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Oakley students run town theater

By Vera Sloan
Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwks.com

It's tough for any town to lose a business, especially when it's a place for families to go together.

When Oakley lost its movie theater in 2001, a group of citizens decided they should buy the building and concoct a way to run it. At first, it seemed to be too much of a commitment because of their busy work schedules. Then the group came up with the idea of asking the business teacher at the Oakley High School if he could teach a hands-on entrepreneur class and give the students an opportunity to run the theater.

The idea got a green light, and soon people pooled their money to buy the building. Volunteers formed a corporation with a four-man board which controls the main aspects of the corporation.

Students run the business and control the Palace Community Theater.

Students and volunteers got together to repair and paint the building, and then the entrepreneur class took over.

"The entrepreneur class is made up of seniors who sign up to take a turn at being the theater manager," said Jessie Janssen, business instructor at the high school. "It's a weekend commitment, and with 11 seniors in the class, they all get their turns, and they take management very seriously."

The class has to get sponsors each week for advertising. The students take care of ticket sales, are in touch with a booking agent in California for movies, count the cash each night and make the deposits.

Janssen said the students learn sales, management, public relations, how advertising works, how

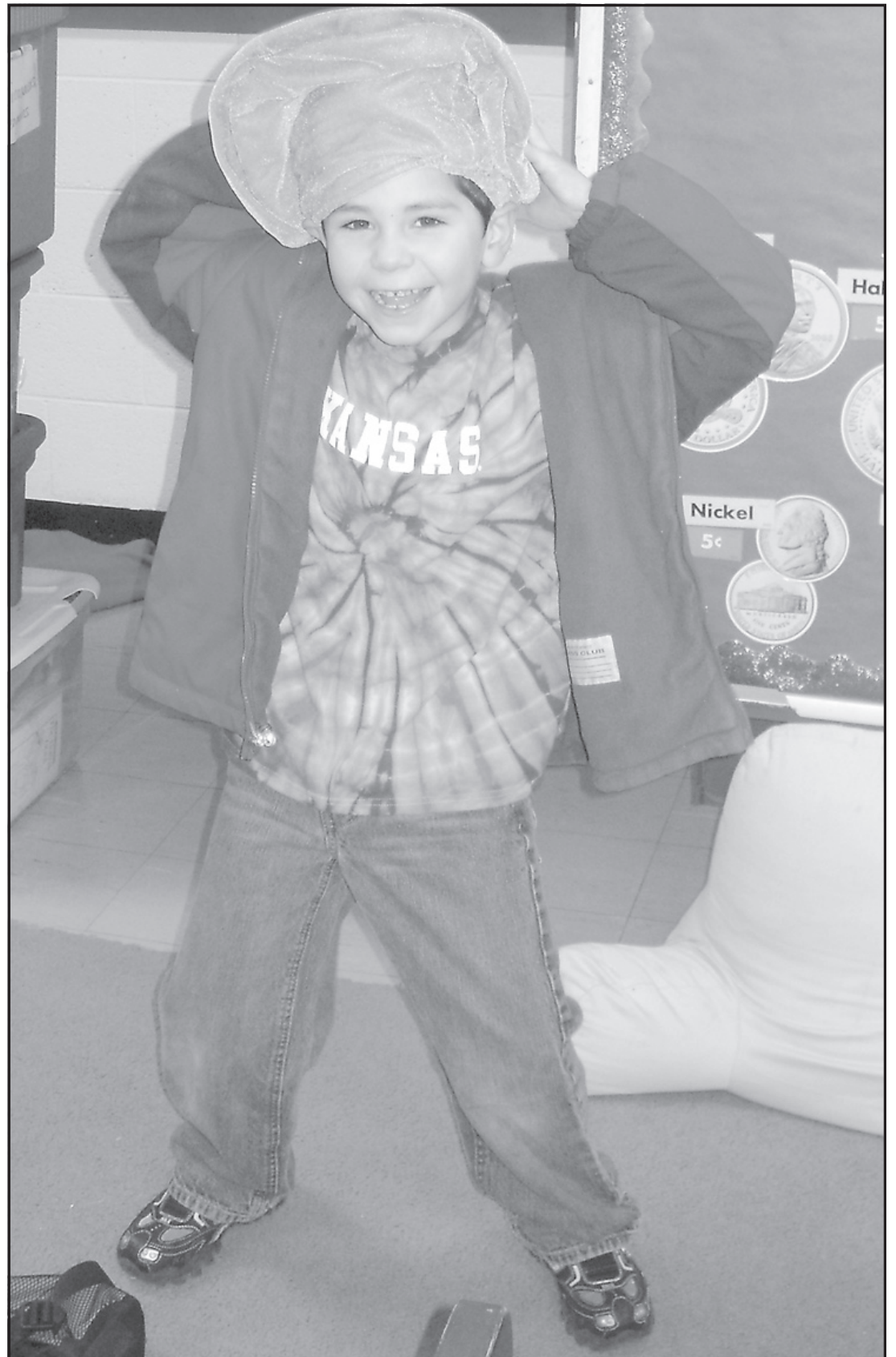
to use business software such as Quick Books, Quicken and spread sheets and self discipline. The kids are conscientious about living up to their commitment of volunteerism.

The teacher said the theater pays booking fees and royalties like any other, but the number of nights a week a movie house is open determines how soon a new release is offered. He said a theater that is open every night get first chance at a new release, but pays a 90 percent fee. A weekend theater pays only 50 percent, so the difference works very well for the class' budget.

"We have recently taken out a loan for \$80,000 to go digital," Janssen said. "The movie theater business as a whole has only two more years to switch to digital, as reels (of film) will be a thing

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Crazy Hat Day at Sacred Heart



SARA BETZ/Sacred Heart School
Ian Rosales, a kindergartner at Sacred Heart School, modeled his crazy hat Monday during Catholic Schools Week. Rosales was the kindergartner winner of the craziest hat contest. Other winners were Wyatt Tubbs, first grade; Ryan Voss, second grade; Kellyn Wahlmeier, third grade; Rayanna Schmidt, fourth grade; and Taylen Hubbell, fifth grade.

Kansas Chautauqua to make 1930s come alive

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwks.com

One of the most anticipated events of Thomas County's 125th Anniversary, the 1930s-themed Kansas-Nebraska Chautauqua, is deep in the planning stage.

The Chautauqua, "Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties," will tell the story of the Great Depression years through display exhibits and living-history performances. Chautauqua is a traveling show put on in cities around Kansas and Nebraska every year. The main events here will be June 2-6.

Last year's Chautauqua in Ottawa had the same theme and program. Leilani Thomas, director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, said she thinks the theme is particularly relevant because of the current economic crisis.

Sue Taylor, director of the Prairie Museum of His-

tory and Art, said the museum will set up a huge tent to house the event, keeping with the chautauqua tradition of a century ago. Under the tent, scholars from the Kansas Humanities Council will portray characters from the '30s, including President Franklin Roosevelt, Louisiana Sen. Huey Long and evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. The characters do presentations about their lives and take questions from the audience. There will also be music and theatrical entertainment.

The committee is planning other events around the evening tent shows. The exact schedule is still being decided, but some of the highlights will include:

- Workshops and historical talks on subjects including "Agriculture Then and Now," "The Role of Political Satire and Commentary" and "Radio in the '30s." These events will be put on throughout the week alongside the Dust Bowl exhibit at the museum.

See "CHAUTAUQUA," Page 3

Snowy day on Kansas streets



Northwest Kansas got a light dusting of snow this morning. The National Weather Service predicted snow all weekend, but aside from a few flakes here and there, none materialized.

JESSICA CORBIN/The Goodland Star-News
The service is predicting flurries throughout the rest of the day and mostly sunny tomorrow with highs in the 20s.

Secretary of state resigns post today

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas' top election official announced Monday that he's resigning to take a top job at a Kansas City-area company that builds and manages government websites.

Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh said his last day in the state office will be Feb. 15. He'll become senior vice president of sales and marketing for NIC Inc., based in Olathe.

Thornburgh, a Republican, already had decided against seeking a fifth term as secretary of state this year and abandoned a campaign for governor last year. He said he'd begun searching for a job in private business a few weeks ago when he started talking



R. Thornburgh

with NIC's chief executive. Gov. Mark Parkinson, a Democrat, will name a new secretary of state to serve until Thornburgh's current term ends in January 2011. Three Republicans and two Democrats are running for the office this year.

Thornburgh has long been an advocate of providing government services and information electronically. He received an award in 2002 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for his efforts, and his office launched an online voter registration system last fall.

"That is a groundbreaking

See "RESIGNS," Page 3

Briefly

Flu clinic set for Tuesday

The Thomas County Health Department will hold a free H1N1 flu clinic from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at the department office, 350 S. Range. Vaccine is available to everyone at this walk-in clinic. No appointment is necessary. For information, call the flu hotline at 460-4599 or the office at 460-4596.

Food sign-up this week

Prairie Land Food sign-up for the month will be open through Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 E. Sixth St. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed,

divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. The building is accessible by an elevator near the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

Civic club to serve soup

Kappa Upsilon, a service organization, will hold a soup supper from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Colby Community Building during the Colby-Garden City basketball games. There will be chili, chicken-noodle and vegetable-beef soups with cinnamon rolls, cookies and vegetables. Donations will be accepted for the Puddle Duck Preschool. For information, call Amy Jennings at 460-2603.

Low income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons will

offer a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60 or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

Church to display relics

Sacred Heart Catholic Church will sponsor a relic display from 2 to 7 p.m. Sunday and 8:30 and 10 a.m. next Monday. Dale Anderson from Manhattan will show relics going back to the time of Jesus and give a 45-minute talk, followed by time for questions and viewing. For information, call Laura Krejci at 462-9724 or the church at 62-2179.

Food bank meeting is Monday

The annual meeting of Genesis-Thomas County

Food Bank will be at 7 p.m. next Monday in the meeting room of the Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. Fourth St. The public is invited. For information, call Wynn Duffey at the First Presbyterian Church, (785) 462-6342.

Rotary to serve soup at game

The Colby Rotary Club will hold its annual soup supper from 5 to 7:30 Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the Community Building during basketball games with Goodland. The cost will be \$4 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under. For information, call Sara Bryan at (308) 530-8363.



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