

Big band concert planned in Hoxie

Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians with Al Pierson, director, will be presented on Sunday, Oct. 3rd, at 3 p.m. in the Hoxie High School Auditorium. The Royal Canadians will perform a concert of Big Band era tunes, and their logo has been to play "the sweetest music this side of heaven."

The program is presented by Western Plains Arts Commission and Kansas Arts Commission. Admission is with season ticket or tickets at the door.

Countless people remember with nostalgia the tradition of Guy Lombardo with his Royal Canadians playing at New York's Waldorf Astoria on New Year's Eve. The band was formed in 1916, and was the longest running act in show business, with the band now performing to great grandchildren of original audiences. The band introduced over 500 hit songs, more than any other musical organization. Those who look back to the Big Band era also remember that distinctive recognizable style—the exaggerated vibrato of the saxophones, the clipped brass phrases, and a vocal styling that immediately identifies the orchestra as Guy Lombardo's.

Since the death of Guy Lombardo in 1977, Auld Lang Syne has continued to be performed by various bands before enthusiastic audiences throughout the world. The Lombardo New Year's Eve Party was the longest running annual special program in radio history, with their 50th

consecutive broadcast in 1979. On television they performed for more than 1.5 billion viewers since they first telecast their New Year's Eve Party in 1954.

The most important ingredient of the Guy Lombardo Orchestra was its consistency in playing wonderful tunes like Seems Like Old Times, Boo Hoo, Coquette, Sweethearts on Parade and Ain't She Sweet, all written by Carmen Lombardo. Johnson Rag, Bye Bye Blues, and Enjoy Yourself are also some of its recognizable tunes. Today's orchestra includes in its program an occasional Lombardo style arrangement of contemporary classic pop tunes.

On Feb. 12, 1989, Al Pierson took up the baton of the famed Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians with the blessings, and a long-term contract, from the Lombardo family. This exciting new chapter in Pierson's life was a challenge that he was totally prepared for. He shows a dedication to the distinctive and recognizable style and grand tradition that made the Lombardo Orchestra one of the most listened to, talked about, and imitated big bands of all time. Al brings "The Sweetest Music This Side of Heaven" back to the prominence it so richly deserves. Al is beginning his 19th consecutive year as the leader of the Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians. He has taken this group internationally to 32 foreign countries, sometimes in the midst of revolutions within these countries.

Man celebrates by traveling to Hawaii

In celebration of his upcoming 85th birthday, John Kamla recently realized a life-long dream by going to Hawaii.

He spent the first two days on Oahu, seeing such sights as Waikiki, Diamond Head, Hanauma Bay, Na Pali Lookout, the North Shore, Dole Plantation, Arizona Memorial, USS Missouri Battleship and highlights of Honolulu.

He then boarded Norwegian Cruise Lines' Pride of America for a seven-day cruise of Maui, the Big Island and Kauai.

While on Maui, John traveled the winding road to Hana, saw a black-sand beach and went to the Haleakala Volcano Crater at an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea level.

Hilo was the first stop on the Big Island and he went to Volcanoes National Park and Rainbow Falls. That evening the ship sailed around the southeast side of The Big Island, where he was able to view the lava of Kilauea Volcano as it poured into the ocean.

Kona was the second stop on the Big Island and from there, John visited a coffee plantation, a sacred Hawaiian village called Puuohonua o Honaunau National Historical Park and a farmers' market.

Next, the ship sailed for Kauai, where he took a riverboat cruise up Wailua River, visited the Fern Grotto, attended a traditional luau, and took in the sights of Waimea Canyon.

On the final afternoon of the cruise, the ship sailed around



JOHN KAMLA traveled to Hawaii to celebrate his upcoming birthday.

the northwest corner of Kauai and he viewed the spectacular Napali Coast, only accessible by helicopter or ship.

John remarked that much of Hawaii was more beautiful than he could even have imagined.

When he returned home, he said, "There's beauty here in Northwest Kansas, although most people probably can't see it. Sometimes, you don't know just how good you've got it."

John will turn 85 on Nov. 30.



THE BLANKA FAMILY looks at the sign that was presented to them during the annual Farm Bureau meeting. Pictured are (l to r) Shawn Blanka, Shawna Blanka, Shadryon Blanka and Shakotah Blanka.

Family recognized by Farm Bureau

*By Karen Krien
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Each year, 10 families in the state are recognized by Farm Bureau as a Kansas Farm Family of the Year. This year, Shawn and Shawna Blanka and their boys, Shakotah and Shadryon, St. Francis-Cheyenne County farmers, were one of the 10.

They were presented the sign for their farm and, in March, they and the other nine district winners will travel to California to see that state's production agriculture. They will also be presented at the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting in Manhattan.

To qualify, the farm family needs to actively participate in Farm Bureau programs and leadership, family activities, community and civic service as well as displaying good farming operation management.

The Blankas have been active in Farm Bureau for over 10 years. Mrs. Blanka currently serves on the county board as the women's chair and is a past president. She is on her first year on the State Promotion and Education Committee.

Mr. Blanka served on the local board and is a past president. He is in his third year as the State Beef Advisory Committee.

Both served on the State Young Farmer and Rancher Committee.

"It is a real honor to be recognized as a Kansas Farm Family," Mrs. Blanka said. "There are many talented farm families out there and to be recognized for something that you love doing is neat!"

Both Shawn and Shawna were raised on farms. After they were married, they moved back to St. Francis to farm.

"This is where we wanted to raise our family," Mrs. Blanka said.

There was a house and farm waiting for them. The farm is a "Century Farm," which means

that it has been in the family for over 100 years. The farm was homesteaded in 1887 and Mrs. Blanka's great-grandfather had built the house of concrete blocks and sand from the river in 1914.

About 6 months after Shawn and Shawna moved back to St. Francis, they moved into the house but it had been gutted and remodeled.

We wanted to carry on the great family tradition of farming, Mrs. Blanka said.

"This was the lifestyle that we wanted our kids to be raised in so they understood where their food comes from, the responsibilities of taking care of animals and taking care of the land," she said. "We take pride in raising our crops and cattle that help feed the world."

The Blankas raise wheat, corn and alfalfa. They also have a cow/calf herd. They finish out the steers in their own feedlot.

Most of our irrigated acres are used to raise feed for the cattle. Some of the corn goes to silage. The rest goes to the bins and then is cracked for the ration for the feedlot cattle. The alfalfa and sorghum feed is used as round bales to feed the cows, as well as ground up for the feedlot ration.

About four years ago, Shawn, Shawna and the boys started raising Boer cross goats. It started as a 4-H project, Shawna said, and has expanded. They now have 50 nannies and 20 young ones from this year totaling about 70 that they will breed next year.

The Blankas have found some of the pluses of farming are being able to work for themselves while having success in raising good crops and improving the genetics in their cattle herd. Producing good heifers for good mamma cows and the steers to finish good in their own feed lot is a great sense of satisfaction.

One of the greatest joys of living on our farm, Mrs. Blanka said, was seeing the clear, blue sky to

look at everyday and the wide open spaces that God created. It is also good to see the boys helping their dad or grandfather, especially at wheat harvest time.

There are downfalls to farming. We are not guaranteed a crop every year, Mrs. Blanka said. A lot depends on Mother Nature.

We also have no control over the prices we get for grain or cattle.

"The input costs continue to rise so we have to put more money in but what we get back doesn't continue to go up at the same rates.

Future of farming

"We will need to continue to have production agriculture as the world continues to increase in population and there are more mouths to feed," Mrs. Blanka said. "However we need to improve the education about agriculture to the public. This needs to be done more so now, than ever, with the constant information that is available on the internet.

"The public would rather listen to the negative and assume from one bad picture of an animal that we treat all our animals that way. They need to know that raising those cattle and putting that meat on their plate or the shoes on their feet comes from daily sacrifices made by ranchers. The cattle are our livelihood so why would we mistreat them?"

This is where Farm Bureau is helpful, she said. They continue to help each county educate and promote agriculture. The policies and concerns that come from those that live it every day is important and to have a state organization with staff that can fight and voice those concerns at the state house as well as Washington, DC, is vitally important to the future of agriculture.

The farms and ranches are getting smaller in numbers but those that continue are bigger operations that are producing more than ever.

Complete fundraising workshop scheduled

The Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development is sponsoring a "Complete Fundraising Workshop" Tuesday, Oct. 12, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Prairie Museum of Art and History Conference Room, 1905 S. Franklin Ave., Colby. The presenter will be Shannon Martin of Professional Grant Services.

Workshop topics include fund raising basics, long-range planning, special event planning, grant writing basics, and publicity and marketing techniques. Those attending will leave with great ideas and an overview of each element in the fund-raising pyramid. At day's end participants will have developed their

own long-range fundraising and marketing plans.

Ms. Martin's experience as a grant writer coupled with a background in marketing and fundraising allows her to assist those from schools, non-profit organizations, government officials and others who need to raise funds and/or learn marketing techniques to help their organizations.


There is a registration fee which will include a large amount of helpful information, the cost of a resource packet and lunch.

For registration information and any questions, please call Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development at (785) 462-7671, extension 5.

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