

# Rest of the story about burning deaths

Tragedy struck two young men in their 20's in Goodland on the night of January 5, 1904. According to a lengthy account in The Goodland Republic, a fire caused by one of the men resulted in their horrific deaths. This is a continuation of that article which appeared more than a century ago and contains a death bed confession of one of the men.

## TWO MEN BURNED TO DEATH: FATALLY BURNED WITH GASOLINE

(Continued from previous edition) Since working at the Depot hotel the two young men (James Welch and Robert Fleet) had been given a little room in the laundry building just north of the hotel. The room was provided with a bed, a stand, a closet in one corner, and a window on the west. In cleaning their clothes Sunday evening the men placed a cup of gasoline on the window sill and used a brush to apply it with. The room being very small, was soon filled with gas vapors, and when the match was struck (by Welch to light a cigarette) with no thought of the danger, the gas flashed up with fire from all the clothing. Welch was dressed, but Fleet was in his underclothing



## marcia smith

• from the vault

preparing to retire. In an instant both occupants were flames of fire, and it is doubtful if human power is swift enough to have saved them from the fatal effect of the burns.

Dr. Gulick, coroner, made a statement of the accident from the testimony of the men, corroborated by witnesses of the scene. No blame is attached to the management of the hotel, and according to the statement of Welch, the fire was the result of a heedless and fatal moment.

Fleet Tells Secret History  
Robert Fleet, a well built, fine looking young man of twenty years, did not complain of the accident, but simply said Welch lit a match to smoke a cigarette after they had been cleaning their clothes with gasoline. A lighted lamp was on the stand, but it did not start the flame. Fleet surmised that he was fatally burned, and asked Dr. Smith if he could get

well. The doctor shook his head and stepped away, not seen by Fleet. And again, he asked the question and wanted to know honestly, when

Dr. Smith told him he was going to die.

"Then I've got a whole lot on my mind I want to tell," Fleet said. "My folks live in Salisbury, Mo., and I want you to telegraph them I've been burned and am dying." He then called Mrs. Archer, sister of Mrs. C.C. Young, and said he wanted to tell her some secrets. She seemed so like a mother to him that he had taken to calling her Auntie; and not wishing to die without some words in his own defense, he told Mrs. Archer he was not exactly the good little boy she thought he was, and that he had had his troubles and was going under the assumed name of DeVoe. He said he was not guilty of the charge against him by the parents of the girl with whom he had been implicated by another.

The details of Fleet's story are treasured up in secrecy, but it ap-

pears that there was another man in the case, and Fleet was determined to have a settlement with him. Fleet met him one night and used his enemy so roughly that the fellow was laid up for a week or so, and while convalescing was taken with typhoid fever and died. This unfortunate condition was the cause of Fleet leaving the place and taking up residence somewhere else to avoid possible prosecution. So when coming to Goodland he gave the name of DeVoe.

Mrs. Young, wife of the Depot hotel proprietor, said that Fleet had come to him on November 19 and wanted to get work until there was an opening for him in the railroad shops. He was given a place in the lunch counter, but finally having a chance to learn to be a cook he changed his mind about working for the railroad and continued to stay at the hotel. Mr. Young said that from all appearances Fleet was a good boy, gentlemanly in his ways. He had come to Goodland by way of Norton.

### Welch's Itinerary

On his dying couch Welch, who was 23, gave little of his history. He came to Goodland from Chicago,

December 24, and when asking for a position with the hotel, said he was a member of the Union of Waiters, and his service in the dining room was evidence that he was a good waiter. But when Welch's father was here Tuesday, he manifested a very tender feeling for his son saying that he was a good boy, but like many others, had lived his life a little on the wayward side. The young man had traveled with a circus for a year or so and then went to England for three years to search for his father's ancestors. Since that time he had worked as a hotel waiter around the

As Mr. Welch, Sr., is a Mason, his home lodge in Illinois telegraphed the Masonic lodge in Goodland to take charge of the son's body. A committee of Masons met the elder Mr. Welch at the station and accorded marked consideration during his short stay. He left with his son's body on No. 6 back to Illinois on Wednesday morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Young did everything in their power to mitigate the suffering of the two young men, and with various attentions softened the hard circumstances of the tragedy at their hotel.

## club news

### Lincoln Larks

A taco party was held Thursday, March 6, for the Lincoln Larks members and LaDonna Frerichs at the Assembly Room in Sherman County Courthouse.

A very good lesson on "Change One" was given by Melinda Daily which includes change one meal at a time or one food at a time. The key principles are making one change at a time. Understand portion sizes, not math. All foods are allowed. Eating for a healthy weight is the same as eating for health. Your are to have 1300 to 1600 calories a day with three meals and snacks - an average person's daily allowance is 2000 calories per day.

Why breakfast is key? Breakfast is the single most important meal to start with and encourages healthy eating throughout the day.

The lunch menu is the biggest challenge of the day with the meal being in the middle of crowded schedules, work, errands and distractions. Lunch is the meal that people are least likely to eat at home with less control over what is on the menu.

Brain chemicals that give us a sense of control are cortisol and adrenaline which peak right after we get up in the morning. Too little calcium triggers the release of a hormone called calcitriol which tells the body to store fat rather than burn it.

Secondly snack time takes the edge off hunger and making losing weight. Make snacks work for you by paying attention to hunger cues and signals that alert us when the body's energy stores are dipping low and as hunger intensifies will power weakens.

Then at dinner time slow down, relax, enjoy and no gobbling down meals. So pull up a chair and enjoy.

In closing change one by starting a fitness program and have a sample activity schedule. So make your life style change now.

Daily gave a very interesting lesson and you missed a lot by not coming. Several quizzes were given during the lesson.

The Lincoln Larks are hostess

to the Spring meeting to be held in Colby on Monday, April 14.

### Goodland Federated Music Club

The regular monthly meeting of the Goodland Federated Music Club was held Monday, February 4, at the home of Linda Lucas.

President Martha Gunderson called the meeting to order. Members sang the club Song and the state theme song, recited the Federation Collect, and sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints", hymn of the month. Gunderson, club pianist, accompanied the singing and Birkley Barnes gave the hymn's history.

Minutes of the previous meeting and the treasurer's report were read and approved. Under Unfinished Business--By unanimous consent the Secretary was instructed to send an invitation to Bobbi Wolski to become a music club member. New Business--Barnes reported that she had contacted Andrew Salvador about doing the recital for the District Meeting to be held in Goodland this Fall. Salvador expressed that he wished to do part of the recital, but not the entire recital. Ideas were discussed as to performer possibilities for the remainder of the recital, but no decisions were made. President Gunderson also reminded us to be thinking ahead to the junior senior student recital on May 4th, and to check our club books for the related committee assignments.

The program consisted of music and lyrics by Rodgers and Hammerstein. "It's a Grand Night for Singing", a vocal trio by Linda Lucas-soprano; Birkley Barnes-soprano; Eva Lou Selby-alto and accompanied by Linda Koons, set the tone of the program. Gunderson presented the course of study about Rodgers and Hammerstein. Enhancing the study of their music involved group singing of "Gettting to Know You" from "The King and I"; "O, What a Beautiful Morning" from "Oklahoma"; "Do Re Mi" from "Sound of Music"; and "Edelweiss" from "Sound of Music".

The meeting was declared adjourned.

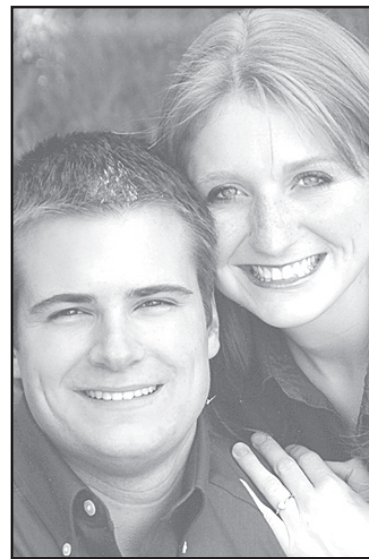
Reported by Eva Lou Selby, Secretary

# Couple plan wedding in May

Michael Dewaine Mangus of Kanorado and Emily Claire Beck of Manhattan plan to marry on Saturday, May 31, 2008, at St. Isidore's Catholic Church in Manhattan.

The groom-elect is the son of Danny and Charlene Mangus of Kanorado and grandson of Dorothy Mangus of Kanorado and Glen and Meme Carper of Jennings. He is a 2004 graduate of Goodland High School and a senior in mechanical engineering at Kansas State University, where he works at the National Gas Machinery Lab.

The future bride is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Terry Beck of Manhattan. She graduated from Manhattan High School in 2004 and is a senior in bioengineering at K-State. She is pianist at the Blue Valley Memorial United Methodist Church and a math tutor.



Mangus and Beck

## matters of record

### Goodland Police

The following incidents have been reported to the Goodland Police Department:

**Feb. 29** — 1:48 p.m., 700 W. 10th, arrested Jerry D. Blake for driving under influence. Case referred to city attorney.

**March 1** — 9:41 a.m., 510 Sherman Ave., Dale Davis reported criminal damage to property.

**March 4** — 2:59 p.m., 403 E. 17th, arrested Corbin Huffman and Nicholas Slusher for theft from Kears Quality Liquor. Case referred to city attorney.

5:15 p.m., 2810 Commerce Road, Apt. 1, arrested Monica Louise Baker and Teresa A. Marshall for battery and disorderly conduct against each other. Case referred to city attorney.

7:39 a.m., 813 1/2 Broadway Ave., arrested Teresa A. Marshall on a city warrant. Case referred to city attorney.

## Brewster All-Star Booster Club

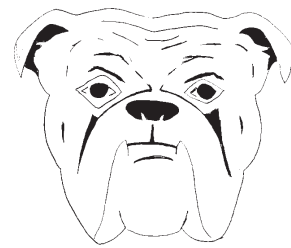
### Calendar for March 18 to March 24

**Tuesday:** Casual individual portraits.

**Friday, March 21 to Friday, 28:** Spring break and Easter.



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# Doo Wop Saturday Night

presented by Colby Tumbleweed and McCook Prairie Statesmen Barbershop Choruses



Headline Quartet — Cabaret



Guest Chorus — Ignition

# Saturday, March 29

Two performances 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Colby High School Auditorium



Tickets:  
\$10.00 Advance  
\$12.00 at the Door  
Contact any member or call: 785-462-2474

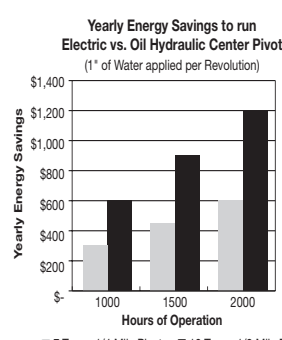


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