



Tom



Patty



Crystal

# Happy New Year!



Leatte



Evan



Shelby



Tisha

Then

Now

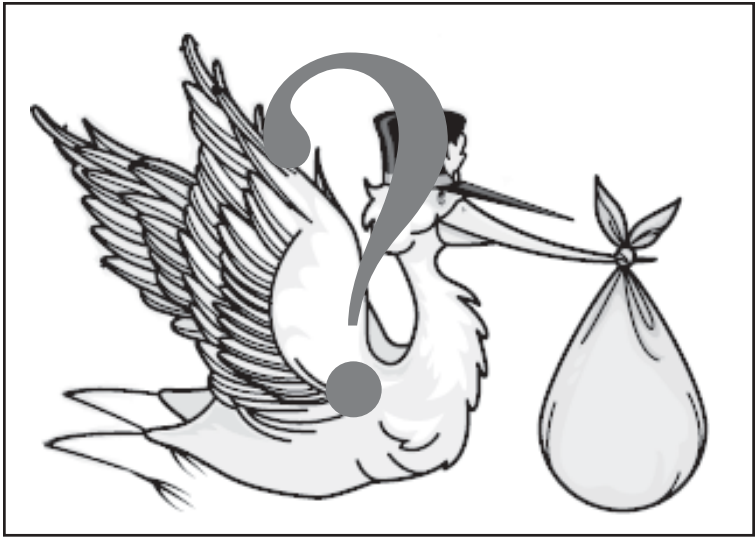
Next



... Brianna Hanson, the daughter of Mark and Jill Hanson of Wallace, at birth on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2003



... Brianna Hanson one year later playing with toys at her home in Wallace.



... See Baby Contest, page 5 and editorial on page 2.

## Brewster man charged with first-degree murder

**By PATTY DECKER** *Free Press Editor*

GOODLAND — A 33-year-old Brewster man appeared today before the Sherman County District Court on charges of first degree murder in what authorities are now saying was not an accident involving the shooting death of his 27-year-old wife early Sunday morning.

Lanny Bevington was arrested Monday and a \$1 million bond was set in the alleged murder of Kerrie A. Bevington, said Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson.

In the initial investigation, Whitson said the husband claimed the shooting was accidental, but suspicion was cast on Lanny after KBI agents looked further into the incident.

Prior to the shooting, the couple was apparently at a wedding dance in Colby and left the party sometime after 2 a.m.

Authorities said the time of death was between 3 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday morning, but the body was not discovered until 7 a.m. when Lanny called Kerrie's father, Tom Aschenbrenner.

In Lanny's initial statement to the Sherman County Sheriff's Office on Sunday, he said he accidentally shot his wife while trying to remove a gun from the pickup she was sitting in.

Assisting the sheriff's office with the investigation, said Sherman County Attorney Bonnie Selby, were three agents with the KBI.

The couple's home is 3 1/2 miles south of Brewster on County Road 37 in Sherman County.

Services for Kerrie (Aschenbrenner) Bevington have been scheduled for Monday with Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel in Colby. See page 4.

Details from the first appearance today will appear in the Friday's edition of the *Colby Free Press*.



### Warm, then cold

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area

**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph turning southwest around 15 mph after midnight. **New Year's Day...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s. West winds 10 to 20 mph. **Thursday night...**Clear. Lows in the upper 20s. South winds 10 to 20 mph. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the upper 60s. Southwest winds 15 to 25 mph. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. **Saturday...**Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of snow. Breezy. Highs in the middle 30s. **Saturday night...**Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Breezy. Lows around 14.

**The numbers**

Tuesday's high, 64

Low this morning, 14

Records for Dec. 31, 73 in 1904 and -21 in 1898

Year ago today, 52 and 24

Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00

Month's precipitation, 0.09

Month's snowfall, 3 inches

Year's precipitation to date, 14.53

2002's precipitation to date, 12.60

Soil temperature, 31

**The sources:**

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

## Retailers generally happy with holiday shopping

**By TISHA COX** *Colby Free Press*

Overall, Colby businesses had the holiday season they wanted. Things matched up with last year and in some cases, were slightly better.

Mark Beringer, owner of Beringer Hardware, said things were slow from Thanksgiving until the week before Christmas, but then picked up right before the holiday.

"We're busier now than we were before Christmas," he said. "All of a sudden it broke loose. It's been very good since then."

He attributed the pick up to people coming in to spend their Christmas cash on things like appliances and electronics. Beringer said he's happy with the way things have turned out.

Sears had a decent holiday season, said owner Sherry McDonald.

She said laser levels, table and miter saws and small televisions were some of the more popular items for Christmas this year.

"We were sold out of DVDs on Thanksgiving weekend," she said.

Tess Smith, manager of The Sports Shoppe, said this year was comparable to the past. Hot sellers were Kansas State University and Kansas City Chiefs items.

"We had a pretty good one," she said. "We were really busy."

Great Western Tire also experienced relatively good Christmas sales.

"It was fine," said manager Steve Wolf. "I wouldn't say it was exceptional. It was better than what I thought it would be."

He said it was about the same as last year. Popular items were dishwashers, washers and dryers.

Calvin Sharpe, manager of Golden Hardware, said the business did "pretty good."

"It was better than I expected," he said. Items that went quickly were laser levels and electronic tape measures, he said.

Bigger ticket items like vehicles were on some people's lists, but not for any particular reason.

Mike Tubbs, of Tubbs and Sons Ford, said sales at the dealership were good through December. "Actually we had a pretty brisk holiday season," he said.

"We had a good run through the holiday season," Tubbs said many people were

**We're busier now than we were before Christmas. . . all of a sudden it broke loose.**

**Mark Beringer**  
— Beringer Hardware

taking advantage of federal tax incentives on the purchase of new pickups and sport utility vehicles. The tax breaks were geared toward small business owners, but he said farmers were also taking advantage.

"We've had a really good fourth quarter," Tubbs said.

"We have nothing to complain about. This has been a good month for us."

C.W. Cheney, a salesman at Taylor Motors, said the dealership has sold many new and used vehicles. "December has been a good month," he said.

Jewelry was also a popular Christmas gift this year. Jeff Horlacher, of Horlacher Jewelers, said the holiday season was "very good."

"It was pretty steady and we were pretty busy on the 26th," he said, adding it was probably better than some years past.

Diamonds and precious gems in pendants and earrings were some of the more popular gift items the business sold.

Donelan's Jewelry also had a good Christmas season. Deanna Mallory, one of the owners, was pleased with the holiday sales. "We ended up really good," she said. "It was slow getting there."

The day of Dec. 24 was "awesome," Mallory said. "We were very thankful," she said. "We felt very fortunate we ended the year well."

Sought after items at the shop were white gold, watches and Omega gold chains, which it sold out of.

Carol Hunter, manager of Maurice's, said the store had a lot of traffic this year.

"It was a great season," she said. Most everything in the store sold well but Hunter said sweatshirts and jewelry were popular gift ideas.

Furniture was another item that sold well in Colby. Eugene Wieland, one of the owners of Office Works and Home Furnishings, said the season went well, including a lot of out of town and local traffic.

Couches and recliners were two of his better-selling items over the holidays.

## Thomas County rated safe New Year's Eve spot

**By TISHA COX** *Colby Free Press*

Thomas County is apparently one of the safer places to be on New Year's Eve. In fact, it's one of the few places in the state that won't have extra patrols out tonight.

Pati O'Hara, acting chief of the Kansas Department of Transportation's Bureau of Traffic Safety, said "that's a good thing."

When compared to the rest of the state, Colby doesn't meet the requirements to be on the list to require sobriety checkpoints during the year, she said.

Each year, the state sponsors the "You Drink and Drive, You Lose" campaign aimed at enforcing the law and catching drivers who get behind the wheel under the influence of alcohol.

O'Hara said the state sponsors the Impaired Drug Deterrence Program through contracts with counties and municipalities around Kansas.

Thomas County and Colby aren't among the 93 law enforcement

agencies in the state participating in the program. She said it's because it's based on a list that takes into consideration population, road mileage and other factors, including accidents.

"We kind of prioritize those," O'Hara said, adding neither Thomas County nor Colby were even on the list. "It means you have fewer crashes," she said.

Colby doesn't have the population numbers, road miles or accident statistics to warrant being on the list, she said.

Undersheriff Mike Baughn said the sheriff's office won't have any additional patrols out tonight. He said there hasn't been a problem with excessive numbers of people driving under the influence in the county.

"People around here use good judgment," Baughn said. "We encourage everyone to have a good time and do so safely."

He said it's usually fairly calm on New Year's Eve.

Despite the low number of incidents, Baughn did offer a few pointers to stay safe.

"Use common sense and drink moderately," he said.

Baughn said having a designated driver is also a good idea.

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones said the police department also won't be adding extra patrols during the holiday.

He did say that officers are aware of the time of year and will be extra vigilant.

## Briefly

### No paper Thursday, yes Friday

The *Colby Free Press* will join in the celebration of New Year's Day and in so doing will not publish on that holiday. "They tell me there might be a football game or two on television that day and we will want to join millions of other Americans in front of the TV," said Tom Dreiling, publisher. "All good things must come to an end and we'll end ours at 8 a.m. on Friday with a full day's schedule. See you then," he said.

### Workforce Center has new hours

The Colby Workforce Center (formerly the Job Service Center) is now operating under new hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The center is located at 485 N. Chick.

### Trash schedule changes for holiday

The City of Colby Sanitation Department will not be operating on Thursday, Jan. 1, due to the holiday, said Gerry Bieker, director of public utilities. For those who normally have trash pick up on Thursday, their trash will be included along with the Friday route on Jan. 2. For questions, call the department at 462-4420.

### College board to meet

The Colby Community College board of trustees will meet at 5 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 5 in the board room of Thomas Hall. Items on the agenda include a campus tour, resignations and liquidated damages, approval of contracts and agreements, negotiations and the Wellness Center. The meeting is open to the public.

### Public hearing planned

The Colby Public Schools Board of Education has scheduled a public hearing at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 13 in the board room of the administration building, 400 W. Third St. The purpose of the hearing is to allow the public an opportunity to review the proposed petition to establish a charter school within the confines of the school district. Detailed information will be available at the hearing or by request from the district. For questions, call (785) 460-5000.

### Free barbecue on agenda next year

The Thomas County Fair Board will be accepting bids from anyone interested in handling the free barbecue for the 2004 county fair, said Audrey Hines, secretary. Those interested may send bids to the fair board at P.O. Box 260, Colby, Kan.

