

Auxiliary members have interesting program Friday

The Bird City American Legion Auxiliary 352 ladies held an appreciation luncheon at the American Legion Hall in Bird City last Friday afternoon.

This appreciation luncheon was for those who had supported them in the Auxiliary Support Our Soldiers (SOS) program. Of the 24 women in attendance, many of these ladies are not in the American Legion Auxiliary, but were very supportive of this project.

Hulda Dorsch introduced Karen Starks, from Oklahoma City, Okla., as the guest speaker. Karen is the originator, and coordinator for the Support Our Soldiers (Hugs Program). Mrs. Starks, started off by telling where her love of the military came from.

As a young girl Karen had two uncles that had served in the World War II and they told stories about the war, so she grew to love the military. After a car accident that took her first husband's life and left her with two teenage girls to finish raising, she felt she needed to do something with her life.

One Sunday at her church, a serviceman stood up and told the congregation what it was like serving and fighting in the wars. He told them that many of the soldiers in his unit never heard from anyone in the United States, and encouraged the people of this church to just write notes to them and let them know how much they loved their freedom and how thankful they were that they were fighting for us.

Mrs. Starks went into Desert Seal for more information. The news talked about how these soldiers needed lots of support, and some of them had no one to offer that support. The Desert Seal talked about how anyone who was interested could write to these soldiers. She decided to adopt a soldier to write to, sent out 30 copies of her letter, and received 45 replies. She reached into the middle of this pile and selected one. It was from a lonely sailor aboard the USS Independence Ship. They continued to correspond, fell in love, and have been married for 14 years.

After her marriage, she continued writing to other lonely soldiers, and sending care packages to her husband Ted, who shared all the goodies with his shipmates. She could cook, but didn't have a sewing machine, or know how to sew, so she sent cookies and all sorts of goodies. She even tried sending cakes by inserting them in plastic bags, and with a straw sucking out all the air. It wasn't until much later she learned that sometimes those cakes turned green before they got to the destination.

This is when she realized how many things citizens, in this country could do for those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, so she started asking for help in putting together care packages, and writing to soldiers who did not get any mail. Since June of 2004, this project has expanded to become a nation-wide project, with even some foreign countries helping out.

Through her contact with soldiers in Afghanistan and other countries that do not have any means of shopping, she found out there was a great need for care packages in these areas of the war. Because there is no way of them being able to shop, they wear their sox until they rot and fall off their feet. In the mountains it can get as low as minus 40 degrees. Some days they have to go for 3-4 weeks without a shower. One soldier

told her he put his uniform on in October, and took it off in February.

One of the officers wrote her and said, "I have 800 soldiers on my base and more coming, we need as many care packages as you can send".

A simple rock with a cross on it can become significant to a soldier in knowing someone they don't even know cares for them, and will carry it in his pocket.

One of the newest items volunteer groups make can be a means of survival if needed. It is simply a long cord that is woven into a bracelet, and if needed it can be pulled out to produce a long cord, that can be used to choke the enemy if needed as a method of escape.

The main sewing project adopted by the Bird City Auxiliary is the cooling ties that are sent to the soldiers in any extremely hot place. The scarves are 22-inches long, and two to three inches wide, and sewn to form a tube and filled with tiny grain like beads that expand when soaked. They lower body core temperatures by 5+degrees. A main goal of the hugs project is to place a "Hug" (neck cooler) around the neck of every American military member serving in the Middle East.

Mrs. Stark passed several photos of soldiers in Afghanistan around to see how they have to live. One of these was titled, 'The heart of America saved us'. It contained a tear jerking story from a group of soldiers who were marching to a certain area, and they come upon a very small girl sitting in the middle of the road with her arms crossed on her chest clutching a bunch of Beanie Babies. They ordered her to move, and she refused. After their leaders command to move on, they drove the equipment off the road and went around her. When the next group came one of the soldiers remembered handing out these Beanie Babies to a group of children days earlier. They took time to talk to her through an interpreter, and she warned them of danger ahead. As they approached the bridge farther down the road, they found it had been blown to pieces and if they would not have stopped, they too would have been



GUEST SPEAKER Karen Starks had an interesting presentation about the Support Our Soldiers project.

Times photo by Norma Martinez.

blown up with the bridge.

The HUGS project sends 4,000 special Christmas boxes every year, between June 2004 and the present they've sent over 850,000 "Hugs", approximately 150,000 books and more than 365 tons of care packages to Americans serving in harm's way.

Anyone can join the Support Our Soldiers Hugs program and if anyone is interested in helping out they can contact; Hulda

Dorsch, Joy Anderegg, Wanda Dowdy, or Christie Wurm for more information. Or go into the website: www.TheHugsProject.net, and www.TheHugsProject.com also: If you have someone serving "over there" please submit their address online at the same address and they will receive a care package from the Oklahoma City group to thank them for their service.

McDonald News

84th birthday

Ray Johnson will be celebrating his 84th birthday on April 18. Cards and well wishes will reach him at P.O. Box 3, McDonald, KS 67745.

Lisa Johnson was a Saturday morning guest of Ray and Marlene Johnson. Lois Morelock, Allen and Penny Cline and family, and George Vandegrift were Saturday afternoon guests.

Tish Loker was a Sunday afternoon guest of Ray and

Marlene Johnson.

On Saturday afternoon Eleanor Swihart, Joann Tongish, and Betty Lewis all attended the Broadway Barber Shop and Tumbleweed Chorus in Colby.

Joann Tongish and Betty Lewis were among those attending the After-Church Cheylin School dinner in Bird City.

Sandy Binning reported the McDonald News and the McDonald Seniors for Vera Kacirek.

Cancer support meeting planned

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Cheyenne County Committee is hosting a meeting on June 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Methodist church to share with residents the importance of Relay For Life in the fight against cancer.

Relay For Life is the signature event of the American Cancer Society. It is a fun-filled, overnight event that mobilizes communities throughout the country to celebrate survivors, remember loved ones, and empower others to fight back against a disease that takes too much.

"The American Cancer Society Relay For Life raises awareness about the progress against cancer while also raising funds to fight the disease," said Pat Rose, event chair, for the American Cancer Society. "Individuals who are willing to give their time and energy to this exciting event, as a volunteer or participant, have made a commitment to fight back against cancer and let the

community know that cancer can be beat."

Teams of eight to 15 members gather with tents and sleeping bags to participate in the largest fundraising walk in the nation. Relay For Life unites friends, families, businesses, hospitals, schools and churches...people from all walks of life. Teams seek sponsorship prior to the Relay, all with the goal of supporting a cure for cancer.

Volunteers are needed to organize and recruit teams, seek community support, coordinate logistics, find refreshments and prizes, plan entertainment and lend their support in any way.

For more information on the June 14 meeting, or if you would like to volunteer on the Relay for Life Committee, please contact Pat at (785) 332-5348.

For more information on cancer, call the American Cancer society's 24-hour help line at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

South of McDonald

By Sandy Binning

Kathy Banister attended the Cheylin Board of Education After-Church dinner Sunday at the Bird City Legion Hall. She helped with the entertainment.

Grandma, Ellen Dewey, and grandpa and grandma, Jim and Barb Morton all attended the Creative Movements annual meet in Atwood Saturday to watch their granddaughter, Tayten Dewey's performances.

Nadine and Arlie Roeseener were Monday guests of Bethel Goltl and enjoyed lunch with her.

Bethel Goltl attended the Esther Linin's funeral Tuesday in Goodland at the Lutheran Church.

Friday evening guests of Lynn and Rita Officer were Pat Sramek and Sheila Maune. They shared their trip to Germany. Additional guests of the Officers were Jerry and Betty Knapp.

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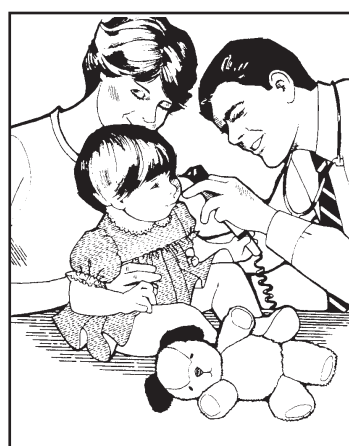
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Rural Health Section



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