



Merry Christmas!



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A girl, mother take miracle journey

By John Van Nostrand

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Christmas is founded upon the miracle birth of Jesus Christ from his virgin mother Mary.

In Brewster, there is another parent-child relationship that involves a miracle.

Whitney Schultz, 15, a freshman at Brewster High School, is getting her life back to what it was before she was diagnosed and treated for a brain tumor Labor Day weekend.

"She was very lucky," said Dawn Schultz, Whitney's mother. "The cancer had not spread. I prayed for a miracle." Whitney's father is Mike.

Whitney's life changed during the summer.

"In July, I went to a volleyball camp and had headaches and was dizzy," Whitney said over her school lunch. "And it kept coming on, even after the camp."

During the Thomas County Fair, the symptoms returned. She thought she was just dehydrated. During preseason volleyball practices, Whitney said the headaches continued.

"I would dive for a ball and feel dizzy," she said.

Bouncing off the floor for loose balls, Whitney thought she devel-

oped some back problems. She went to a chiropractor for treatments, which she said helped made her feel better, but only temporarily.

"After a volleyball game against Wheatland, she said she wanted to go back to the chiropractor," Dawn said. "On the way home, she said she had thrown up and had a headache."

Dawn said she decided to take Whitney to a doctor. Tests for mono and West Nile Virus were negative. She had symptoms for a sinus infection. The medication didn't help after a couple of days as the headaches continued. Dawn took Whitney to Citizens Medical Center's emergency room Sept. 3.

"They did blood work and other tests," Dawn said. "I thought she was just dehydrated. I blamed it on starting volleyball, starting school." Whitney was treated and released.

Later in the day, Whitney and Dawn were eating at relative's house in Brewster. Whitney told her mom she had lost feeling in an arm, leg and half her face.

"She was starting to slur words," Dawn said. "That made me panic."

Whitney was shocked. "I was getting bad," she said. "I lost my balance and was having seizures."

Even before the loss of feeling



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brewster's Whitney Schultz, left, poses for a Christmas card picture with her sister Avery and their cat Simon. Whitney started her freshman year at Brewster High with a brain tumor. Surgery removed the tumor but the incident increased her relationship with her mother, another cancer survivor. Avery dropped out of the University of Kansas to help Whitney with her recovery.

came on, Whitney said her 7-year-old cousin, who she plays with the families' dogs, noticed a change in her.

"Why are you so lazy," Whitney said her cousin asked.

"Labor Day weekend was not

fun," Whitney said. "All I wanted to do was sleep."

Dawn, 48, immediately took Whitney back to Citizens Medical Center's emergency room.

"This will be a repeat of what we did earlier," Dawn remembered

telling others.

Andy Rose was on call and ordered a CAT scan. A CAT scan is a high-tech, detailed body X-ray. Nothing abnormal appeared on the results.

"Her eyes looked wild, like she wasn't focusing," Dawn said. After the CAT scan, Whitney had a seizure. Rose ordered another CAT scan, which revealed the brain tumor.

"I remember him saying, 'I've got to see you in the hall,'" Dawn said. "Oh my gosh.no."

After Rose explained the brain tumor, he said Whitney must immediately be flown to Children's Hospital in Denver for treatment. About 90 minutes later, Whitney's flight to Denver left.

Whitney, who just days ago was putting volleyballs over nets, was preparing to have a portion of her skull removed to allow doctors to access her brain. Dawn said she handled the surgery very well.

"I wasn't scared for surgery," Whitney said. "But I had my moments. I thought I'd never be the same."

It wasn't a physical change Whitney went through.

Whitney said what helped her through her ordeal was what happened to her mother five years ago.

"I had breast cancer," Dawn said. "I went through chemo and radiation. She knows by watching me what's it's like. We are very close."

The timing of Whitney's incident is intriguing to Dawn.

"She's at the age kids want their independence but she is depending upon me. We traveled this journey together. She is amazing."

Whitney remembers a conversation she had with her mother.

"Mom, is that why you got it, to prepare me for this," she said.

The three-team of doctors in Denver that handled Whitney's case said her surgery went very well. The entire tumor was removed.

"She woke up perfectly. She moved everything. They have to tell you everything that could go wrong," Dawn said.

Doctors noticed four lesions on Whitney's spine. Three of them eventually faded away.

While in Denver, a friend of Dawn's visited Whitney in the hospital. Dawn said they talked about why people are put in certain situations.

"It has strengthened her faith and spirit," Dawn said. "I believe to get through what she is going through, you have to have faith and attitude."

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Ferrets return to the prairie

By Tom Betz

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The black-footed ferret, one of the rarest animals in North America, returned to Kansas on Tuesday as 24 pups were released in Logan County after more than two years of effort, legal wrangling and poisonings.

The prairie-dog-eating ferrets were released on land which has been the center of a dispute over allegedly uncontrolled prairie dog populations. Fourteen were divided between two sites about two miles apart on land owned by Larry Haverfield, Gordon Barnhardt and Maxine Blank.

Ten were taken to a Nature Conservancy property 10 miles to the east which has been managed to retain 2,000 acres of prairie dogs within the Smoky Valley Ranch Preserve.

As "wildlife-friendly" landowners, Haverfield and his friends have been fighting to reintroduce the black-footed ferrets as part of their way to keep the balance of nature. They have large prairie dog towns that are a perfect place for the tiny carnivores, but a red flag to neighbors.

The ferret were thought for years to be extinct, until in 1981 a small surviving colony was discovered by chance in Wyoming. Since then, the government has been trying to reintroduce and stabilize the population. Many ranchers, fearing the endangered species will block attempts to eliminate prairie dogs, have resisted.

Haverfield and Barnhardt have been at the forefront of a controversy that has pitted them and their attorney, Randy Rathbun of Wichita, against neighboring landowners, Logan County commissioners and the Kansas Farm Bureau.

Haverfield said Thursday the Fish and Wildlife representatives wanted to keep the release confidential until

after the ferrets had settled in.

"I am happy they are here," Haverfield said. "It is a good feeling to have them here. I don't know what will happen with all the legal stuff. Maybe the judge in Topeka will see this as a way out for him."

Haverfield said he went out Wednesday evening to see if he could spot any of the nocturnal animals, but did not see any.

"I have a spotlight on my pickup," he said, "and I will be looking for them any time I am driving through the area in the early evening."

Haverfield rotates his cattle from pasture to pasture each week and seems more willing to tolerate a few prairie dogs on his land. He is out moving cattle almost daily.

The battle over the plan to reintroduce the black-footed ferrets has taken a number of twists. The Logan County commissioners passing a resolution forbidding the "introduction" of the ferrets or any other endangered species in the county, but federal officials basically said the county couldn't tell them what to do.

Haverfield and Barnhardt were in Topeka on Nov. 20 for a hearing on a temporary restraining order from the Shawnee County to stop the poisoning of prairie dogs by Logan County on a permit issued by the state Department of Wildlife and Parks.

In October, the county had hired a firm from Tribune to poison about 100 acres of the Haverfield, Barnhardt and Blank land, with Phos-toxin and had him come in on a weekend to do the poisoning when Haverfield and his lawyer were unable to find a way to stop them until more than 30 acres had been done.

The day before the hearing, while Haverfield was headed to Topeka, the Logan County commissioners had the Tribune firm come in and poison more of the land with Rozol.

Haverfield said he found out about

the poisoning when he received a bill from the county.

He said the Rozol poison was spread around on the surface more than in the prairie dog holes, which is where the label on the product says it needs to be. He said he showed the poisoned area to several of the federal wildlife people after the ferrets were released.

Despite the shroud of secrecy around the release, the federal agency notified key players, including the Logan commissioners.

"Yeah, they called me," said Commission Chairman Doug Mackley. "They left a message on the phone."

What the county will do next is uncertain, he said.

"It's pretty tough to fight the federal government," Mackley said. "We'll talk about it. So far, we haven't done anything."

Haverfield and Barnhardt also face a civil lawsuit by 13 neighbors for damages and claim that the prairie dogs have caused a loss of land value in the area.

Haverfield said he does not know what is going to happen with that case, but that he had been told that all the neighbors for a mile around his 6,000-acre ranch are accepting a Fish and Wildlife program to help control prairie dogs.

While their maverick ways may not endeavor them to prairie-dog-hating neighbors, the two draw praise from environmental and wildlife groups.

"These landowners (Haverfield and Barnhardt) have resisted the efforts to force them and other landowners to poison their lands to exterminate prairie dogs," said Ron Klataske, executive director of Audubon of Kansas.

Calling the two "wildlife heroes," he said they have invested tens of thousands of dollars defending their right to conserve native species on their land.



A black-footed ferret peered out of its new home, a prairie dog burrow on ranchland owned by Gordon Barnhardt.

Pond prompts letter to FFA

By Patty Decker

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The Colby City Council requested its attorney write a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration at its meeting Tuesday asking for an onsite visit to determine whether or not there are safety or money concerns regarding a private pond located near the municipal airport.

The decision to ask for assistance from the federal agency was prompted after hearing from Tuffy and Linda Taylor, Colby residents, who own a house and pond near the airport.

For the Taylors, they said they believe the issue thus far has been "one-sided" and they wanted to be heard.

"We were given the right to proceed with plans for the evaporation basin," Tuffy told the council. "We have done nothing different than what you told us to do."

He told the council the pond is an evaporation basin, but it's not a mud hole. "If you shut my pond

down, we won't have a heating and cooling system because that's what makes it operate.

Councilmember Jim Brown told the council he went to the Taylor's home and saw the pond, adding that it was comparable in size to the Colby Municipal Pool.

"If someone is flying the correct pattern," Brown said, "they would be downwind and not over the pond either direction."

Brown added that he could not see where any wildlife or ducks could be attracted to the pond based on its location near the house, which was a concern by the airport board.

In October, Mark Ostmeyer, airport manager, flew over the pond. Ostmeyer said his concern was ducks and wildlife hitting an aircraft windshield in flight or an engine or airframes.

After hearing back from the airport board and the Federal Aviation Administration in November, the council began discussing the matter. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, allowing the pond to exist could cause the city

to be declared ineligible for future airport grants.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the city's biggest issue with the pond is FFA fund and losing future grants.

"The pond has a gradual slope from 2' to 6' deep and it won't go dry, but the water will go up and down."

"We just want people to leave us be," he said. "We have spent thousands and thousands of dollars and researched this carefully. If I seem emotional, I am, this is my home."

Brown added that he didn't see any hazard when he visited the pond. "We need to expedite this matter and start including Mr. Taylor in any discussions," said Councilmember Tom Waldschmidt.

The issue will be on hold until City Attorney John Gatz sends the letter to the FFA asking for a site visit.

Until then, nothing further will be decided.

"I am sorry to get in a conflict like this," Tuffy said, "but we have done everything you asked us to do."

Christmas lighting contest winners named

By Patty Decker

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The winners of the annual Colby Promotions Committee Christmas decorating contest were announced. Winners of the residential category were Brent and Connie Menges, 545 Cherokee Dr., first place. They received \$100 prize. The judges said the moving displays were colorful and a delight for children.

Second place, and \$75 went to John and Joann Tweed, 275 E. Ash

St. Judges liked the traditional lighting, adding it was "very nice."

In the business category, Tubbs and Sons, 810 S. Range Ave., took first place and \$75 for the use of lighting and a home scene in the showroom window.

Second place and a prize of \$50 went to Colby Community College, 1255 S. Range Ave. Judges liked the lighted tree that can be seen from Range Avenue.

"We had 51 entries this year," said Marvin Bickner, member of the Colby Promotion Committee.

Scrapbooking set

Heartland Christian School will hold a Crop 'Til you Drop, Scrapbooking fundraiser, 8 a.m.- 8p.m., Saturday, Jan. 5, at the school at 1995 W. Fourth in Colby. Cost is \$30 and includes meals. Call Lucy Wood to register, 460-2721.

Extension office closes

The Thomas County Extension office, 350 S. Range

Ave., will be closed Monday and through New Year's Day. The office will reopen Wednesday, Jan. 2.

Holiday trash dates set

The City of Colby's Sanitation Department will be picking up Monday and Tuesday (Dec. 24-25) trash on Wednesday, Dec. 26. For questions, call 460-4420.

Deadline near for tags

The Thomas County Treasurer's office is reminding

everyone whose last name begins with the letter U, X, Y or Z to have license tags renewed by Friday, Dec. 28 since the office will be closed Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. For questions, call 460-4520.

County meets Dec. 28

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m., Friday, Dec. 28 in the courthouse, 300 N. Court Ave. The agenda includes Health Administrator Lisa Molstad at 9 a.m.; Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper

will discuss the topcoat cover cost at 9:15 a.m.; and at 9:30 a.m. a proposal will be made for the 2008 County Employee Salaries and an Emergency Medical Technician salary proposal will be given.

Wellness fair scheduled

The 2008 Thomas County Wellness Fair will be held from 5 to 9 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7. Blood work dates are from 6 to 10 a.m., Jan. 16, 17 and 19 at Citizens Medical Center, 100 College Dr.