

Family buys repair business

By Sharon Corcoran

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A former engineer and airplane repairman's desire to be near his grandson and a mechanic's desire to own a business led the engineer and his step-son to buy a shop here together.

Micha Seamans and his wife Lana moved to Goodland from North Carolina in March after Lana's son, Drew Miller, and Seamans bought Dennis Malsom's repair shop. The Seamanses said they wanted to be closer to Drew, his wife Whitney Jo and their son Aiden, nearly 18 months old, and Drew wanted to own his own shop.



Drew Miller

The father and step-son bought the shop together and call it S&M Repair. They have Lana as the office manager, Drew's brother-in-law, Mark Carmichael, as lead mechanic and Richard Beard, a graduate from the diesel department at the Northwest Kansas Technical College, all working for them.

Even Aiden helps out. "He's our crew chief," Micha said.

He comes in to play with the nuts and bolts, Drew added. Down the road, Micha said, Aiden will definitely be working at the shop and he could own the business eventually.

Seamans said he had worked as an engineer in North Carolina the last 12 years and was an airplane mechanic for 12 years, in the military and as a craft crew chief for American Airlines. Then he went to school and earned his engineering degree.

He was ready for a change when they decided to buy the business.

"I was working on the computer 12 hours a day designing," he said, "and did that for 12 years. I got burned out on it. I was ready to go back to being a mechanic."

Miller said he worked for Malsom while he was attending the technical college, then went to work at Yost Farm Supply, where Carmichael was the foreman. He went back to Malsom's and was trying to find a way to buy the shop.

"I always wanted to buy a shop," Miller said. "My great-grandfather had a shop in Bird City, the Balyard Garage."

Miller said raced cars all through high school, and that's what inspired him to become a mechanic.

Seamans said his experience working on aircraft has helped him in the business. A bolt's a bolt and a nut's a nut, he said; they're different systems but related. One difference, he said, is up in the air, you don't want anything falling off and causing anyone to fall out of the sky, and down here, you don't want anything falling off and causing some-



Micha Seamans (above) worked on a semitrailer rig at S&M Repair on Thursday, while Mark Carmichael (left) worked on a roller coaster.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

"We try to please every customer that comes through the door," Seamans added.

They describe the business as a "jack of all trades."

"We're the only ones that work on everything," Miller said, "motor homes, RVs, lawn mowers."

Besides being mechanics, Miller and Carmichael are avid racers, and Seamans puts golf clubs together and is an assistant coach for the Goodland Cowboys football team.

Football's a way to give something to the community, he said, to help kids. He played football for Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Ga., a NCAA Division I-AA school.

Golfing is a hobby for him, but Seamans said he is a professional club maker. He makes custom sets of golf clubs. Everyone has a different swing, he said, and different speeds. If everyone was the same height and strength, he said, it wouldn't matter — all golf clubs could be the same. As it is, he said, it's crucial that a golfer's clubs be made to fit his size and strength.

one to run into someone else.

He said the business is like a roller coaster; the work comes and goes, but they have been doing well and enjoy it.

"We're doing OK," Seamans said. "We're not getting rich, but we're making a living."

It's demanding, he said, a lot of work. They get called out to I-70 alot, sometimes in the middle of the night, and they work on vehicles along the road when they can. Otherwise, they tow them in. They're available 24 hours a day, Miller said.

Monument Rocks 'Eight Wonders' finalist

What do two western Kansas semifinals for the Eight Wonders of Kansas contest have in common?

Monument Rocks and Lake Scott State Park are 18 miles apart and both are off of U.S. 83 in Scott County. Both feature scenic rock formations, beautiful vistas and a wealth of state history.

An informal event with speakers at both sites is planned for Saturday. Talks at Monument Rocks will be from 8 to 10 a.m. (Mountain Time) and at Lake Scott State Park from 1 to 3 p.m. beside the El Quartejeo pueblo ruins. There will be time between the talks for exploring these locations on your own.

In case of bad weather, people should not drive on muddy roads to Monument Rocks. Alternate locations in case of rain are at Keystone Gallery for the Monument Rocks speaker and the shelter house adjacent to El Quartejeo at Lake Scott.

Jim McCauley, a geologist with the Kansas Geological Survey, will speak at Monument Rocks. He is the co-author of "Roadside Kan-

sas," which details geologic landmarks and history throughout Kansas identified by major highway mile-markers.

Tom Witty, a retired state archaeologist, will speak at Lake Scott. He was instrumental in the restoration of the El Quartejeo ruins in the late 1960s and early '70s. He will show personal slides on the pueblo's history, offering a unique perspective of the ruins from the initial discovery to the restoration.

Monument Rocks — the first National Natural Landmark designated in Kansas — is known for monolithic Niobrara chalk formations rising out of the buffalo grass prairie. Travelers on the Smoky Hill Trail, established in 1858, used the landmarks to help navigate their way to the gold fields in Colorado.

Lake Scott was one of the early parks established in Kansas in the

late 1920s. The natural canyon was home to the El Quartejeo Pueblo Indian, the northeastern most Pueblo location in the U.S. National Geographic designated this prime location as one of 50 outstanding parks in America.

An IMAX film crew from National Geographic visited and filmed the locations last year for footage to be used in the upcoming "Sea Monsters" movie premiering the first part of October.

Monument Rocks
From Oakley, drive 20 miles south on US 83 to Jayhawk Road, then turn east four miles, south three miles, east a mile, then south.

Download a road map by going to www.keystonegallery.com. Contact Keystone Gallery at (620) 872-

2762 for information or e-mail keystone@plpnt.com

Lake Scott
From Oakley, 30 miles south on U.S. 83 to K-95, turn right and follow the signs down into the park. Contact Lake Scott State Park at (620) 872-2061 for information, e-mail at scottsp@wp.state.ks.us or visit their website www.kdwp.state.ks.us Park entrance fee required.

The Eight Wonders of Kansas is a project of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. Voting for the semifinals began on June 1 and will end on Dec. 31. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius will announce the finalists on Kansas Day, Jan. 29. To see all the semifinals and vote, go to the website at 8wonders.org.

Judge orders state to stop poisoning

By Tom Betz
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A Shawnee County District Court judge issued a temporary restraining order last week against the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to stop the gassing of prairie dogs in southern Logan County.

The restraining order was the latest chapter in a more than two-year battle over prairie dogs between the Logan County commissioners and a few landowners, mainly south of Russell Springs.

At the heart of the fight is whether, under a 1904 state law, the county can force ranchers to eradicate all prairie dogs on their land, or have the rodents killed and bill the landowner. A group of cattlemen interested in "natural" control by reintroducing the rare black-footed ferret has been fighting the county.

The battle pits statewide farm groups that usually tout the "sanctity" of farmers' property rights against landowners who don't want the county coming on their land with poison. Some fear having an endangered species in the area will give the government control over their lands.

Larry Haverfield, who feeds cattle on his 6,720 acres of grassland south of the former county seat, said Sunday he received notice of the restraining order Monday afternoon. Haverfield went looking for Donald Walter, an exterminator of Tribune hired by Logan County to poison about 100 acres of borderland belonging to Haverfield and Gordon Barnhardt, who have been at the center of a controversy.

Walter's crew had shown up late on Friday, Sept. 7, and worked Saturday and Sunday to finish poisoning a 100-yard strip on Haverfield's land.

"I had a call from Walter on Monday morning asking if we were going to unlock the gate to Barnhart's land," Haverfield said, "and I told him I was not going to unlock it."

"When I got the restraining order, I went looking for Walter, but couldn't find him."

Walter was working under a permit was issued Sept. 4 by the wildlife agency under the signature of Keith Sexson, assistant secretary for operations, allowing him to use aluminum phosphide, which produces a poison gas, for prairie dog control.

Haverfield's attorney, Randal K. Rathbun of Wichita, filed for the restraining order in Shawnee County, he said, because under state law that is the district court that has jurisdiction.

"The judge's ruling also halted Logan County's commissioners from using aluminum phosphide on these properties as part of their

aggressive campaign to eradicate prairie dogs in that county," said Ron Klataske, executive director of the Audubon of Kansas. "The Logan County Farm Bureau, Kansas Farm Bureau and the Logan County Commission have sought to force the landowners to eradicate prairie dogs from their land as a strategy to prevent the experimental reintroduction of black-footed ferrets."

Logan County filed suit against Haverfield and several neighbors in December asking the court to allow the county to go onto the lands to eradicate the prairie dogs.

Klataske said he was scheduled to testify on Haverfield's behalf, adding that he believes these wildlife-friendly landowners are serving a broad public wildlife conservation purpose needed in Kansas.

Haverfield said the county's lawsuit had been dismissed last week in Logan County District Court. The county dropped the lawsuit with a settlement that involved nothing more than an admission by the landowners that they had received notice from the county ordering them to eradicate prairie dogs and that they didn't do it, he said.

"I have not seen the document," he said "but our attorney said he thought we sort of came out well. I think it is possible the county and the Farm Bureau did not want the case to actually end up in court because they had a better chance to lose than they thought."

A brief Rathbun produced when the lawsuit was scheduled for trial mentioned a previous case involving North Dakota and the protection of wetlands. In that suit, the court held that the Congressional intent to protect threatened and endangered species superseded state law.

"Knee-jerk hostility to the Endangered Species Act and the federal government has clouded the county's judgment in this case," Klataske said.

Haverfield said he continues to try to keep his prairie dogs from getting onto his neighbor's land, and is looking for an exterminator to use zinc phosphide to treat his border areas, about 200 acres.

"I tried to hire Walter," Haverfield said, "but he told me he could not do it because of his contract with Logan County."

"I am looking for a licensed person to poison my border areas."

Haverfield said he is continuing to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about reintroducing the black-footed ferret.

He said he does not know what action the state might take about the restraining order but said it appears the ball is in their court.

matters of record

Municipal Court

These are cases decided by the Goodland Municipal Court:

Aug. 1: Milton Blaine Varney, driving in violation of restriction, diversion, \$150.

Danyale A. Nothdurft, battery and disorderly conduct, diversion, \$350.

Bret M. Jarmin, disorderly conduct, diversion, \$250.

Aug. 3: Michael W. Brannick, speeding 10 mph over limit, fined \$90.

Gregory L. Nemechek, speeding 12 mph over limit, fined \$98.

Aug. 6: Gustavo Aguilar, speed-

ing 11 mph over limit, fined \$94.

Matthew John Miller, speeding 10 mph over limit, diversion, \$190.

Aug. 7: Donald D. Seachris, failure to report property damage, fined \$250.

Aug. 8: Martha A. Alfaro, speeding 10 mph over limit, fined \$90.

Jerry K. Amthor, speeding 13 mph over limit, fined \$102.

Meghan R. Weber, speeding 14 mph over limit, fined \$106.

Aug. 9: Nichole Fose, speeding 10 mph over limit, fined \$91.

Margaret M. Bauman, speeding 10 mph over limit, fined \$90.

corrections

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