

State bird watchers society meets in Goodland

By Ron Barkley

Sherman County bird watcher
Braving 50 mph winds and blizzard conditions about 20 members of the Kansas Ornithological Society blew in to Goodland on Friday for the group's annual spring meeting.

The meeting drew members from across the state to spend two days in the field observing the birds found in the area and making a combined count of the number of species identified.

The first session was a social hour Friday in the conference room of the Holiday Inn Express to meet and greet friends and to plan field trips Saturday and Sunday morning.

The major focus was to see as many birds as possible. The group reassembled in the morning to head out on a day of bird watching, despite a wind chill of 15 degrees and three inches of snow from the storm the day before.

The total species seen by the group numbered 138 in Sherman, Cheyenne, Wallace and Logan counties, plus a brief venture to Haigler, Neb.

The entire group headed out together to tour some local areas for the first hour Saturday, then splint for the rest of the day. One group traveled North toward St. Francis while the second went south toward Sharon Springs. They all returned late Saturday and met for dinner at

the Goodland Elks Lodge.

At a buffet was prepared by Sonya Vandiver, of the high school. The society members talked about the birds each group had seen. An unofficial count by each group showed they had seen about 90 species.

The facilitator of the meeting, Vice President Nancy Leo from Prairie Village, gave out a few typical birding awards, such as who had spent the most money on gas to attend, the oldest member in attendance and who had spotted the best bird both north and south of Goodland.

On display were scrapbooks and posters on birds and wildlife that enthusiast Harry Zoborski had made during a lifetime of observing birds.

Society treasurer Terry Mannell, Leo, Pete Janzen, a world renown birder and coauthor of the book "The Guide to Kansas Birds and Birding Hot Spots;" and several board members were present. Those attending represented a variety of occupations, including employees of Kansas Wildlife and Parks, architects, educators, librarians, newspaper employees, several sales people, housewives and retirees.

Sunday morning, the members set off in search of additional species. At noon, they gathered in Steever Park for a final count of the bird species seen on Saturday and Sunday.

A few members had been able to



Members of the Kansas Ornithological Society looked for bird species along the St. Francis River Walk during their spring meeting,

which was based in Goodland.

Photo by Cheryl E. Miller/The Wichita Eagle

add new species to their Life List. Everyone thought the trip to western Kansas had been a good birding weekend despite the bad weather.

Debbie Lucas of Goodland accompanied the "north" group on Saturday for her first real field trip to identify birds, even though she

has been observing birds at her feeders for over a year. After spotting several northern cardinals at the St. Francis River walk and seeing over

90 species of birds in one day, she says she is now a confirmed birder for life.

School made \$4,000 from garage sale of surplus

By Pat Schiefen

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The Goodland School District made \$4,000 from selling surplus items at garage sale in April, Superintendent Shelley Angelos told the board on Monday, May 6, with \$1,500 going into the general fund.

The sale of sports equipment at Max Jones Fieldhouse made \$2,500, she said, and that will go back into the sports department.

Angelos said they had a dead spot in the grass at football field and has sent samples in to Kansas State University to determine the cause and treatment.

A rate increase on the district's

Blue Cross/Blue Health health insurance will cost an additional \$107,000 a year, or 13 percent, she said. The insurance committee is going to check into the state Blue Cross/Blue Shield program and Humana Health.

The board set the number of credits that students needs to graduate at 27 in 2009, 26 in 2010, 25 in 2011 and 24 and in 2012. The change in the number of credits required is do to changes in class scheduling. The high school is changing its block scheduling some.

Graduates this year must have 24 credits to graduate. High school Principal Sharon Gregory said students would have 31 opportunities

to get the 27 needed credits.

Art teacher Jeff First asked the board to add a class in graphic arts for next year. He said that graphic arts are incorporated into another class but need to be dealt with in more detail.

Classes offered in the art department would be Art I, Art II, Applied Art and Graphic Arts. First said students would learn to use computer programs including Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, Premier and Final Cut. He said once they had the software, it would not need to be updated for five years.

"It will be a better teaching opportunity," Gregory said.

The board agreed to allow graphic

arts as a stand-alone course.

West Elementary School Principal Verna Milnes said she would like to make some changes in the school's literacy program. Milnes said she would like the kids not to move around the building as much and stay more in one room. She felt the kids would be more settled and she wanted to strengthen the relationship between teacher and student.

"The teacher is the key to success," Angelos said. The board gave its permission to Milnes.

The superintendent said she is looking for teachers to run the elementary summer school program for kindergarten to sixth grade. It

costs \$30,000 for the three-week program, she said, and last year 185 students studied with 17 teachers, three aides and a secretary.

She said she wondered if there was a better way for the district to do summer school.

In other business, the board:

- Went into closed sessions for "student matters" from 8:16 to 8:25 p.m. and for personnel from 8:30 to 8:45.

- Approved the retirement of high school history teacher Wallace Hansen.

- Accepted the resignations of junior high band teacher Melanie Biel and fifth-grade teacher Stephanie Grippin from North Elementary

School.

- Rehired Jerry McKee as special education teacher for next year.

- Hired new teachers Benjamin Foust as a junior high math, Anne Madorin for fifth grade and Laura Shaw for fourth grade, effective in the fall.

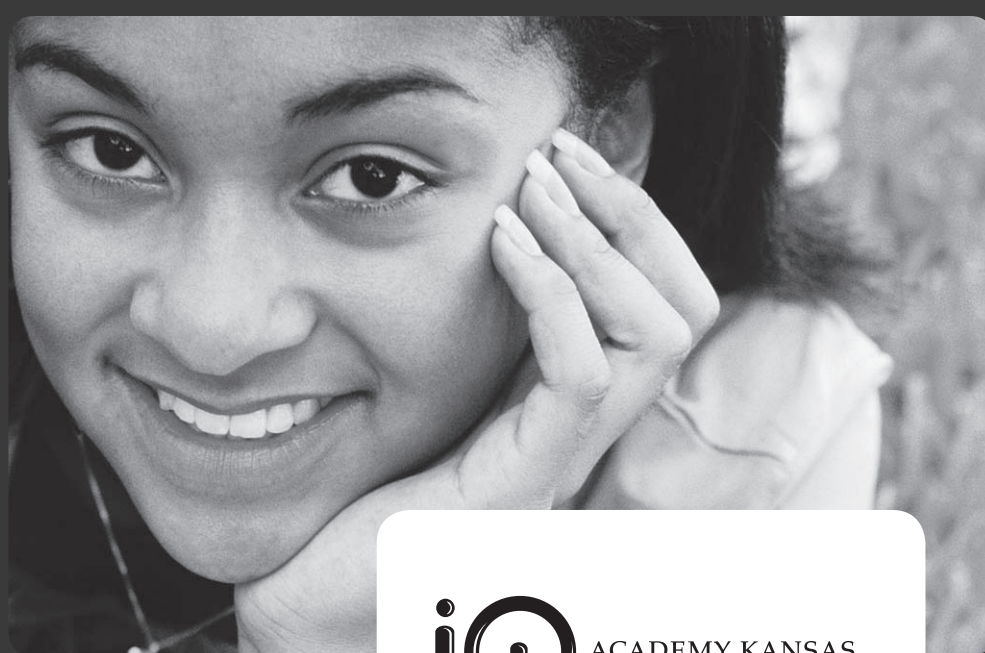
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