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1964

Locals take classes on nuclear fall-out monitoring

Two men picked up heavy fines and sentences over the weekend back in 1964. One man was from Liberal, and the other from Durant, Okla. The sentences and fines picked up were both in relation to drunken driving and traffic charges.

Charles Robert Snook, of Liberal, drew a \$275 fine and a 90-day sentence for drunken driving, improper lane usage, no driver's license and driving left of center.

William Cole Tipton, of Durant, Okla, was fined \$300, along with a 90-day sentence in lieu of fine, for drunken driving, illegal liquor transport and no driver's license.

The Liberal Municipal Music association of 1964 was in peril after an unprecedented cancellation of the key performance of the season, "Brigadoon." In hopes of saving the season, the young executive vice-president offered to fly to New York at his own expense, and seek a replacement that would outshine the previous season finale.

The only possible replacement that would not simply be seen as a downgrade was "Camelot," which was traveling to major cities in both the United States and Canada.

Many people claimed that Liberal was too small to facilitate such a huge production. Thankfully, the association persisted in bringing "Camelot" to Liberal, and it was a huge success, all around.

Larry Ling, high school physics and science instructor conducted the first of eight classes on nuclear fall-out monitoring, under the sponsorship of the local Civil Defense unit.

The first class was 20 eager citizens. The session was devoted to various methods of reading radiological meters, and how to take into account the normal radiation factor present every day.

"Dr. Otto Prochazka stressed the importance of being able to detect the beta ray penetration in the shelter," noted the Times. The next two-hour class was to be covering the subject of live cobalt 60.

Liberal got a new superintendent of schools in the February of 1964. Ronald L. Stafford had been the Hugoton superintendent for six years and was an administrator for 14 of his 15 years of working in school systems in Kansas.

After screening 45 applicants, and narrowing it down to five possibilities, at least one of which had a doctorate, and two others very close to having doctorates, the Board of Education settled on Stafford, who was ideal for the task ahead of him.

Before earning his degree, Stafford had served as a Naval aviation cadet in World War II at the

University of Oklahoma, which is where he finished his bachelor of arts degree. Liberal was eager to have him, and Stafford was as just as eager to move to Liberal and serve as superintendent.

Just as Liberal experienced a heavy snow recently, highways south and east of Liberal were blocked due to a 'million dollar snow' in 1964.

People were told to stay clear of the highway while workmen attempted to snowplow the highway. Cars and trucks were found on the highway, jamming up the works of those trying to make the highway drivable.

The snow in Liberal piled up from 4-10 inches, while surrounding areas in the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles were experiencing much heavier weather, ranging from 12 to 14 inches. Schools were closed throughout the area — just as they are today in 2014.