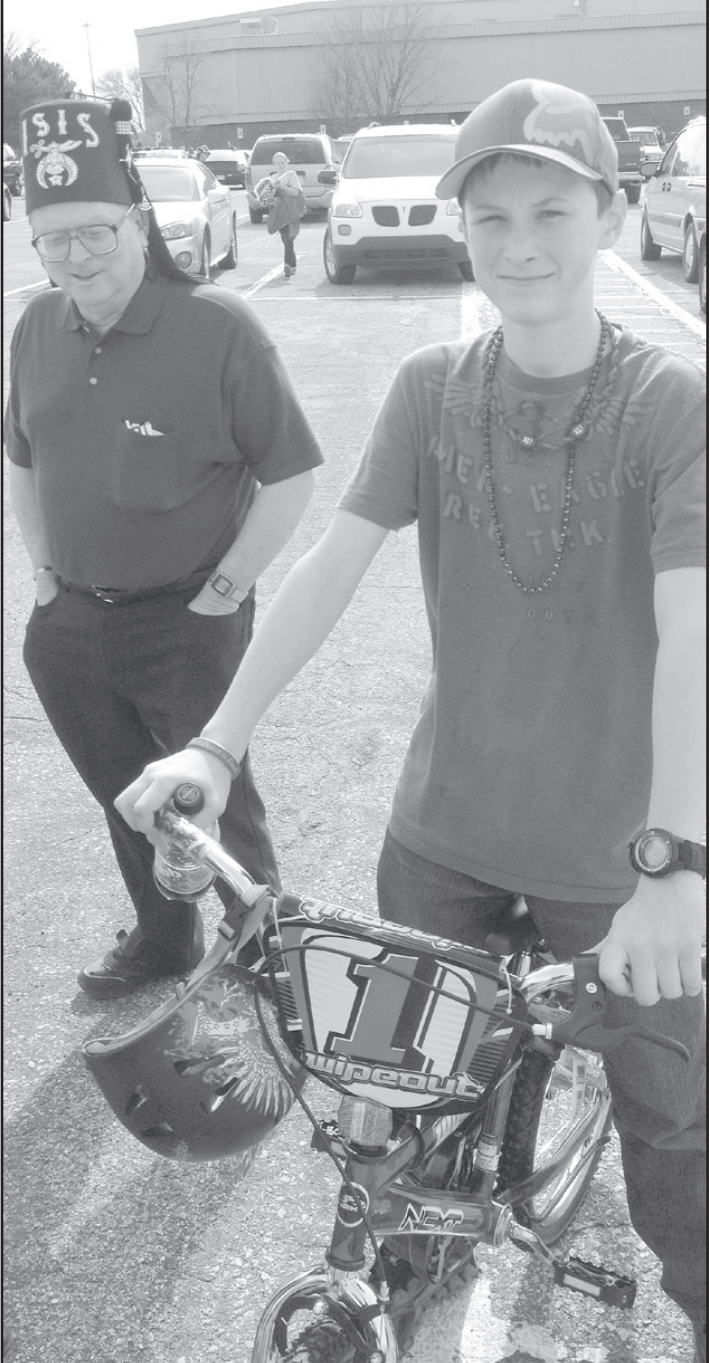
Mom, Thomas said, this was the most awesome place. If it wasn't for the worry I brought to my family, this would have been the most awesome experience I've ever had.

The only thing I would have done

different, he said, is I would not have taken the dog.

They kept him on a leash, but some of the places on the trail were so narrow it was difficult for them to maneuver and watching for the dog's safety on the trail made it more difficult. He also assured his mother, "Mom, we were not lost."

adding, "We knew where we were and what we were doing!" Thomas and Santiago are now in the process of logging information and photos from this trip into the "Back Packing Club Log." This website is established to give safety tips and information on how to safely hike treacherous trails such as the Mee Canyon loop near Grand Junction.



DRAVEN HOUTMAN, sixth grader, won one of the bikes given away by the ISIS Shrine Temple, Salina West. Draven's ticket was one of several thousand tickets. Also pictured is Shrinier, Mickey Graves who was getting ready to help him load it on the bus to go home.

Herald photo by Kody Krien

Obituary

Deana Lynn Amack Stasser

Jan. 9, 1939 - April 16, 2013



Stasser

Lifelong Goodland resident Deana Lynn Amack Stasser, 74, died April 16, 2013, at Good Samaritan Society-Sherman County in Goodland.

She was born Jan. 9, 1939, in Bird City, the daughter of Ruby Helen Waits. She graduated from Sherman Community High School in Goodland with the class of 1956.

On Nov. 22, 1955, she and Bernard Ray "Bernie" Amack were married at Goodland. He preceded her in death on Jan. 12, 1999. On Jan. 8, 2005, she and M. Merle Stasser were married at Goodland. He preceded her in death on June 11, 2011.

She was a member of First United Methodist Church, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and pitch league.

Preceding her in death were her husbands Bernie Amack and Merle Stasser; her parents; sister Dorothy Jackson; son Merlyn Stasser; grandsons Anthony Amack and Mike Stasser.

Surviving family includes sons Ron Amack of Goodland; Gaylord Stasser and his wife Bonnie of Goodland; Alvin Stasser of Phoe-

nix, Ariz.; daughter-in-law Arlea Carmack and her husband Neil of Centerville, Utah; eight grandchildren; Amy Amack, Adam Amack and his wife Brandilyn, Justin Stasser and his wife Dawn, Heather Bowman and her husband Ryan, Lee Stasser, Chenoa McLain and her husband Matt, Daniel Oikarinen, Chris Stasser; 12 great-grandchildren; and brother Brad Hughes of Denver, Colo.; and sister Shirley of Hershberger of Denver.

The funeral was held April 24 at Koons Chapel, with Reverend Shelly Petz officiating. Private inurnment will be in the Goodland Cemetery.

Memorials may be designated to the Deana Amack Stasser Memorial, and may be left at or mailed to Koons Funeral Home, 211 N. Main Ave., Goodland, KS 67735-1555. Online condolences and guest register www.koonsfuneralhome.com

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