

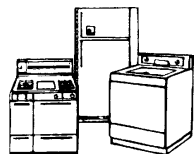
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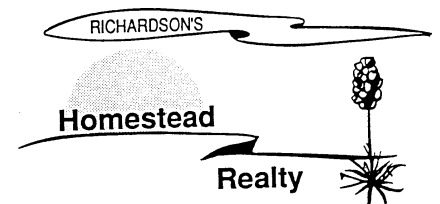


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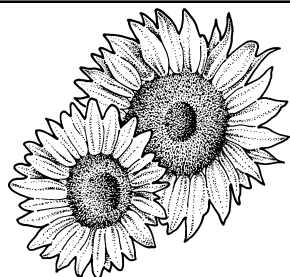
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Judy McKee; Jacquie Cooper (standing), owner of Jacquie's Hallmark; and Ann Middleton accepted entries for the drawing to give away the snowman and teddy bear in front of the table and the Disney ornament swag, angel (in the bag) and limited edition piece on the table.

Photos courtesy of Judy McKee

'Tis the Season Club raises money for Hospice

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News

The 'Tis the Season Collectors Club raised \$186 for Sherman County Hospice and gave away decorations in a drawing at Jacquie's Hallmark this month.

Oriele House of Goodland won an angel; Debbie David of Sharon Springs won a teddy bear; Cristi Walls of Goodland won a Disney ornament swag; Sharon Deeds of Goodland won a snowman; and Carol Johnson of Goodland won a limited edition piece.

The collectors club began in 1994, Club President Judy McKee said, as part of the Hallmark National Ornament Club. The club began with Jan Malpert's direction, McKee said, when Malpert had the Hallmark store here. It is the collectors club, she said, because the members collect all Hallmark seasonal decorations, not just ornaments.

The Goodland club was the first Hallmark club in Kansas, McKee said, and even now, the closest larger ornament club is in Denver. Hallmark sends an ornament for each member once a year and sends representatives to local meetings to talk about the upcoming line of ornaments, she said, and likes the clubs to do community service projects. The ornaments are made exclusively for club members, she said, and are sent when the club sends in its updated roster.

Besides helping others, McKee said, members of the club have fun. The club has gone to expos, called "Artists on Tour," she said, where the artists sign signature pieces and the motel is full of collectors who "room hop" buying, selling and trading pieces.

There are 200 rooms of collectors at the motels in Kansas City, McKee said, and the room hopping goes on until 2 a.m. sometimes.

"It's kind of like trick-or-treating in a motel," she said.

There are workshops at the expos where you can sculpt your own ornament, McKee said. The expos are the only places to get limited edition showpieces, she said, and the clubs often swap pins that they have designed for their clubs.

McKee said she designed the pin for the Goodland club, and the club has had the design put on bright, red T-shirts that really stand out among the 3,000 people at the expos.

She has even run into a former Goodland resident at expos, McKee said, as Duane Unruh, former basketball coach at Goodland High School, is now an artist for



Judy McKee designed this pin for the 'Tis the Season Collectors Club. The club also has bright red T-shirts with the logo on it.

Hallmark. An article in the fall 1997 issue of *The Ornament Collector* said Unruh sculpted and carved some pieces as his hobby before being asked to work for the greeting card giant.

He had some designs on display at a store in Crown Center across the street from the Hallmark headquarters building. Hallmark managers noticed the pieces, Unruh said in the article, and asked in 1978 if I was willing to freelance for Hallmark. He began working for the company full time the following year.

Besides the fun of meeting other collectors,

McKee said there is an informative aspect to club activities and expos. Members get information on how to record ornaments for insurance purposes, she said, and suggestions on how to light a Christmas tree and how to store ornaments.

Since the first Hallmark ornament was sold in 1973, she said, many of the ornaments are valuable.

The club baked cookies for the Goodland store for the Christmas grand opening, McKee said, and then began taking entries for the drawing. Jacquie's Hallmark sponsors the Goodland club, McKee said, and donated the snowman, the Susan G. Coleman breast cancer angel and at Ty teddy bear.

The idea to raise money for Hospice came several years ago, McKee said, when Hospice was new to Sherman County. McKee said her father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer around that time and had to have only six weeks left to live before he could benefit from Hospice. Then the volunteers helped to keep him comfortable for the last six weeks of his life.

"We thought, 'what a neat thing to do at the holidays,'" McKee said, "to help such a worthy cause."



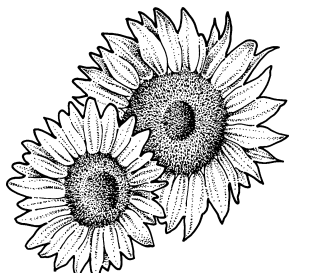
Judy McKee posed with Rodney the Reindeer, a Hallmark ornament character, and his girlfriend, Rhonda the Reindeer, at the Denver Ornament Collectors Club expo.

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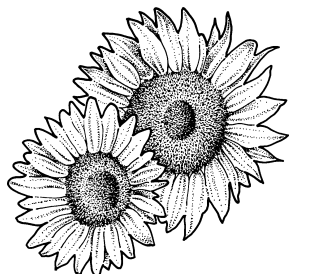
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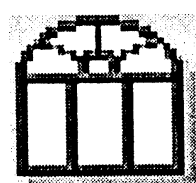


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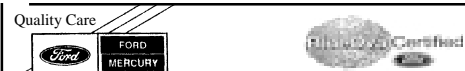
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