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Commissioners explore management

By Karen Krien

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The Cheyenne County Commissioners met with Ron Ross, owner of Rural Health Development, a management services for independent nursing homes and/or hospitals out of Cambridge and Lincoln, Neb.

Mr. Ross' company manages the Hester Nursing Home in Benkelman along with a number of other facilities. The commissioners

wanted to hear what some were of the options in nursing homes management besides the Good Samaritan Society which now owns the Good Samaritan Village in St. Francis but wants to only lease the facility.

Present besides commissioners, Ernie Ketzner, Dale Patton and Andy Beikman, and Terry Miller, county clerk, were Troy Burr, Kay Shay, Elton Keller, Rick and Linda Rogers, Loretta Touslee and

Karen Krien.

Mr. Ross said he had been in the business of managing nursing homes and/or hospitals for 30 years, but had owned Rural Health Development for 20 years. In those 20 years, the business has had consulting services to over 300 facilities in 38 states.

Mr. Ross said his company only manages the nursing home/hospital. They hire the administrator who hires the workers, and helps

the commissioners (if the county is to take the facility over) to set and enforce policies. The only person the company pays is the administrator.

There are many requirements for nursing home including state and Medicare regulations. The nursing home, Mr. Ross said, needs to be a Medicare-skilled facility.

The commissioners talked about the rate of pay. He said there are generally three levels of pay, low,

medium and high care facilities. He said that putting a loved one in a low-care facility is not always the best thing for the person because it can mean that the level of care is not as good.

However, he said that he felt that a 22-bed nursing home can make money or at least break even. But, he said, there is no "wobble room." He also talked about that some facilities struggle at 30 beds. If there is no debt against the facility, then

it is easier to make the numbers work. It also depends on what type of equipment needs to be put in and what is needed to keep up the maintenance work.

Mr. Ross' opinion was, that if the nursing home was at 35 beds, it could be ran to make a profit. He noted that, unlike some companies, there is little corporate cost in his management company.

Mrs. Shay asked who is responsible. **See EXPLORE on Page 9**

Artist, activist holds exhibit

On Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m. at Main Street Java, Mallory Knodel, artist and activist, will be holding the opening event for her photography exhibit. She will also give a short presentation on her work.

Mallory's work features scenes from Dakar, Senegal and the 2011 World Society Forum event and other subjects of her recent trip abroad including the neighborhood, Liberte VI, where she lived during her trip. For those who miss the opening Saturday afternoon, the work will be on display for the remainder of March and through April.

Refreshments will be served.

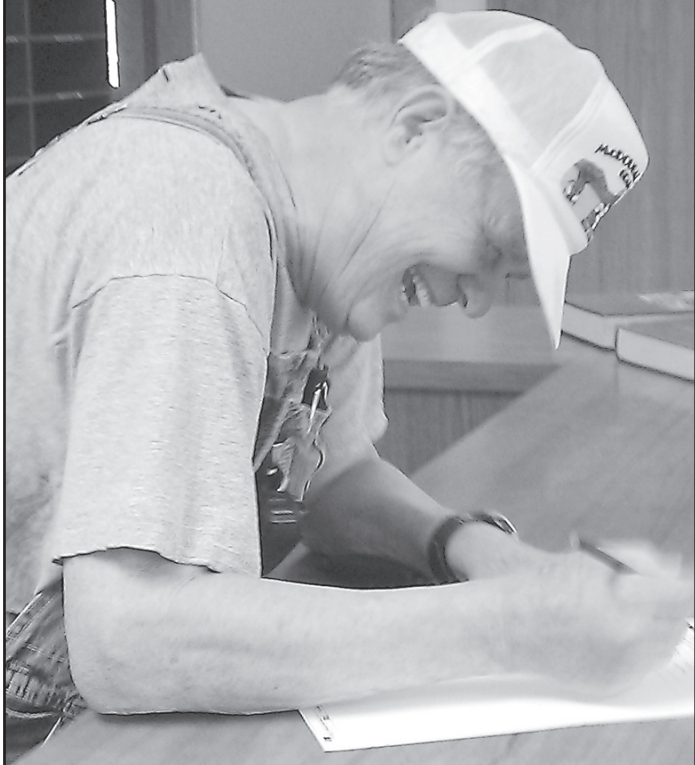
About the artist

Mallory was born and raised in St. Francis. She said she wanted to come back to show and tell the people in her hometown about her trip.

Mallory said her international organizing work is on behalf of May First/People Link, which is a progressive Internet provider based in Brooklyn, N.Y. Our organization, she said, operates under many principles of shared communication to solve global problems and empower communities

See ARTIST on Page 9

Advanced voting -



HALSAGER, Bird City, took advantage of the advanced voting booth in the clerk's office in the courthouse. People can vote in the booth until noon on April 4. For more information on the candidates running, turn to Pages 6 and 7 in this issue.



GREEN MACHINE TEAM were headed down to have rider, Brock McAtee, put on his pajamas. The winning pushers were (l to r) Mac Frewen, Dustin Andrist, A.J. McAtee and Brennan Wilger. *Herald staff photo by Karen Krien*

Only two beds show up for race

By Karen Krien

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The wind was blowing but the sun was shining for the first St. Patty's Bed Races on Saturday. A number of people had come out to cheer on the races but, only two beds showed up and one was a last-minute bed provided by Raedell Winston.

Joyce Russ had organized the

race, thinking it would be a fun spring event. She said several people had contacted her indicating they would be making a racing bed.

Kary Zweygardt, owner of Zero's, said he had planned to build one and the kids at Zero's were interested in racing it. However, a remodeling project had taken more time than he had planned

so the making of the bed had been put to the side.

Scott Schultz, who was helping with the timing, said he had heard that beds were a little hard to find and it would help if there were someone on the team who could do some welding.

The Green Machine had been put together by the team of Brock McAtee, Dustin Andrist, Roger

Neitzel, A.J. McAtee, Mac Frewen and Brennan Wilger. They had found a metal bunk bed, attached bicycle tires and a mattress, then painted it green with Wiley Coyote attached to the top. The rider was Brock McAtee.

At the last minute, Mrs. Winston said she had a hospital bed

See RACE on Page 9

Grass fire destroys over 2,000 acres southwest of town

By Karen Krien

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It was a warm day with very little wind but that didn't stop a grass fire from burning over 2,000 acres southwest of St. Francis.

George Harper, St. Francis fire chief, said the call that a controlled burn had gotten away from the farmer came in about 1:30 p.m. When the firemen got to the scene, they soon realized they needed more help. Firemen came from Sherman County as well as the Colorado communities of Armel, Idalia and Hale.

The county and Bartlett Grain had water tanks on trucks at the scene as did the other fire departments. Gale Walz had let them fill up with water out of his irrigation well. The county also had a maintainer at work.

The fire started around County Roads 6 and D and it wasn't long before it had jumped the road and was headed north and east. Tractors with plows were brought in by Spencer Schlepp, John Lampe and Ryan McAtee. They were able to stop the fire from reaching the Dean Krien home but the fire still got into a line of trees.

The firemen were able to go back to town about 8:30 that evening, then were called back out two hours later, again at 2 a.m. and twice the next day.

Chief Harper said there was low humidity that day which fueled the fire. There were several "fire/smoke twisters" that occurred throughout the afternoon.

No one was hurt, Harper said, and no structures were lost and this is because of all the help we received.

Spring is here, he said, but the pastures haven't greened up yet and it is dry on top. People need to use caution if they are burning.



FIREFIGHTERS FOUGHT the fire that burned over 2,000 acres of grassland on Wednesday. *Herald staff photo by Karen Krien*