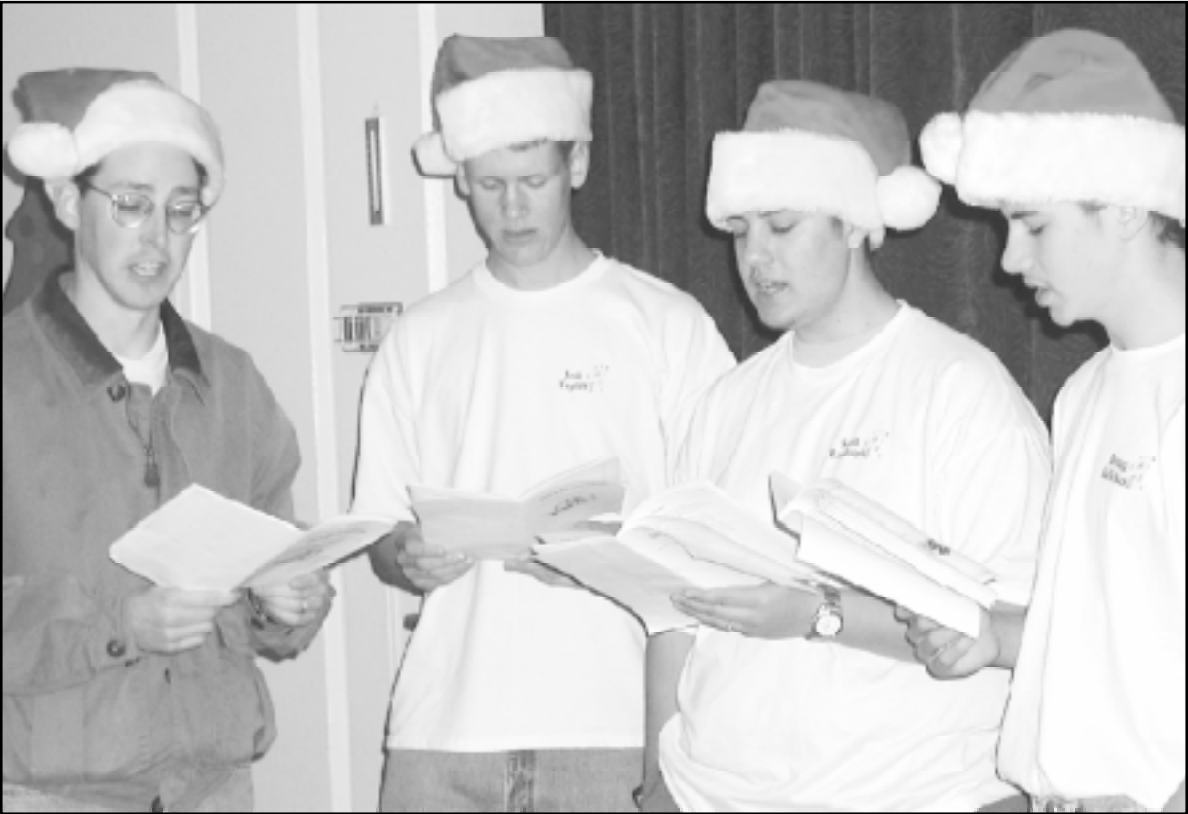


Christmas chorus



Randy Berls, junior high and high school vocal director, and Josh Topliff, Scott Randolph and Doug Lalicker, high school choir members, sang Christmas carols Saturday afternoon during the Christmas On Us drawing at Central School.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Daily News

Seminar teaches sunflower farming

WICHITA (AP) — Sunflowers grow wild in almost every county of Kansas, but a booming market for the plants and their oil doesn't mean any old patch of the flowers will make money.

There's a science to profitable sunflower cultivation. And judging from the number of people — more than 150 — who braved the ice and cold for a

day-long seminar on the topic last week, farmers are eager to learn it.

"I didn't have a real good experience last year," said Joe Meis, a Sedgwick County grower who had planted sunflowers after the wheat harvest but was disappointed with the test weights. Most elevators reduce the amount they pay for sunflowers if the test weight is less than 25 pounds

per bushel.

So Meis listened closely to the advice of the panelists at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center: Mike Heine, a sunflower producer who farms near Chase in Ellsworth County; Jon Oden, a Sterling farmer; Clark Woodworth, who also farms near Sterling; and Ken Seiler, an agronomist with Crop Quest.

Santa Claus represents kindness

Santa Claus is more than a jolly man in a red suit or a generous gift giver. Santa represents a wonderful spirit of kindness, according to Chuck Smith, K-State Research and Extension child development specialist.

In fact, you don't even need to believe in Santa to benefit. Just thinking about Santa can improve the mind for many adults.

For very young children, Santa can be frightening. Children under 4 may not be old enough to understand who Santa is and what he does. Plus, his appearance and behavior are unusual and potentially frightening, Smith said.

When children begin enjoying imaginative stories and or reach the "Tell me a story" stage, sharing the spirit of Santa Claus can be fun.

It is, however, important for parents to respect the child's imagination. Setting out a small plate of cookies for



roxanne burda

• slice of life

Santa to eat while the family sleeps can contribute to a sense of anticipation.

Setting a place at the dinner table for Santa on Christmas Day can raise a child's expectations to an unrealistic level and cause disappointment.

The key is to be playful about Santa's role during the holiday season. Like all good fun, we shouldn't overdo it.

Parents who sacrifice to buy toys and games for their children and leave them under the tree as Santa's gifts should realize that this experience is one that their children will remember fondly well into adulthood. The children's delight in

and appreciate their parents' willingness to keep the spirit of Santa alive.

Playing Santa can help children learn more about the spirit of kindness. A family that makes holiday gifts, like plates of cookies or crafted items, grows in the process.

During the process of creating a gift for others, family members can develop a greater sense of self, family and community.

Keep Santa's spirit of kindness alive this Christmas Season. Happy Holidays from the Sherman County K-State Research and Extension Office.

De-icing can cause plant problems

Slick sidewalks are a winter hazard and many people resort to using chemical de-icing compounds rather than shoveling or scraping to remove the ice.

There are five main materials that are used as chemical de-icers. They are calcium chloride, sodium chloride or salt, potassium chloride, urea and calcium magnesium acetate.

Some of these materials may damage the cement surface more than others and some may cause injury to plants nearby that are splashed by the slush or where runoff of melted ice may accumulate.

Calcium chloride is the material most frequently used for road or highway de-icing and is a very effective de-



dana belshe

• ag notebook

icer.

Sodium chloride and potassium chloride can cause serious plant injury when washed or splashed on surrounding areas. Serious foliage and root injury can occur when excessive amounts of these materials are used.

Urea is a fertilizer material and does not burn foliage or roots as much as sodium or potassium chloride.

However, since it is a fertilizer there

may be excessive growth on plants the following spring.

Calcium magnesium acetate is a newer material that shows little influence on plants and concrete surfaces.

Limited uses of any of these materials should cause little injury. Problems accumulate when you use excessive amounts of the materials or when there is adequate rainfall to wash and leach the materials from the area following their use.

Many problems may be 'latent' and not show up until the next spring or summer.

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