

Former Brewster woman writes book on gutsy women

Author Doris Johnson of Burlington, formerly of Brewster, was the guest for the Booked for Lunch at noon on Wednesday at the Pioneer Memorial Library of Colby.

Johnson has written two different types of books: *Gutsy Women*, telling about women who have had extraordinary lives, and a children's book, *The Cookie Crumb Trail*.

Gutsy Women tells the stories of 16 incredible women who overcame adversity to lead successful lives.

Five women from the Thomas and Sherman County area are featured in the book including Evelyn

Hoyt Ward, Opal Imhof Reck, Minnie Belle Imhof Jones, Lucy Imhof, and Esther Imhof.



Johnson

The women featured in the book were not famous, but they led courageous lives and accomplished many things, book author Johnson said.

Many of the women in the book grew up during the Great Depression when people were struggling everyday to put food on the table.

"Growing up during the Depression only heightened these women's desire to succeed against all odds," Johnson said.

Although the lifestyles of the

women in the book are a lot different than the lifestyles of women today, many of the challenges they faced were similar to the challenges confronting today's women she said. These challenges include financial insecurity, family illness, loneliness, and the death of loved ones.

The Cookie Crumb Trail is a children's book Johnson's oldest grandson, Shane, inspired her to write. The story is about a boy and his pet duckling who are flying to their Grandma's house.

When they arrive at the airport, they get into all sorts of mischief. The duo eventually gets to grandma's thanks to luck and some creative problem solving.

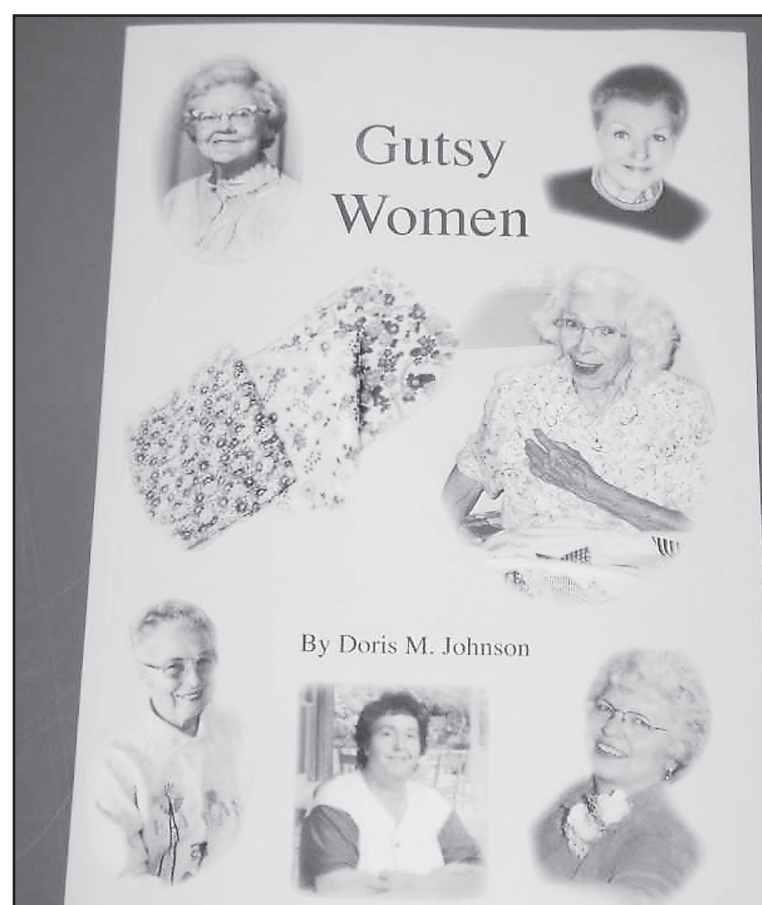
Johnson also co-authored a book

with her brother, Ray Imhof, entitled *As I Remember It*. The story is a memoir about their mother's life growing up in western Kansas in the early 1900's.

All three books can be purchased at the Prairie Museum in Colby and the Craft Peddler in Brewster.

The books can be checked out at the Pioneer Memorial Library of Colby.

Johnson grew up on a farm northeast of Brewster. She graduated from Brewster High School and Kansas State University. She was a teacher before her retirement in 1998. She now spends her time writing books and playing with her grandchildren.



Children's loss and grief different from adults

A child's reaction to loss is different than that of an adult, and varies depending on their age and level of development. Children under the age of three years do not really understand the underlying reasons, but do feel that something has changed. Their response is related more to the reactions of their parents and others. Ages three to five also sense that something has changed or that someone is absent, and will ask questions as to "why." They may also show anger or unreasonable fear. Ages six to eight have a better understanding of the



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Parents and other adults can help children work through their grief by first explaining the situation in terms that are understand-

able, depending on the age of the child. Give them time to absorb the information, ask questions, and to express feelings. Help them to deal with feelings of guilt or responsibility for the loss. Keep to regular routines as much as possible

such as daily activities, school, and other events. Be a good role model by expressing your own grief honestly, and letting your child know that grieving is normal for all ages. Open communication and continual reassurance are keys to helping children cope.

While people tend to associate grief with death, it is important to remember that many kinds of loss can result in grief. Probably one of the greatest and often unrecognized causes of childhood grief results from parental separation and divorce. Other causes include

physical or mental disabilities, chronic illness, loss of hopes and dreams, loss of a relationship, loss of pride, loss of self-image, or loss of an idealized role model.

Children, especially young children, often express their feelings through actions rather than words. Behaviors that may indicate a problem include long term denial of the loss, reaction with anger or withdrawal, extended periods of depression, loss of interest in daily activities, unrealistic fears, aggressive behavior, obsessive activity and unprovoked violence or inexpli-

cable destruction of property. When a parent has concerns about a child's behavior due to loss and grief, a school counselor or local mental health professional can provide information and assistance.

Contributed by Karen Schueler, MS, LCPC, Manager PEO - Prevention, Education and Outreach Department of High Plains Mental Health Center. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.

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