

Golden Plains candidates are positive about future

From "SCHOOL," Page 1

"I believe our schools are the foundations for our communities," she says. "I want to continue to serve the people of USD 316. Please give me the opportunity to do so."

David Gould, Rexford, has lived in the district all of his life. He says plans to do his best for the school district and all of its kids, teachers and parents.

When asked what he sees as the district's strengths, he said that it has family values and is small enough to care for each child. The district has a low student-teacher ratio, he said, and every child can participate in school if they want to and succeed.

He feels the challenge of keeping the doors open and staying financially sound, keeping good teachers, keeping buildings in good shape and keeping children safe are primary.

"I am not running for my own agenda," he said. "I am running to be a voice for the people. I believe that a school board member should vote in a sound and thought-out manner."

Ben Hoeting, Rexford, said he has experience serving on other

boards, dealing with budgets, solving problems and enforcing policies. He also has experience on interview panels for hiring.

Hoeting says the school needs to maintain a strong student body. He wants to ensure the district can keep a staff capable of teaching and that the community continues to support our schools.

He said he believes that a declining budget has to be the biggest challenge for any school district and that the district needs to be sure our dollars are spent wisely. His vision of the future includes keeping the school strong by teaching kids to the best of their ability.

"Jeanette and I have been married for 25 years," he said. "We have a son in the seventh grade at Golden Plains. I farm southwest of Rexford and also work for Wells Fargo Insurance as an adjuster."

Don Koerperich is 33 and lives in Selden. He and his wife Katie have four children, Joseph, 12; Jessica, 10; Jaiden, 6; and Jerri, 2. He graduated from Golden Plains High School in 1993 and from McCook Community College in 1995 with an associate's degree. He is co-owner of Koerperich Bookbinders Inc. in Selden

with his brother Chris, and has worked in the family business for the past 13 years. He has been an emergency medical technician for Sheridan County for eight years.

The most important action he sees for the board is manage with the budget cuts from the state and keep the schools open. He says he feels the current school board and staff at Golden Plains are dedicated people.

"We have seen several small schools in the area close down in recent years," he said. "The fact that our school is still open and going strong says a lot for our current school board. Our students receive some of the highest markings on state tests, which is a reflection of our excellent teachers. I believe that the teachers getting qualified in the English as a Second Language program is very beneficial to our school and students."

Kim Moss, Menlo, works with her husband on their family farm. She considers herself to be strong willed, with determination and an open mind.

Moss said she likes the one-on-one attention that she sees the Golden Plains faculty give to both students and parents. The challenges the district is facing in-

clude budget cuts, keeping enrollment up and attracting competent teachers to a smaller school.

Her vision for the future is that the district will still be running strong. She would like to see graduates move back and help in the growth of the school.

Terry Moss, Rexford, has been on the school board before and is familiar with the community. He sees the district's strengths as its strong enrollment, staff and students. He said that meeting the budget challenges and cutbacks coming from the state are a challenge the district must face.

He said his vision of the future is as one of the top small school districts still functioning out here. He said that he is "fair and not afraid to go against the grain."

Todd Schwarz, 39, lives in Rexford. He and his wife Tanya have three children, Victoria, 18; Trey, 14; and Tristan, 13. He graduated from Golden Plains High School in 1987 and from Kansas State University in 1991 with a degree in agronomy. He operates Schwarz Land and Cattle Inc.

He said his priority for Golden Plains is keeping the tradition of providing students with a great curriculum and education, as well

as facilities and equipment for the kids to use. The challenge he sees ahead is working with the budget the state offers the district, and the potential that state money will be tighter in the future.

Asked what changes he would make, he said he thought some classes have room for improvement as far as presenting the material to the students.

Matt Vogler, 36, Rexford, is married to Penny, and their children are Cole Christensen, 15; Jordan Christensen, 12; and Landen Vogler, 3. Vogler attended Garden County High School in Oshkosh, Neb., and majored in computer science in the six years he served in the Marine Corps. He has been a computer programmer, sold technology consulting services, been a project manager in the construction industry, and now is superintendent at the Breton Elevator for Frontier Ag.

He said the most important thing he wants to do on the board is protect the future of the school district and continue to provide a quality education to all students.

One of the major challenges is obviously the budget and a lack of money available in small schools, he said. A second major concern is maintaining enrollment. He said he would like to look at alternative fund-raising and grant possibilities and also work with the district communities on economic development to draw more people.

He would look at changes that could save money for the district without sacrificing a quality education. Avenues to explore are a

four-day school week and energy efficiencies, he said.

For the most part, he said, he think the majority of people in the district are happy with the way things are, but there are definitely some concerns that the district patrons have.

Brandi Wark, 30, lives in Rexford. She and husband Ryan have three children, Brooke, 12; Tucker, 3; and Talon, 15 months. She graduated from Golden Plains High School in 1996 and from Colby Community College in 1999 with an associate's degree in applied science. A registered nurse, she works part time at Citizens Medical Center in Colby and spends time at home to raise her children.

Wark said her priority for the board is to make sure that the district thrives, both in budget and in the best education possible. The biggest challenge is going to be the budget, she said.

She would work to make sure that enrollment stays up. The district is going to have to make cuts in the budget, she said, adding that she wouldn't make decisions on changes until she saw exactly what needs to happen.

Colby council, school candidates speak

From "COUNCIL," Page 1

the city should hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

Weber also is a member of the Colby School Board. He is a write-in candidate because, he said, he was considering a business option that would have prevented him from serving until it was too late to file for the council.

Four people running for school board positions who attended the forum were incumbents Gerald Fulwider and Cindy Frahm, and challengers Dale Vap and Susan McLemore. Missing were newcomer J.C. Carter and incumbent Tracy Rogers.

With six candidates, district residents can choose three to vote for. The top three will be elected.

Susan McLemore, who works

for Aegis Therapies, said the main duty of the school board is to set policy and to provide each student with the best education possible. She said the schools must continue to focus on technology and keep their good teachers.

McLemore said the council should look at close-in busing to see if cuts can be made to help offset budget cuts expected next fall.

She said the current school board had a great team that she wanted to be part of that.

Gerald Fulwider, former county economic development director, said he thought about not running for the school board after 12 years, but he thought his experience could help the district get through the impending budget cuts. It's the board's job to guide

school policy, he said.

Fulwider said its important that all children learn about whatever they're interested in so they can pursue a job in that field.

Dale Vap, owner of Vap Distributing (a wholesale frozen dairy business), said that schools shouldn't only concentrate on teaching high technology, but they also should teach hands-on jobs. He said his business experience would help on the council because he has experience budgeting.

Vap said he thinks there is some unnecessary spending in the current school budget. He said the school should be bidding on fuel so it can get the lowest price for the school buses. The school is getting gasoline from the full-service pumps at High Plains Coop, said

Vap, and that may be the highest price in town.

"Taxpayers are customers of the school district," said Vap. "We need to know ... and give them what they want. We should take care of taxpayers first."

Cindy Frahm, who works in the family farm operation, said it's important for people to try to get family members to move back to Colby. She said she thinks the current school board does a good job considering things carefully and the members will be careful in making the tough decisions that will need to be made when the state cuts the education budget.

Frahm said she thinks the district needs to educate students so they can compete in today's global economy.

Gardeners fill two acres with covered, open plots

From "GARDENERS," Page

they grow everything from asparagus (new to the beds) and arugula to zucchini. He has raised beds, hilled beds, staked beds and even irrigation-pivot-tire beds filled with rich black soil mixture used for deep-rooted vegetable beds.

Cheney said he uses coconut core (ground coconut hulls) as a mixture to start the seedlings. He uses sprinklers for some of the gardens and soaker hoses for plants that don't like constant sprinkling. He uses aged manure from nearby feedlots for fertilizer, and grass clippings for mulch because of the nitrogen they return to the soil.

When he sees a need, he said, he uses an organic mixture to keep cabbage worms away. Otherwise, chemicals are not necessary.

"We do a lot of weeding by hand," Jo said.

As a handy man, Cheney said, he makes most all of the aids he needs to grow great produce. He recycles about anything he can get his hands on, from juice and pop bottles to throw-away wooden crates. He even recycles old

denim to use as wicks to keep soil moist when starting seedlings. Hydroponic gardening is beginning to make an appearance on a small scale in one of the high tunnels (hoop houses) which serve as growing rooms where he starts the vegetables from seed.

"I planted four plantings of potatoes last year," Cheney said, "so we always had new crop potatoes on hand."

Other warm-season vegetables are replanted and harvested until the season is over, he added.

Dry beans are one of the main crops that attract lots of attention, Cheney said. He plants more than a dozen varieties, in rainbows of color. Their tastes and textures are all different.

"The dry beans are pretty labor intensive, and we sit many nights in the winter shelling beans," he said.

When he was growing up, Cheney said, his mother always raised chickens, so he decided to carry on the tradition. He makes portable hen houses so that the penned chickens are able to be

moved to green grass areas several times during the warm weather seasons instead of letting them range. The Cheney's market the majority of the eggs gathered from their seventy-five laying hens.

Jo said she doesn't sit on the sidelines and just watch while Gary does all the work. She has projects of her own after the garden begins to produce.

Her husband said she is great in the kitchen and spends hours making fresh noodles, cookies, breads and all sorts of goodies from garden produce. She makes egg noodles, plus tomato, spinach and whole-wheat noodles, which she sells. She uses a variety of vegetables in quick breads to make them moist and delicious.

The Cheney's said they take fresh veggies, eggs and homemade goodies from the kitchen to sell at the farmers market at Colby Community Building each Wednesday

from late June until the pumpkins are all gone in the fall.

They donate flower seedlings to Pioneer Memorial Library, planted in brightly colored grow cups. The library sponsors a Mother's Day shopping spree for children where they can pick out a flower for their mom to plant outside that will come up year after year. At the Cheney's request, proceeds are used to promote children's programs at the library.

The couple said they continue to learn new things and spend lots of time reading seed catalogs.

"It is not actually a money making project," Cheney said. "It is just something we love to do."

Cheney is coordinator of Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development, a regional rural development group sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Jo is a homemaker. Their children are grown.

Thank You!

The family of Norma Rebarchek wishes to thank our family, friends, and neighbors for the kindness shown to us with food, cards, flowers and memorials in Norma's memory.

Special thanks to Bill and Alice Wing for opening their home to us, and the nurses and doctors at the Salina Regional Health Center for the care they gave Norma.

Thank you to Pastor Rocky Schmier for the lovely service, and to the ladies of the Gove Community Bible Church for serving dessert after the graveside service.

Milton Rebarchek
Charles Rebarchek and children
Sayle Bland and family
Frank Rebarchek and family
Cecil Rebarchek and family
Neil Rebarchek and children
Aloin Rebarchek and family
Nancy Yates and family
The children of Eugene Rebarchek

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