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

Researched and compiled by Amira Coleman, L&T Reporter



1963

Flood brings boat to Liberal streets

Kansas' unpredictable weather patterns were a way of life for Liberal residents in October 1963 and now. A flash flood had hit the northwest part of Liberal, causing flooded basements and littered debris throughout that part of town.

Five-and-a-half miles from town, 80 percent of the maize crop had been lost due to the torrential hail that passed through town along with the heavy rain. Other crops were also affected, and the new wheat that had just come up was practically completely destroyed.

“One of the most amazing things about the storm was the widely varying amounts of rain dumped less than a mile apart,” the Times reported. Some part of town got five inches, and

others only got one. People were asked to stay off of the streets in some areas. On one street, a boat was reported to be in use. Of course, Liberal's citizens bounced back from the effects of the bad weather, as they always do.

A large crowd — 2,180 members of the Liberal Municipal Music Association — showed up at Rindom Hall at Liberal High School (the building on Seventh Street between Lincoln and Grant Avenues) to hear Tong Il Han, a virtuoso pianist of Korea perform on Oct. 17, 1963. He played many Western world classics, including Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, Prokovieff's Sonata No. 6, and other pieces by Chopin and Debussy.

The Municipal Music Association's ballots showed that a majority of the attendees enjoyed the concert. One serious pianist expressed that he was grateful that Liberal could expose its audience to one of the world's greatest music figures.

It took three curtain calls from the enthusiastic audience to gain an encore from the perfectionistic artist, as he only responded when he felt he played well.

"There were no gratuitous encores," the Times reported.

Much like Liberal's 2013 homecoming queen, the 1963 homecoming queen was honored by the Times with a front-page picture of her with the homecoming royalty. Her escort, Redskin fullback and captain, was injured, but got back in the lineup just long enough to present roses to, crown, and kiss her. The homecoming queen was Vicki Ditch, a senior, and her attendants were Starla Cox, sophomore, Martha Dryer, senior, Sheryl Adams, junior, and Linda Ewing, junior.

A "gang of roving vandals" slashed 56 tires on 24 cars in various areas of Liberal Oct. 22, 1963, a Tuesday night. The first punctures were reported at 8:53 p.m. near the First Christian Church, where nine vehicle's tires had been slashed. The vandals seemed to have used "razor-sharp pen knives," and also hit the 600, 900, and 1000 blocks on S. New York and S. Pennsylvania, as well as another section on N. Pershing, Lincoln, Sherman, Jordan, Prospect and Princeton Avenues. All four tires were punctured on many cars, and on one pickup truck, even the spare was slashed.

A first-grader, 6 year-old Randy Lee Brake, was reported missing from Garfield School on Oct. 22, 1963. The police believed that Brake had been removed from school by his mother, but it wasn't confirmed. The boy's father, Sanford Brake, and mother, were separated, with a pending divorce.

An unknown woman had called Mr. Brake's office and left a message with his secretary saying that Randy wasn't in school, but with his mother. Randy was seen by a teacher getting into a car with two women. The car had Oklahoma license plates, where Brake's mother was presumed to be living.

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