

From the archives of Liberal's hometown newspaper since 1886.

Researched and compiled by A.J. Coleman, L&T Reporter



1963

Hot sales, fires and solar eclipse

Full-page advertisements built up the excitement for the annual Bazaar Days sidewalk sale all over Liberal.

The event, the ad said, was a chance to “shop on the streets! Wear wacky clothes! Meet happy people! Buy snazzy bargains! Laugh and get laughed at! Have fun, fun, fun!”

To give parents a chance to shop all day, the Tucker Theater provided free “sitter’s shows” from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. “So, park the kids, have fun!” the ad encouraged. At Ideal Food Stores, free pony rides would continue from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. Tucker’s Men’s and Boys’ Wear offered 50-cent grab bags, packed with “at least \$5 of merchandise.” Gibson’s Discount Store promoted its air-conditioning and low prices as “Cool shopping for hot bargains.” The sale was sponsored by the Liberal Chamber of Commerce’s retail division.

A total eclipse of the sun got everyone excited, since it was the first in 30 years. However, the newspaper warned everyone, especially parents and young children, to avoid looking directly at the sun. The sun would not be completely covered from view in Liberal, but staring at even the partial eclipse could cause permanent damage to eyes, the paper warned in an editorial. In order to give everyone an idea of how the eclipse looked, the Times staged a time-lapse photo with 12 separate exposures, and published it on the front page the next day.

Across town, a fire at the airport got out of control when the wind came up and pushed the flames closer to a storage building with acetylene gas bottles inside. The city had started the fire on purpose to burn off a sludge pit, but then had to put the whole thing out with a cloud of steam from the city fire trucks.

Seven young men from Liberal and the area had signed up to join the U.S. Navy, and they boarded a Central Airlines airplane the morning of July 25, 1963 for Kansas City, and then San Diego. Pictured on the front page were John Wayne Spencer, Laurence B. Harness, Robert Wayne Phillips, Robert Dean Wares, David Michael Shores, James Calvin Norton, and Ronald Myron Dunn of Plains. It was the largest single group ever sent by local U.S. Navy recruiter John Kane.

The school offices moved to a new location — the old Liberal post office, located at Fourth Street and Kansas Avenue. Superintendent of Schools Marvin Forker, elementary coordinator Ed Reed and school psychologist Larry Barrow moved their offices to the building, and the school board also planned to hold its meetings there.

“When school opens in September,” the article read, “the office practices and distributive education classes will also meet at the building.” The city had purchased the building as surplus from the federal government, and offered its use to the school district rent-free.

“All in a night’s work,” read the headline describing what Liberal Police Department officers encountered one summer night. First, police found a woman walking barefoot down Kansas Avenue, wearing a nightgown. She’d “taken all the pills she could get her hands on and wanted to die,” the officers reported. When her husband drove up, “everybody went to the hospital to check out her story via the stomach method.”

Next, the police were called to the U.S. Hwy. 54 and U.S. Hwy. 83 junction to check on a report that two kids were heading east, one pushing the other in a wheelchair. The boys, 12 and 7 years old, said they were running away. They, too, had family members following them.