

**Deaths**

**William S. AraSmith**

William S. AraSmith, 78, Rexford, died Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009, in Colby. He was born May 16, 1931.

Funeral arrangements are pending with the Harrison Chapel, Colby, (785) 462-2331.

**Goats put to work on fire prevention**

Dear EarthTalk: I heard that goats are being used to prevent some of those catastrophic fires that seem to happen increasingly. What's the story with that? - Ali B., New Canaan, Conn.

As wildfires consume parts of California larger than some smaller states, everyone is talking about how we can prevent such disasters from getting going in the first place. One novel approach is to enlist goats. Not as firefighters - although their surefootedness and determination would probably serve them well in such situations - but as grazers to keep the forest underbrush clear of the tinder-like grasses, bushes and small trees that allow flames to jump to the higher forest canopy and get further spread by the wind.

"Goats help prevent forest fires ... by eating the dry stuff before the fire season strikes," says Lani Malmberg, owner of Colorado-based Ewe4ic (pronounced "u-for-ik") Ecological Services, which uses goats to gradually and naturally remove weeds and return lands to a healthier more natural state.

Goats have been called in for fire mitigation purposes across parts of California, Arizona and other drought-prone parts of the western U.S. In the Oakland and Berkeley hills regions of California's Bay Area, where the combined effects of drought and a bark beetle infestation have killed thousands of acres of trees, public agencies and residents have enlisted the help of goat herds to suppress weeds and keep down the fire risk in the process for what remains of the area's forest cover.

"The goat clearance scheme is one of the key reasons the Bay Area hasn't had a recurrence of a catastrophic fire in decades," says

Tom Klatt, former manager of the Office of Emergency Preparedness at UC Berkeley and the author of UC Berkeley's 2007 Fire Mitigation Program Annual Report.

Other earth-minded land managers are going goat as well. The Nature Conservancy recently hired goats to keep dry grasses and other tinder-like plant matter down at its Hassayampa River Preserve in Arizona, where the constant threat of summer fires haunts nearby homeowners while endangering the integrity of the area's unique and fragile riparian ecosystem.

Using goats to control forest brush may seem like a novel idea, but it's been around as long as grazing animals have looked for nourishment. But with ever-increasing human development, wild grazers are fewer and farther between. The problem is exacerbated by our building our homes so close to (and sometimes within) forested areas that naturally burn occasionally. Efforts to then suppress all forest fires - even naturally occurring undergrowth burns - to protect these homes have led to "tinderbox" conditions ripe for those large destructive fires that spread for hundreds of miles, blown by the wind from treetop to treetop.

Grazing goats are also used in other endeavors. "Goats can be utilized as an effective bio-control agent to reduce weed populations to economically acceptable levels," says Malmberg, adding that weeding with goats requires no pesticides or herbicides and generates zero greenhouse gas or other harmful emissions.

CONTACTS: Ewe4ic Ecological Services, www.goatseatweeds.com; Office of Emergency Preparedness at UC Berkeley, oep.berkeley.edu.

**Thomas County Jail**

Booked into the Thomas County jail:

- Joseph Benson Foraker, 26, Colby, Sept. 5, harassment by telephone, Colby Police Department, released same day on notice to appear.
- Matthew Trevor Jones, 30, Colby, Sept. 13, theft-more than \$1,000, Keith County Neb., released same day to other agency.
- Colby Ryan Elliott, 20, Colby, Sept. 20, reckless driving, Thomas County Sheriff's Office, released same day on notice to appear.
- Kevin James Hazlett, 30, Colby, Sept. 21, driving with license suspended or revoked, no proof of insurance, Colby Police, released same day on notice to appear.
- Craig Jay Hiebert, 45, Mor-

risson, Colo., Sept. 22, driving under the influence, open container, Colby Police, released Sept. 23 on notice to appear.

- Jesus Manuel Jeffries, 32, Wauneta, Neb., Sept. 22, open container, driving with license suspended or revoked, speeding, Kansas Highway Patrol, released Sept. 23 on notice to appear.
- Chanel Marie Siruta, 23, Colby, Sept. 23, driving under the influence, Colby Police Department, released same day on notice to appear.
- Myron Anthony Bice, 31, Rexford, Sept. 24, giving a worthless check, Thomas County Sheriff's Office, released same day on supervised probation.

**On the Beat**

**COLBY POLICE Saturday**

5:40 p.m. - Erratic driver northbound on Franklin from College. Stopped vehicle at Chick and Third. Report for driving while suspended.

9:02 p.m. - Smoke smelled in 900 block of W. Sixth was pit barbecue in the area.

**Sunday**

12:42 a.m. - Security check at the B-Hive.

8:07 a.m. - Two dogs at large in the 200 block of W. Sixth.

9:59 a.m. - Criminal trespass: Subjects reported carrying out items without permission from old hospital building at 210 S. Range. Three officers responded.

10:53 a.m., 12:10, 12:23 p.m. - Burglary reports filed in connection to above incident.

4 p.m. - Theft of fuel from Dillon's. Highway Patrol located vehicle on I-70 mile 49.

**Monday**

2:59 a.m. - Injury broke out bedroom window.

9:23 a.m. - Pastor at First Baptist Church reported church broken into on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

10:28 a.m. - Disorderly conduct/criminal damage to property: 911 call saying nephew was out of control.

3:34 p.m. - Crossing guard reported vehicle in handicapped parking and when asked to move refused. Spoke with subject.

7:29 p.m. - Battery: subject came to station saying sister had

hit him. Sisters called saying brother had hit her.

9:08 p.m. - Burglary: vehicle broken into at 1260 W. Third.

10:10 p.m. - Hit and run accident at 700 S. Franklin.

**Tuesday**

12:56 a.m. - Secured doors at Meadow Lakes.

2:24 a.m. - Fight behind B-Hive. Unable to locate anyone.

3:08 a.m. - Security check at Holiday Inn Express.

4:56 a.m. - Security check to downtown businesses.

10:20 a.m. - Complaint of scam call. Report filed.

12:50 p.m. - Vehicle dragging items on 1900 block of S. Range. Contacted driver.

**THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Saturday**

3:26 p.m. - Cory Kistler reported vandalism in 2300 block of County Rd. CC.

9:44 p.m. - Injury accident with cow on County Rd. 25 and DD.

**Sunday**

10:24 a.m. - Assisted police on trespassing call at old hospital at 210 S. Range.

4 p.m. - Assisted Highway Patrol on I-70 mile 49 in reference to Dillon's gas skip.

4 p.m. - Loud music at First and Center, Rexford.

**Monday**

11:14 a.m. - 911 call needing traffic control for grain truck that lost two tires in the 500 block of U.S. 83.

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